

Introduction

This game is for a **Game Master** (GM) and one or more players. Beast Dream allows players to experience the heart of the journeys seen in Pokemon, Digimon, and other monster training, collecting, and battling games, but with the creative freedom a pen and paper game affords. Many of the game rules are based on Blades in the Dark by John Harper, so familiarity with that game will be helpful (but unnecessary) for both players and GMs, but the tone of this game is vastly different from Blades.

The only materials you need to play this game are pencils, paper, and several six-sided die.

Beast Dream is also a **SWORD DREAM**. The SWORD DREAM movement began with the OSR (Old School Revival/Renaissance) community. It focuses on inclusivity, kindness, support, creativity, and empowering more voices. Every SWORD DREAM or *DREAM game follows the 9 Principles which can be found [here](#). These principles are a work in progress as we learn more about what works best to support our goals.

In Beast Dream I want to explore the following concepts for this SWORD DREAM:

- Provide a fun experience for a GM and any amount of players
- Encourage the building of bonds between players, characters, and beasts
- Remove physical harm and trauma as consequences for failure
- Create modular systems that encourage designers and players to express themselves in the world, beasts, and moves they create
- Capture the magic I felt playing my favorite video games as a child

Contents

Players

- Rolling the Dice
- Action Rolls
- Group Actions
- Progress Tracks
- Fortune Rolls
- Push and Stress
- Coin and Gear
- Handler Moves
- Optional: Advanced Moves

Beasts

- Beast Battles
- Beast Tags
- Befriending or Capturing Beasts
- Sharing and Trading Beasts
- Beast Transformation
- Example Beasts

Game Masters

- Running the Game
- Diversity and Inclusion
- Dreams
- Agendas
- Principles
- Themes
- Settings
- Characters
- Unique Rules
- Beasts
- Adventures

Building a Dream

- Dreams and Creative Commons
- Building a Bestiary

Credits

Players

Players create a character that will go on a fantastical journey in a world of beasts. Characters are typically called **handlers** because of their connection to beasts, but feel free to use a different term for yours (ranger, explorer, or trainer are other good fits). They choose a look and name for their character and then choose one quality that's their strength (2 dice), one that's neutral (1 die) and one that's their weakness (0 dice). There are three qualities: Heart, Cunning, and Drive. Each action that your handler takes is influenced by one of these three qualities. Then you pick a move from the handler move list. The first move you pick is your specialty, and you will keep this move forever.

Once you've made your handler, you then pick your first beast, either by creating it yourself or choosing a beast from the GM's bestiary. More information can be found in the Beasts section. Though you will be collecting more beasts throughout the game, your first beast is special. You have a special bond with your beast. Your first beast begins with a bond of 1. Nicknaming your first beast is important but not necessary.

It's up to the GM whether you begin the game with your first beast or if you have to accomplish some small task to get it. Once you are bonded with your first beast, your adventure can begin in earnest.

Talk back and forth with the GM, narrating or describing your handler's actions and reactions. When your actions are difficult or create conflict, the GM may ask you to roll to determine the outcome of the roll. Read more about that in the **Action Rolls** section. Your actions will have consequences, but by pushing yourself you can change outcomes and resist some of the consequences. Read more about that in the **Push and Stress** section.

At the end of the session, ask yourself these questions and mark Potential for each question you can answer with a yes.

- Did I make a new friend?
- Did I defeat a powerful enemy?
- Did I encounter or learn about a new beast?

After you answer these questions, if you have marked Potential equal to 3 + the number of Moves you have, you earn an advancement. Unmark all of your Potential, learn a new Move, and increase the Bond of one of your beasts by 1. When you earn an advancement you have the option of changing your specialty to another move you already have instead of learning a new move. Your new specialty cannot be an advanced move.

Rolling the Dice

Beast Dream uses six-sided dice. You roll several at once and read the single highest result.

- If the highest die is a 6, it's a **full success**—things go well. If you roll more than one 6, it's a **critical success**—you gain some additional advantage.
- If the highest die is a 4 or 5, that's a **partial success**—you do what you were trying to do, but prepare for trouble: danger, harm, reduced effect, etc.
- If the highest die is 1-3, it's a bad outcome. Things go poorly. You probably don't achieve your goal and you suffer complications, too.

If you ever need to roll but you have zero (or negative) dice, roll two dice and take the single lowest result. You can't roll a critical when you have zero dice.

All the dice systems in the game are expressions of this basic format. When you're first learning the game, you can always make a simple roll to judge how things go. Look up the exact rule later when you have time.

To create a dice pool for a roll, you'll use one of your three qualities and take dice equal to its score (2 dice for a strength, 1 die for neutral, and 0 dice for a weakness). Certain moves may increase your dice pool, and situations may increase your dice pool at the GM's discretion.

Action Rolls

When you take an action that poses significant danger or risk, you make an **action roll**. The GM determines the appropriate position, you choose which quality you are rolling, then the GM determines the appropriate effect. You can roll any quality you want, but the GM may determine that one quality is less effective than the other based on the action.

When you act with empathy and compassion, roll **heart**. When you act with guile and wit, roll **cunning**. When you act with passion and determination, roll **drive**.

Position is the narrative stakes of the action. There are three positions: controlled, risky, and desperate. If you're in a **controlled** position, the possible consequences are less serious. If you're in a **desperate** position, the consequences can be severe. If you're somewhere in between, it's **risky**—usually considered the “default” position for most actions.

Effect determines how much your action roll will accomplish on a success.

Controlled—You act on your terms. You exploit a dominant advantage.

- **Critical:** You do it with increased effect.
- **6:** You do it.
- **4/5:** You hesitate. Withdraw and try a different approach, or else do it with a minor consequence: a minor complication occurs, you have reduced effect, you suffer lesser harm, you end up in a risky position.
- **1-3:** You falter. Press on by seizing a risky opportunity, or withdraw and try a different approach.

Risky—You go head to head. You act under fire. You take a chance.

- **Critical:** You do it with increased effect.
- **6:** You do it.
- **4/5:** You do it, but there's a consequence: you suffer harm, a complication occurs, you have reduced effect, you end up in a desperate position.
- **1-3:** Things go badly. You suffer harm, a complication occurs, you end up in a desperate position, you lose this opportunity.

Desperate—You overreach your capabilities. You're in serious trouble.

- **Critical:** You do it with increased effect.
- **6:** You do it.
- **4/5:** You do it, but there's a consequence: you suffer severe harm, a serious complication occurs, you have reduced effect.
- **1-3:** It's the worst outcome. You suffer severe harm, a serious complication occurs, you lose this opportunity for action.

There are three effect levels: super effective, standard, and not very effective. If your effect is **super effective**, you achieve more than usual. If your effect is **not very effective**, you have a partial or weak effect. If your effect is **standard**, then it accomplishes what you'd expect it to accomplish. Since NPCs don't roll for their actions, an action roll does double-duty: it resolves the action of the PC as well as any NPCs that are involved. The single roll tells us how those actions interact and which consequences result. On a 6, the PC wins and has their effect. On a 4/5, it's a mix—both the PC and the NPC have their effect. On a 1-3, the NPC wins and has their effect as a consequence on the PC.

Group Actions

When you lead a group action, you coordinate multiple members of the team to tackle a problem together. Describe how your character leads the team in a coordinated effort. Do you appeal to them gently and encouragingly, do

you push them to go above and beyond, or do you guide them with strategic plans and ideas?

Each handler who's involved makes an action roll (using the same quality) and the team counts the single best result as the overall effort for everyone who rolled. However, the handler leading the group action takes 1 stress for each handler that rolled 1-3 as their best result.

This is how you do the "we all sneak into the building" scene. Everyone who wants to sneak in rolls their action, and the best result counts for the whole team. The leader expends push for everyone who does poorly. It's tough covering for the stragglers.

The group action result covers everyone who rolled. If you don't roll, your handler doesn't get the effects of the action.

Progress Tracks

A **progress track** is a way to measure progress on an ongoing effort against an obstacle or other trouble. Draw out a track like below and mark boxes off the track whenever you successfully make progress.



Generally, the more complex or difficult a task, the more boxes are in the track. The GM will decide the total number of boxes before you start making progress on it. Typically, progress tracks will have no less than four boxes (the exception being certain battle tracks, see in the Beasts section), with the most complex having no more than ten boxes. Typically, a successful action with standard effect will mark off one or two boxes, while a not very effective or super effective action will mark off less or more.

Fortune Rolls

Sometimes you take an action that has a chance of failure but without much risk or danger involved. When that happens, the GM might call for a **fortune roll**. A fortune roll works a lot like an action roll, but the only consequence of failure is that you do not succeed.

Push and Stress

Handlers have a special ability called **Push** that allows them to exert themselves to gain an advantage or avoid consequences. A handler has eight Push to spend.

Before you roll, you may choose to spend one Push to roll an additional die (or roll a single die if the roll is using your weakness) or to increase the

effect (from not very effective to standard or from standard to super effective). You can also resist consequences by describing how you resist it and then rolling 1d6. You spend Push equal to 6 minus the result of this roll. If there are more than one players, it costs two Push to add an additional die to your own rolls, but you can also spend one Push to help another handler and add an additional die to theirs. Teamwork is important! Pushing yourself is risky and can lead to overexerting yourself. If you spend all of your Push, you become **Stressed** and are temporarily taken out of the action. When you are Stressed, you are feeling overwhelmed and it takes a toll on you. Lose one of your Moves or reduce your Bond with one of your beasts by 1. You cannot lose your Specialty. Describe how your partner beasts and your friends help you get back on your feet as soon as there's a break in the action and regain all of your Push. You also regain all of your Push when you can safely relax.

Coin and Gear

Handlers shouldn't travel with just their beast companions and the clothes on their backs. Gear and the coin to buy it with are important for any handler.

Coin is an abstraction that represents a small sum of whatever currency is used in your world. Don't worry about coin when buying day-to-day items; as long as you have coin then you can afford basic necessities without spending enough to impact your amount of coin. Coin is for buying important things like adventuring gear, healing items, capture devices, and more.

Handler Moves

Here are some basic handler moves. Game Masters should come up with more if they want more variety in their games.

Connections: You know people. Once per session you can call on a connection to get a piece of useful or valuable equipment or information without spending coin.

Domineering: You are skilled at capturing beasts. Spend one push to treat a beast's capture score as if it were 1 less.

Fast Friends: You make friends quickly. All beasts you capture or befriend begin with a Bond of 1. If this move is your specialty, increase your bond with your first beast by 1.

Type Hunter: Choose a type. Your first attack in a battle against a beast of that type has improved effect. This move can be taken multiple times, but you cannot choose the same type twice.

Optional: Advanced Moves

When you have five or more moves, the Game Master may allow you to take Advanced Moves. These moves are generally stronger or more useful than regular moves, but they cost a lot of Potential because of how many moves you have. They might require you to have other moves as a prerequisite. If an advanced move has another move as a prerequisite, you must lose the advanced move before you can lose the prerequisite move.

Character Growth: Treat your weakness as if it were a neutral quality.
Faster Friends (Prerequisite: Fast Friends): All beasts you capture or befriend begin with a bond of 2.

Beasts

Beasts are the heart of Beast Dream. Every handler has at least one partner beast, and depending on the setting of your game you could have dozens or more. Also, beasts should inhabit every niche of your world, and friendly beasts helping with construction or delivery could be just as common as wild beasts. Beast battles are also an important element of Beast Dream. Read more about that in **Beast Battles**.

Beasts have four numbered stats. **Bond** represents the trust and history between the handler and the beast. The highest bond a beast can have is 3. **Tier** represents how powerful the beast is in battle. Tier ranges from 1 to 4 (in special instances such as enhanced or legendary beasts this number can go higher). **Skill** represents a beast's level of training, and this starts at 0 when you capture or befriend a beast and can go up to 2. **XP** (or experience) is the progress in training a beast has before its skill increases. Beasts also all have a **type**, which represents their elemental affinity and their strength and weakness to other types. A beast has at least one type, and can have up to two. Finally, a beast has a set of **tags** that describe its special abilities. For example, a beast with the Swim tag might be able to ferry people across the water, or a beast with the Strength tag might be able to lift boulders or smash walls.

Like handlers, beasts can make action rolls when they perform dangerous actions under the direction of their handler. The action roll uses the beast's skill, and the GM takes into account the beast's tier and tags to determine effect. For example, a beast with the Swim tag would have improved effect when trying to swim through dangerous rapids. You can resist the consequences of a beast's action roll as normal, and you can also choose to **spend the beast's bond in place of push**. You can spend one bond or push to encourage, motivate, or guide your beast and substitute one of your qualities for the beast's skill for a single roll. Often, the consequences of a failure or partial success impact the beast performing the action roll rather than the handler. A beast recovers bond whenever their handler recovers push.

When a beast rolls a desperate action roll or defeats a beast of a higher tier than them, they gain 1 XP. When they have 5 XP, reduce their XP to 0 and increase their skill by 1. A beast with a skill of 2 cannot gain XP.

Beast Battles

Beasts fight, either for a cause, for self-defense, to hunt, or simply for the love of the fight. When these battles occur, you have the option to play them as any other scenario, or you can run racing battle tracks.

A **battle track** is a special progress track that represents the vitality of the beast currently in battle versus the vitality of the opponent's beast. A beast's battle track has a number of boxes on it equal to twice its tier. For example, a tier 2 beast has four boxes, and a tier 3 beast has 6 boxes. When you battle, you choose the action your beast takes and roll an action roll. On a miss, you fill boxes on your beast's battle track based on the position of the roll (3 for desperate, 2 for standard, 1 for controlled). On a success, you fill boxes on your opponent's track based on the effect (3 for super effective, 2 for standard, 1 for not very effective). On a partial success, you fill boxes on both tracks. When your beast's battle track fills completely, that beast is knocked unconscious and you choose your next beast to battle. The same goes for your opponent. If you fill all of your beasts' battle tracks, you lose the battle. If you fill all of your opponent's battle tracks, you win the battle. If you both fill your tracks at the same time, then the GM decides the winner using whatever method they want.

During a battle using a battle track, a beast can **permanently expend one of their bond** to unfill a number of boxes on your beast's battle track equal to its tier to represent it giving its all. This bond can be regained during an advancement.

Handlers should never fight beasts themselves. Their beast companions will always leap in front of danger to protect them if another beast tries to fight, and most beasts do not consider humans worth attacking anyways.

Beast Tags

Beasts come with a selection of tags that are meant to give the players an idea of the special abilities the beast has. A beast is assumed to have combat abilities using their type, so those are not included among its tags.

Befriending or Capturing Beasts

Wild or unbonded beasts have an extra stat.

If your game revolves around befriending beasts, then unbonded beasts have the befriend quality stat. **Befriend quality** determines the quality that you must roll in order to befriend the beast. When interacting with the beast, you can make an attempt to befriend that beast by demonstrating that

quality and then making a befriend roll. A befriend roll functions like an action roll but without the GM choosing effect and position. On a **6 or a crit**, the beast is befriended and joins your team. On a **4-5**, the beast recognizes you and if you are engaged in battle with it you can choose to end the battle immediately, or it will offer to help you temporarily. On a **1-3**, the beast flees or attacks you. You cannot attempt to befriend the same beast twice on an adventure, though other players can attempt to befriend a beast that another player failed to befriend.

If your game revolves around capturing beasts, then wild beasts have the capture score stat. **Capture score** ranges from 1 to 6 and determines the difficulty of capture with a capture device. During a battle you can attempt to capture a wild beast. Expend a use of your capture device and roll 1d6. If the result equals or exceeds the beast's capture score, then you've captured the beast. If the result is lower than the capture score, then the beast breaks free and attacks you. You can attempt to capture a wild beast repeatedly as long as you have uses of your capture device remaining. When you first befriend or capture a beast, their bond is set to 0 unless a move says otherwise.

Sharing and Trading Beasts

A beast can only benefit from a bond with one handler at a time. However, under specific circumstances, a handler can attempt to command a beast that is not bonded with them. When a wild beast is friendly to a handler, when the handler bonded with a beast is unable to act in some way, or when the handler bonded with a beast is okay with someone else commanding their beast, you can make an action roll with a beast, treating its skill as if it were 1 less. If its skill is 0 already, then the action has reduced effect instead.

It is also possible to permanently trade or give away beasts. If you trade a beast with someone else, both beasts reset their bonds to 0 and their skill is reduced by 1. This also happens to any beast you give away. A bond with a beast is very powerful, so do not trade or give away beasts lightly.

Beast Transformation

In some settings, beasts can transform into other forms. Depending on the beast, this transformation can be temporary or permanent.

Temporary transformations happen and then the beast changes back. If a beast can temporarily transform, it will include it and the prerequisites for transforming in the beast's tags.

Permanent transformations are tied to handler advancements. When you advance, if a beast has at least 1 bond with you, you can choose to permanently transform it into its next form rather than increase its bond by 1. There may be other prerequisites to permanently transform. If there are, they will be included in the beast's tags.

Example Beasts

Vulpage

The sparks that fly off this fox's tail often leave behind a trail of electrical fires.

Type: Fire/Spark

Tier: 2, Befriend Quality: Drive

Tags: Burning, Status

Georode

These leafy creatures can cause massive rockslides when they search for a new fertile patch of soil to sleep in.

Type: Earth/Plant

Tier: 3, Befriend Quality: Drive

Tags: Burrow, Carry

Lobspire

It emits a blue glow to lure prey to its lair, then creates a cloud of shadow before draining the life from its prey.

Type: Shadow/Curse

Tier 3, Befriend Quality: Cunning

Tags, Carry, Swim

Prawnlight

When pursued by predators, sea creatures flee to Prawnlight because they know they will be safe in its glow.

Type: Water/Light

Tier 4, Befriend Quality: Heart

Tags: Carry, Swim

Psichuck

These brawny ground squirrels channel psychic energy when they're preparing to kick some tail.

Type: Brawl/Psion

Tier: 2, Befriend Quality: Heart

Tags: Telekinesis

Shrimpil

This small crustacean escapes from predators by cursing the water it swims through, slowing down anything that pursues it.

Type: Water/Curse

Tier: 1, Befriend Quality: Cunning

Tags: Swim, Permanent transformation (Lobspire), Permanent transformation (Prawnlight, must have Bond of 3)

Starbright

This bird leaves trails of solid light as it soars through the air. Swarms of them can create temporary flight hazards.

Type: Light

Tier: 1, Befriend Quality: Drive

Tags: Flight

Game Masters

The Game Master is in charge of presenting players with interesting choices and scenarios, and using an existing beast dream as the backdrop for your game, or creating your own dream.

Running the Game

As the GM, you are responsible for running the game. That means knowing the rules and making judgement calls, but it also means having a conversation with your players and letting that conversation lead the game. Just because you are the GM doesn't mean that you are in charge of the game. Beast Dream is a conversation between the players and the GM, and while that places you in a position of some authority, it is extremely important that you listen to your players and respect their wishes. A "GM versus the players" mentality is toxic and leads to bad games and hurt feelings that bleed outside of the game. While it is your responsibility to create obstacles for your players, do so in a way that leads to fun and exciting situations, instead of trying to crush them or force them down a set path that you have planned.

When you run the game, there are a few things you must do.

Ask questions. Asking questions is the single most important tool a GM can use. Ask establishing questions to set the scene. Where are you? What are you doing? How do you feel about this? These questions get the players bought into the scene and allow you to shape the scene in a way that's most impactful and fun. Ask more questions. If there's a character you forgot to name, ask a player and ask how they know them. That saves you the trouble of having to come up with a name (I'm terrible at naming on the fly), and it gets your player invested in the character immediately.

Provide opportunities. Without your input, your players' handlers exist in a vacuum. Come up with opportunities for your players to pursue. This can be as simple as saying that they see a beast wandering past looking confused, or it could be a whispered hint that an evil organization is preparing to execute a plan. Don't force your players to engage with all the opportunities you provide, but if your players refuse to engage with any of your opportunities, pause the game and talk to your players to figure out why. Provide more opportunities as the game goes on, like mentioning a chandelier that bridges a gap or a beast that seems distracted. The more opportunities you provide, the richer the world will feel and the more interesting choices your players will face.

Follow their lead. After presenting opportunities, let your players decide what happens next and what course they take. Don't try to force them down a particular path. If the players are determined to do something, let them do it, or at least attempt it. If a player asks a leading question, consider providing an opportunity for them, or let them roll to see what they find. If a player is trapped in a room and they ask if there is a way out, tell them if there are any obvious ways out, have them roll a fortune roll to determine if there is a way out, or have them roll an action roll to determine if they can find the way out.

Cut to the action. When players tell you what they want to do, cut to the part where they're doing that, don't run them through every step to get there. If your party wants to brave a stretch of wilderness, start them out in the wilderness and ask them what they want to do next. If your party wants to challenge a gauntlet of powerful monsters, jump to them at the gate, or even better, with them engaging with the first monster. Don't waste time in transitions unless they have importance to the scene, like a getaway or something similar.

Foreshadow consequences. This applies to big and small consequences. Smaller consequences can have tells; for example, a snarling beast foreshadows the consequence that it might strike if the players fail to calm it down. Similarly, larger consequences have even more obvious tells. Foreshadowing shouldn't give away everything though. Hint at what can happen, don't give away everything that will happen.

Follow through. When a consequence has been foreshadowed and the players fail a roll or ignore the foreshadowing, it's your job to follow through with the consequence. However, the severity and the details are up to your discretion. Also, always allow handlers to resist consequences. Tell them the consequences and then let them decide if they want to resist the consequences. Let them know how much of the consequence will be resisted before they roll. You can choose to only allow them to resist some but not all of the consequences, or ask them to make multiple resistance rolls if they want to resist every kind of consequence. Resisting a consequence is stressful to player characters, and this is where characters will most often stress out, so have a plan in mind for what happens if they do.

Mark a track. Sometimes consequences can be indirect or building to something. Instead of immediately causing problems, foreshadow something coming and mark a **consequence track**. These function exactly like progress tracks, except that they increase based on failure or inaction by the players rather than success. When a consequence track fills, something bad

happens. The position of a failed or partial action roll determines how much the track fills. The results of a consequence track filling should be big. Perhaps a powerful enemy shows up that the players must defeat, or the cave collapses and they can no longer explore in that direction. Handlers can still resist the consequences of a consequence track, but instead of negating or reducing the consequence on a resistance roll, unmark a box or two; the consequence will still happen if they don't act fast.

Diversity and Inclusion

As a GM, it's your job to make your game diverse and inclusive. There is no one kind of person that enjoys games, and everyone that comes to your table deserves to be welcomed and respected if they welcome and respect you and everyone else at the table. Ensure that the worlds of your games include people that are marginalized in the real world so that everyone feels like they can be a part of your world. Do everything in your power to accommodate marginalized people at your table. Don't just invite cis straight white abled men into your gaming groups, and make everyone feel comfortable at your table. Normalize asking for pronouns before addressing someone, normalize asking if anyone needs any accommodations on account of any disabilities or trauma, and normalize safety tools such as the [X-Card](#) and lines and veils. If you do these things, you'll be so much better off than many gaming groups.

Dreams

A **dream** is the agendas, principles, setting, themes, characters, items, moves, beasts, and more that inform the game you are playing. This game is built to give you as much freedom as possible with how you want to play the game, so individual dreams are what provide specific content and provide a narrower focus for your games.

Agendas

Agendas are the driving goals of your games. Everything you say and do should accomplish your agendas. Agendas only exist if they are important enough to shape the entirety of a dream. Take agendas to heart and figure out how to best include them into your game. The most common agenda is **play to find out what happens**, which means that you allow the rules and events of the game to guide what happens with the story rather than railroading and creating grand plans ahead of time. Do not come up with a

grand storyline you want to run your players through, but instead come up with a few ideas but let the actions of your players and the results of the rolls steer the story.

Principles

Principles are a set of statements that guide how you run the game and present the world. While they might seem similar to agendas, principles are more specific and are things you should do rather than things you must do. My favorite principle is **be a fan of the players**, which means you are not playing against the players, but rather you are putting situations and challenges in front of them to give them a chance to shine. You don't want your players to fail, instead you want them to struggle and ultimately succeed, or if they fail, fail in a fun way. It's no fun to play in a game where the GM has decided that there's no way for you to win, so don't be that GM.

Themes

Themes are ideas you want to explore in your dream. These often influence the tone of the dream, based on how serious or tragic the themes are. Themes tie into the stories you try to tell. For example, if a theme you want to explore is the consequences of corporate greed, then you could introduce a character or organization that's driven by profit and have them harm everything around them in their search for profit. You don't have to be subtle with your themes. This is a game, so nobody expects a brilliantly crafted narrative anyways.

Settings

Settings are the building blocks of the worlds your dream takes place in. Settings are made in tiers, with the region encompassing the entire setting of the dream, then areas, dividing the region into more distinct segments, and finally locations that provide specific places to visit. If a region is described as arid, then generally anywhere in that entire setting would be arid, unless an area or location says otherwise. If an area is described as mountainous, then generally anywhere in that area would be mountainous, unless a location says otherwise. Regions and areas paint with a broad brush, so there's plenty of room for exceptions inside them. As a Game Master, it is up to you to interpret a setting and bring the details to life.

Characters

Characters inhabit the setting of your dream. Usually, only the most important characters are included in any detail, so it's up to GMs to create and characterize the majority of characters in their games. Don't stress coming up with a detailed backstory and motivation for every character in your game, but keep characters consistent and when a character becomes important, take the time to flesh them out in your mind so that they can be believable or memorable.

Unique Rules

Sometimes to make a dream's setting or themes make sense, unique rules have to be added on top of Beast Dream's core rules. Some unique rules are presented as optional, while others are core to making a dream work. Either way, if a unique rule contradicts a core rule, then the unique rule overrides the core rule. Be careful about using too many optional rules or requiring overly complex unique rules or else the game can be difficult to keep up with for your players.

Beasts

Beasts are perhaps the most important element of any game of Beast Dream. As the GM, you are in charge of bringing beasts to life and deciding which beast to use at what time. Carefully consider the list of beasts you are using and try to pick beasts that make sense in the situation (a fish beast would not make much sense to be at the top of a mountain), and don't overwhelm the party with extremely strong beasts if they aren't prepared to deal with them. By default, wild beasts are happy to ignore people and other beasts unless they threaten them or inconvenience them in some way, so don't just throw beasts at your players unless there's an in-game justification for it. Beasts are animals, but they're more empathetic than real animals, so play up their personalities and quirks. Keep in mind a beast's tags and consider how that might influence their moment to moment actions.

Adventures

As the GM, it's your responsibility to come up with adventures for your players to undertake. Adventures can take many forms, but they should take the handlers out of a comfortable position and put them in some sort of danger, while also expanding or changing the world in some significant way.

An adventure could be as simple as an expedition into the wilderness to reach the next town, but it could be as monumental as defeating a revived beast god that threatens to destroy the ecosystem if left unchecked. Adventures should always be presented to your players rather than forced upon them. However, you should make the adventures urgent and the consequences of avoiding them apparent.

Though there is not a set format for adventures, the following are basic frameworks for adventures that can easily be adapted to fit any world and story:

- Travel through dangerous territory in order to make it to your destination.
- Protect a beast from being captured by villainy.
- Explore a supposedly abandoned building that's rumored to be a hideout for criminals.
- Seek out an elusive and powerful beast that's capable of stopping a coming disaster.

Building a Dream

Many GMs want to do more than run a game using existing dreams. If you're like me, you'll want to build your own dreams. While everyone has their own creative process, there are a few guidelines that should help you build your own dreams.

Dreams and Creative Commons

As stated in the credits, *Beast Dream* is released under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 3.0 license, which means that anyone is free to share and edit the game as long as you credit the original writer (Tyler Magruder), and you release your work under the same license. There's no restriction on commercializing work using *Beast Dream*, so you are free to sell your dreams or release them for free for the public to use.

Building XYZ

I plan to include details on building every possible element of a dream. That's still in progress, so I've left the older Building a Bestiary section here. That section will be reworked in the next update, but for now it contains some useful information so I will leave it here for now.

Building a Bestiary

Creating your own bestiary is a lot of work, but it can be very rewarding to populate your world with beasts of your own creation. The first step to building a bestiary is deciding what kind of world these beasts will inhabit. Think about the kinds of creatures that would live in that world. When you have a general idea of what this world looks like, create a beast or two in your mind. Think about what abilities they'd have and how they fit into the world. Use them as a springboard for ideas. Look at beasts in media: games, movies, books, etc. When you have a handful of beasts thought up, figure out what determines their type. Are they elementally powered? Is there a natural order that determines what creature is weak to another? When you have this figured out, create a type weakness chart. This should be broad enough that at least one type can apply to any beast you'll want to create in your world, and no one type should be much stronger or weaker than another. Make sure each type has a handful of weaknesses and a handful of strengths. With this in hand, you can begin applying types to the beasts you've imagined. Come up with names. This is one aspect I can't really help you with, I'm terrible at names (you've seen the example beast list). What

abilities do your beasts have? Create tags based on these abilities so you can easily and clearly communicate them to your players. Do your beasts transform? Create transformations that feel natural or at least logical. Don't have a dog transform into a bus or a bee transform into a snake, unless there's some logical reasoning behind that. Transformations should usually increase a beast's tier; if not, there should be a significant change to the beast's type or tags to justify the transformation. I would suggest clearly outlining which beasts make good first beasts. First beasts should all be the same tier (I would recommend tier 1, with transformations to tiers 2 and 3). Having imbalanced first beasts makes it less fun for players that end up picking the weaker beasts. Finally, decide if beasts in your world are captured, befriended, or both. The befriend quality can tell a lot about a beast's personality. Beasts of higher tier should generally have a higher capture score.

When you have a bunch of beasts, you should have more of an idea about how this world works. Now is a perfect time to begin planning player moves that are specific to your world. Each ability should provide a significant benefit, but do your best to ensure that no one player move is significantly more powerful than any other.

Credits

Design by Tyler Magruder

Art by Cole Riz

Logo by Cole Riz and Tyler Magruder

Special thanks to Jamila R. Nedjadi for the use of their description of SWORD DREAM

Inspiration for the logo from Lusunati

This work is based on Blades in the Dark (found at

<http://www.bladesinthedark.com/>), product of One Seven Design, developed and authored by John Harper, and licensed for our use under the Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Unported license

(<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/>).

This work is released under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 3.0 license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/us/>)

[Support me on Patreon](#) to get the latest versions and news on this game and others

What's Next?

Later versions of the game will include more information about running the game, including expanded guidelines for creating dreams of your own and advice for structuring your campaigns. I plan on reworking a lot of the text that I borrowed from the Blades in the Dark SRD so that it's more in line with the theme of the game. I'm also planning on expanding the Commonwealth setting, including important locations, NPCs, and more beasts.

Beyond that, your feedback can help shape the game. If you have any ideas, feel free to reach out to me on Twitter @sorryjzargo.

All future versions of Beast Dream will be paid, but buying any of the playtest versions will get you access to all of the playtest versions and the final finished version.