

# ADVENTURING

While it may feel conversational, Labyrinthian is more than just talking. At its heart, it's an Immersive Improv Game—a unique collaboration between you, your fellow Players, the Keeper, and the Game itself. Together, you'll shape the future of a living, breathing world that acts with its own agency, whether you're involved in its comings and goings, or not.

Adventure isn't just a matter of delving into dungeons to slay dragons, or a tale of good and evil in a climactic clash to decide the future of the world. While these are certainly compelling, Labyrinthian also finds adventure in the quieter moments—the meals shared, the stars charted, and the simple joys of exploration. A Life well-lived may well encompass both...perhaps it should.

In Labyrinthian, Life *is* the Adventure. This section will teach you the key procedures that drive your journey, blending structured mechanics with improvisation to guide you. Whether braving uncharted wilderness, wandering bustling cities, or reflecting at a campfire, you'll shape your character's life by embracing the challenges and the opportunities in the world.

*Author's Note: The purpose of this document is to consolidate the full Adventuring system for Labyrinthian into a singular reference. This document should not be taken as the final, playable rule book in its formatting. The **Appendix** section is attached to this document to provide some Core Rules, as well as Primers on different aspects of the game that are out of scope for this document to cover in detail.*

## Table of Contents

- **The Basics of Adventuring – Pg. 2**
- **How to Adventure – Pg. 3**
  - *The Crawl*
  - *The Marching Roll*
  - *Understanding Pacing*
- **The Faces of the Crawl – Pg. 4**
  - *Lingering*
  - *Delves*
  - *Rambling*
  - *Expeditions*
- **Understanding Time – Pg. 5**
  - *The Time Pool*
  - *The Living World and Inviting it In*
  - *How Time Advances*
  - *Risk and Rumor*
- **Survival – Pg. 6**
  - *Energy Dice*
  - *Composure and Exhaustion*
  - *Weather and Shadow*
  - *Taking Shelter – Pg. 7*
  - *Wounds and Scars – Pg. 7*
  - *Diseases – Pg. 8*
- **Exploration and Discovery – Pg. 9**
  - *Why Explore?*
  - *The Lore Bonus*
  - *Research and Examination*
  - *The Discovery Modifier – Pg. 10*
  - *Inspiration – Pg. 10*
  - *Distractions and Diversions – Pg. 10*
  - *Example Diversion – Pg. 11*
- **Appendix**
  - *Primer on Core Mechanics*
  - *Primer on the World Keeper*
  - *Primer on the Alliance*

# THE BASICS OF ADVENTURING

## The Crawl and Time

The Crawl governs how your party moves and interacts with the world. It's the backbone of your adventuring experience, structuring how you traverse various environments—whether you're exploring dungeons, traveling through cities, or wandering the wilderness.

- **The Time Pool:** As you move through your adventure, and even when you're not moving, Time will still pass, and eventually the Pool gets rolled, triggering changes in the world as time advances.
- **Keep an eye on the Time Pool:** the riskier your actions, the more it will be rolled, and the more dangerous your adventure becomes.

## The Marching Roll

1. **Roll 2d20:** Total the rolls and announce the highest result.
2. **Choose your Dice:** The highest roller selects their Action die first, and adds the relevant Talent Modifier to what they choose to do.
  - 2.2. Your Action can be any listed **Task** or **Activity** under your Skills, or you can **Improvise** a new action using one of them.
3. **Second Action:** A Skill Die in any Skill allows you to make a second action; or you may augment your first, if you have a Skill Die for it.
4. **Pacing:** The second d20 determines Pacing. Pacing determines how you traverse the world, but can push you too far into danger and complications, if you do not control it. Tasks and Activities will give you control over Pacing, and will augment your Party's safety as they travel or explore; so choose wisely.

## Energy and Exhaustion

Energy Dice represent your character's ability to recover, adapt, and press forward, and are tracked on your Character Sheet.

- **Core Reserves:** Each character has two, tied to Endurance and Willpower, growing from a d4 to a d12 as those talents increase.
- **Supplementary Energy:** You earn additional Energy Dice through Food and Drink, which even basic types of will provide a multitude of additional benefits beyond Energy. **Use Energy Dice** to restore Composure, recover from Exhaustion, or heal Wounds.
- **Daily Needs:** Your character must eat, drink, and rest to prevent Exhaustion, which impacts your Pacing, but also everything you do.
  - Take 1pt for missing food, 3pts for missing sleep, and 6pts for missing water. The points accrue at Sunrise every in-game day.
- **Managing Exhaustion:** At 30 points, your character dies immediately. If all Needs are satisfied, Exhaustion drops to zero at Sunrise.
- Exhaustion applies as a negative modifier to all rolls, but also as a positive modifier to your Acuity, and any Damage you deal.
- **Weather and Shadow** will affect both your Composure and Exhaustion, so be prepared for the elements. Shadow will sap your Composure by 5pts with every Turn, and Weather will have various effects, communicated to you by the Keeper as they come up.

## Wounds, Scars, and Disease

Where Composure represents your Character's Focus, Wounds represent their physical damage.

- **Wounds:** When injured, a Wound starts as a d4, and can grow to a d12 through continual infliction of the same Wound type. The effects of the Wound are determined by the type of damage that caused it.
- **Healing:** Energy Dice are used to heal Wounds. To heal a d12 Wound, for example, you need to expend at least 7 Energy Dice.
- **Scars:** If a Wound isn't fully healed in one Rest, it will leave a Scar, causing permanent Scar effects defined by the Wound. However, certain Treatments can prevent this, or allow you to flip these effects to positive Boons, at the cost of embracing the Scar.
- **Diseases:** Some injuries or environments expose your character to Diseases, which gradually cause Exhaustion and sap Composure, but can be much more severe, particularly if left untreated. Diseases are managed by the Keeper, and can be prevented by avoiding the Sick, managing Wounds, and utilizing common sense. Seek out healers and herbalists to help cure them.

## The Lore Bonus and Inspiration

The more you learn about the World, the more your Character's can find creative solutions to the problems and obstacles they face.

- **Lore Bonus:** As you explore, discover hidden knowledge, and interact with the world, you accumulate a Lore Bonus, which is a party-wide floating Modifier, which can be spent at will on Inspiration. The information you learn through Lore is shared by the Party.
- **Inspiration:** Any party member can spend some number of Lore Bonus to gain that amount as a bonus on a roll, improving the effort. The *Discovery Modifier* for the Area you are in affects how much Lore you can spend at once; confer with your Keeper on this.
- **Research and Examination:** To uncover information, you can either Research beforehand using a relevant skill (like Herbalism or Smithing) to gain Lore from resources such as people or books, or Examine your surroundings in the moment by using an appropriate skill (like Investigation or Insight) to discover hidden details. Both actions help you gain Lore and provide crucial knowledge.

## Distractions and Diversions

Distractions and Diversions occur as you explore the world. These are unexpected prompts that may pull you off course.

- **Finds, Curiosities, and Events:** While Marching, on an odd result on your either d20, you'll encounter something that demands your attention. Refer to the default lists on your Character Sheet to know what you uncover.
- **Interpreting Prompts:** If you wish, describe it, add to it and share it with the group. Be Mindful, your Party may have more pressing matters than a distraction allows for. As you share your prompt and what you've added to it, it may be added on to by the other players. You won't know what will happen until it all plays out. **Remember:** You're not telling a story; you're *making* one.

# HOW TO ADVENTURE

It is indeed quite a dangerous thing to step out on the road; there's no telling where you'll end up, but ever onwards you must go. This section will cover the basic mechanics of Adventuring.

## The Crawl

Your ability to traverse the gameworld, whether you're simply crossing from the table over to the bar, or trekking many countless miles through an unknown wilderness, is governed by a unified procedure called the Crawl, which provides structure to the process of traversing and interacting with the gameworld.

In its smallest form, the Crawl is entirely freeform, with no specific procedure, but as you begin to engage different kinds of traversal, from exploring dungeons to travelling on the road, you will be called on to make ***The Marching Roll***, which will govern how you and your Party engages in a series of ***Adventuring Rounds*** and ***Turns***.

## The Marching Roll

This procedure will be called for by the Keeper when you are engaging in one of the three Faces of the Crawl.

1. Roll 2d20.
2. Total the roll, and announce what you got. Whomever rolls highest goes first.
3. Decide how to use your Dice (see below).
4. Choose who will go next.

The first Die you should pick will act as a pre-rolled Action, and you may utilize it to do whatever you like, adding the respective Talent Modifier for whatever Skill you are using, if you have earned one. However, there are specific **Travel Tasks and Activities**, which are available throughout your character's Skills, that will be especially important to utilize, which will not only augment your Party's overall progress and even safety, but will also be important to your own, personal progression. Unlike many abilities, these Tasks and Activities are available to anyone regardless of their earned Skill.

However, you are not limited to only one Action. If you wish to make a simultaneous Second Action, you may do so if you have earned a Skill Die in the Skill corresponding to the Task or Activity you want to do in addition to your first. You will roll that Skill Die, and add the respective Talent Modifier to it.

The second Die you pick will determine your personal contribution to the Party's ***Pacing***. Pacing is effectively a measurement of your Party's overall movement throughout the gameworld, and it can be directly affected by the different Travel Tasks and Abilities you set for yourself; each Task or Activity will list a specific **Pacing Modifier**, which could be positive or negative. While Pacing does convert into a real distance, as a Player you shouldn't concern yourself with that; focus on what you're doing and how that contributes to the group's Pacing. However, the sufficiently Intelligent, utilizing the Ability *Numerical Analysis*, can discern these specifics if they wish.

This value is added or subtracted from your Pacing result, but be aware that it can be affected by the specific result you had. If you roll 5 or Less, double your Pacing Modifier. If you Crit on your Die, you may instead choose whether or not to treat the Pacing Modifier as a Bonus or a Penalty. How much distance your Party's Pacing value confers will depend, both on how many people are in your Party, and the specific Crawl you are engaged in. These will all be discussed alongside the specific Crawls themselves beginning on Page XX.

## Understanding Pacing

You may have noticed that, particularly if you've read ahead, that the nature of Pacing means that your movement as a group is not only variable, but also isn't very controllable. This is intentional, as the game assumes that your Party is moving together; each member contributes progress, with the inherent coordination will slow the party down. But, Parties can also inadvertently push too far, and go too fast.

This dynamic becomes especially prominent in dungeons and labyrinths and other dangerous places, with Parties who are not careful being liable to run into Traps and other terrible things, but it even becomes a factor during otherwise mundane travel, as depending on the chosen Tasks or Activities, your Party may disperse over a wide area, before coming back together again.

However, you do have some control. At will, any Party member can formally split off from the group, even if you're otherwise sticking by them. This, however, has many disadvantages. Not only will you be potentially susceptible to being ganged up on by enemies unknown if you stray too far, but you will also lose the benefits that sticking with your Party confers. For example, only one Party member needs to be especially skilled in Guile to conceal the movement of their Party, and thus enable them to traverse stealthily.

If you opt to split off from the group, you will have to make up for that Skill yourself. But, opting to split up is sometimes the right call. If you are moving especially fast, splitting off to fulfill a scouting role, or perhaps to double back and ensure your trail is concealed or that doors are barred would be the smart play. Likewise, the places you explore might just be so vast that covering all of it would be unfeasible if you stick together. Splitting up becomes a prudent, if sometimes unwise, decision.

# THE FACES OF THE CRAWL

You might question why we call these procedures Crawls. Once upon a time, one could be found to be literally crawling, claiming every inch through blood, sweat and tears. That's still pretty much true, actually.

This section will cover each type of Crawl, and the specifics of engaging with them. Note that while these rules are printed here for you, you should focus on your Marching Roll when its called for, and at all other times simply focus on being your character.

## Lingering

The default state of the game at any given time. Quite often, you will simply be present in a given location, not specifically going anywhere, but you still need to be able to interact and move about within these places. To do so, just speak up and declare what you want to do. There is no need to take Turns, but take care to ensure everyone is able to do what they want to do; not everyone may be as eager to speak as you might be. You will know when you are lingering if you meet in a Tavern, or gather together in Camp, or you might just stop for a moment, deep in a dungeon, to investigate it further. In general, if your Party is staying relatively still within a single location, you would be utilizing this Face.

However, **be aware**. While the party can opt to linger at any time, the group should make it clear that they intend to do so as a group. Any one player who dawdles or loiters can affect your Party's Pacing, and this will be more severe the less focus your Party maintains. Do not be surprised if bickering in the deep dark of a dungeon swiftly leads to the Keeper making a dice roll and announcing the sudden shift in the wind as an arrow comes screaming out of the darkness...but likewise, don't linger overlong on the road, less you intend to waste time and day light.

In general, if your group decides to Linger, Time will pass at the same rate as the Face you left; 10 minutes for Delves, 2 Hours for Rambling, and 4 Hours for Expeditions, and the actions you take while Lingering will be limited to what you can accomplish in those time frames.

## Bouts

During any Face of the Crawl, you may encounter some kind of challenge which will require a structured response by the Party to deal with. This can often be low stakes combat, with a wandering guard or dangerous animal, but just as often it can be something happening that's dangerous. The bridge you're crossing might suddenly give way in a dangerous thunderstorm, or the slaying of the dragon is bringing its Lair down on your heads. A huge boulder might be screaming towards you, and yet these pesky Bandits still want to rob you even as they too must run for their lives. An argument with a sketchy trader may turn particularly nasty, and a Debate will rage.

The Bout is a means of engaging these kinds of scenarios; while Turns are taken by everyone, there is no strict order. Speak up and declare how you want to handle the situation, but take heed: if you don't speak up quickly, you will forfeit your ability to act, and this will have consequences. While everyone who does speak will still get their chance in the end, you should be certain o what you want to do. Hesitation, ultimately, is deadly.

## Skirmishes and Battles

In more extreme circumstances, you may find yourself in the midst of a Skirmish or even a full on Battle. Both of these scenarios are matters of Combat, and as such a specific procedure exists to handle them, which will be covered in greater detail during the Combat section of this book. You should be aware, however, that even the middle of these scenarios, that you could face environmental or even social dangers whilst engaged in mortal combat.

## Delve

The Crawl of diving into dungeons or labyrinths, performing heists, and other indoors traversal over a large space. You'll know you're on a Delve if you're going into a place you shouldn't be, whether because you're tresspeassing, or because its just scary in there. Your Party's movement is hampered during Delves, as even the most reckless Parties will have to manage the dank, often inhospitable places they explore. Rounds during Delves occur over a period of 10 Minutes.

## Rambling

The Crawl of making your way in the sprawling cities of the world. Not all Settlements will call for Rambling to traverse, but the biggest cities are not that different from the labyrinths you might visit in your travels. Parties will face difficulty making significant strides across the city on foot, having to navigate every alley and every street. Rounds during Rambling occur over a period of 2 Hours.

## Expeditions

The Crawl of the Wilderness and the Road. While you'll often be on this Crawl for travel reasons, you should be open to the idea of *Meandering*, simply wandering with no particular destination in mind. There's no telling what you'll find out there...unless you get out there. Parties on Expeditions will face many natural hazards and set backs, from the Weather to the earth they walk on, and even the most tightly knit Parties will still find themselves dispersing, and thus, must come back together at the cost of Time. Rounds during Expeditions occur over a period of 4 Hours.

# UNDERSTANDING TIME

Time is at the center of everything, everywhere, all at once. Throughout your Adventurers, Time will always be moving forward through the process of play. While it might not always move forward at the same rate, it will make itself known to you throughout. This section will cover how Time works in the game and how you can interact with it.

## The Time Pool

The Core Mechanic of the Keeper is the Time Pool, a system for automatically handle the passage of Time as you play the game. How the Time Pool will present to you is as a bowl or pile of dice that are openly rolled and collected where you and the rest of the table can see it. The Pool will grow with each Adventuring Round that is completed, up to a maximum of 6 Dice, at which point it will be emptied, and all 6 dice rolled, and the Keeper will advise of the Time and Date, if it changed and your Party is aware of it.

When this happens, and whenever you see the Time Pool picked up and rolled, you can expect something to change in the world. This change could be very immediate to you, but it also might not be apparent at all. Guards might change positions on you, or a Nation you've never even heard of could fall. A sudden shift in the wind might create an ominous howl throughout the Hall, and yet elsewhere, a Hurricane might be bearing down on an isolated village. These things will not always be visible to you, but they are happening.

## The Living World and Inviting it In

Unique to Labyrinthian is the ability for the gameworld to, in a very real sense, live on its own as you play. It can do this so well, in fact, that if you decide you would like to stuff this whole Adventuring business, and spend all day running a Tavern, the World will not cease to functionally exist beyond the walls of your dive. It will move on without you, and in fact, it might even intrude on your little business, and you might just hear what's going on in the world.

This is not the only way in which the World will express itself, however, for the Time Pool could be rolled at any time, before it's reached its maximum, and things will come of it. Perhaps a neighboring faction begins to mobilize its forces, distant weather patterns worsen, or a rare celestial event brings strange tidings. Indeed, you can also invite the World into the lives of your characters.

You need only ask...or do something shockingly dim-witted.

## How Time Advances

When the Time Pool is cleared, Time will advance according to specific timescales, which are defined by the activity you were engaged in, such as Delving through a Dungeon, or Rambling about in a City.

What you should expect, though, when transitioning between these timescales, is that the Time Pool, wherever it sits, will be cleared, inviting yet more of the World to intrude on your Adventure. When the Timescale shifts, and indeed whenever it is cleared, the World itself takes its Turn. A clear Time Pool represents a new chapter in your journey, inviting fresh opportunities—or the ominous and unexpected.

## Risk and Rumor

There are many cues for the Keeper to roll the Time Pool, acting on unseen events and circumstances in the world, but the one's in which you have a say will involve your management of Risk, and your seeking of Rumors. Whenever you seek news or rumor of the world, the Time Pool will be rolled. For instance, if you ask a barkeep for the latest news, the Keeper might roll the Time Pool. Perhaps you overhear whispers of a nearby treasure—but risk attracting unwanted attention.

Meanwhile, when you are in a dangerous, or otherwise high stakes situation, you should take care with how you behave. While opting to bash in a door might be expediant, it is a risky thing to do compared to letting your friend pick the lock; if you do this, the Keeper will consider this Risky move, and roll the Time Pool, but you won't be told if something is rolled; you'll have to pay attention, and keep your wits about you. You might have alerted guards, you might not have.

The key to understanding Risk is watching the Time Pool itself. The more d4s you see, be wary; the more d8s, you can relax. But don't underestimate what you see and hear. A sudden chilling noise, might just be nothing more than a noise...but are you sure? The balance of Risk and Rumor is ultimately yours to manage.

Take decisive actions, but weigh the consequences; seek knowledge, but prepare for what you might uncover. Fortune favors the bold, but does not abide the fool.

# SURVIVAL

When you're out there, survival is its own kind of adventure. The biting cold of a winter storm, the thirst that gnaws at you under a scorching sun, or the fragile light of a campfire holding back the Shadow—these are as much your enemies as the monsters you face. Survival in Labyrinthian is not a matter of mere endurance; it is a story told through the choices you make, the resources you gather, and the ingenuity you bring to bear. Will you master the wilds, or will they master you?

## Energy Dice

Energy Dice are the heartbeat of survival, representing your ability to recover, adapt, and press forward. Every decision you make—what to eat, where to rest, how to prepare—shapes how you sustain this vital resource.

- **Your Core Reserves:** Each character has two inherent Energy Dice, tied to their *Endurance* and *Willpower* Talents. These grow from a d4 to a d12 as those Talents increase. Unlike other Energy Dice, these cannot be diminished by the environment or time and are always available.
- **Supplementary Energy:** Additional Energy Dice are earned through **Food** and **Drink**, reflecting how well you've nourished and prepared yourself.

## Using Energy Dice

Energy Dice are primarily spent to restore Composure during Rest. Roll any number of dice, adding their totals to your Composure. Certain abilities, potions, or tools may enhance these rolls or allow Energy Dice to restore other attributes. Other uses include:

- **Exhaustion Recovery:** Composure restoration during Rest also reduces your Exhaustion Modifier, allowing you to manage both resources simultaneously.
- **Healing Wounds:** Energy Dice can heal Wounds, scaling with their severity. Refer to the ***Wounds and Scars*** section for details.

## Composure and Exhaustion

As you should know, Composure is the central measure of your Character's focus, but this is not just something that is relevant in Combat. While Adventuring, your Composure can be affected by many things, including the Weather, Diseases, and even Shadow. Steeling yourself against these hazards and threats is central to your survival.

- **Composure:** A measure of mental resolve, Composure is affected by Weather, Shadow, and other environmental threats. Energy Dice are essential for restoring it.
- **Exhaustion:** Accumulates daily at sunrise based on unmet needs:
  - 1 point for not eating.
  - 3 points for not sleeping.
  - 6 points for not drinking water.
- Reaching 30 Exhaustion, at any point, results in *immediate* death, but fulfilling all three needs resets the Modifier to 0 at Sunrise. In the meantime, any Exhaustion you accrue acts as a penalty to any roll you make; however, Exhaustion also *boosts* your Acuity, and any Damage you deal. Soldiering through Exhaustion can be prudent, but do not get careless, for it can kill quicker than you think.

## Weather and Shadow

While they may seem innocuous, Weather and Shadow are the most relentless adversaries you can face, for even when they might be held back by sword, sorcery, or sheer ingenuity, they will swarm you the moment you let your guard down; like a moth to a flame they will pursue you to the ends and bowels of the world.

- **Weather:**  
Extreme conditions—scorching heat, freezing cold, or raging storms—demand preparation. Without proper gear or shelter, you risk accelerated Energy Dice drain, reduced Composure, and heightened Exhaustion, though *Conditioning* can lessen these issues.
- **Shadow:**  
Whenever Light is absent, Shadow saps Composure by 5 points per Turn. Torches, lanterns, and magical illumination stave off Shadow but may reveal your presence to enemies. Your *Resolve* Skill can help mitigate Shadow's effects, but this alone will not be enough.

There are many different kinds of Weather you can face, and each will require specific preparation if you want to avoid their effects. While common sense will generally help, the ***What Your Characters Know*** section of this book will detail the most common Weather effects, and how you can deal with them. But, you will need to be adaptable, as the Weather your character don't know about will be especially dangerous, and more so if you aren't prepared to deal with them on the fly.

Shadow, meanwhile, is much more consistent in its effects. Light, however, is a different story, and there are many different kinds of Light you could be affected by, such as the *Glimmering* Light of Enchanted items, which emits a soft blue glow that is especially effective against Shadow. Some of these kinds of Light will have their effects communicated to you by your Keeper; all others will be detailed for you in the items and Abilities that can generate them.

## Taking Shelter

Shelter is more than a shield against the elements—it is a symbol of your ability to endure. Whether a flickering campfire under the stars or the sturdy walls of a mountain keep, the spaces you carve out in the world are as vital as any power. Build wisely, rest deeply, and carry on.

### The Role of Shelter

Shelter protects you from the elements, aids recovery, and provides a haven from threats. It allows your party to regain energy, prepare for the challenges ahead, and strategize for survival. When all else fails, being able to set up even a rudimentary Shelter will be your best defense against the Weather and Shadow, and with time and care, you can begin to lay the foundations of entire Cities.

### Campsites

Campsites are the most versatile and immediate form of shelter, created during your travels to offer refuge.

- **Overnight Camps:** Quick to set up, these temporary shelters provide basic protection against Weather and Shadow, enabling rest and recovery. Benefits: Reduces Exhaustion, slows Energy Dice drain, and stabilizes Composure.
- **Fortified Camps:** Robust shelters requiring more effort and resources to construct. These camps offer enhanced protection and benefits. Benefits: Fully negate Weather effects, repel Shadow, and can provide bonuses to recovery and crafting.

### Using Shelter in Play

The process of setting up shelter integrates into **Travel Tasks and Activities**, requiring players to collaborate and allocate roles to collect materials, identify a campsite, and begin to construct it.

- **Enhancements:** Campsites can include features like barricades for defense, fire for warmth and light, or beds for improved recovery. Permanent sites can support a wide range of work stations, enhancing your Party's ability to Craft Items or Rear Animals.
- **A Hub of Exploration:** When your Party intends to stick around an area for a long while, taking the time to set up a permanent campsite will prove to be a huge boon, providing you a place to return to and to store valuables you recover.
- **Narrative Opportunities:** Campsites offer moments of reflection and storytelling, where characters bond or share insights.

### Lodging in Settlements

When your travels bring you to civilization, inns and rented lodgings provide another form of shelter. With the right amount of Gold, you will find accommodations that can rival those you create for yourself, and in some places, the accommodations might be one of a kind, providing you benefits you won't be able to gain anywhere else.

### Creating Settlements

With Permanent Campsites, you can begin to engage in *Settlement* play, with your campsites growing into Fortifications, and then eventually into Vilages, Towns, and Cities. Settlements represent the apex of what Survival is, as by the time your character has reached a point where they might begin to rule over these places, Survival will be rather trivial for them.

But, Survival of an entire population is another matter, and Survival thus becomes no a matter of your individual ability to weather a Storm, but of how well you can keep the Crops from failing, the Gold flowing in, and your People safe from those who wish to do them harm.

Settlements are an advanced game mechanic meant for players who have become accustomed to the game. The ***Settlements and Domains*** section of this book will cover them in further detail.

## Wounds and Scars

In the heat of battle or the grip of the wilds, survival is never without cost. Wounds carve into your flesh and Scars etch your story onto your very being. Every injury tells a tale—of risk, resilience, and the choices that kept you alive. Wounds represent physical damage sustained through combat, hazards, or failures in survival.

Unlike Composure, which measures mental focus, Wounds are tangible injuries that hinder your capabilities. Wounds are tracked utilizing dice, and escalate in severity from a d4 to a d12. Each Wound that is dealt to you will typically start as a d4, and will escalate by one size upwards with every reapplication of the Wound. The Wounds themselves are defined by the Damage Type that caused them, and each carries a unique Wound Effect, and a unique Scar Effect. Each of these is detailed within the Combat Section for all Wounds in the game.

### Healing Wounds

Recovery from Wounds requires time, resources, and Energy Dice.

- **Energy Dice Use:** To heal a Wound, expend an Energy Die of equal or greater size. Doing so reduces the Wound's severity by one die step (e.g., d8 → d6). Healing a d12 Wound fully requires at least 7 Energy Dice.
- **Scars:** If a Wound is not fully healed in a single go, or is healed without Treatment, it leaves a Scar, causing the respective Scar Effect.
- **Treatment:** Applying a Salve (physical) or Elixir (magical) before Rest reduces the required Energy Dice and accelerates recovery, allowing two steps of healing at once, but also allow you to flip the Scar into a benefit, permanently granting you to opposite of its usual effects.

## Diseases

In the untamed corners of the world, danger is not always wielded by blade or claw. A stagnant pool of water, a festering wound, or the breath of the wrong creature can all carry an invisible peril—disease. These quiet killers test not only your body but also your will, requiring vigilance, preparation, and sometimes sheer grit to overcome.

Diseases in Labyrinthian represent insidious, long-term challenges that test a character's resilience and ingenuity. While similar to Wounds, which reflect physical trauma, Diseases linger and grow, sapping strength, focus, and resources over time. They are not a simple condition to be healed but a dynamic, evolving threat.

### Contracting Diseases

When your character has become infected with a disease, it will not be immediately apparent in most cases, though if you've been near by a known source, such as an infected person or a devious trap or creature, you can probably assume you've been exposed. In any case, your Keeper will be tracking any diseases you've been inflicted with, as well as whether or not you contract one.

When the Symptoms begin to show, your Keeper will advise you of the effects. If you haven't already, you should seek someone skilled in *Fieldcraft* or *Herbalism*, who may be able to identify what you've been infected with, and how you might rid yourself of them more quickly than letting your body take care of it for you.

### Preventing and Managing Diseases

In general, common sense prevails when it comes to preventing disease, though sense has been wrong before. In general, as long as you have set up some kind of camp, you are assumed to have boiled any water you forage or collect, but any other sources should be drunk with great apprehension. Likewise, if you are interacting with someone who you know to be infected with something, keep your distance. Sometimes though, you might not be able to avoid it, for Diseases can also be carried by Curse or terrible Creature. If one has attained a high Endurance, however, they will gain some natural resistance to Disease, and certain kinds of Food, Drink, or Abilities can bolster this resistance further.

Once you have contracted a Disease, however, managing it becomes a matter of recovering. Without any help, your body is usually pretty good at it, so long as you help it along. As most Diseases exacerbate your Exhaustion throughout the day, it's very important that you have plenty of food and drink, and get some sleep, as these will ensure your Exhaustion doesn't prevent you from fighting off the disease.

At Sunrise every day, any who has been afflicted with a Disease will be asked to confirm what their Exhaustion is, if they have any, as well as any boosts they may have received. The Keeper will then be making a dice roll (or they will have the Diseased make the roll) to determine if the Disease worsens, stays the same, or begins to recover. Over time, many Diseases will dissipate naturally, but others may be much more severe, and you will have to seek out assistance with recovering from them, unless you happen to have the right Skills to help yourself, that is.

Most Diseases in the game will be unknown to both you and your characters. However, some are not, and you can find a list of these known Diseases in the ***What your Character's Know*** section of this book.



# EXPLORATION AND DISCOVERY

The fire of knowledge is at the heart of that innate urge to explore in all of us, and the discoveries we make are the spark of creation. The following section covers the Exploration system in detail, which will be an incredible boon to your Party as they learn more about the Gameworld.

## Why Explore?

While most have an innate sense of curiosity, exploration is not merely its own reward. By learning more about the gameworld, your character's will gain access to an abstracted representation of what they have learned, called **The Lore Bonus**, which in turn can be utilized to grant either the Party, or just one Member, a burst of ***Inspiration*** – a strong bonus to your Skill checks that may well turn the tide in times of need, especially when improvising a solution to some problem or obstacle you may be facing.

## The Lore Bonus

A representation of the accumulated lore and knowledge your Party has learned about the Gameworld, the Lore Bonus is the central resource of Exploration. Your Party gains individual points of Lore by making ***Discoveries***. Discoveries can be virtually anything. A hidden door perhaps, or the weakness of an enemy. The name of a stranger, or their secret.

Often, you will find that the Keeper will reward Lore to you as you move about and interact in the gameworld; this is only natural of course, as you'd have to be especially absent minded to not be learning on the go. You might not have intended to experiment by setting the Troll on fire, but you will likely learn something about their weaknesses anyway.

But, you are not limited to only gaining lore passively, and you may also strive to make Discoveries more deliberately, either by ***Researching*** ahead of time, or by direct ***Examination*** of the places you go to.

## What can you Explore?

The Gameworld is divided into three specific kinds of explorable areas: ***Regions, Cities, and Locations***. Each of these is generally tracked by your Keeper as you explore them, but they may offer one of your Party the role of *Chronicler*, essentially giving them a Sheet that corresponds to these areas, and having them track what you learn about these places. If your Party has decided to fill in their own maps, it may be wise to have the same person do both.

**Regions** are the largest explorable area, covering potentially hundreds of miles of land or sea. You will know you are in a Region if you are on an Expedition.

**Cities**, intuitively are any suitably large city, and these are identifiable if you are Rambling to explore it. Smaller settlements will generally fall under the purview of their Region, but they can sometimes be Locations...if one is, it probably means there's more to it than meets the eye.

**Locations**, typically, are indoor areas, but they can often be quite vast. Dungeons, Labyrinths, and the like. However, Locations can also be outdoors, if they are particularly significant and/or unique. Secret groves or ritual sites, battlefields, crime scenes, and so on.

## Research and Examination

The general process of making a Discovery about any of these areas is simple, as you will just be making an Improvised Action, using any suitable Skill you like, to either *Research* a place you intend to explore later, or to *Examine* the area directly, if you're already there. Researching is valuable, as it allows you to remotely explore the world, which will prepare you for what's to come, but Research can only go so far.

**To Research**, you must have some source of knowledge available to you. A Library is a perfect source with plenty to potentially learn, but even a Journal, a Painting, or some other esoteric thing can be a source. Your best source, though, is People.

When you make your Improvised Action to Research, you are defining not only how you intend to research, but also the Skill that will guide your Research. While someone skilled in Smithing may not be the most naturally gifted researcher, they will be best primed to understand what's to be learned about a lost Forge. Likewise, they will also find that seeking out Smiths who may have knowledge of the Forge will be much more amenable to discussing it with a fellow Smith, rather than smarmy bookworm or slick-talking musician.

**To Examine**, you will have to be present in the area you're exploring. While it will typically be harder to utilize all 32 Skills to directly examine an area, if you have a good idea, you should go for it. When in doubt, *Investigation* and *Insight* are solid, general use Skills which may reveal more ways you can explore. For example, you might Investigate a room in a Dungeon, and discover under the debris that it used to be an alchemical laboratory. Thus, your Party's skilled Herbalist can examine the room further and in more detail. But even the most physically minded of people are valuable here; who else could make the best discoveries in an Armory than a skilled Warrior, after all?

## The Discovery Modifier

What your requisite Dice Roll must hit to make a new discovery through either method will be defined by the **Discovery Modifier** of the Area you are either intending to explore or are directly exploring. To gain at least one Lore, you must roll within 10 of this modifier, and higher rolls can generate much more Lore at once. Because of this, places with a high Discovery Modifier will be quite difficult to make Discoveries about, but at the same time, such places will also be the most potent places to find **Inspiration**.

Something to keep in mind, however, is that while this system is an abstract way of representing knowledge, connecting your Character's Knowledge with your own, the actual lore itself that your Keeper conveys is just as important to take into account. Take notes, and pay attention.

## Inspiration

Once your Party has earned an Lore Bonus, any single Party member may choose to utilize it to gain Inspiration; as long as you are still a part of your Party, you may deduct however many points of Lore you wish to use, and you may add it to any roll you make. How much you may spend at once will depend on the Discovery Modifier of the area you are in; confer with your Keeper, and they will advise you of this.

Naturally, the Party should confer with each other, out of character, on whether or not its wise to do this, as your Lore Bonus does not come back, unless you discover more, and most places will only have so much that they can tell you.

## Distractions and Diversions

Exploration is rarely a straight path. Even the most focused adventurers find themselves caught by the world's strange and sudden turns. A flicker of movement in the shadows. An odd smell that lingers in the air. A voice calling out when no one should be there. These moments aren't obstacles—they're invitations, pulling you toward the unknown. As you explore, your character will notice things—Finds, Curiosities, and Events—that might tempt you to veer off your current path. These prompts are opportunities to notice the world around you, share what you see with your party, and decide if it's worth your time.

Will you stop to investigate the broken cart at the side of the road? Follow the distant sound of music into the forest? Or ignore it all and press forward, staying focused on your goal? The choice is always yours, but the world will keep offering distractions. Sometimes, the most interesting stories begin when you step away from your plans.

## Finds, Curiosities, and Events

As a player, you'll encounter Distractions and Diversions during exploration through **Finds**, **Curiosities**, and **Events**. These are prompts that reflect what your character notices in the world around them, tailored respectively to the type of environment you're exploring: a dungeon, a city, or the wilderness. However, your Keeper may provide you additional lists, tied to the specific places you go, and these should take precedent over your default sets.

When you perform a **Travel Task** or **Activity**, you'll roll a d20. If the result is an *odd number*, it triggers one of these prompts. These prompts are listed on your character sheet, allowing you to quickly reference what you've noticed. Each prompt is designed to spark your imagination and encourage interpretation without dictating exactly what you see.

## What Happens Next?

When you receive a prompt, it's up to you to decide how to act. There's no right or wrong way to engage—these moments are about creativity and collaboration. Here's what you can do:

1. **Interpret the Prompt:**

Think about what the prompt means in the current situation. How does your character react? Is it a danger? An opportunity? Or just a strange detail to note? You don't have to interpret it literally; if you have something in mind, *bring it to life*. But don't expect to just tell a story; your fellow Players and the Keeper can change it considerably by what they contribute.

2. **Share with the Group:**

Describe what your character notices to the rest of the party, and if you're the first to do so, be sure to add context to what you are seeing. You don't have to take the prompt literally—you can adapt it to fit what makes sense for the world or your character. For example, if your Party has had run ins with a particularly nasty band of Goblins, and you receive the Prompt "They are coming...run!", well, you can guess what you should probably do. But, this might also be something else; *they could even be Bees...* only you can tell your Party what's going on.

3. **Choose How to Respond:**

You're not obligated to act on the prompt. If it doesn't interest your character or doesn't fit the party's priorities, you can ignore it entirely. However, if it sparks your curiosity, you can investigate further, drawing the group into a potential side adventure or discovery. But note that they too will receive Prompts, and both they and your Keeper can add to or combine them.

So when you interpret a Prompt, do not become attached to the things you believe happened. They might have happened that way, they might not. You won't know for certain until the diversion plays out. Remember the basic principle of improvisation in Labyrinthian: **Follow the Follower!**

## Example Diversion

The party—Galen, Nira, and Rotha—is traveling through a dense forest toward a ruined temple. The Keeper has hinted at a tense atmosphere: faint noises, shifting shadows, and unnatural quiet. During their Travel Tasks, all three players receive prompts, and choose to act on them.

### Prompts Received

**Galen, the Warrior:** "A growl rumbles from the underbrush...Draw your weapon!"

**Nira, the Ranger:** "A flock of birds suddenly takes flight...Take note."

**Rotha, the Wizard:** "A low hum fills the air...Cover your ears."

### Players Interpret Prompts

**Galen:**

"I'm leading, so I hear the growl first. It's low and layered—too strange to be a normal animal. I draw my sword and freeze, scanning the bushes. 'Stay sharp,' I say to the others."

**Nira:**

"Just as Galen stops, I see a huge flock of birds shoot up from behind us and circle toward the trees ahead. They're moving erratically, like they're fleeing—or guiding us. I call out, 'Those birds are acting weird. They're all going toward the same spot.'"

**Rotha:**

"I feel a strange hum in my chest, like a deep vibration. I cover my ears and yell, 'Something's up ahead. It feels... magical, but unstable.' I point toward the faint flicker of light I can see through the trees."

### The Keeper Combines the Prompts

**Keeper:**

"The growl grows louder, and now all of you hear it—something large and spectral steps out of the bushes: a translucent wolf. Its layered growls sound almost like words, but they're distorted."

"Nira, the circling birds dive toward the wolf, cawing wildly and trying to drive it back. Rotha, the flickering glow ahead resolves into a glowing symbol carved into a tree—clearly a magical ward, but it's unstable, pulsing in time with the hum you feel."

### Players Combine Interpretations

**Galen:**

"I step toward the wolf, sword ready. 'Rotha, that thing's guarding the ward. Fix it, or we'll have to deal with this!' I move into position to defend if it attacks."

**Nira:**

"I realize the birds are protecting the tree, not us. 'Those birds are trying to stop it—they're guarding whatever's up there!' I grab a stick and start waving it to distract the wolf."

**Rotha:**

"I kneel by the glowing symbol and examine it. 'This ward is breaking down—if it fails, that wolf might get stronger.' I grab my chalk and start sketching runes to stabilize it. 'Keep it off me!'"

### The Keeper Adds Tension

**Keeper:**

"The wolf snarls and circles Galen, he's poised to leap. Nira, the birds swarm the wolf but start scattering as it moves closer to the tree. Rotha, as you work on the ward, the hum intensifies—it feels like something powerful is resisting your efforts. Galen, you are first. What do you do?"

### Out-of-Character Explanation

The party's diversion developed from Events combined through player interpretation and Keeper contributions. The Keeper turned the spectral wolf and unstable ward into a connected challenge, giving each player a role: Galen as the defender, Nira as the observer and guide, and Rotha as the problem-solver. The birds added a thematic layer, hinting at the forest's deeper magic. From here, the players might:

- Stabilize the ward, dispelling the wolf and uncovering new lore.
- Defeat the wolf, but risk losing the ward's protection.
- Fail both, leading to further complications in the forest.

# PRIMER ON THE CORE MECHANIC

## What Labyrinthian is About

Labyrinthian is an "Immersive Improv" game, where improvisation forms the heart of the experience, but is integrated with a highly systemic game system, where interactivity and interconnection are supreme. Improv, though, isn't just about making things up—it's about embracing collaboration. You, your fellow players, the Keeper, and the game world itself are all active partners in shaping the lives of your characters. The goal is to live the adventure, not just tell a story.

The game invites you to be ***Present***: to embody your character, respond to the world around you, and act accordingly. But, the world is not your idle plaything; everything you do has a consequence, and the world will not sit around and wait for you to be a hero, nor will it just stand by while you become the villain. The world can solve its own problems. So, you have to remember this core maxim: You are owed nothing, until you take it, and you do not matter, until you do.

## How to Improvise

When you're prompted to Improvise, think about what your character wants to do or sees, and make it happen. Want to kick someone down a flight of stairs? Just do it. No need for special rules or permission—but, you will have available to you the game's other mechanics and rules, which are structured to enhance and facilitate these moments of improvisation. While Combat, for example, is a highly structured experience, there are many ways to fight, and indeed, you can even define your own, unique fighting style by engaging with these systems.

Indeed, not only can you improvise new ways to do things, things that simply aren't listed in this book, but you can also improvise a new way to use any given Skill, Ability, Spell, Item, or some other thing. You are not limited to merely what the book tells you these things do, but the Game also provides this structure for a reason.

The game's design does embrace whatever you bring to it, but *only* if you learn to ***trust*** the Game, just as you ***trust*** your fellow humans. As such, you should not be imposing your own unwillingness to play certain aspects of the game; this is as egregious as imposing on your fellow humans, and the game will break as a result of it. Trust the Game, and you will not merely be playing a game of epic fantasy comingling with slice of life; you'll be living in a world beyond our own, where your life ***can*** become legend.

## Understanding Improvisation

Improv has an unfortunate negative connotation in today's world, often pulling up images of hack comedians or wanna be actors, overly focused on terrible jokes or melodramatic scenes. While there is a ring of truth to this, that is not all Improv is, and what's more, Improv is not this esoteric skill only accessible by professional actors. Anyone can do it, and most of us knew how when we were children.

As an adult, though, it can sometimes be hard to get into that headspace of genuine play, where you can lose the self-consciousness that prevents the kind of Presence that makes Improv, and thus Labyrinthian, really sing. To help with this, two rules, ***Game Tone***, and ***Follow the Follower***, are available.

## Game Tone and Following the Follower

The group's ***Game Tone*** sets the mood for your gameworld, whether it's zany, gritty, heroic, or something else. Will you explore Romance or Trauma, or will these issues simply fade to black, implied rather than spoken to directly? Will you engage in loony physics and wonky, bonkers magic, or will you maintain something more subtle, grounded, and real? Whatever your group's choices, establishing this tone ahead of time helps everyone know what kind of improvisation is appropriate. Always respect the agreed tone to ensure everyone is on the same page, and communicate openly if anything feels out of line.

Keep in mind however, that the responsibility to maintain Game Tone is ***everyones***, not just the Keeper's.

The second rule, ***Follow the Follower***, gives you a way of internalizing the right kind of mindset to achieve the kind of Presence the game is at its best with. This follows from an improvisational exercise where the group will mimic each other's actions, no matter how small, and escalate them, which over time will become wild cacophany of nonsense. This is, as it happens, a rather fun way to loosen up before play, if your group is comfortable doing it. But as you play, you should seek to embody this principle.

If a player, the Keeper, or the game world throws something your way—embrace it. Follow the direction others are taking, even if it's different from your own plans. For example, if a fellow player decides their character is embracing a darker path, you might oppose them, but still respect the journey they're taking. By doing this, you create a more dynamic, interconnected experience.

Similarly, Follow the Follower applies to how you respond to the Keeper and the game itself. The world may present challenges, unexpected events, or complications, but rather than resisting, lean into them. ***Trust*** the flow of the game and allow what you introduce to evolve as part of the broader events. Remember, improv isn't about controlling the outcome; it's about contributing your part, and seeing where it leads.

# PRIMER ON THE ROLE OF THE KEEPER

## What the Keeper Does

In many games, the "Game Master" often acts as a facilitator and, typically, takes on a disproportionate share of responsibility in how the game plays out. Labyrinthian avoids this. The World Keeper plays the Gameworld itself, giving a human voice and creativity to the Living World, managing its coming and goings as it evolves.

The Keeper is an equal partner in the Improv game, with a role as deep as the Players' and as integral as theirs and the Game itself. They are not there to "tell stories" or merely facilitate play. Multiple players can share this role, and multiple Keepers can even act simultaneously in the same game. This robust role also supports Solo play, where the Keeper's tools enable the Living World to provide the same immersive experience for the Solo Player as group play would.

## The Living World

Though the game requires human players to function, the Living World can act independently of the Keeper's direction. The Keeper, or solo player, can obscure from themselves what is going on until uncovered them through exploration or inquiry.

Labyrinthian is not about "simulation" for its own sake. While realism informs its aesthetic, the mechanics of the Living World are designed as tools and systems to enhance gameplay. These tools empower the Keeper to "be" the world effectively, especially for those accustomed to traditional Game Master roles.

## The Tools of their Trade

There are many Tools being developed to assist the Keeper in their role to make it enjoyable and compelling, but the following are the most important ones to point out for the purpose of this Primer, as they affect the Adventuring system in particular.

**World Sheet:** A "character sheet" for the Gameworld that makes its state easy to understand and interact with. "World Stats" like Famine vs. Prosperity evolve based on events and provide modifiers that link the Gameworld's development with gameplay via the Time Pool.

**Time Pool:** The core mechanic for structuring play and enabling the Living World to act autonomously. Clearing the Time Pool triggers Complications, Encounters, or Boons, each of which drives the Living World forward while integrating naturally into Player adventures. These can be introduced through improvisation or pre-defined designs.

## Quest Block and Questlines:

- **Quest Block:** A gamified version of "Story Spines" from Narrative Improv, these act as "stat blocks" for different kinds of stories, allowing the Keeper to structure and improvise different story types without extensive preparation.
- Quest Blocks are the core tool that enables the world to act on its own, allowing you to make sense of what happens on the fly, without any extensive need to predefine it.
- **Questlines:** These elaborate Quest Blocks into a tool that allows more traditional storytelling methods, like the classic "Module" or "Adventure Path", to be integrated into the Living World. Questlines do this by being written and designed with the assumption that the Players never become involved, even to witness the events. As such, if the Questline begins to progress, the events of each Block backfills into the canon of the gameworld.
- And when the Players do become involved, the Questline provides all the details you need to adapt what will happen to what they inject into it. They might derail the story entirely, or fall right in line with what it expects, or anything in between, and you will have the means to make it compelling.

## Interpretive Difficulty

Unlike many games, Labyrinthian's target numbers are often "soft," avoiding hard pass/fail outcomes. A low roll typically reflects a task taking longer or encountering difficulty, but still results in success. Most often, if a specific number is being used, it is utilized to guide how rolls are interpreted. For instance:

- **Crawls:** Rolling low while picking a lock means it takes longer, potentially advancing Time, but the lock is still picked.
- **Combat:** Interpreting Clashes, where the lower the final damage of an attack, the more effective the Defender's efforts.
- **Research/Examination:** Players always gain one piece of lore; the Discovery Modifier determines how much more they uncover and reflects the effort required.

This, it should not be said, is not "failing forward" for there is no failure from their dice rolls—true failures arise from Complications and Encounters triggered by the Time Pool, which make them rarer and more interesting than they would be as a rote part of gameplay. In other aspects of the game, where a firmer target number might be utilized, the point isn't so much to introduce failure, but guide behaviors. Composure Saving Throws, for example, punish players who do not maintain their own or their Party's Composure, which in turn avoids problems of yo-yo healing and empowers Players who might be favorable to a healer role (who in turn have much more significant tools to embody that role than is typical).

# PRIMER ON THE ALLIANCE

## The Scope of Play Evolved

In other games like it, there is a very common issue of how the game shakes out as higher "levels" are reached. While there is no conventional Level system in Labyrinthian, it does provide for a distinct power scaling for characters that, arguably, greatly dwarfs such systems. After all, I do not describe the game as having casual dragon suplexing for the giggles.

Like in those games, this produces the question of how the game scales to this. Does it truly make sense for "Survival" to be a strict challenge for people who can casually toss a Dragon aside like an unruly house cat?

Generally, no, it does not. As such, to square the circle, the game must evolve the scope of its challenges to meet the characters where they are as they reach these heights. Hence, how the Adventuring Party becomes ***The Alliance***.

## Understanding the Alliance

The Alliance is an evolution of what the classic Party represents, which is not only apropos for the kind of Epic Fantasy the game strives to embody, but also cleverly depicts how the game plays when their individual characters start to eclipse the normal challenges they face.

Labyrinthian has two Pillars that transform with the Party: Adventuring and Combat. When the Party transitions into the Alliance, these Pillars transition with them. Adventuring becomes ***Settlements and Domains***, and Combat, ***Warfare***.

Adventuring becomes less about crawling through dungeons or the Wilderness, and more about the foundation and management of Settlements. Survival isn't about whether or not your character can survive in a hostile wilderness, but whether or not you can safeguard the people you are responsible for from the hazards of the world. Will your City persist through a terrible winter, or resist the onslaught of a hostile nation?

But its not only about managing realms, small and large. Players also have the option of founding special *Domains*, which can take many forms, such as businesses, organizations, or even strongholds, which integrate with Settlements, but can also stand alone. The classic Bakery or Tavern, for example, is a Domain. But so to is the Knightly Order of a Paladin, or the Sanctum of a Necromancer. And for those who opt to engage in both, entire Nations can even be founded in play.

This aspect of play is what allows two other Pillars of the game, ***Crafting and Gathering*** and ***Bloodlines***, to continue to shine as well as play progresses into the Alliance. Not only can you genuinely build a Nation from the ground up, but the things you create and the families you establish, even if not by blood, can persist for generations. This is the true meaning of epic fantasy, as the things you do with your *first* characters will still be reverberating years down the line when you are on your 7<sup>th</sup>.

An especially well made sword becomes not just a useful weapon for adventuring, but could very well be an heirloom of your Bloodline, of your People, and a symbol of your legacy. And what indeed will happen, if this sword should be broken under the foot of a terrible evil, only for your character's descendents to reforge in time to face down that evil, and vanquish him for good?

## How the Alliance Plays

Play at this stage progresses more or less similarly to how it did up to that point. The same Crawl procedure still applies, but changes are made to the timescales involved and the number of things that can be done from Turn to Turn.

A Rogue's *Company* for example acts within the Alliance pretty similarly to how the Rogue does for the Party, providing a stealthy, defiant combatant and explorer role, but simply elaborated on to a larger scope. The Company, informed by the Rogue's specific subclass (like the Avenger or Shadow), embodies those aspects. A Company of the Avenger becomes a potent force in Warfare as an elite unit, whereas a Shadow's Company, essentially a sect of assassins, will be especially key in undermining and defeating the Alliance's enemies from within.

Meanwhile, other types of Domains or Settlements integrate into this procedure of play. A Tavern is as easy to run through play as a Nation, and through the Living World, all of these disparate experiences are interconnected. While it may seem trite to say a player could be off running a Bakery, while everyone else is engaging in this epic fantasy of nations embroiled in a conflict over good and evil, one should be more imaginative. What does that Baker do, for example, when their city is besieged by ten thousand screaming Goblins? Did the young little Hobbits just, give up and leave when the Shire was taken over by that moronic wizard? What happens when the Farmer, becomes a King?

The Alliance in many ways, is what bridges the gap between epic fantasy and slice of life, for the opposite questions can be posed. When you've conquered everything, what do you do then? Did Thanos go find another universe to tear apart, or did he just start farming and making weird soups?