



Exploration

Songs of the Northlanders is about explorations. Across rolling hills and freezing rivers, up misty fjords, and rocky mountains, and into deep forgotten ruins of ages long past. This chapter provides rules for exploring these areas in your game.

Tracking Time

Tracking time is very important to this game. Both the Game Master and players are responsible for keeping track of the passage of time. Songs of the Northlanders tracks time in different increments: seasons, adventures, phases, turns, and exchanges.

Seasons

Seasons are the largest increment of time in the game. Within a season, you go out and partake in an Adventure or you stay in and take a Respite from the world's harsh realities.

As seasons pass we tick off the months as the world passes by around us. There's more information about seasons, weather, seasonal rites, the passing of seasons, and taking respite in the chapter on Seasons.

Adventures

Within one season your party goes on an adventure. An adventure generally consists of one main plot or goal.

Wights have been seen and blue fire atop the barrow mounds north of Balefire. Investigating these rumors, exploring the barrows, and getting involved with the plots and parties within is an adventure.

Phases

Adventures are comprised of two distinct phases: the Adventuring Phase and the Town Phase.

- ❖ All the action of the adventure takes place during the Adventuring phase. This phase generally lasts around a few hours of table time. The adventuring phase is broken into turns.
- ❖ Town phase only happens when your characters visit town to rest and recover, restock, sell salvage and treasure, etc. It ends when you leave town and go back to the adventure.

Songs of the Northlanders is a team-based game. You all participate in the same phase together at the same time.





Turns

Time moves along in clicks during the adventure, like a ticking clock. We call these clicks, “Turns”. A turn is a narrative term describing an amount of time that passes in the game’s fiction. There are two types of turns; Wilderness turns and Dungeon turns.

Wilderness Turns

When traveling in the wilderness there are 4 turns in a day. A turn is generally 6 hours. The turns usually last from sun-up to midday, midday to nightfall, nightfall to midnight, and midnight to sun-up.

Within a Wilderness turn you may:

- ❖ **Travel** up to your maximum movement speed in miles -usually about 1 hex.
- ❖ **Make a test** like fording a river, finding a path through a forest, or tracking a quarry.
- ❖ **Fight monsters.** A single combat counts as a turn.
- ❖ **Argue** with friends and/or foes. Duels of Wit count as one turn.

Dungeon Turns

A turn in the dungeon is usually about 10 minutes of in-game time. A turn is made up of a test or series of tests - like combat or duels of wit.

Within a turn you may:

- ❖ **Make a test** like searching a room, listening through a door, or improvising a contraption.
- ❖ **Fight monsters.** A single combat counts as one turn.
- ❖ **Argue** with friends and/or foes. Duels of Wit count as one turn.

Resolve

Every turn during the adventure each character loses 1 point of resolve. This shows the toil their characters are under. When a character’s Resolve reaches 0 they take the Exhausted condition.

Exchanges

Exchanges are used in combat and duels of wit. They are the smallest amount of time tracked. An Exchange occurs when everyone takes their actions in order at the table.

Overland Travel

Between town and the dungeon or adventure site, there is only the open space of the wilderness. When traveling in the wilderness a character may:

- ❖ Travel a number of miles equal to their modified movement score per turn -usually one hex.
- ❖ In a day, a character can travel comfortably a number of miles equal to their modified movement x3.

Difficult Terrain

Wilderness that is considered difficult terrain -blasted lands, deserts, forests, mountains, and swamps require two turns to cross.

Resting

Characters must rest for one Wilderness turn per day. If they press on in a forced march and travel for a fourth wilderness turn, they take the Exhausted condition.

Weather

Every three days the GM rolls a new weather result. Consult the chapter on Seasons for the individual weather conditions per season.

Harsh Weather

For every turn spent traveling through harsh weather conditions, characters should make Constitution tests to fight off the elements. On a failed test they take the Exhausted or Sick conditions.

Dungeon Exploration

GMs should track turns in the dungeon as described in the Turn section above. To make tracking turns easier, use the turn tracker on the GM sheet. Each time the party ticks another turn, check off the next box on the tracker and have the players reduce their resolve.

Encounters

In any adventure, there are wandering monsters and random encounters waiting to be had.

- ◆ While the characters are in a dungeon roll for a random encounter every three turns or whenever they create chaos that could draw attention.
- ◆ While the characters are exploring the wilderness, roll for a random encounter every other turn. Usually at sun-up and nightfall.

Roll 1d6 to determine if an encounter happens. On the result of a 1, the encounter happens. If a 2 is rolled, the characters experience a clue or portent showing that an encounter is close.

Knowing that a giant spider resides in the tower, a roll of a 1 would mean the characters encounter something. On the roll of a two, the characters find a chamber covered in webs and egg sacks. They get a clue the spider is close.

Creating Encounter Tables

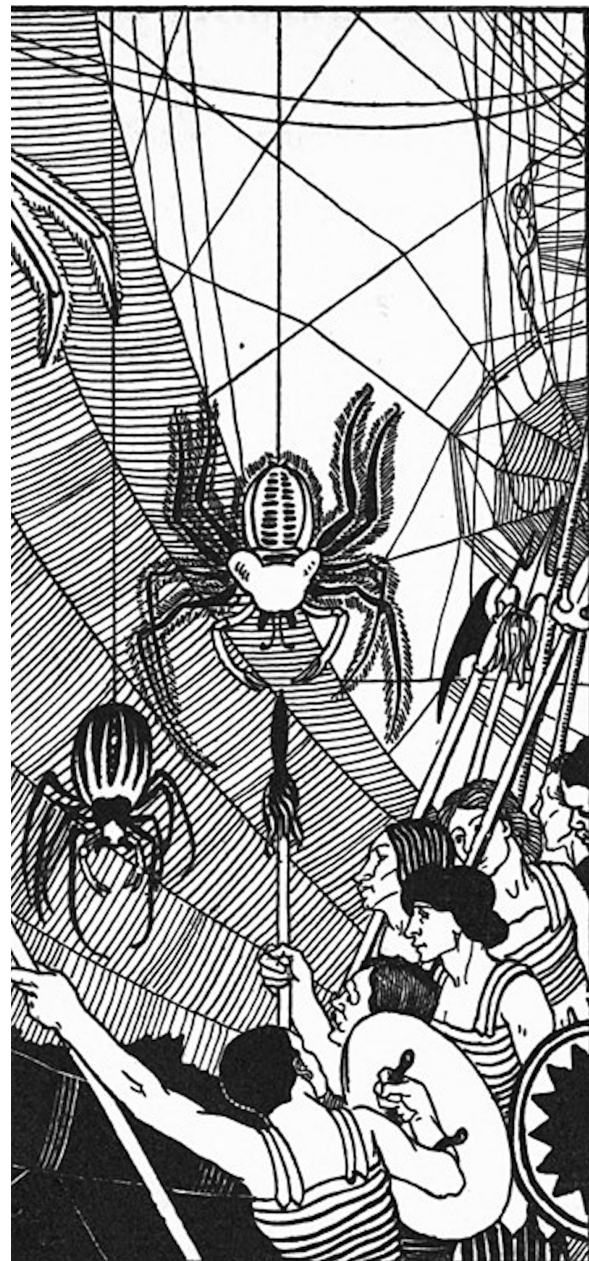
For each area important to the adventure create a table of 1d6 encounters. To make the world come to life give each encounter something they are doing when the characters arrive.

- ◆ Results 1-3 should be common encounters. Lackeys, goons, etc with slight variations.
- ◆ Results 4-5 should be an uncommon encounter. Perhaps this is something unusual or a more prominent NPC.
- ◆ Result 6 should be a rare or weird encounter.

This should result in 3-6 total entries.

Example:

Roll	Encounter
1-3	Some bandits on guard around a stew or arguing over what to do with the prisoners.
4-5	A sorcerer in the middle of a ritual incanting strange words from an ancient book.
6	A giant stone spider descending on you looking for fresh meat.





Light

After Time, Light is the most important resource of exploration. Without light we are all outcasts into darkness, to stumble and fall.

Characters must have light to explore the dark places of the world - dank caves, canopies of night, and dark dungeons. Light is extended over a space in-game, lighting your way through the darkness. As a resource, it too is expended over time.

Light Source

This game features three types of light sources as gear that your characters carry with them on adventures; candles, torches, and lanterns. Each provides light for several characters and a certain amount of turns during the adventure.

- ❖ Candles burn for 6 turns or until snuffed out.
- ❖ Torches burn for 3 turns or until snuffed out.
- ❖ Lanterns burn for 4 turns.

Candles provide dim light for one person. Lanterns provide bright light *on one side of the table* and dim light *on the other side*. Torches provide bright light *for one person* and dim light *on that side of the table*.

Dim Light

Characters at the border between being in the light, and being encompassed in darkness are in dim light.

- ❖ In Dim Light characters are at a -1 disadvantage to skill ranks to perform all delicate tests (picking locks, disarming traps, reading, sewing, cooking, etc).
- ❖ In Dim Light characters suffer -1 to all melee 'to hit' rolls.
- ❖ In Dim Light characters suffer -2 to all ranged attack 'to hit' rolls.

Nightlight provided by the lit moon is considered dim light. Otherwise, nighttime is in complete darkness.

Darkness

Characters cannot see in darkness. They may not perform tests and exploration takes twice as long. Count every turn of exploration in the darkness as two turns instead.

Drafty Halls

Candlelight is fragile. The GM, at their discretion, can blow out a candle for any reason.

Dropping a Torch

Dropping a torch, or leaving it burning on the ground, provides dim light for that side of the table only. Also, voluntarily dropping a torch or having it knocked from your hand means the GM may choose to snuff it out.

Setting Down the Lantern

You can set down your lantern to free up a hand. Doing so changes all light it provides to dim light. Be careful, lanterns are easily kicked over.

Fire Fighting

In a pinch torches and lanterns may be used as weapons. They count as handaxes for purposes of initiative. After combat, the torch is consumed and used up.

Lanterns can be used in melee or at range; after the first attack the light is extinguished, and the lantern breaks.

If a target is hit by flaming oil it deals 1d6 damage the first turn, 1d3 damage the second, and then burns out.

