

## **Heroes of Myth and Legend**

Heroes of Myth and Legend  
Fantasy Role Playing in the Worlds of Myth and Legend

A role-playing game of fantastic adventures in the realms of legend and myth.

by

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### **Introduction**

Heroes of Myth & Legend -hereafter referred to as HoML- is a fantasy role-playing game of legendary heroes and mythical monsters. The players will take on the roles of heroic adventurers, player characters, while the Game Master (GM) will act as their guide through the worlds of myth and legend, playing the roles the non-player characters (NPCs). As the PCs move through the world of HoML the GM will present them with information and challenging situations. These situations may be of any possible type, foul monsters to slay, mysteries to solve, wars to fight, etc. The rules of HoML are used as a set of guidelines to help the GM and players determine what the abilities of their characters are and how the actions of the PCs and NPCs, and the effects of the environment affect the PCs and their story.

HoML is designed to allow the players to participate directly in the development of the story. While the GM is tasked with presentation and has primary responsibility for the coherency of the fiction, the players are empowered to introduce some elements focused on their characters, and this game includes mechanics which help to adjudicate this process, as well as guidelines for their use. The goal of the game is to have fun and see what happens when the PCs come into conflict with the forces of fate, the gods, monsters, and the people around them.

## Organization of the Rules

HoML's rules are presented in three main parts. First is a detailed explanation and rules covering the creation and advancement of player characters. This section is titled *Legendary Heroes* and is useful for both players and GMs to read. Some of the things touched on in this section make reference to the second section.

The second major section, *Living Legends* provides the detailed rules for the three modes of play, how to make checks, and other detailed rules of play. This section is particularly relevant to GMs, as it will explain how they perform their job in detail. Players will also want to understand the contents of this section, but it is not required knowledge in order to create a PC and begin play.

The third major section, *Myths and Monsters* provides procedures, ideas, material, and advice useful to the GM from a fictional standpoint. This includes detailed rules for creating encounters, a roster of monsters/ NPCs of various types, etc. Much of this information is of relatively little use to players unless they want to gain additional insight into the inner workings of the game.

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## Legendary Heroes

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### Rules for Player Characters

#### **Player Characters**

Player characters, PCs, are the alter-egos of the players in HoML. Each player normally has a single PC which they utilize in a HoML session, although they might switch characters or play different characters at different times. The rules in this chapter explain how to construct a PC and then discusses what happens when a PC advances in level.

#### **Overview of PCs**

Player characters have a number of standard attributes which are used to define them. Some of these are more significant than others. Four things are particularly significant and will be noted here.

#### **Species**

Every character belongs to some species. This defines the character's basic physical parameters. A detailed description of various possible choices of species is

presented in a later chapter. Species choice is generally up to the players. The choice will make certain boons available, and apply some adjustments to the character. For example dwarves move more slowly than other characters, but are also extremely resistant to certain kinds of effects.

## **Calling**

Every PC has a calling, which is a general indication of the character's role in the world. A knight is a member of a hereditary caste of specialists in fighting with weapons, a wizard is a practitioner and student of magic, etc. Most callings will define a power source for the character. This is the character's primary source of power. They might also call on other sources at times, but the source associated with their calling is the basis of their power.

Calling also defines the character's core combat role. Each calling is associated with a particular role, and a character will generally function well in that role, although they may also be capable of filling other roles. Thus a knight calling has a defender role, and a wizard calling has a controller role. In a fight most knights will stand in the front lines against their opponents, prevent them from going where they please, and engage in melee combat with them. A wizard on the other hand will use magical means to shape the battlefield, disrupt the plans of opponents and generally restrict their options. Both roles will certainly also directly work to defeat the enemy, applying damage against their hit points, but they each have their own unique way of operating in a fight.

Finally each calling has some unique boons which are only available to those who choose that calling. These are generally related to the role associated with the calling, but also give the character general competency in areas which relate to the calling, such as a proficiency modifier with appropriate tools and knacks.

## **Power and Source**

### **Power**

Each character has a power attribute. This has a numeric value which represents the number of power points the character can expend. Power points may be used for a wide variety of things. They can be used to power an extra action, as a reserve of durability which a hero can dig into in order to restore his or her hit points, or a resource which can be used to power magic

items, feats, or for other extraordinary purposes. Generally speaking only PCs have non-zero power. Most NPCs lack the connections to fate and destiny which translate into power points. However some mighty monsters and particularly important NPCs might possess a small amount of power.

PCs each receive 8 power points at first level and receive another 1 at each of 9th and 17th levels. Power points are recovered as determined by the recovery rules, see the *Rest and Recovery* section of the rules.

## Power Source

Every character has a Power Source, which is determined initially by their calling. This is one of the five sources of power within the game which are the motivating energies of the world. These are discussed in detail in their chapter *Power Sources*. The sources are:

- **Martial:** Also known by other names, such as chi, this is the interior force of character, will, and discipline. It is often called 'martial' because it is the easiest of all sources to attune, though also the most difficult to fully master. Thus many warriors are trained to apply it to their weapon skills, and the traditions of this power source are mostly martial. It can also accomplish other things however, such as control of the body, self-healing, etc.
- **Spirit:** This is the power of the spirit world. It is raw psychic energy given form and purpose. Spirit power flows from the spirit world and is accessed by making contact with the spirits. This can take the form of shamanism, worship of gods, making pacts with the spirits, etc. It is a powerful force which gives access to many capabilities. However, the spirits and gods don't do anything entirely for free. What power they give, they can also take.
- **Elemental:** This is the raw force of physical creation and matter. All things which have a material existence flow with elemental power. There is also said to be an infinite realm of elemental chaos from which this energy, and all matter, originates. Characters can tap into this power but it is dangerous and unpredictable. Great care, knowledge, and study are required in order to master the forms and words required in order to command it. Mistakes can have unfortunate consequences.
- **Life:** The life force is a universal force which binds together living things and gives them the ability to grow and heal. It is sometimes confused with

nature, but the life force exists everywhere, not only in wild places. However, it is strongest where there is life, or perhaps life is strongest where this force is most present. Those who attune to the life force are great healers and masters of living and growing things.

- **Shadow:** This is the force of both animation and of dissolution and death. It is a complement to the life force in that life without motion towards its end is mere static existence. It is the most difficult of all the forces to understand and master, but it also grants great powers. Its practitioners can cloud the mind, misdirect the senses, and even whither the living or bring about undeath. Its practitioners are rare, and often ostracized in many lands.

## **Using Power**

When a character needs power to enable a feat, they will need power of the correct type. A character can only spend power points on feats which are associated with power sources they are attuned to. Thus a knight can spend points to enhance martial feats. A priest can spend them to enhance a blessing, but not to conjure up a fireball. However, characters can acquire additional attunements in the form of boons. This is generally difficult, but many heroes are able to tap into more than one power source. There may also be magical objects, places, or effects which can grant access to additional sources of power. These are quite difficult to find.

When a player desires to expend her character's power points, she can do so in any situation where this is allowed. The character's power point total is simply reduced by the requisite amount. It can be restored to its original value by rest and recovery, as detailed later.

## **Ability Scores**

Every character has each of the six ability score attributes. These scores have ability modifiers associated with them, which will apply whenever an aspect associated with that ability is governing a check. Ability scores also apply to some other attributes such as initiative modifier. These scores are a significant part of defining the nature of a character and the player will have to decide their values during character construction. They generally don't change in play often, unless something fundamentally alters the character's nature.

## **Personality traits**

Each PC starts the game with at least three character traits. These attributes describe the character in narrative terms. Players are free to invent any specific traits they wish, but three are suggested, a strength, a weakness, and a goal. Other traits may be generated as desired by the players and GM as well during the course of play. Options might include beliefs, interests, fears, etc.

Character traits are the attributes which are used to drive the character's story. They should be evocative, interesting, and speak to the character's nature, agenda, and needs. When the GM creates challenges for the PCs he will use these traits to decide what will engage a given character. For example: If a player describes his character as 'honest to a fault' then the GM is likely to test his honesty. What price will he pay to remain honest? Is he naive, or highly principled? How will he cope with a situation where his honesty will hurt others?

Traits are also used to govern the use of fate.

## **Character Attributes**

This section lists all the major attributes commonly possessed by PCs. Rules for determining their values are given under the *Character Generation* and *Character Advancement* sections.

## **Ability Scores**

These are the most basic attributes of all characters. They help to define the basic capabilities of the character. Each of the six abilities listed below has a value from the following table. The value for each attribute determines its associated ability modifier.

<b>Value</b>	<b>Modifier</b>	<b>Description</b>
None	*	<p>The creature has no ability in this area at all, it has no strength, is completely unintelligent, etc. Usually this applies when an attribute simply doesn't apply to a creature or it is completely lacking in a certain area. Insects have no strength, they can't lift or carry anything, etc. None doesn't imply that no capability exists, ants for instance can collectively move things over time, they just can't lift a heavy rock or leap a chasm. The character will never pass checks based on this ability. Player characters don't normally have a rating of None in any of their abilities.</p>
Poor	0	<p>This is the lowest normally possible value for a PC and represents a creature with little ability in this area. The character can function in any everyday sense, but has no extraordinary ability and is weaker/slower/stupider than the average person.</p>
Average	1	<p>The creature is roughly in the normal human range. Most humans and animals of about human size will be average in most abilities.</p>
Above Average	2	<p>The creature is above average in this attribute, but not truly exceptional. This is roughly the baseline level of performance for heroes. Most people will be above average in at least one ability.</p>
Strong	3	<p>The creature is much better than most humans. Most creatures of larger than human size will have Strong strength. Only the best humans will have an ability beyond this level and a human with Strong level is unusual. PCs are often rated Strong, as are some exceptional NPCs.</p>

<b>Value</b>	<b>Modifier</b>	<b>Description</b>
Exceptional	4	Only the very best humans achieve this level in any ability. An Exceptional intelligence human is a genius, etc.
Mighty	5	This is a legendary level of ability. Only mighty heroes, extraordinary creatures, and higher beings have Mighty ability scores. Only the gods themselves can over-top a Mighty hero or exceed the constitution of a dragon or the strength of a giant.
Godlike	*	This level of ability is reserved for NPCs and designates a creature of divine stature. Such creatures simply pass all checks based on this ability automatically unless the GM decides otherwise for story reasons. Huge giants for instance might have Godlike strength and constitution, they can lift or carry anything the GM wants them to. If a PC opposes a Godlike NPC, they will generally lose in a straight up contest.

## **Strength**

This ability represents a character's physical power. It determines his modifier to checks involving lifting, pulling, pushing, holding onto things, and any other similar sort of test of brute force. Tasks such as climbing, leaping, swimming, etc are all mainly governed by strength.

## **Constitution**

This ability represents the character's ability to withstand physical punishment, endure extreme conditions, resist disease, and perform feats of extreme physical endurance such as extremely long distance running, surviving outdoors in a raging blizzard with no shelter, holding his breath underwater for 9 minutes, etc.

## **Dexterity**

This ability represents both coordination and reaction speed. It determines the character's modifier in any task requiring speed or coordination, such as slight of hand, acrobatics, or aiming missile weapons.

## **Intelligence**

This ability represents a character's reasoning power and ability to study and absorb abstract knowledge, remember lore, and generally perform any feat of intellect such as solving a puzzle or researching an unusual ritual.

## **Wisdom**

This represents a character's intuition, willpower, and self-control. It is used to understand situations, make leaps of intuition, and perform feats of mental or spiritual discipline and control.

## **Charisma**

This represents a character's emotional and social reasoning and skill. It is used to lead and inspire other people, convince them to do things, negotiate, and generally to get by in social situations of all types.

## **Ability Modifier Notations**

Ability modifiers are generally noted by a 3 letter abbreviation, STR for Strength, CON for Constitution, DEX for Dexterity, INT for Intelligence, WIS for Wisdom, and CHA for Charisma. For instance an attack might have a damage expression of  $1d8+STR$ , meaning that the character's strength ability modifier is added to the results of a roll of  $1d8$ .

## **Fate**

Fate is an attribute which can be used by players to shift the fiction in their favor. Every character starts with positive fate, and that can change to neutral fate and back. This attribute will be used to allow the player to make changes in the fiction based on one of the character's attributes. This is discussed in detail under *Fate* .

## **Hit Points**

Each character has hit points. This attribute has a numeric value which is used to measure how close the

character is to defeat and how much more physical and mental punishment the character can take before dying, surrendering, or giving up as the situation dictates. Each character begins with a specific number of hit points based on her constitution and other factors; the character's maximum hit points. Each calling indicates a base number of hit points for that calling. As the character increases in level her maximum hit point value will also increase based on the calling.

## **Damage Resistance**

Each character has a damage resistance attribute. Whenever a character takes damage its damage resistance value is subtracted from the damage taken. Damage resistance is primarily provided by armor, but may also be a result of various boons, the effects of feats, etc. Note that damage resistance values may or may not stack, depending on how they are worded. A power might grant "Damage resistance 5", which sets the character's damage resistance at this value. A magic ring might grant a +1 permanent modifier to damage resistance, which is added to whatever the character has already. A character with both of the above effects in play would have a damage resistance of 6, the highest specific value acts as a base, but modifiers stack on top of that, subject to the general stacking rule (only one modifier of each type). Damage Resistance is usually abbreviated 'DR'.

## **Protection and Vulnerability**

A character may have protection from certain types of damage. If so then the character takes half damage whenever the damage tag matches the tag for the protection. For instance a character with Protection from Fire would take half damage from all damage with the fire tag. Likewise a character may have vulnerability to certain types of damage. Whenever a character takes damage with the corresponding tag the damage is doubled. In any case where damage has multiple tags, the character is protected from it if any one tag matches his protection. Likewise the character is vulnerable if any one tag matches his vulnerability. If a character is both vulnerable and protected, then the two cancel.

## **Calling**

Every character has exactly one calling. This is the central defining feature of the character which represents the archetype of the character. Calling is

selected when the character is created. It determines the character's power source.

## **Species**

Every character has a species, which is selected at character creation.

## **Background**

Each character may have additional background elements. These help to round out the character and fill in details of his or her story. They may also point out areas where the character has some special knowledge, or other minor boon, which may be noted. There are several categories of background element:

1. **Parentage:** Who were the character's parents, what was their position in society, etc.
2. **Occupation:** What did the character do before he became a hero?
3. **Society:** What was the character's role and position in society?
4. **Geography:** Where did the character live?
5. **Bonds:** Who did the character know?

Most characters will have at most one of each of these five categories of background element, but these are only suggestions, players should feel free to add other types, forgo using some of these, or even use more than one of the same type if it works for them.

## **Boons and Limitations**

Boons are attributes which characters have or which they gain by virtue of their species, calling, background, and/or story. They may be rewards earned through adventuring, such as ancient magical treasures, they may represent knowledge gained by the character in the course of pursuing her career, or they may be attributes acquired by the character as a result of exposure to mystical forces beyond human ken.

Boons come in several types, including items, special training, and divine favor. Some of them may provide permanent modifiers, feats, or other benefits which apply to the character's other attributes.

Limitations are similar to boons, but have a negative effect on a character. They are recorded in the same way. All characters start the game with one or more boons or limitations as a result of choices of calling, species, background, GM decree, story considerations, etc. Usually more boons are acquired during the course of a character's adventures.

## **Size**

All creatures have a size, which is usually determined by the creature's species or type. For player characters this is determined by species. Each species describes the size of its members. This should be noted on the character sheet. See the action rules for the effects of character size. The vast majority of PCs are of size Medium, but a few races deviate from this norm. The sizes are tiny, small, medium, large, huge, and gargantuan.

## **Space**

Each character also has a space, which is the set of squares it takes up in action sequences; for tiny, small, and medium creatures this is simply one square; for large creatures it is 2-4 contiguous squares; for huge creatures it is 5-9 contiguous squares; and for gargantuan creatures it is more than 9 contiguous squares. Most races which are large or larger will specify the space of characters who belong to them. If no other space is specified then a large character has a 2x2 square space, a huge creature 3x3, and a gargantuan creature 4x4.

## **Speed**

Each creature has a speed. The value of speed determines how fast the character moves in units of distance in action sequences. This value will be determined by a character's species and encumbrance. Characters may also have other speed values corresponding to additional modes of movement. A character could have a Swim Speed, and/or a Fly Speed, or possibly other more esoteric speeds. If no other indication is given then the character's speed is a land speed used to walk/run. These modes will be indicated by a tag associated with the speed, thus for example: speed = 6, flying, would indicate that the character can fly at a speed of 6. When no mode tag is provided it is assumed the speed is a walking speed. Note that flying and swimming speeds may also have an associated maneuverability class.

Normal humans and similar creatures have a speed of 6. A horse would have a speed of about 8, and a cheetah a speed of about 12.

## **Encumbrance**

This is a measure of how much the character is carrying. Each character is either unencumbered, encumbered, or overloaded. The exact amount of total load which represents each value depends on the character's maximum load, which is determined primarily by strength and size.

## **Maximum Load**

Maximum load indicates the total load that the character can carry before becoming encumbered. If a character is carrying less than or equal to this value, they are unencumbered. If they are carrying less than twice this value, they are encumbered. If they attempt to carry more than twice this value they are overloaded.

Normally a character can carry a load of items equal to 40 load plus 20 times the character's STR modifier without being encumbered. This assumes the weight is reasonably distributed and easy to carry. 40 lbs of pillows might encumber anyone, a 40 lb piece of iron carried in a backpack probably wouldn't.

If a character carries more than her maximum load then she is encumbered. When encumbered her speed is reduced by one and she has disadvantage on all checks based on Dexterity governed aspects.

## **Load**

This is simply how much load the character is currently carrying. It is the sum of the load of each item in the character's equipment.

## **Equipment**

Characters have equipment. These are the possessions which they carry around with them. This may include things like tools, weapons, armor, adventuring gear, etc. A later chapter goes into more detail on equipment. Note that changes to equipment also changes load, and possibly encumbrance.

## **Wealth**

Every character has a wealth. This attribute is a basic description of how much purchasing power the character has. Wealth can vary from none to practically

unlimited. When a character needs to buy something, or when money is important to the story, the player will generally make a wealth check to determine the outcome. The wealth check modifier is applied to this check, and the character's wealth helps to determine the types of outcomes which are feasible (IE a penniless character cannot pay a large bribe, but even a moderately well-off one won't always succeed).

## **Level**

Every character has a level. This determines the level of challenges which the character can face.

## **Other Attributes**

Characters also have other less important attributes which are generally just descriptive. These include name, gender, height, weight, age, ethnicity, social class, and appearance. There are no specific rules for generating these attributes, nor do they have any mechanical effect in the game (although size is obviously related to height and weight it is up to the players to decide the details as they see fit). The GM may decide to factor these attributes into certain situation as she wishes. They might form the basis for boons, limitations, or simple story elements. GMs are of course free to attach novel mechanics to any attribute.

# **Character Generation**

The previous section detailed most of the things which appear on character sheets. This section details how to build a character from scratch.

## **Level**

Normally characters start at level 1. Sometimes you may generate a character which is higher level. This will require allocating a boon for each level beyond first. Note that in this case the character will have a non-zero level modifier, remember to incorporate this.

## **Species**

The first thing a player will want to determine is the species of his character. Is it a human, an eldar, or maybe a wose? This choice might be dictated by setting convention or other choices of specific genre which the participants have already made. Otherwise it will be up to the player. The chosen species is noted, it will be significant later.

## **Calling**

Second the player will pick a calling for their character. Is it a knight, a wizard, a priest perhaps? As with species this choice might be dictated by circumstances. Players will probably want to discuss with each other who wishes to play what. Pay attention to the combat role of the calling, it is a good idea for the players to make sure they cover all the bases. A party will work fine without characters of every role, but a player might want to keep in mind which ones are and are not represented in the party when picking starting boons.

## **Abilities**

Once you know what species and calling the character will have, it is time to determine their abilities.

**Standard Array:** The simplest way to do this is to take the standard sequence of modifiers, +3, +2, +1, +1, +1, +1 and apply them in any order to your characters abilities. Another option is to use the point system outlined below

**Point Value:** Start with 9 points. Each point of ability modifier costs one point. A character could be Strong in 3 areas and poor in the other 3, or any other combination adding up to 9 points of modifiers.

Using this system you can produce a character with potentially up to a +5 starting modifier in a given ability, although this will probably limit the character significantly in other areas. Consider applying a 'well rounded character' rule when using point buy. This limits all starting ability modifiers to at most +4. Doing so makes +5 an aspirational goal instead of an optimum starting bonus.

Record the value for each ability and its modifier.

## **Background**

Characters may have up to five background elements, one each of the types discussed above in the character attributes section. Not all five must be chosen, the character may not be distinctive in all of these ways, although every character certainly has a place of birth a family of some sort, and a social station in life.

## **Hit points and healing value**

Add your character's CON modifier, and calling hit point number to 10. This is your hit point total. Divide this number by 4, rounding down; this is your healing

Value. The character's bloodied value can also be noted as 1/2 their maximum hit points, rounded down.

## **Power**

You start with 8 power.

## **Boons**

Each character starts with the boons described under their calling's class features. You may select another major boon chosen from their calling's level 1 boons, or any major boon listed as available to their species or background. The character also receives one minor boon listed from among their background elements, and any minor boons listed as being provided by their species. Additionally the GM may allow characters to pick one or more of these from any other boons that are available to level 1 characters.

## **Record Proficiencies**

The character's calling, species, and background, as well as their boons, may designate certain proficiencies which the character will have. In some cases this may be a choice amongst multiple alternatives. Make any indicated choices and note them all.

## **Character traits**

Note at least three character traits, each should have a one or two word name, and a short value giving a bit more depth.

## **Wealth**

Wealth is essentially a sort of background detail of characters. Most characters are going to have ordinary, adequate, or possibly well off as a wealth attribute (+1 to +3 ability modifier). A few might be poor, or even destitute, and there could be some rare rich or even vast wealth characters. A PC's wealth attribute should be selected with the character's entire background and concept in mind. The details of the story genre being played may also be a factor. You may want to consult with the GM about what makes the most sense, but players should generally be allowed to decide this detail for themselves.

## **Feats**

Various boons will give the character access to feats. These should be noted.

## **Equipment**

Select equipment which is appropriate to your character and backstory. If a player wishes his character to begin with something of higher than trivial value, then a wealth check should be made to determine whether or not the character was able to afford the item. Some characters may have certain items as a result of boons or backgrounds. The GM may provide or restrict equipment based on the nature of the setting as well. Record what your character is carrying and note its encumbrance.

## **Maximum load**

This is normally  $40 + 20 * STR$  for medium sized creatures. Large creatures should start at  $60 + 20 * STR$ , small at  $30 + 20 * STR$ , and tiny creatures at  $10 + 10 * STR$ .

## **Load**

Add up all the loads of each piece of equipment being carried by the character and note the total.

## **Encumbrance**

Note if the character is unencumbered, encumbered, or overloaded.

## **Movement**

Note the movement rate(s) and mode(s) of the character. Base rates come from the character's species. If not otherwise specified characters have a walking mode speed of 6. Other modes will always be noted specifically.

## **Attacks**

All characters will have some form of attack. If nothing else every character has the feat Basic Attack. Attack modifiers and damage expressions can be calculated as given in the section on feats.

## **Defenses**

All characters will have various options available to them in terms of defenses as well. They can simply employ their knacks as defenses, or they can utilize the defense element of some feats. These can be noted on the character sheet.

## **Knack Modifiers**

Each character will have a specific modifier when employing a given knack to make a check. These modifiers will generally only change if the character levels up. They should be recorded on the character sheet for easy reference. Each knack's modifier is equal to the character's level modifier (0 for most starting characters) plus the character's proficiency modifier with that knack plus the character's ability modifier for the ability associated with that knack plus any permanent modifier they might get from other sources.

## **Character Advancement**

As explained above, each character has a level, which determines the sorts of challenges the character should be capable of facing. As characters have adventures, they will inevitably increase in level. The following rules govern this process.

Whenever a character receives a major boon she also advances to the next character level. At the GM's option a character might also lose a level under some circumstances, such as losing a particularly significant signature item or ability permanently. Perhaps a hero has retired and put aside his heroic attributes. Such a character might be reduced to a more appropriate level if he returns to the action at a later time. Mere separation of a character from objects or other temporary losses of access to boons don't normally involve reducing the character's level. Level is more a measure of what a character has accomplished in a heroic sense, and his standing and connections to fate than what is currently in their possession or their current circumstances.

## **Advancement Process**

When a character has achieved a new major boon he will be eligible to advance to the next level. It is up to the GM to decide exactly how and when this will happen. Normally, for convenience and to better fit the narrative of the game, the player and GM will advance the character after the end of the current session of play, and/or whatever action the character is currently engaged in. However it is perfectly legitimate to raise a character's level in the middle of the action, this might represent some sudden and profound change in the character, access to a whole new power, etc.

## Effects of Gaining a Level

When a character acquires a new level the character immediately gains additional hit points equal to the amount specified for his calling. The character's bloodied and healing values will need to be recalculated. If the character's level modifier has changed, it will require recalculation of most of the other values on the character sheet, including defense modifiers, attack modifiers, etc. A character's damage dice may also increase.

These increases are summarized on the table below:

Level

Damage Dice

Level Modifier

Benefit

Tier

1

1

0

Heroic

2

1

1

3

1

1

4

1

2

5

1

3

6

1

3

7

2

4

Gain one damage die

8

2

5

9

2

5

Increase one ability modifier by 1

Legendary

10

2

6

11

2

7

12

2

7

13

2

8

14

2

9

15

2

9

16

3

10

Gain one damage die

17

3

11

Increase one ability modifier by 1

Mythic

18

3

11

19

3

12

20

3

13

## **Knacks and Aspects**

Knacks represent the major approaches which characters take when they attempt to solve problems, and aspects represent the corresponding way that a given problem is being solved. The following Aspects exist, and each one has a similarly named knack which it pairs with.

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Knack</b>	<b>Ability Score</b>
Acrobatic	Acrobatics	Dexterity
Arcane	Arcana	Intelligence
Athletic	Athletics	Strength
Bluffing	Bluff	Charisma
Diplomatic	Diplomacy	Charisma
Engineered	Engineering	Intelligence
Health	Healing	Wisdom
Historical	History	Intelligence
Insightful	Insight	Wisdom
Intimidating	Intimidation	Charisma
Leading	Leadership	Charisma
Natural	Nature	Wisdom
Perceptive	Perception	Wisdom
Religious	Religion	Intelligence
Stealthy	Stealth	Dexterity
Streetwise	Streetwise	Charisma
Surviving	Survival	Constitution
Thieving	Thievery	Dexterity

The chapter *How to Play* contains the *Checks and Actions* rules, which explain that when a player announces an action for his character, the GM will determine, based on the action and intent, which aspect is governing that check, and thus which Knack is appropriate. If the character has proficiency with that Knack, then they will gain a proficiency modifier on the resulting check. The character will also benefit from their ability modifier for the relevant ability, etc. as explained under *Checks and Actions*.

## **Aspect Descriptions**

Each Aspect describes an area of endeavor and style of action. The GM can use the following descriptions to determine which aspect is governing a specific action, and the players can use them to decide which knacks to give their characters proficiency in. As a result each character will generally favor certain approaches to problem solving and excel in different ways.

### **Acrobatic**

**Knack:** Acrobatics, ability modifier DEX

This aspect governs all sorts of situations in which a character might need to act in a highly coordinated and controlled manner, exercise good balance, precision, and similar kinds of actions. Tumbling, falling, narrow crossings, handling slippery or treacherous conditions, these are all the kinds of situations which would be governed by the acrobatic aspect. This aspect might also govern actions in combat such as dodging attacks or avoiding attempts to grab or restrain the character.

### **Arcane**

**Knack:** Arcana, ability modifier INT

This aspect governs all sorts of situations in which a character needs esoteric or specialized knowledge of magical or otherworldly things. Reading magical writing, detecting magic, analyzing magic, or otherworldly forces. Performing research on magical topics and procedures, properly performing rituals, these are all topics related to arcana.

## **Athletic**

**Knack:** Athletics, ability modifier STR

This aspect deals with anything requiring strength, power, and overall athletic ability, such as running, jumping, climbing, swimming, etc. Anything that mostly requires a strong body and benefits from athletic practice is governed by the athletic aspect. This is particularly appropriate for actions which are mostly or completely strength related.

## **Bluffing**

**Knack:** Bluff, ability modifier CHA

This aspect governs anything where deception is being employed. Anytime a character attempts to mislead, misdirect, fool, or simply outright lie to an NPC they will employ the Bluff knack. This included things like trying to pass off fake papers or other sorts of cons and scams as well.

## **Diplomatic**

**Knack:** Diplomacy, ability modifier CHA

The diplomatic aspect governs all situations involving befriending, negotiating with, or otherwise interacting with other people in which the character is relatively honest and not using threats or lies. Most business deals, alliances, and similar situations will be governed by this aspect. Diplomatic characters are able to make friends and allies, and get deals done.

## **Engineered**

**Knack:** Engineering, ability modifier INT

The engineered aspect governs all situations involving a knowledge and practice of mechanics, construction, and similar. When a character builds something, assesses the function of a thing, repairs it, tries to understand it, etc. then the action is controlled by this aspect.

## **Health**

**Knack:** Healing, ability modifier WIS

The health aspect governs all situations where a character is healing another, providing health advice, understanding a disease, curing a wound, treating poison, etc.

## **Historical**

**Knack:** History, ability modifier INT

The historical aspect governs all actions which relate to knowing, understanding, researching, or explaining anything historical, or an action where historical knowledge or understanding could be highly useful.

Characters with a history knack tend to have an understanding of history and the nature of historical processes, and to use this to draw conclusions, reason about the current situation, etc.

## **Insightful**

**Knack:** Insight, ability modifier WIS

The insightful aspect deals with situations in which a character takes an action which relies on understanding another person, their motivations, personality, and likely behavior. It also deals with being able to spot information about people based on this understanding. Generally it can come into play when determining the truthfulness of a statement, reliability of an NPC, etc.

## **Intimidating**

**Knack:** Intimidation, ability modifier CHA

The intimidating aspect deals with actions related to frightening, cowering, or threatening others. Any time a character attempts to get what he wants by threat, then the intimidation knack could be used.

## **Leading**

**Knack:** Leadership, ability modifier CHA

The leading aspect comes into play whenever a character attempts to command others, or when attempting to understand a command situation, such as knowing what commands an NPC might follow or not follow, or who is in command in a given situation.

## **Natural**

**Knack:** Nature, ability modifier WIS

The natural aspect governs when an action is taken which relies on understanding or utilizing the natural aspect of a thing. This could be taming an animal, finding food in the wilderness, orienteering, or coming up with information on things in nature.

## **Perceptive**

**Knack:** Perception, ability modifier WIS

The perceptive aspect governs whenever a character is looking for something, watching something, or attempting to notice some clue or attribute of a place or situation. It could be used if a character searched an area, or attempted to track an enemy, etc.

## **Religious**

**Knack:** Religion, ability modifier INT

The religious aspect governs any situation where a character is exercising spiritual or religious understanding or knowledge. This would be the case when needing to know facts about a religion or religious or spiritual practice or ritual.

## **Stealthy**

**Knack:** Stealth, ability modifier DEX

The stealthy aspect governs all attempts to hide, sneak, conceal, or ambush.

## **Streetwise**

**Knack:** Streetwise, ability modifier CHA

This aspect governs all situations where an action is taken which relies on understanding or utilizing the social and political organization of some sort of inhabited location. It might come into play when determining who has influence, where things are located, how the power structure and politics of an urban area work, etc.

## **Surviving**

**Knack:** Survival, ability modifier CON

This aspect governs situations where a character is enduring, resisting, or fortifying himself against an environmental condition, resisting an affliction, or attempting accomplish some action despite adverse conditions.

## **Thieving**

**Knack:** Thievery, ability modifier DEX

This aspect governs attempts to steal, legerdemain, slight of hand, and dealing with the common situations encountered by those who appropriate the goods of others by nefarious means.

## **Proficiency**

Characters will have proficiency with certain knacks, based on their calling, possibly race, and granted by some boons. For example, a character might have stealth proficiency. In this case, they will get a proficiency modifier of +5 when they carry out an action governed by the stealthy aspect. As described in the rules for making checks, proficiency always grants a +5 bonus.

## **Other Proficiencies**

Beyond a character's knacks, they may also be good at certain specific things. In particular the use of tools, weapons, and implements are subject to proficiency bonuses.

## **Tools**

Any category of equipment might be the subject of proficiency. For example a given character might be an expert with all sorts of climbing gear. This character would gain a proficiency bonus on checks related to using this sort of gear, that is ropes, pitons, carabiners, grappling hooks, etc. Another character might have proficiency with lockpicking tools, etc.

## **Professions**

Some characters may be specifically experts in certain fields of knowledge. While knacks will provide access to a certain amount of general knowledge proficiency, a character might also have very specific types of information, probably related to some sort of profession or similar life activity. Thus a character who is a farmer has specific knowledge of local crops, domestic animals, and farming implements and techniques.

## **Weapons**

This is a very significant area of expertise. Some characters will have specific knowledge in the use of particular weapons, granting them a proficiency bonus when using the weapon in combat. In order to gain the bonus, the character must have the weapon in hand. Note that there are some restrictions here, the weapon must actually be a valid weapon for use in the specific type of attack being made. If the weapon is used defensively, then again, it must be appropriate, you cannot use a bow against close attacks for example.

## **Implements**

Implements are magical instruments which are used with some feats. They are virtually identical to weapons in terms of the rules governing them, and some implements actually make reasonable weapons (and vice versa). Use of implements on the defensive is possible, but note that having implement proficiency with a specific item is not interchangeable with weapon proficiency with the same item. Thus a wizard with staff implement proficiency won't be able to claim the proficiency bonus when parrying a weapon attack with the staff, unless some sort of feat which dictates otherwise is in play.

## **Species**

Every character is a member of some species, which the player will choose when first building the character. A species designates a unique kind of being, like an elf, a human, or a dragon. Species choice allows the player to choose certain options associated with that kind of creature, and it will probably also color the way the character is played. Every species has some traits which are common to its members, but remember, the world is a magical place, there are no rules of biology and genetics which dictate that every elf will have the same species traits as every other one, or that species itself must be established by heredity, etc. Some species are exceptionally mutable and may not even be biological at all!

Instead think of species as a starting point. If your character is human, he's probably similar to other humans. He probably has parents, and he probably looks like them and his personality and other attributes are probably similar to theirs. However, the world of HoML is magical, and fantastic, and it is possible he's a changeling, or somehow touched by fate. Maybe he was raised by elves and shares some traits with them. As with other categories, these are intended more as a starting point, baseline, and something you can use when elaborating on this character element isn't desired. Your character could be a generic dwarf, or he could be a very special unique dwarf with characteristics different from other dwarves.

## **Human**

Size:	Medium
Speed:	6
Avg Height:	152cm - 185cm
Avg Weight:	45kg - 100kg

Humans are typical inhabitants of the world. They are ordinary people. In many settings humans are the most common or even the only race which exists. Humans are the assumed baseline for player characters. Where other races differ from humans they are provided with racial attributes and limitations which illustrate those differences. Human heroes are likely to have any calling.

## **Culture**

Human cultures are highly varied and humans are quick to adapt, adopting practices and ideas from other humans, or even other species, relatively quickly and easily. Many human cultures have included non-humans and here too humans tend to be relatively flexible. At the same time humans can be quite militant and stubborn about their values and practices. They are often quite willing to go to war over a cultural dispute, yet a couple of decades later they may change their attitudes entirely, making one wonder what the fuss was about.

In religious practices humans are likewise both flexible and opinionated. While a human culture may quickly accept a new religious idea, or a new god, on the one hand, an individual human may prove to be quite ready to die rather than change her beliefs one iota. Humans tend to make a big show of their religious activities, building large temples and holding elaborate rituals. Priesthoods are often highly organized and influential in human societies.

Humans adopt a wide variety of different social organization types. Some live in small family groups with little other organization. Other humans live in large societies with a high degree of organization and social structure where each person belongs to a distinct social group.

In game terms backgrounds of any social class, occupation, etc. are potentially open to all humans.

## **Boons**

Humans are associated with the following boons.

## Major Boons

Human characters may select from the following boons at first level.

## Minor Boons

All human characters gain access to the following boons.

## Wose

Size:	Medium
Speed:	6
Avg Height:	152cm - 230cm
Avg Weight:	50kg - 150kg

The wose are a race of beings unlike the more fleshly races of men, eldar, and dwarves. Their bodies are more vegetable in nature than those of the other races, and they look quite plantlike, with skin which resembles, bark, moss, or sometimes stone.

Wose are originally creatures of the deep forest, and they are most at home in wooded glens, thick forests, and even dense jungles and wooded swamps. From time to time they are seen in other territories, however, and they are perfectly capable of surviving in a variety of habitats if they must.

The origins and history of the wose race is an obscure one. While they are accomplished lore-masters in their own way they rarely produce written works and usually have limited contact with humanoid races such as humans. While there are reports of these creatures going back many centuries it is only recently that they have appeared in considerable numbers and come to the attention of men in general.

The truth is that the wose race has existed in small numbers, mostly in the realm of Fairy for many ages, but in recent times they have entered the natural world in force, heeding the call of the nature spirits they call their creators to come and protect the world from those who would ravage the forests and the land.

## Culture

Wose culture is rather different from that of creatures like humans. Although they do produce things, and have communities, individual wose are able to fairly easily exist simply by standing in a favorable location and soaking up the sunlight. They are not, therefore, compelled to order themselves into complex productive communities with elaborate economies. Instead the wose seem more driven by their essential nature. They travel the wild forested lands of the world(s) acting as wardens, tending to the woods wherever they go.

This doesn't mean that the wose have no community, but it is more likely to be organized around and driven by concerns related to this natural drive. Thus there are orders and schools of wose who pursue various strategies and hone a variety of different traditional skills which they use in their mission. These various groups don't always see eye-to-eye either. There can

be rather significant differences of opinion over questions of approach and strategy, or acceptable practices.

Another factor is that wose don't have a particularly strong emphasis on families and biological relations. A new wose is planted by its seed mother, and then left to emerge as a sapling and find its own way in the world. The upshot being that orders, schools, circles, and looser associations based on individual loyalty, reputation, convergence of interests and beliefs, etc. play the dominant role in their society.

Thus a wose may be known for having specific skills, but they don't really fall into well-defined socio-economic groupings. There are elders who have superior skills and knowledge, but they are not, per se, vested with political power and there are no such things as titles analogous to those amongst humans. Instead wose have stories, which are vast long utterances that detail their various experiences, alliances, affiliations, accomplishments, and stories. Since individual wose may live for an indefinite time period these stories can become quite long and complex. It is said that the eldest of the wose would require days to recount their names!

## **Backgrounds**

Wose would most likely have backgrounds related to hunting, tracking, or various sorts of crafting. They do have forms of entertainment, mostly relating to retelling of old histories and lore in oral form.

## **Varieties**

There are 3 separate types of wose, the ancients who are the oldest ancestral form of the race, and two newer forms, the hunters and the guardians. All wose have a basically humanoid appearance. They walk upright on two leg-like limbs and possess arms roughly similar to those of humanoids. Their hands and feet are irregular and varying in shape, but all have a number of root-like fingers and toes. Their heads are often somewhat oddly shaped, square, lopsided, or craggy and stone-like. Their eyes are deep-set and have the appearance of polished stone or deep pools of water with no white showing.

## **Ancients**

appear greenish or gray and their skin appears to be covered in moss, while on their heads a tangle of vine-like material, usually tangled with a few leaves, has the appearance of hair. Their eyes look like gazing into a deep pool, ranging from a medium blue color to pitch black. Ancients tend to have a medium build.

## **Hunters**

appear woody and their skin is bark-like in appearance. Their heads are covered in a twiggy mass which has the appearance of a tangle of small shrubby branches. A hunter's eyes have catlike pupils and an iris varying from grayish green to dark green or dark amber. Hunters are generally the tallest and thinnest of the wose.

## Guardians

appear stony and their skin has the consistency of rock, usually looking a bit like lichen-stained granite or sometimes limestone. The eyes of guardians have a dry stony look to them as well, though they do appear slightly polished. The iris is usually grayish red to dark red in color. Guardians are usually the shortest of the wose, and are very heavily built, being almost dwarf-like in their proportions. Their fingers and toes are short, stubby, and stone-like, with a powerful grip.

## Boons

The following boons are associated with the wose species:

### Major Boons

Wose characters may choose one of the following major boons at first level

Child of the Wood	Wose: 1 Major
<b>Association:</b> Wose	<b>Prerequisites:</b> None
<b>Description:</b> You were brought up amongst the wose and know their ways.	
<b>Benefits:</b> You have proficiency in the Nature knack. You can speak Wose. You are proficient with the spear and dagger. Your knowledge of plantlife is extensive, gain a proficiency bonus to any check relating to plants or knowledge about plants. You gain access to the following feats:	
Silence of the Ancients	Child of the Wood 1 - Major
<b>Stealth</b>	
<b>Type/Target</b> Self	
<b>Effects:</b> You have advantage on any check to avoid being tracked in a natural setting. <i>You pass through the undergrowth without leaving the slightest trace.</i>	

### Minor Boons

All wose characters receive the following minor boons.

## Boons

Boons are an important concept in HoML. They represent the things which heroes can obtain which will grant them level increases. Each time a hero acquires a major boon, she increases her level by one, and is granted all the benefits of leveling up. At the same time, the boon itself will grant the hero access to some sort of benefit, a new feat, some sort of proficiency, or something similar. There are also minor boons, which are similar to major boons but do not grant a level increase, and generally represent smaller, often mundane, benefits such as money or information.

Boons are attributes which characters have or which they gain by virtue of their species, calling, level, and/or story. They may be rewards earned through adventuring, such as ancient magical treasures, they may represent knowledge gained by the character in the course of pursuing her career, or they may be things acquired by the character as a result of exposure to mystical forces beyond human ken.

Every character has various boons. Each boon is an attribute of the character which modifies the character in some way. Some may alter the values of other attributes, others may allow the character to do entirely new things that are not normally possible. Lists of possible boons are provided in various places. Each species has racial boons which a character may acquire. Each calling has calling boons which characters of that calling may acquire. In addition there are items, spells, etc., all of which are boons. The Game Master generally assigns most boons, but players may have a choice of boons granted by calling, species, and other player selected options.

The higher level the character is the more potent their boons may become. Some boons don't change with level (a permanent modifier for instance is equally valuable at all levels), but others such as the damage dealt by an attack might increase with each level to keep pace with the challenges the character faces. In many cases these boons grant feats, which are discussed separately in their own section.

## Boon Description

Boons are described using a standard format which is explained here.

Sample	Source: 1 Major
<b>Association:</b> None	<b>Prerequisites:</b> None
<b>Description:</b> This is a general description of the boon in terms of fiction. Use this to describe what the boon is and what it means in the story.	
<b>Benefits:</b> The mechanical benefits of the boon are described here. If it grants the character who has it some attributes or something similar, then these are described here.	
<b>Disadvantages:</b> Any negative mechanical aspects of the boon are described here.	

- **Name-** This is the name of the boon.
- **Type-** This is the source, level, and type (major, minor, or limitation) of the boon. Not all boons have a source or level.
- **Association-** This indicates some other game element(s), tags, etc. which the boon is associated with. It is often a calling, species, etc. It may be 'None' indicating the boon has no associations. Association is merely an indicator intended to give some idea of what sort of category a boon might fall in. If it is a calling for instance, that might be a hint that members of that calling find the boon useful and might frequently acquire it.

- **Prerequisites**- Indicates something that the boon cannot function properly without. A player character must have the required prerequisite, usually another boon, a calling, or a proficiency, in order to use this boon.
- **Description**- This is the story of the boon, what it does in narrative terms. This may be purely flavor, or in some cases it may explain how the boon is used, restrictions on its use, etc.
- **Benefits**- This is the actual rules text of the boon. It explains exactly what the mechanical effects are and how to use it in play. It might contain powers, attributes, or specific rules text which applies to a character who possesses this boon.
- **Disadvantages**- If a boon has any negative effects, mechanical or narrative, then they are described here. In a few cases a boon might be better described as a 'curse', and its effects may be purely disadvantageous. Such boons are called limitations.

## Manifestation

Every boon has a manifestation when it is brought into play. Manifestation refers to the form which the boon takes in the game world. It could be an attribute of a character, or it could be an item, for example. Other possibilities might exist too. Thus a character might acquire Shield Expertise simply by virtue of training as a knight. Another character might acquire it by owning a Shield of Expertise, a magic item. A third character might acquire the boon temporarily by performing a ritual, and that ritual itself might be manifested in the form of a consumable, a potion for instance.

HoML has some specific rules, which are found in book three, describing certain types of manifestations, like magic items, which have additional mechanics. However, in general, the manifestation of a boon doesn't effect how it works. Boon descriptions are normally written in a manifestation-independent form. In a few cases the manifestation might be central to how the boon works, in which case it will be described in those terms in the Description section.

Manifestations might also have some narrative implications. A boon manifested in the form of a sword might potentially be stolen or lost, etc.

## Callings

As described in the *Callings* topic of the chapter on player characters, callings are character archetypes. They describe the basic concept of what the character *is* and what they do. Heroes come in many guises and the calling a player chooses for their hero will help determine how the character looks, thinks, acts, and what sorts of abilities they have. Each calling has certain elements in common which are discussed below.

# Attributes of Callings

## Power Source

One of the most significant aspects of a calling is its power source. Every calling has a power source. This is the wellspring from which characters of this calling draw their power. There are five power sources, and several callings draw from each of them. While there may be some similarities between callings which have the same source of power, they are all quite distinct.

Mechanically every character is said to be attuned to the power source of their calling. The character's power points will be of this type and carry the power source's tag. Feats normally require power of a specific type, meaning a character may not be able to fully utilize a feat when they lack power of its source. However, it is possible for characters to attune to additional power sources, and there may be other ways to acquire or convert power from one source to another.

For the most part power source is thematic, there is no specific difference between points of one source or another, but in some cases there may be feats which behave in different ways depending on the source used to power them.

## Role

Every calling has a role, which indicates the type of job that this calling is most suitable for in action situations, particularly combat. There are four of these roles and most characters of a given calling will fall into the role defined for their calling. That being said, roles are intended to help define the themes of callings, and to help the players develop a well-rounded team which can take on various opponents successfully. Roles are not meant to be absolute unbreakable things which every character must adhere to. It may well be that a given player creates a character with a given role, and then acquires boons and makes role playing choices which lead to the character acting more in a different role. This is fine, the character is simply not the most typical example of their calling. They should still be effective as played however.

## Other Attributes

- **Proficiencies:** Each calling may have certain weapons, implements, and other tools with which they are especially capable. Characters of this calling are automatically granted proficiencies as described.
- **Defense modifier:** Every calling grants a permanent modifier to one or more defenses
- **Knacks:** This lists the knacks which typical characters of this calling are likely to have. These are suggestions, not requirements.
- **Damage die:** The size of the calling's damage die.
- **Features:** These are boons which every character of the given calling possesses, they don't count against the character's four starting boons.

In some cases the calling asks the player to choose one choice out of several. Normally only characters with this calling may possess these boons, and they are normally only chosen during character creation.

- **Boons:** These are additional boons which might be selected by the character at start up. They might also be acquired later, like any other boon.
- **Hit points:** The number of hit points gained per level when taking this calling.
- **Starting hit points:** The base number of hit points a character with this calling starts with.

## Descriptions

### List of Callings

The following table lists some of the basic attributes of each calling which is available.

Power Source

Calling

Role

Martial

Knight

Defender

Rogue

Striker

Elemental

Spell Blade

Defender

Spirit

Priest

Enabler

Shadow

Illusionist

Controller

## **Martial callings**

Martial power draws from an individual's internal and inherent magical potential, and is accessed and controlled through will and discipline. Practitioners of martial power use endless practice and techniques such as shouts and the perfection of specific weapon and unarmed combat techniques. In most cases a martial hero will rely on weapons and/or her own body to prevail. For this reason they also tend to favor physical knacks such as athletics or acrobatics over intellectual pursuits. No one should be fooled however, many such heroes are quite clever, even brilliant.

Martial power, being one of the most accessible sources at a basic level, has gone by many names, including Qi or Chi, etc. These are all examples of the same power source simply interpreted through the lens of different concepts and systems of thought through the ages.

All characters with a martial calling gain the following boon:

<b>Martial Attunement</b>	<b>Level 1: Major</b>
<b>Association:</b> Martial	<b>Prerequisites:</b> None
<b>Description:</b> Through discipline and force of will you have tapped into the internal power of your being.	
<b>Benefits:</b> You are attuned to the Martial power source. Your power points may be used with feats and effects having the martial source tag. You are considered a practitioner of martial power.	

The following callings draw their power from the martial power source.

## **Knight**

Role:	Defender
Power Source:	Martial
Damage Die:	D8
Weapon Proficiencies:	Any 4
Implement Proficiencies:	None
Knack Proficiencies:	Athletics, Leadership
Hit Points:	6
Starting Hit Points:	10

The knight is a classic warrior who specializes in close melee fighting. He may or may not be mounted, and in some cultures he might sport heavy armor, a bow, or other variations, but his primary focus is his ability to go toe-to-toe with his enemies and beat them. As a defender his main purpose is to keep the enemy occupied, damage them, and prevent them from moving past him or attacking his allies.

Knights never shrink from battle willingly, they have been well trained and consider it their highest calling to test their mettle against powerful foes.

### Features

<b>Mighty Defender</b>	<b>Knight Calling Feature</b>
<b>Association:</b> Knight Calling	<b>Prerequisites:</b> Knight Calling

**Description:** Enemies ignore you at their own risk. When they attempt to do so they quickly regret it.

**Benefits:** Whenever you attack an opponent you may inflict the engaged condition on that opponent. If the engaged opponent makes any attack which does not include you as a target it will take 4 points of damage. This increases to 12 points at legendary tier, and 24 points at Mythic tier. This condition ends at the start of your next turn.

You may use an opportunity action against an opponent whom you have placed the engaged condition on. You don't expend your one opportunity action per round when you do this. Each time you hit an opponent with one of these attacks, the opponent's current move action ends immediately, or they suffer disadvantage on whatever attack they are currently making. You may still use opportunity in the normal way once per round (ie against a non-engaged opponent).

## Boons

Shield Expert

Level: 1 Major

**Association:** Knight

**Prerequisites:** None

**Description:** You know how to get the most out of a shield.

**Benefits:** You gain proficiency with a shield. You gain access to the following powers:

Shield Block

Shield Expert 1 - Free

**Requirements:** You must have a shield equipped.

**Trigger:** When an enemy hits you with an attack.

**Effects:** You may reduce the damage from this attack by 5 points, or 10 points at Legendary, or 15 points at Mythic.

**Special:** Your shield is broken and must be repaired before it will contribute to your defense again. During a rest you may repair your shield temporarily by passing an INT check at a DV equal to the level of the opponent who's attack you used shield expert against. If the shield is magical then you pass this check automatically.

*You manage to take most of the blow on your trusty shield.*

## Rogue

The rogue is a character who survives by his quick wits, cunning, and a good eye with a silver tongue. A shrewd martialist comes to shove. Rogues like a fight that has even odds. They prefer to surprise their enemies, attack from the flanks, or snipe from the shadows. When not engaged in a fight they tend to be glib, fast talking, and freewheeling types. Many have a dark past, but many also hide a good heart beneath a hard exterior.

### Proficiencies:

Knack Thievery,  
Proficiency Stealth

Hit 5  
Points:

Starting 8  
Hit  
Points:

## Features

Sneak Attack  
Rogue  
Calling  
Feature

Association  
Rogue  
Rogue

### Description:

Your attacks are particularly deadly. You have learned to capitalize on any advantage to strike hard and decisively.

### Benefits:

Once per turn, when you hit with an attack using a light weapon and have advantage on your attack you may roll additional damage dice. At heroic tier you roll an extra 1DD, at legendary tier 3DD, and at mythic tier 5DD.

## Boons

Alertness  
Rogue  
Calling  
Feature

Association  
Rogue  
Rogue

### Description:

You are always ready for anything. Your danger instincts have been honed to a fine edge, making you very hard to catch flatfooted.

**Benefits:** You are not subject to the surprised condition. Whenever you roll for initiative you do so with advantage.

Elemental power is the raw power of physical creation and material existence. It both creates and destroys all that is physical. Mastery of elemental power is not easy, but it can bring great rewards and much direct power.

### Elemental Callings

Unfortunately it requires a highly developed mind to master the intricate power words and subtle vocal and somatic gestures required to bring forth and shape this power into a useful form. Thus many disciples of elemental power spend long periods of time in practice and research.

There are actually many paths to elemental power. While all of them require study and control, some elementalists take the less disciplined approaches of merging themselves with the elements. Eventually they may entirely replace their bodies with elemental forms which are both exceedingly powerful, and often vulnerable. These beings are certainly frightening to mere mortals who can only look upon their power with awe and fear.

In any case, every practitioner of elemental power must infuse a certain amount of this power into their being, taking elemental substances into their bodies in order to establish links with the elemental chaos from which it emerges.

Elemental Level 1: Major Infusion

### Prerequisites:

Elemental None

### Description:

Your being has become infused with the raw power of creation, elemental power. Your body can now channel its power.

**Benefits:** You are attuned to the elemental power source.

Your power

### Spell Blade

The spell blade is a magical infused warrior who utilizes elemental power in order to give her weapon attacks great force. The arcane magics bound up into this rune weapon also give her fantastical powers with which to confront her enemies.

The spell blade is a magical infused warrior who utilizes elemental power in order to give her weapon attacks great force. The arcane magics bound up into this rune

weapon also give her fantastical powers with which to confront her enemies.

Spell blades follow ancient traditions once

perfected by lost races who used arts long forgotten by all others to empower themselves. By studying the arcane secrets of magic they were able to harness the power of elements to both attack and defend. Only a very few of these mighty warriors still exist, and you have been granted access to their secrets.

## Features

Elemental Defender Spell Blade Calling Feature

**Association:** Spell Blade **Prerequisites:** Spell Blade

**Description:** You can conjure up a shield of elemental energy to protect an ally.

**Benefits:**

Elemental Shield Elemental Defender 1 - Free

**Trigger:** When an enemy engaged by you attacks someone other than you.

**Effects:** The target of the attack receives a bonus of +2 DR, +5 DR at legendary tier, and +8 DR at mythic tier.

*A shield of elemental material appears wherever your enemy focuses his attention.*

Combat Focus Spell Blade Calling Feature

**Association:** Spell Blade **Prerequisites:** Spell Blade

**Description:** You are able to focus your magical energies on your current target

**Benefits:** Whenever you attack a target, that target becomes engaged. Only one target can be engaged at a time. This condition lasts until the start of your next turn, or you attack another target, whichever comes first.

Arcane Duelist Spell Blade Calling Feature

**Association:** Spell Blade **Prerequisites:** Spell Blade

**Description:** You have learned to project the magic flowing through your blade at your most immediate enemy.

**Benefits:**

Elemental Defense Arcane Duelist 1 - Free

**rune weapon**

**Trigger:** When an enemy engaged by you attacks someone other than you.

**Type/Target** range 5, triggering opponent

**Attack** arcane vs REF

**Complete Success** 1DD and the target's triggering attack automatically fails.

**Success** 1DD and the target gains disadvantage on the triggering attack.

**Special:** This feat does not grant an opportunity to opponents when used.

*You keep your opponent engaged, even at a distance.*

Weapon Bond Spell Blade Calling Feature

**Association:** Spell Blade **Prerequisites:** None

**Description:** A spell blade's weapon is an extension of his power to which he is forever bonded by arcane forces of elemental power.

**Benefits:**

Call Weapon

Weapon Bond 1 - Free

**summoning**

**Effects:** Your rune weapon appears in your hand.

*When you call, your faithful weapon answers the summons.*

Boons

**Life Callings**

All characters with a life calling gain the following boon:

Life Attunement Level 1: Major

**Association:** Life **Prerequisites:** None

**Description:** You are attuned to the life force which permeates all things and imbues every living thing with life.

**Benefits:** You are attuned to the life power source. Your power points may be used with feats and effects having the life source tag. You are considered a vessel of life power.

The following callings draw their power from the elemental power source.

Spirit  
is the  
source  
which is

**Spirit**  
**Callings**

derived from  
contact with  
otherworldly  
entities.  
These beings  
hail from  
metaphysical  
realms of  
existence,  
and are able  
to manipulate  
and shape the  
matter and  
energies of  
the material  
world. Spirits  
have many  
names,  
including  
gods,  
demons, and  
spirits. They  
are all beings  
who exhibit  
considerable  
power and  
influence in  
the world. By  
creating  
various types  
of

relationships with these

Spirit power is one of the more readily accessible and frequently used types of power in the world. However, it can be dangerous, just like other power sources. Gods are sometimes jealous or demanding and always expect loyalty and fealty from their followers. Other beings may be less strict in their rules and more lenient in terms of behavior, but they are often unpredictable, vicious, profoundly alien, or lay cunning traps and schemes with which to cheat those who entreat them.

Most societies consider priests to be a vital link with gods whom they revere and worship. Other spirit power users may be more or less well-accepted. In some places certain gods may also be held in low esteem, thus even priests may find themselves unwelcome in a few places.

**Spiritual Level Attunement 1: Major**

**Prerequisites:**

None

**Description:**

You have become connected to the spirit world and its denizens.

**Benefits:** You are attuned to the spirit power source. Your power points may be used with feats and effects

**Invest**

characters having the spirit source tag. You are considered a practitioner from the spirit power boon:

Die: WeAPON

Weapon

Proficiencies:

Implement

Proficiencies:

Knave

Proficiencies:

Hit 6

Points:

Starting

Hit

Points:

Priests are the servants of the gods. They are granted divine power which they use to support and protect the gods' followers, defeat the god's enemies, and further the philosophy of their gods. In combat Priests fill the enabler role, healing and empowering their allies while disempowering their enemies.

Priests gain much of their power by

spirits heroes are able to gain access to power.

studying at and being initiated by different altars. Each god has many altars scattered around the lands which can grant spells of different types and levels. When a priest first reaches a particular altar she will need to perform some sort of ritual or sacrifice in order to tap the power of that particular altar. Once the requirements for the altar are met and a certain amount of prayer is completed the character will be granted a boon allowing the casting of spells of certain levels and domains. The GM has a chart which lists a number of known altars, their requirements, and the boons they can provide.

Each priest should select a god, or possibly several gods, to which she is dedicated. Some deities may normally impose racial or other limitations on their priests, although in many cases heroes break the mold. Each deity has a primary sphere of influence over which they preside. A level 1 priest may start with a generic level 1 boon as a class feature from this primary sphere. If the priest worships a group of deities, or one with multiple domains, then he could pick multiple domain boons.

## Features

Healing Hands Priest Calling Feature

**Association:** Priest **Prerequisites:** Priest

**Description:** Your spiritual connections allow you to heal with great effect.

**Benefits:** Gain a bonus to the healing value provided by all powers with the healing keyword equal to your WIS.

Healer Priest Calling Feature

**Association:** Priest **Prerequisites:** Priest

**Description:** You have the power to heal your allies.

**Benefits:**

Healing Word Healer 1 - Free

**healing**

**Requirements:** It must be your turn.

**Type/Target** close touch, one ally or self

**Effects:** The target is allowed to spend a power point in order to receive healing with a bonus of 1d6 extra points, 2d6 at legendary tier, or 3d6 at mythic tier.

**Special:** This feat may only be used twice per action sequence, and only once per turn.

Boons

**Shadow Callings**

Shadow power is often taken to be the power of death. However death and dying are only one of the manifestations of shadow. Its primary aspect is the undoing and unknowing of things. Death brings oblivion and release from the world. Likewise shadow can undo men's thoughts, obliterate their memories, and conceal things from their minds.

While many see shadow as simply a negative force, it is a power unto itself. One can not only confuse the mind, one can actually negate the very life force with its power. Thus the necromantic arts are based on the use of shadow power, and a skilled practitioner can use it to bind the bodies and spirits of the dead, creating undead beings and other similar constructions often shunned. Practice of shadow power is generally frowned upon in many societies, as its most obvious use involve deception and the higher mysteries of shadow power are hard, well hidden, and open only to a select few. The price demanded for such knowledge can be terrifyingly high. Only those of great will power, or with extremely strong motivations, are likely to be attracted to this life.

Shadow Level Attunement 1: Major

**Prerequisites:**

Shadow None

**Description:**

You have walked the path of shadow, paid the price, and become attuned to shadow.

**Benefits:**

You are attuned to the shadow power source. Your power points may be

**Illusionist**

The illusionist shadow controller, having the shadow source tag, can gain the power following from the boon: Shadow practitioners of shadow power source.

**Proficiencies:**

Implement Proficiencies:

Knack Arcana, Proficiencies:

Hit5

Points:

Starting

Hit

Points:

necromancer he focuses on the mind-affecting aspects of shadow. Thus illusionists are masters of deception, illusion, and misdirection. When in the

presence of an illusionist, nothing is as it seems!

Illusion magic has a reputation for being frightening and its practitioners are often held in ill-repute. This reputation may be often deserved, but some of those with a talent for this kind of magic have resolved to use it for good ends. It is a difficult path to follow as suspicion will never be far away, and the temptation to cloud the minds and judgment of even one's friends and allies can be a deadly temptation. As ever, the path of shadow is both powerful and treacherous.

### Features

Mental Confusion	Illusionist Calling Feature
<b>Association:</b> Illusionist	<b>Prerequisites:</b> Illusionist
<b>Description:</b> Your enemies are trapped in shadowy confusion.	
<b>Benefits:</b> Once per encounter you may impose the slowed condition on the targets of one of your powers. You may cause these characters to stop moving if they try to exit the area of effect of a shadow power you have used which is still in effect. This effect lasts until the end of the encounter.	

Phantasmist Initiate	Level 1: Major
<b>Association:</b> Illusionist	<b>Prerequisites:</b> Shadow Initiate
<b>Description:</b>	
<b>Benefits:</b>	

### Boons

There are a few rare callings which do not follow the path of access to a single power source. There are no general rules for these classes, each one has a unique

**Other** approach to tapping into the power required to become a hero.

### **Wizard**

Role:	Controller
Power Source:	Varies
Damage Die:	D6
Weapon Proficiencies:	Any 1
Implement Proficiencies:	Any 3 of staff, wand, or tome
Knack Proficiency:	Arcana, History
Hit Points:	5
Starting Hit Points:	8

Wizards are pure students of the magic of the cosmos. Without entirely limiting themselves to one power source, they study and utilize all of them in some measure. This requires a great deal of mental discipline and constant study and practice. The wizard must also seek out and gain access to the information which they need to master in order to command the power sources without becoming attuned to a given one. Often they will be found wandering in far lands, strange worlds, or dark regions of the earth in search of this knowledge.

The path of true wizardry is long and hard. Many wizards eventually become tired of its rigours and effectively become practitioners of one or another of the specific power sources, essentially taking up a second

calling within that source and abandoning much of their wizardly practice. Others simply become casualties of their need to explore and research into dangerous places and topics. Either way the higher ranks of wizardry are rarely achieved and the names of the few mighty ones who have become true archmages are spoken in awe.

## Features

Source Attunement	Wizard Calling Feature
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<b>Association:</b> Wizard	<b>Prerequisites:</b> Wizard
-------------------------------	---------------------------------

**Description:** You are able to temporarily attune yourself to different sources of power.

**Benefits:** During any given rest you may attune to any two of the five power sources. Until you change your attunements, you will be able to spend power as any other character who is attuned to those sources.

You may spend power points as if you were attuned to a power source by first spending a single power point. You have to do this each time you want to utilize power of a source you are not attuned to. Instead of spending this power point, you may instead reduce your hit points by your healing value.

## Boons

# Equipment

## Equipment and Wealth

What hero would be complete without his trusty sword, staff, or shield? There are limitless varieties of possible equipment which characters may use and possess at different times. Four major categories are discussed below, armor, weapons, implements, and general equipment.

*Note on prices:* The prices given are representative and useful for providing color and determining what things are insignificant, significant, or major expenses for a given character. The exact price a character pays for something on a given day in a specific place will vary somewhat, perhaps even significantly. The numbers provided make a useful starting point when an exact price becomes significant enough to determine.

## Armor

Many characters wear armor of various sorts. All armor reduces the number of points of damage which attacks inflict on the wearer. Armor does nothing to mitigate the non-damage effects of attacks. Armor also has a weight, which will count towards encumbrance.

The armor table shows the attributes for several types of armor. Note that historically there have been many styles of armor manufactured, but all of them can be generalized to one of the types shown here. For instance "cloth" armors made of many layers of stiffened cloth are roughly equivalent to leather armor.

## Type

The general name for this kind of armor. As noted above, this is just a general or typical descriptive name, many other styles of armor have existed, but they all have roughly the same attributes as one of the listed types.

- **None:** This is simply ordinary clothing of all types. It simply indicates that these materials provide no protection by default. Magical clothes however may act as armor and in that case they follow all the normal armor rules.
- **Leather:** This covers all sorts of basic armors made from hides, heavy furs, as well as lightweight padding such as a gambeson or other similar items that provide limited protection.
- **Reinforced Leather:** This covers improved versions of armors made from natural materials, including multiple layers, additional padding, and simple metal (or other material) reinforcements which only cover a few critical areas.
- **Mail:** Woven metal fabric shaped into a suite of armor which covers most of the body. This is the basic form of metal armor, heavier grades of armor usually involve additions to a coat of mail.
- **Piece Metal:** Brigandines, scale armors, and lamellar armors made by fastening together pieces of metal or affixing them to some sort of backing. Often includes some elements of mail. May also include earlier forms of 'plate' armor which involve affixing metal plates to critical areas of mail armor.
- **Plate:** Solid metal plates carefully joined and covering extensive parts of the body. This was the ultimate form of pre-technological armor, being quite difficult for most weapons to penetrate. Note that shields do not add DR with plate armor!
- **Shield:** This is a basic type of shield. It occupies one arm and hand completely, but isn't huge and bulky. It adds one point of DR to any type of armor except plate with which it is combined. Note that larger shields were sometimes employed by infantry formations and such, but they don't perform any better than this one as personal protection.
- **Buckler:** This is a very small shield which is held in the off hand. It provides good defense in a compact form and can be used with 1.5-handed

weapons. It adds one point of DR to anyone wearing cloth, leather, or reinforced leather armor.

## Damage Reduction

Abbreviated as DR, damage reduction is the number of points of damage reduction the armor grants the wearer. This is a 'base' DR in the case of armor, and a DR bonus in the case of shields.

\* Note that shields and bucklers won't stack with Plate armor. They will stack with other forms of DR however and in that case their bonus is considered a proficiency bonus.

## Load

The load of the armor in units.

## Cost

How many silver pieces a basic suit of armor of this type might typically cost. Note that armor is often heavily decorated and stylized. Such suits may be vastly more expensive than indicated.

## Weapons

Weapons are a type of tools which are used in combat. In addition to the basic characteristics of all tools they have some additional ones of their own. The following table lists the attributes of weapons, the meanings of these values are discussed below.

Name	Category	Load	Cost	Type	Ability	Tags	Range	Hands	Damage
Club	club	2	1cp	melee	CON		1	1	1
Mace	club	2	1sp	melee	CON		1	1	2
Great Club	club	3	5cp	melee	CON		1	2	4
Spear	spear	2	1sp	melee, ranged	DEX		1, 5/20	1	2
Long Spear	spear, polearm	3	2sp	melee	CON		2	2	2
Dagger	dagger	1	4sp	melee, ranged	DEX	light, close	1, 2/5	1	1
Rapier	sword	2	1sp	melee	DEX	light	1	1	2
Arming Sword	sword	2	3sp	melee	STR		1	1	2
Bastard Sword	sword	2	10sp	melee	STR		1	1.5	3
Great Sword	sword	3	20sp	melee	STR		1	2	4

Name	Category	Load	Cost	Type	Ability	Tags	Range	Hands	Damage
Halberd	axe, polearm	3	5sp	melee	STR		2	2	3
Glaive	polearm	3	3sp	melee	STR		2	2	3
Flail	flexible	3	1sp	melee	DEX		1	1	2
Throwing Axe	axe	1	1sp	melee, ranged	STR	light	1, 2/5	1	2
Battle Axe	axe	2	3sp	melee	STR		1	1	3
War Axe	axe	3	6sp	melee	CON		1	2	4
Throwing Hammer	hammer	1	1sp	melee, ranged	STR	light	1, 2/5	1	2
War Hammer	hammer	2	2sp	melee	CON		1	2	3
Lance	spear	3	2sp	melee	STR	mounted	1	1	3
Staff	staff	2	2cp	melee	DEX		1	2	2
Unarmed	unarmed	0	0	melee	pick	close, light	1	1	0
Light Bow	bow	2	10sp	ranged	DEX		15/30	2	1
Heavy Bow	bow	3	20sp	ranged	DEX		15/40	2	2
Hand Crossbow	crossbow	1	4gp	ranged	DEX	light	5/10	1.5	2
Light Crossbow	crossbow	4	2gp	ranged	DEX		15/30	2	3
Heavy Crossbow	crossbow	10	15gp	ranged	DEX		20/50	2	4
Sling	sling	1	5cp	ranged	DEX		10/20	2	1
Dart	dart	2	1cp	ranged	DEX	light	3/6	1	1

### Explanation of Weapon Attributes

- **Name:** This is the name of the weapon. Note that these are very general weapons. Club for instance includes all basically club-like weapons of all sorts. While many historical flavors of weapons have existed, most of them will correspond to something in this table.
- **Category:** Categories group weapons together for purposes of some powers and boons. Similar weapons will fall into a single category. Categories are considered to be a type of tag.
- **Type:** Is it a melee weapon a ranged weapon, or both? Melee weapons can only be applied to attacks which don't have a range. Ranged weapons can only be applied to ranged and area attacks. Type is considered to be a tag.
- **Ability:** The controlling ability score for the weapon. This is the ability used for attack or damage bonus when Weapon is specified in an attack or damage statement.

- **Tags:** Some weapons have special tags. The only currently defined ones are: Light which indicates that the weapon can be wielded at the same time as another one-handed weapon if the character has a second free hand; and Close which allows the weapon to be wielded even at range 0 (close combat).
- **Range:** This describes the range for the weapon. If the weapon is a melee weapon this is the range at which melee attacks may be made using it when range is 'Weapon'. If the weapon is a ranged weapon then the range is short/long. If a weapon has both types then both ranges will appear.
- **Hands:** This describes how many hands are required to wield the weapon. One means the weapon requires only one hand. 2 means the weapon requires 2 hands. For melee weapons 1.5 means the weapon requires a free hand and the second hand may hold nothing bigger than a buckler. For ranged weapons 1.5 means that the weapon requires 2 hands to load, but only one hand to fire.
- **Damage:** How many points of extra damage does this weapon do when used as part of an attack.

## Weapon Descriptions

- **Club:** This is the simplest of weapons, a heavy, blunt object which is balanced so that it can be swung with great force. Clubs come in many styles and are known by many names in different lands. They may be made of wood, stone, bone, or similar materials or combinations of material. They may even be simply a well-chosen chunk of wood.
- **Mace:** A mace is simply a fancier and more robust club. Mace includes such weapons as morning stars. Anything which generally incorporates a metal head, spikes, etc. and is crafted as a weapon can qualify as a mace.
- **Great Club:** A larger two-handed version of the club. These are often adorned with spikes and equipped with forged metal heads, metal bands, etc. As with its smaller cousin the great club is known by many names, but they are all essentially the same weapon. This includes large two-handed 'maces'.
- **Spear:** Only slightly less basic than the club is the spear. This is a stick with one end sharpened. It has a length up to about 6' and can be handled with one hand. Spears are often thrown and can have considerable range. The smallest spears are often called javelins and may be optimized for throwing, but they are all basically the same weapon.
- **Dart:** This covers anything which is small and intended only for throwing. This would include lighter and smaller spear-like items as well as some exotic variations like throwing stars. Their main advantage is they are cheap, small, and light, so many can be carried and they are easy to conceal.
- **Dagger:** This covers all of the smaller knife-like weapons. Some daggers have two edges, others only one, or none at all. Daggers are particularly useful in close quarters fighting where they may be used even when normal weapons are impossible to employ. They may also be thrown with considerable effect.
- **Flail:** This weapon is usually similar to a club, but instead of a heavy blunt head it has one or more heavy weights attached to the handle with chain or rope. Other similar weapons may have two weighted handles connected by

a chain so that the weapon can be gripped by either or both handles. In any case they all function similarly. Flails reward speed and coordination where clubs rely on brute strength.

- **Rapier:** This covers all types of light swords used only for stabbing and largely lacking any edge. Most such weapons also have elaborated hilts including a basket guard etc. These are largely self-defense weapons which are not used much in battle and have limited use against armored opponents. However, in skilled hands they can be quite deadly.
- **Arming Sword:** This covers all of the smaller swords which are used one handed and range up to about 1 meter in length. They are light weapons which can be wielded without a lot of extra space and are easily carried. Swords of this general type have gone by a vast number of different names throughout history. The Roman hispanica or gladius, the later spatha and viking swords, the arming sword of the medieval knight, and other later types of 'dress' swords and similar weapons. Anything bigger than a dagger and intended purely for use one-handed falls into this category.
- **Bastard Sword:** This covers all types of swords which are large and heavy enough to be gripped with 2 hands, but smaller than the massive great swords. They require the user to have one completely free hand and the second hand to be occupied only with a buckler or light weapon. These weapons are quite popular with warriors who fight outside of large battles where they have plenty of room to swing the weapon. Because these weapons are somewhat heavy and inconvenient to carry or use in close quarters they are generally considered to be a war weapon, not a self-defense weapon.
- **Great Sword:** This is the largest of swords, a fully two-handed weapon. It is heavy enough to damage an opponent by sheer force, but also sharp and quick like any other sword. These weapons are bulky and quite inconvenient to carry around and are normally relegated to situations where a character expects heavy fighting.
- **Long Spear:** This covers all sorts of pike-type weapons, which are all very long spears, sometimes up to 4 meters in length. Such weapons are difficult to employ and even more difficult to carry around, but they do allow for melee attacks at greater than one square range. These long spears however cannot be thrown, and in the open where an opponent can move past the point of the weapon are of limited use. One great advantage of these weapons is that they can be set against a charge, and a group of warriors equipped with set spears can be a great deterrent to mounted opponents.
- **Halberd:** The halberd is an axe on a very long handle, usually about 2 meters long. Generally the axe head is backed by a piercing point or sometimes a blunt hammer. Most halberds are topped with a spear-like point. This weapon performs as an axe, but requires two hands to use. It also allows the character to attack at a range of 2 squares due to its length.
- **Glaive:** This is a long pole with a heavy chopping and cutting type blade affixed. It generally has a point and some form of hook or fork used to fend off or dismount riders. It has a reach of 2 and requires two hands.
- **Throwing Axe:** This covers all sorts of lighter weight throwable combat axes like the tomahawk, seaxe, etc. This type of weapon is very common and comes in a variety of shapes and sizes, but they all have some things in common, a handle and a weighted head with a sharp edge. This kind of weapon is particularly favored by woodsmen and less affluent warriors as it is cheap, fairly easy to make, and effective.

- **Battle Axe:** The battle axe covers heavier one-handed combat axes of all types which are not thrown. Many of these are double-bitted and there are many minor variations, but they all function in the same way, as a heavy cutting/slashing weapon.
- **War Axe:** This is the largest of axes, requiring two-hands to wield. They do both cutting and bludgeoning damage and are quite useful for hacking through the toughest armor.
- **Light Bow:** The light bow includes most common everyday bows used for hunting and as auxiliary weapons. They are easy to draw, aren't overly bulky, much cheaper, and require less training than the heavier bows.
- **Heavy Bow:** This is a highly specialized combat weapon with a very high pull and superior range. They are very expensive, require considerable training to master, and are quite deadly in skilled hands. This covers all the larger types of bow weapons such as the long bow, and various bows built of composite materials designed for use from horseback.
- **Hand Crossbow:** This is a small steel bow with a single-handed grip. It is quite powerful but requires some time to reload. It is often used by warriors as an opening shot and is especially popular with heavily armed mounted warriors who quickly discharge the weapon and then charge into melee. They are also popular assassination weapons and shipboard auxiliary arms. It requires 2 hands to reload this weapon.
- **Light Crossbow:** These are relatively lightweight crossbows used for hunting or war which can be carried and fired. Reloading this weapon is not too time-consuming but very difficult in a close fight, generally requiring a belt hook, placing a foot in a stirrup, or operating a lever.
- **Heavy Crossbow:** These are very heavy and ungainly weapons. They can be carried around and fired, but are almost always equipped with a stand of some sort to support the weapon while being aimed. It is almost impossible to reload this kind of weapon in a close fight, but they put out considerable damage and have a very long range. For these reasons this sort of weapon is favored in situations where the user has protection such as atop a fortification.
- **Sling:** This is a leather or cloth pouch attached to lengths of string of some sort and used to throw rocks or sometimes even lead bullets. Quite effective but requires a lot of training. These are simple to make and often used by poor folk.
- **Lance:** The lance is a mounted warrior's spear. It is specialized for use from horseback, being somewhat longer and heavier than the average spear, but weighted and balanced for one-handed use from a mount. If used while dismounted the lance requires both hands to wield.
- **Throwing Hammer:** This is a fairly lightweight hammer weapon which is balanced for throwing. It can be used as a thrown weapon or melee weapon. Some tomahawks are fairly good examples of throwing hammers.
- **War Hammer:** While very similar in function to a mace/club the war hammer has a heavier head derived from mining tools. It is the favorite weapon of dwarves, who long ago adapted it from their stone masonry tools into a deadly weapon.
- **Unarmed:** This is presented in order to provide the statistics for an unarmed attack, it isn't an actual type of weapon characters can buy. Unarmed attacks represent kicks, punches, etc. A character who becomes proficient with this type of attack must choose from STR, CON, or DEX and

becomes proficient with attacks using that ability score. A character could always choose to use a type of unarmed attack they are not proficient with.

## **Ammunition**

Missile weapons such as bows, slings, etc. require ammunition such as arrows. Each type of weapon has its own ammunition type, and they are generally not interchangeable (in a pinch different types of bows might fire each other's arrows, though with reduced effectiveness).

Generally when ammunition is fired, it is used up. However, some ammunition might be recovered. Sling stones in particular are likely to remain relatively undamaged when used. Slings can also use suitable small stones, which are likely to be available in many environments. Characters might also be able to fashion crude ammunition for other missile

weapons in a pinch. Manufacturing proper arrows and such may require some time and raw materials are not available just anywhere. Heavy bolts and arrows in particular require high quality materials.

## **Implements**

Implements are tools, similar to weapons, which can be used in combat. Feats with the implement keyword allow the use of an implement and an attack made with an implement which the character has proficiency with gains the +5 proficiency bonus. In other respects the implements work fairly similarly to weapons.

### **Implement Attributes**

- **Implement Type:** the form of the implement.
- **Cost:** the cost of a basic non-magical version of this implement.
- **Hands:** how many hands are required to wield this implement in combat.
- **Damage:** amount of additional damage done by this implement when used to attack.
- **Ability:** The ability score associated with the implement.

**Wealth**

Wealth is one of the attributes of characters which can be useful in telling stories. Often players want to interact with money and by using the wealth mechanism this can be accomplished without needing to get into too many details of who has exactly what coins and whatever. All that is needed is to know the character's wealth in general terms on a scale similar to character abilities. The descriptors for wealth are slightly different than those for abilities.

## **Wealth Attribute**

Essentially characters may possess both portable wealth, coins, jewelry, and other similar small but valuable items, and non-portable wealth. Non-portable wealth may take many forms, from massive heavy items to real estate, businesses, mines, castles, etc. Normally characters can only spend portable wealth, at least easily, particularly when traveling to

distant locations. However, even the mere possession of great wealth, portable or not, is often sufficient to create significant economic advantages for a character. Thus the character can leverage all of her wealth in any situation where the player can justify this in a narrative fashion.

## Using Wealth

Proficiency - wealth is simply another area of knowledge and expertise. It can be seen as being similar to things like tools and weapons. A character may thus have 'Wealth Proficiency', in which case they get a +5 proficiency modifier to wealth checks. Certain backgrounds may provide this as a boon, or it might be acquired in other ways as a boon.

**Expenditure sizes:** Exactly what constitutes an expenditure of a given magnitude is relative to the tier of play and roughly the level of the challenge. As an approximation this chart can be used to estimate what would be an insignificant, significant, or major expense for the character. When making wealth

Tier	Insignificant	Significant	Major
Heroic	10cp	50sp	20gp
Legendary	10sp	50gp	200gp
Mythic	100gp	500gp	5000gp

checks note this and determine whether advantage or disadvantage should be granted on the check based on the description of the character's wealth, and the size of the expense.

## In an Interlude

During unstructured play, Interludes, if a player decides her character will use his wealth, then the only consideration would be whether the character's wealth attribute falls within a range which would make the action feasible. A Rich character can buy an expensive horse, and this is simply within their means to accomplish using wealth. If the case becomes one where the character's fortunes are in danger or they wish to accomplish something which is likely to be beyond their means, then this is probably going to develop into a challenge, but it could also be that the GM could simply report that your finances are insufficient. That might set up a challenge in and of itself, or not depending on how important the goal is to the character.

## In a Challenge

Wealth works in a fairly obvious way during a challenge. If a character makes a move which involves utilizing their wealth, then the check is governed by a financial aspect, and the character's wealth attribute plays the role of an ability score. If the character simply spends some money within their reasonable means, then their wealth ability modifier applies. If the expenditure or other use is well within the character's means, then they should get advantage on the check. If the expenditure is somewhat beyond their means, then disadvantage is appropriate.

Players can also use wealth reduction in the same sense that an affliction could be acquired (see *Afflictions* ). That is, a character might avoid consequences of failing a wealth related check by accepting a downgrade of their wealth attribute. This would represent a decline in the character's fortunes, such as mortgaging the family estate, or taking a loan from a loanshark (which might be paid back later, recovering the character's fortunes, or not, making the change permanent).

## In Action

Action sequences don't often revolve around things like money, but there's no reason why a PC couldn't, for instance, try to undermine an opponents morale by offering them cash to surrender or something similar. Minions might potentially be affected by insignificant bribes, while standard monsters would probably require at least a significant expense, and higher monster types would probably require major expense level expenditures to influence. The outcome of such an attempt is likely to be highly situational, but a wealth check is an obvious way to handle it. Certainly only intelligent opponents who value money (or something else of value) can be dealt with in this way, and without the ability to communicate back and forth such attempts are surely at disadvantage. On the other hand, offering extra incentives might gain advantage. In any case, such attempts should probably deliver non-lethal damage to the targets, but it might also induce them to take specific actions. This can be handled using the *Improvisation* rules.

# Living Legends

## Rules of Play

### **How to Play**

As noted in the introduction a game of HoML includes a Game Master and some number of players. Usually between two and five players are ideal, although the game could be played with as few as one player, or perhaps as many as seven or more players. These rules are generally written with the idea in mind that there will be around five players. Some challenges will need to be scaled in order to adjust for more or less, but the game should play reasonably well with any number. Each player will take on the role of one character, a player character (PC). They will play this character until her fate has been determined. During play the character is the player's alter ego within the game.

HoML is designed for play as an ongoing campaign or adventure which will span multiple sessions of play. Player characters start off as heroes, figures who have a date with destiny. They will engage in many fantastical adventures, increasing in power and shaping their fates until they become legendary and even mythic figures. This process might take months or years of playing sessions. Players might also enjoy shorter games. There is no requirement that the characters must start as level 1 heroes. The GM and players might agree to simply play a one-shot game with pre-generated characters of a certain level, or start at higher than level 1, or end the game before reaching the ultimate ending, the mythic apotheosis. Characters which do reach apotheosis (at level 20) will retire from active play and may become part of the lore of the setting in which their adventures took place.

Once the participants in a game have decided who the GM will be, they should gather for a 'Session 0'. This will be discussed more below, but this is a session in which the outline of the game, the nature of the PCs, and the themes to be explored during play are determined. The players will generate their characters, fill in their character sheets, and select boons appropriate to the character concepts and themes of the game. Players will also decide their character's specific individual goals, strengths, and weaknesses. Once these items have been addressed, then the GM will initiate active play.

Play itself is relatively simple; the GM will inform the players of what the situation is, where they are, what is happening around them, etc. The players will then decide what actions they wish to take, what they are attempting to accomplish, and how. The GM will then determine which rules apply, etc. The exact procedure will be determined by the relevant mode of play. These will be addressed in the next section.

## Modes of Play

HoML has three primary modes of play. Each of these involves a slightly different application of the rules and is appropriate to different points in the development of the PC's story. The three modes are:

- *Interlude* Interludes are periods of free role play. The characters are not engaged in a conflict. During this period no checks are required, players simply state the nature of their character's actions, possibly expend some resources, and resolve what happens next using their imaginations.
- *Challenge* Challenges are periods of conflict. During a challenge there are specific obstacles for the PCs to overcome, and a specific goal which they are attempting to achieve. The players will declare their PC's actions, intent, and resources being brought to bear against an obstacle, and the GM will determine a DV, which the player will then make a check against. When enough checks have succeeded or failed, the goal will be achieved, or success will become impossible. Either way the challenge will be resolved.
- *Action Sequence* Action sequences are detailed action scenes which involve things like combat or escaping from immediate danger. They involve checks and use of resources, but follow a somewhat more structured set of rules than challenges.

Collectively challenges and action sequences are sometimes called 'encounters' or 'scenes'. Some rules will apply to both of them, others only apply in one or the other.

## Agenda

The purpose of playing HoML is not to win or lose. It is not a competitive game in which players are pitted against each other, or against the GM. The participants work together to play and discover the fiction which results from the interactions of the various characters, and situations. The goal is to play to find out what happens. It should be fun and interesting. The GM is particularly important here, and there are certain specific elements of the agenda which fall in the GM's lap.

- *Portray an Epic World* The world is place of fantasy, filled with danger and adventure. It is ripe for great heroes to make their names by accomplishing great things. The characters are these heroes, and they need a large stage on which to play. The world is in need of them and they will rise to the challenge. The stage should always be larger than life, and this becomes even more true for legendary and mythic adventures, which should be truly astounding and amazing in their scale and fantastic nature.
- *The Characters are Heroes* The PCs are heroes, they are faced with adventure and danger at every turn. Their lives are never ordinary in any way. Every PC is potentially a key player in the fate of their town, nation, or world. They will engage in adventures which will form the stories told to future generations for years, centuries, or even all time

to come. The world is also a dynamic place. If the heroes fail to step up, or fail under the test, the fate of the world will march on, and the things they value will remain in danger.

- *Play to See What Happens* The point of the game is to find out what happens. The GM creates situations which engage the PCs, which put their values, goals, and possessions, even their lives, at risk, and then everyone plays to see what will happen next. This is not about the GM telling a story. It is fine for the GM to make some plans, to concoct threats and come up with cunning plans for NPCs which will create conflict. This should not be carried so far as to push the story in a predetermined direction. Let the plot shape itself. It is the job of the GM to get the ball rolling and make sure that things move along, not to decide every twist and turn unilaterally

## Techniques

There are some techniques which are helpful for the GM in order to make the game successful. These are general behaviors which can be used to guide the GM during play. They are not rules, but they should be kept in mind and used consistently, as the way HoML plays is largely dependent on them. Don't be afraid to experiment with other techniques or to incorporate new ideas into the game. The techniques given here have proven to be successful, but they are not a complete recipe. The players should also keep these in mind, and they can use them as well, where appropriate.

- *Address the Characters* This is a game of fiction about the characters, always address yourself to the characters, not the players. If you need to know what Joe's Eldar Wizard Tekarius does next, ask him; "Tekarius, what do you do now?" This is more engaging than asking Joe to tell you what Tekarius does. It will help to keep the players in character and give play a more fictional storylike feel.
- *Put the Fiction First* This follows from the first technique. While you and the players may need to engage in some 'game speak' in order to resolve checks, etc. the story is the point! Start with the fiction, describe the situation, resolve whatever arises from that, and then describe the resulting fiction, the situation which results from the consequences of the player's choices.
- *Ask Questions, use the Answers* The GM should ask the players what they think. If a player asks the GM "what lies to the south of the swamp?" turn it around and reply "I don't know, what do you think is there?" Likewise, ask the players what they think of the various options when they have a choice. Do they think one is riskier but potentially more rewarding? Do they have a particular interest in going in a certain direction? Whenever you are unsure where things will go next, it is a good idea to ask the players a question. Try to keep these questions couched in fictional terms.
- *Pay Attention to What the Players are Telling You* Players will often telegraph what they are interested in, what is exciting to them, and what they don't want to hear more about. This can take many forms.

Often a player will make certain choices for their character which indicate things they find interesting. If the character is trying to figure out how to make a sword which is potent against the undead, they probably don't want to end up fighting dinosaurs! If they build an elaborate backstory around their family history and a roster of all its members, they probably want that to figure prominently in the game. Likewise if they don't take up some fairly obvious challenge that is in front of them, they are probably just not interested in that plot thread, give them something else, or better ask them what they want to do. Always offer some choices, and always take up what is offered whenever possible.

- **Say Yes** When a player comes up with an idea or plan, give them a way to move forward with it. Maybe it is risky, maybe even foolish, but shutting down players and pushing the plot only in directions you like are not ways to make the game more fun and interesting. You can say "Yes, but..." and introduce a challenge, or you can simply say "Yes, and..." and then introduce whatever follows from this. Often this will be the start of a challenge, or it may represent the player coming up with a novel approach to solving an obstacle during an ongoing challenge. Either way, go with it. If you ever do say "No", then there must be a really good reason. These reasons should only be things like the action being completely discordant with the fiction, or entirely inappropriate to the genre (heroic fantasy). Players will rarely make these sorts of inappropriate suggestions. If they do, explain why you feel the choice is invalid and talk about it.

## Session 0

As mentioned above, an ongoing game of HoML normally starts with a preliminary session, which is referred to here as 'Session 0'. This is a chance for the players and the GM to sort out what the game is about, the setting in which it takes place, establish the basic facts about their characters, and decide how they fit into the world, and what the situation is at the start of play. Some of this might be negotiated by the participants ahead of time, which is a good idea. The whole process may not take an entire session of play, just go on ahead into the first scene, etc. On the other hand the first time you play it may take a while to get started, especially if the participants haven't discussed the game already. That's OK, session 0 should be fun and interesting.

The first thing to decide is who is the GM. Usually this has already been determined when the participants decided to get together to play HoML, but maybe not. The GM has the most challenging role in the game, so usually pick someone who is both interested, has some time to dedicate to it, and is conversant with the game rules. Obviously the rest of the participants will be players.

The players need to decide what they are interested in playing. What sort of hero will they choose? A stout warrior, a subtle wizard, or maybe a devout priest? There are a number of choices of calling for a PC to start with. The player will then need to decide which abilities to focus on, a

species, and background elements for the character. Finally the character needs three personality traits, which will be tested in play. The player and the GM can interact in terms of developing these choices. The GM should particularly be mindful here of the technique of asking questions! At this point the setting will only be loosely defined. Players will have the chance to define their family background, origin, and where they live, as well as their social position, allies, career, enemies, etc. Remember, it isn't necessary to define all of these things right now, some can be discovered in play when or if they become relevant. The point is to define the character well enough that the player can inhabit her and make interesting choices.

Some sort of location should be developed as part of this process. It might be a town, a city, a ship, a remote outpost, anything. This is the character's initial base. While it may not represent their 'home town' it gives them a place to rally to, protect, and draw supplies from. This may be where the characters first met, or not. Let the players decide what the relationships are between their characters, and between the characters and the starting location.

Finally Session 0 should proceed to the first scene of the game. This will usually be a challenge which the characters have suddenly been faced with, their first test! The GM will outline the situation and then the game will proceed from there. Sometimes the GM might decide to start with some sort of Interlude, at other times an Action Sequence. Whatever is chosen, adventure should not be far away. Don't start with the characters lounging in some safe place making decisions. Instead thrust action upon them. Fate is not waiting for them to make the first move, it is coming for them!

## **Basic Definitions**

In order to more easily understand the following chapters some core HoML terminology is established here. Note that the HoML glossary at the end of this document has a more complete listing of terms.

### **Level**

Level is a concept which is used heavily throughout HoML. Each PC and NPC/Monster has a level, each check has a level, each challenge has a level, and many of the game's boons, feats, etc. are assigned a level as well. In all cases level defines the overall significance or difficulty of a thing. These levels range from level 1, the least difficult or significant, to level 20 and beyond, the highest levels of difficulty and significance.

Each character has a level attribute. The character's level determines the character's overall power. A higher level character is more potent than a lower level one. In HoML character levels range from starting heroes at level 1 up to mythic heroes which have finished level 20. However NPCs may be above level 20. Once a PC reaches level 20 they no longer advance in levels, though they may still gain new boons etc. A

character which is eligible to be level 21 is usually considered to have passed beyond the mortal realm, faded into myth, etc. The GM may have some further ideas about what happens to level 20+ characters.

Character levels are used in a pretty straightforward way to allow the GM to gauge what sorts of scenarios provide a challenge for a given group of characters. Each NPC/monster has a level, which indicates what level of PC that monster will provide a degree of challenge to in a fight or other similar situation. Other elements of the game, such as hazardous terrain, traps, and other similar things are also assignable to a level, indicating the level of PC they represent a degree of challenge for. The GM will usually try to arrange scenarios such that the dangers and difficulties the characters match their skills against are roughly near their level.

Each check is also assigned a level, which is used to determine its DV (see core mechanic above). Additionally entire challenges are assigned a level, indicating the overall difficulty of the scenario and what level of PCs it challenges. Usually the individual elements of a challenge will fall close to the level of the challenge as a whole, but there may be considerable variation depending on the details of the challenge.

## Tiers of Play

The 20 levels of HoML are divided up into three tiers of play. Within each tier the game assumes a particular flavor of play and certain assumptions are made about the place of characters of each tier in the world. When characters advance from one tier to the next they begin to enter a different arena for their adventures, one of wider scope, greater challenge, and mightier foes and rewards.

**Heroic Tier** - Characters of levels 1 to 8 are heroes. During this tier of play they will be faced with situations which would test the most capable of ordinary people. Their abilities will be extraordinary, but rarely entirely fantastic. They will face fearsome monsters, evil mages, cunning traps, and adventure in the wilds, ruins, and cities of the world. By the end of heroic tier the characters will be potent heroes, well-known to the people of their homeland. A level 8 knight might be the King's Champion, the priest might be an adviser to the Court, etc.

Heroic characters walk, or ride. They wield powers which are amazing but within the limits of what is known and possible within their (albeit magical) world. A heroic warrior might slay many orcs with his heirloom sword, and endure attacks that would kill most men. There are still others in the kingdom who can challenge him however, and his reputation is still being founded.

**Legendary Tier** - Characters of levels 9 through 16 are legends. They have surpassed all but the very greatest of people in history and will be remembered for their deeds long after their passing. Their abilities will be beyond those of ordinary men, becoming extraordinary in nature. Mighty barbarians slay great giants, erudite wizards weave amazing

spells, and cunning rogues dazzle dragons. The characters will face powerful dragons, awesome giants, travel to the farthest reaches of the world, and battle its most powerful denizens.

Legendary characters ride famous mounts the likes of which are rarely, if ever, seen in the land. They may harness magic to fly or even teleport. Legendary warriors slay entire companies of orcs single-handed and best mighty giants one-on-one. Their swords have names and stories of their own. They can fly into battle, or sneak past even the most watchful guards. Nobody in the history of their land has been mightier, and only the most powerful figures in the entire world can challenge them.

**Mythic Tier** - Characters of level 17 and above are myths. They have surpassed even the most mighty legends of the past and become the greatest warriors, mystics, and tricksters of all time. Their feats will be remembered as long as stories are told until the ending of the world. Their foes are equally mighty, beings so powerful they are only spoken of in the same stories as the very gods themselves. Indeed mythic characters can expect to interact with divine forces, travel to far worlds, and undertake impossible quests. Mythic knights slay the mother of all dragons, unmatched sorcerers forge unique world-shaking magics, and mythical rogues steal the secrets of the very gods themselves.

Mythic characters have no equals in the world at all. No warrior in history has slain the king of the Giants in his own hall in the mountains of ice at the world's heart. When mythic characters travel, they invoke mighty magics, ride dragons, and the earth trembles at their coming. They split mountains, unleash magics which reshape the world, and reweave the very strands of fate itself.

## **Apotheosis**

Once a character reaches level 20, her career as an adventurer reaches its peak and comes to an end. The character will achieve his final goals, sail off into the sunset, pass beyond the realms of the living, or perhaps fall into final and uttermost oblivion. Such a character is unlikely to reappear as a PC in future adventures, her story is finished. Perhaps a favorite character might make a cameo appearance in an interlude in a later game! The character might also become a patron, or even enemy, of future heroes.

## **Tags**

Tags are a core concept in HoML. A tag may be attached to almost any element of the game, such as a power, an attribute of a character, the entire character itself, a monster, etc. Tags indicate a category into which the thing bearing the tag falls. Thus a character who is of the eldar race will have the fey tag, because the eldar are fey creatures. An item might have an attribute something like:

Cold Iron Sword – bonus: +4 permanent modifier to all attacks on fey creatures when using this weapon.

This rule would be triggered when an attack was made on an eldar character. Likewise if a power or effect has a tag, such as 'poison' this might interact with a dwarf character's 'Resistant' trait, granting him a +5 permanent modifier on any checks related to poison.

Tags frequently appear in another context, they describe damage. For instance a magical fireball might produce damage with the tag 'fire'. Characters may have immunity from, vulnerability to, or protection from specific tags. Otherwise damage tags largely work in the same way as other tags, providing an extra level of narrative description and allowing the GM and players to make changes to the mechanics where narratively appropriate. For example a GM might determine that fire damage is halved when the target is under water.

Some of the most common tags are listed in the following table, along with a brief explanation of what they normally signify. Note that some tags can also be signified by a background color, which is also indicated on the table along with the tag's name.

<b>Tag</b>	<b>Description</b>
Aquatic	A creature which is aquatic.
Martial	Associated with or powered by the Martial power source.
Elemental	Associated with or powered by the Elemental power source.
Life	Associated with or powered by the Life power source.
Shadow	Associated with or powered by the Shadow power source and/or the Land of Shadow.
Spirit	Associated with or powered by the Spirit power source.
Fey	Associated with the Land of Fairy.
Enchantment	A magic which affects something for a period of time, altering it in some way.
Illusion	A magic which changes the appearance of something, or makes something appear which is not actually present.
Summoning	A magic which calls forth some kind of being.
Divination	A magic which is used to acquire knowledge or predict the future by unnatural means.
Evocation	A magic which produces an immediate and transient effect.
Necromancy	A magic which deals with death.
Weapon	An item which may be used to make attacks with weapon tagged powers, or such a power.
Implement	An item which may be used to make attacks with Implement tagged powers, or such a power.
Fire	An elemental damage type. Indicates that an effect is related to fire.
Cold	An elemental damage type. Indicates that an effect is related to cold.
Lightning	An elemental damage type. Indicates that an effect is related to electricity.
Caustic	An elemental damage type. Indicates that an effect is caustic or related to acid or other caustic substances.
Force	A damage type caused by physical force. Weapon attacks do this type of damage.
Necrotic	Life destroying damage type effect.
Vital	Damage caused by the uncontrolled application of life energy.
Psychic	A mental effect or mental damage, including fear and other demoralizing or confusing emotions.
Disease	A disease or diseased thing.
Poison	A toxic substance or effect. Damage caused by such a thing.
Species	There are many species and each has it's own individual tag.
Natural	The creature has a natural origin, such as a wild animal, IE a bear.
Humanoid	Roughly human in general body type. A species or creature similar in many ways to humans.
Beast	A creature which is non-human in body plan but animal-like in general nature. Animals are beasts.
Magical	A creature which is unnatural and has an unnatural origin.

## **Attributes**

Attributes go along with tags to describe things in HoML. While a tag being attached to some game element indicates the general kind of that thing, or some category it falls into, attributes define the actual traits of a thing. While any object in HoML could have attributes, the main things which have attributes are characters, both NPCs and PCs. An attribute has a name, and some sort of value. The name of the attribute indicates what it is, for example a character will have an attribute named dexterity. Every attribute will have such a name, if the attribute is a boon, then the boon's name will be the attribute name. Attribute values can be anything. They could simply be a number, or a small bit of text, or they could be an entire boon or a larger block of text. For PCs some attributes are calculated or determined by the values of other attributes. Sometimes an attribute will also have some classifiers. For instance a magic item might grant a character an attribute like:

amulet of protection – bonus: +1 permanent modifier to all defenses

where 'permanent modifier' indicates which type of modifier the +1 is, and 'to all defenses' indicates to which attribute(s) it applies. Sometimes an attribute might have a tag attached to it:

blessing of darkness – 3 regeneration (necromantic)

indicating that the character gets 3 regeneration from the blessing of darkness boon and that this is necromantic magic. Certain other game effects might interact with necromantic magic, perhaps increasing or negating the character's blessing of darkness boon in specific circumstances (see tags above). Note that the presence of a tag on an attribute doesn't mean the entire thing the attribute is part of has that tag, it simply indicates that the attribute and whatever characteristic of its parent it represents is of that type. A character with 'blessing of darkness' is not necessarily necromantic, only their use of that boon carries the tag.

## **Checks and Actions**

One of the core mechanical processes of HoML are actions. When a player wants his character to do something, this is an action. During the action sequence mode of play each action will be assigned an action type, however this aspect will be explained in the more detail later. What is important now is the process.

First the GM will have described the fictional situation the characters are in. At this point players who have access to fate may expend it to alter the fictional situation. This is explained later in this section. The player describes to the GM what action their character is taking, in fictional terms. This includes both the action taken and the intent or desired result. Next, the GM will determine the DV, which is the number required to achieve success on the check governing the action. Usually

the DV is determined by the level of the current challenge, but the GM may have resources available to alter this somewhat.

Once the action has been declared and the DV determined, then the GM will determine which aspect is in force. There are two possibilities. If the action the character is taking is a feat, then the aspect is determined by the feat. For feats which don't list an aspect to make a check against, the check or attack section will decide. This is usually the case when a character makes an attack, but will also apply in other situations as well. Otherwise, if an action is being used in a more general way, then the GM will decide the aspect which governs this action. The *Knacks and Aspects* chapter describes the aspects and suggests which ones would govern in specific types of situation.

At this point players might make supplementary or alternate proposals, including taking a different approach using the initial declaration as a starting point. Another player could state his character takes some sort of supporting action, possibly altering the aspect in force, or giving the acting character advantage, etc. Whether or not advantage or disadvantage are in force due to conditions should also be determined now.

The GM should announce what aspect is now in force, and the DV again, considering supplementary/alternate proposals. The players can then include more of these if they wish, until they are satisfied they want to proceed with the check. Note that once an action has been initially declared, there is no way to back out. You can discuss strategy with your fellow players beforehand but once you decide to act, you are committed.

At this point the GM will determine if an existing check is already in force. In HoML once an aspect has been checked within a challenge or action sequence it generally does not need to be checked again, unless the character using it wants to do something substantially different than before. The GM might determine, at times, that the existing check is simply no longer applicable. In any case, once a challenge ends, all checks relevant to its aspects are no longer in force. If there is no check currently in force for this aspect, the acting player will make a check by throwing 1 or 2 d20. The results are read from the dice. This is the check value which is in force from now on for the controlling aspect. The result is compared with the DV and a level of success is determined.

If the players or GM have traits and plot points with which to improve or reduce the result, these can be utilized now to produce a final level of success. Note that the use of traits and plot points will change the immediate result, but this will not change the value of the check which is in force during this challenge. A plot point can change a failing check into a successful one, but if the aspect is checked again, failure will still result.

The GM now describes what happens and any mechanical consequences are applied (IE damage or conditions).

## Ability Checks

Sometimes a check doesn't really relate to any of the defined aspects, but can be related to a character ability. These kinds of checks come up now and then. The GM should, in these cases, simply govern the check on the basis of a raw ability score. There will be no proficiency bonus in this case, at least none provided by a knack. An example of such a check might come up when a character needs to quickly pull a tool out of his backpack, a dexterity check might indicate success. The player might also leverage a 'Plans Well' trait and spend fate to make this a wisdom check instead.

## Practices

Practices are a specific type of feat. Sometimes they may take a considerable amount of time to employ. Some practices have supplementary costs which can be paid in order to gain automatic success on the relevant check. They may also be imbued into consumables, allowing them to take instant effect. In this case they are treated like other feats which require actions.

Practices are covered in more detail in the chapter on feats.

## Difficulty Value

Level Modifier and DV Chart

LEVEL

LEVEL MOD

DIFFICULTY VALUE

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Difficulty value, or DV, is the number which must be rolled on a d20 in order to achieve a basic level of success on a check. DV is based on the level of the obstacle which the check is overcoming. This will normally be the same as the level of the overall challenge, but the GM may expend resources to increase it, players may spend resources to decrease it, etc. Once the level is known, the DV can be looked up on the difficulty value chart.

## **Defenses**

NPCs have defenses, which are a general measure of how well they resist certain types of attacks. These are used as the DVs when a PC makes an attack on an NPC or tries to effect it in some way which it can resist. PCs do not have defenses per se. Instead, when an NPC attacks a PC the player will be granted a defense check, as described in the action sequence rules. PCs often get modifiers to these checks, which are sometimes referred to as 'defense modifiers'. Sometimes commonly used defensive checks are informally termed 'defenses', but they don't have the same place in the game as NPC defenses.

## Advantage and Disadvantage

Advantage and disadvantage is a mechanism which is used to make a check either easier or harder in order to reflect situational factors. There are many possible sources of advantage, and when a player rolls a check in a situation where her character is in a favorable situation, the roll is said to be made with advantage. Whenever this happens, the player rolls 2d20 instead of 1d20, and chooses the die displaying the higher number, which becomes the result of the roll. Likewise, in an unfavorable situation a roll is made with disadvantage. Again, 2d20 are rolled instead of one, but in this case the lower of the two is chosen. Many situations can produce either advantage or disadvantage, and these are detailed throughout the rules when they apply. In some cases both advantage and disadvantage may be present, in which case they cancel out. There is no such thing as 'double advantage' or 'double disadvantage'. A roll either has advantage or it does not. So if there are two circumstances each granting advantage, and one granting disadvantage, the roll is made with 1d20.

## Modifiers

Modifiers are bonuses or penalties to the check value which reflect something about the character which makes her more or less able to succeed at this sort of check. Normally modifiers don't change, except when something changes about the character, thus they shouldn't have to be recalculated or figured very often.

*Ability modifiers* are determined by the ability value of the rolling character's applicable ability. Generally, for any given check, one ability will be applicable. For a feat of strength the character's strength ability value would be used. A character with a strength of Strong(+3) has an associated +3 ability modifier and would thus add 3 to his check when attempting to lift a heavy object. Likewise if a character were attempting to dodge a poison dart fired by a trap she would make a check using her dexterity ability modifier.

*Permanent Modifiers* are modifiers which are applied for other reasons than ability score. This could be a result of a boon for example.

*Level Modifier* is a modifier which all Characters are granted based on their level. This modifier can be found on the difficulty chart. This represents the character's increasing skill, luck, and confidence. Higher level characters are greater heroes and thus are more easily capable of achieving all manner of tasks.

*Proficiency Modifier* is a modifier which is applied when a check is governed by an aspect in which a character is proficient, a tool with which they are proficient, have specific knowledge, or in any similar situation. This modifier is always +5.

Note that the sum of these modifiers should be a single overall total modifier that will only change as the character acquires or loses boons, gains levels, etc. Frequently used total modifiers can be written on a

character's sheet for reference. This normally includes total attack modifiers, total aspect modifiers, etc.

Modifiers never stack within a type. Only one modifier, the one most favorable to the creature making the check, is applicable. For example a character might have a permanent -2 modifier to all wisdom checks to resist fear due to a curse, but if the character also had a +2 modifier to resist fear checks because they were equipped with an Amulet of Bravery boon then the character would have a +2 modifier when the check is fear-related.

Whenever a check is made, all relevant modifiers in each category are determined, and the best one from each is selected. Then these 4 numbers are added together, to produce a total modifier for the roll.

## Check Results

Roll	Results
Result	
5 or more greater than the DV	
Complete Success	
Equal to the DV or greater	
Success	
Less than the DV	
Failure	

When dice have been rolled and all modifiers applied, then the result is compared to the DV, and the degree by which the value exceeds the DV, or if it falls short of the DV noted. The result can then be compared to the check results table. The final result will be one of three outcomes, complete success, success, or failure. In some cases the players or GM may have the option to adjust this result up or down to produce a final outcome.

Specific rules for each mode of play determine what the mechanical outcome of each type of result is. Fictionally however failure means that the PC's intent is not realized. Either they failed to carry out the action, it went wrong in some way which made it futile, or other circumstances prevented the goal from being achieved. Either way the situation changes. Perhaps the character can attempt something similar at another time, but the story has moved on at this point.

Success means that the character has achieved their basic intent. The action was effective and they can proceed on, having overcome whatever obstacle they faced. Complete success is basically the same as success, but the effectiveness of the results was greater. This might manifest as increased damage of an attack, or extra successes being tallied in a challenge.

## Putting it Together

While checks and actions might seem somewhat complex, in play this is mostly quite simple and straightforward. Suppose a party of characters are attempting to enter into an orc camp. There are alert sentries here and there, and the orcs are fierce warriors, and very numerous. The players decide their characters will sneak past the sentries. It might go something like this:

**GM:** "From the high ground you can see the camp below you. While it is not fortified there are sentries posted at intervals, and you can see a patrol moving along the edge of the nearby woods, apparently watching for intruders, or maybe deserters. At the center of the camp you can see a large tent and some cages. There may be other defenses you cannot see. What do you do next?"

**Player 1:** "We wait awhile until dusk, then we attempt to sneak past the sentries and approach the cages. Since I am the most stealthy I take the lead and guide the rest of the party in."

**GM:** "OK, so the controlling aspect of the check will be Stealth. This is a level 5 challenge, so the DV is 19." At this point the GM could decide to expend some resource in order to increase the DV, but he doesn't do that in this case, let's see if the PCs can get themselves in deeper!

**Player 2:** "How about if I use my camouflage practice to make us all harder to see?"

**GM:** "Since this doesn't change the aspect from Stealth it will give you advantage on the roll for this check. The DV is 19 with advantage."

**Player 3:** "OK, once we have the camouflage we will sneak down into the camp."

**Player 1:** "I have a bonus of +11 total on Stealth, +3 level modifier, +3 DEX modifier, and +5 proficiency modifier." [Rolls 2d20 and picks the higher of the two] "I got a 12 plus 11 equals a 23 total."

**GM:** "OK, that is enough for a success, you have crept quietly down into the camp, passing several sentries and a few wandering orcs on your way. It takes you about half an hour to get close enough to see the cages. There is an open area around them and the large tent. A wagon stands nearby. As you watch some noise and disturbance grow in the camp, orcs are congregating in the open area, and a large warrior suddenly leaps up onto the wagon and begins to speak."

**Player 1:** "Can we sneak past and get to the cages?"

**GM:** "There are many eyes present, and the ground between you and them is quite open. Stealth won't work here."

At this point the fictional situation has evolved, and the players will have to come up with another approach to advancing towards their goal, but they have gotten closer than before. In a challenge situation they will have achieved a success by succeeding on a Stealth check, and this check will continue to govern any additional obstacles based on Stealth, unless the situation changes considerably. What will our heroes do now? Play to find out!

## Helping

When one character attempts to carry out an action, another character might do something intended to assist them. There are two cases: In the first case the second character is changing the situation and invoking a different governing aspect. In the example above, had some of the PCs created a diversion, that would have made the check about Deception instead of Stealth. This might be a good tactic, for instance if the PCs were not overly stealthy.

The other case is when the same aspect governs. In the example camouflage provides advantage to the stealth check because it is a stealth practice. Whenever the assistance is governed by the same aspect, it provides advantage on the roll for the check.

## Group Effort

In many cases the action is a group effort. The above example for instance has the whole party sneaking in. This is handled by simply having the lead character take the check. This works well in most challenges, but in an action sequence characters will usually be fending for themselves. Thus if the party must leap across a chasm, each character will probably need to succeed on their own or else fail to cross. The helping rule can be applied here of course, when it is feasible.

## Feats

Feats represent the special actions which characters can take by virtue of their great power. Any ordinary person can pick up a sword and take a swing with it. Only a mighty hero can chop through the necks of three opponents with one blow! Characters acquire access to feats when they gain boons. Many boons provide access to a feat as a benefit of possessing the boon. If a character has access to a feat, then the character can employ that feat as an action according to the rules found here.

There are a few basic feats which any character can use. These are simply actions which are best described using the feat format, such as basic weapon use, but which any person would be able to accomplish.

# **Actions**

Everything which characters can do in HoML is described in terms of actions. During an action sequence (see Living Legends) characters' activities are regulated by the use of actions, turns, and rounds. If a player wants his or her character to move then the player declares that the character spends a move action. Every active check in the game (and some other types of checks) is made as part of the resolution of an action use. Since there are an infinite number of things characters can do in HoML most of them are not formally described by explicit feats. In most cases it isn't necessary to provide this much detail. The GM can simply declare that a character acts and what type of action it is. For example if a character decides to talk this is simply an ordinary action. The player simply describes what the character does and the effects are determined and resolved. In these cases the GM will decide what type of action is required, Major, Move, Free, or Opportunity. In some cases a feat may simply 'come into effect' or something may 'just happen', in which case there is no action at all, this is called 'No Action'.

In challenges formal action types are less important, as time and what characters can do is regulated in a more narrative fashion. In this case characters generally just utilize various feats when needed, with the GM describing what happens next and players interjecting when they wish to effect the course of events. This is described in the basic how to play rules for checks.

## **Action Types**

Action types are discussed in greater detail under the action sequence rules. Every feat will have one of several action types which it requires. These are designated in the feat's feat block. The action types are Major, Move, Free, and Opportunity. Sometimes a feat is designated as 'no action', meaning it is something which happens without anyone acting at all.

## **Reading a Feat**

Fireball

Fire Adept 4 -  
Major

### **Fire, Implement**

**Type/Target** ranged burst 3 within 10, all creatures

**Attack** Implement vs REF

**Complete Success** 3DD + INT + Implement damage and the target is pushed one square.

**Success** 3DD + INT + implement damage.

**Failure** half damage.

*You Conjure forth a blast of searing fire which burns anyone caught in the blast.*

Every feat has a feat block which describes it in detail, see the example.

### **Tier**

The tier into which the feat falls is reflected by the color of the titlebar for the feat block.

### **Name**

The name of the feat.

### **Origin**

The boon which grants this feat.

### **Level**

The level of the feat.

### **Action Type**

The action type required by this feat.

### **Tags**

All the tags for this feat. Specifically if the feat does damage, the tag for the damage type is here, as well as any tag indicating the type of tool, weapon, or implement you can use with it.

### **Type/Target**

Feats which can be targetted on someone will describe the type of area and whom within that area is targetted.

### **Attack**

Describes attack attribute or tool, and which defense the feat will attack.

### **Check**

Describes a check which is made to achieve success with this feat. This is essentially the same as the attack element, but is present in those cases when a feat must be rolled for, but doesn't actually attack something.

### **Complete Success**

Describes the results of a complete success check result when using the feat.

### **Success**

Describes the results of a success check result when using the feat.

## **Failure**

Describes the results of a failed check result when using the feat.

## **Flavor Text**

Text which can be used to narrate the effect of using the feat.

## **Requirements**

Any preconditions which must be met in order to use this feat.

## **Trigger**

An event or circumstance which will trigger the use of this feat.

## **Effects**

Any results of using the feat which are not dependent on making a check.

## **Special**

Any other special rules associated with this feat.

## **Duration**

The length of time which the effects of the feat last. If not present then generally the effects are instantaneous. End of Turn means the effect lasts until after the target takes its next turn, or takes some sort of action (outside of an action sequence). Rest means the effect lasts for the rest of the current scene, until the character rests. Recovery means the effect lasts until the target finishes a recovery. Continued means the effect lasts as long as the originator wishes, up until the next rest, or until they are unable to take actions, whichever comes first.

## **Practices**

Practices are a special category of feats which are not normally used directly by heroes as actions, but which instead require some time and possibly materials in order to carry out. In terms of reading a practice, they have the same components as other feats. However they will generally not specify an action type, and will have the practice tag, or the ritual tag. Rituals are simply a thematic subcategory of practices which rely on magic specifically.

## **Practices in Action**

Practices are not normally useful during action sequences, because they take significant time to employ. However they may be used quite effectively during challenges. The GM and players should take into consideration the situation and the time and other factors required to implement the practice. If it is narratively feasible, then it can be employed. In some situations the GM might impose disadvantage when conditions are unfavorable to perform a practice. If the conditions are reasonable, but the time or other factors involved would make the situation less favorable to the heroes, the GM might make the check difficult.

Once the players have declared the intent to use a practice, and the GM has decided if it is feasible and any specifics, then the players must expend any required resources needed to carry it out. Whichever character(s) are using the practice may also pay the supplementary cost to produce an automatic success.

## **Rituals**

Rituals are a type of practice which involves the invocation of powerful magical forces. Carrying out a ritual requires the expenditure of ritual components. These components must have a tag which corresponds to the power source of the ritual. The components might be highly specific in nature, or more general, such as 'spiritual components'. The following table lists some of these general categories for the sake of convenience. Each ritual will specify the degree of expenditure required.

## **Consumables**

Rituals may be imbued into consumables. This is a process in which the ritual is carried out, and any costs paid, at an earlier time. The ritual's energy is then focused in a consumable form and contained, so that it can be freed almost instantly later on. Many rituals will specify a consumable form in which they can be imbued. When a ritual specifies a power point cost, the power points spent may not be recovered until the consumable is utilized. This means that consumables are likely to be fairly rare, though a ritual with no power point cost may be used to create consumables rather more often.

## **Reading a Practice**

In general practices read like other feats. However, they often have elements which are not present in other feats. As a rule practices won't list an action type in the feat header. otherwise the following elements may be present.

## **Requirements**

This section may be more extensive than in the case of other feats. It will list any conditions which are required in order to perform the practice.

## **Components**

This lists all the components needed to perform the practice, and the expenditure level required. For example, a ritual might require a major expense worth of elemental components to complete. These must be available at the time of use, and will be expended during the use of the practice.

## **Costs**

This lists the supplementary costs, if any, which guarantee success with the practice. Not all feats have this option, but many do. Often these are power point costs, but they could be anything.

## **Interludes**

Of the three modes of play in HoML, interludes are the simplest, but in some ways they can also be the most important. They represent establishing and character building scenes in which there is no actual conflict. They have very simple rules. In an interlude, no dice are used. Instead the GM and the players simply narrate. First the GM describes a scene in which the characters find themselves, and then the players describe what they do. Often these descriptions can be abstract, like "I go and buy some new clothing." Nothing is at stake here, the character cannot fail to buy new clothing in any interesting way.

Interludes might be more interesting however. A character could acquire useful or necessary resources, make plans, etc. Often these activities might lead towards some more substantive action. If the characters formulate a goal, take consequential action, etc. then the mode of play can shift to either an action sequence, or a challenge as appropriate. Note however that not every minor bit of action needs to be played out. For example:

Ethel, Toric, Randall, and Alia decide they want to learn the latest news. They take themselves to the local tavern where they often hang out, have some beers, and talk to their various contacts. Is anything interesting happening in town this week? They spend most of the evening gathering information, and during the course of this a fight breaks out at the bar. Soon the dock workers are brawling furiously with the stevedores! One of Toric's friends lands near their table, and as a big guy winds up to punch him in the head, Toric bashes the guy with his mug. Soon the PCs are embroiled in the brawl. Later we find them in the town gaol with the other troublemakers. While the players may happily describe their participation in the night's fisticuffs, there's no real need to use another mode of play. Nothing serious is at stake. We have simply learned that Toric has a friend, and is willing to get into a brawl, and now there is at least one stevedore who's sore at him!

Interludes can also be used in other ways. For example the GM could create a vignette, such as a flashback, which could be played as an interlude. The action has already happened. It is recontextualizing or expanding on some sort of ongoing event in the here and now, but the scene being described took place in the past. It won't change anything, and thus nothing is at stake. This is a type of interlude. A 'training montage'

would be a good form for an interlude. The player describes how his character develops some new ability, but nothing is at stake, the results are known, the character will receive a boon and advance a level.

Sometimes there are interactions between the PCs themselves. These are almost always interludes as well. There may be tension between the characters, but normally they don't enter into direct conflict. PCs can interact in an interlude and work out their 'stuff'. This can lead to other conflicts down the road, or play out in a variety of ways.

Another option might be something like a dream sequence where a character experiences a surreal dreamlike vision or an actual dream which contains information or a portent. It might include figures from the character's past, other PCs, etc. Usually the GM will describe what the character sees, but the player (or players) might decide to react in various ways.

Finally, an interlude could act as a transitional scene. Perhaps a long period of time passes for the characters. A transitional scene could be used to describe an important element of the elapsed time, or to describe changes in the setting which take place. The scene can help to establish the tone for the period to follow, perhaps revealing some new threat or opportunity.

Remember, no dice are used in interludes. They are free-form roleplay and exploration where no direct threat or consequences of failure exist for the PCs. If they want to use one of their abilities, a feat, etc. they are free to do so as a way of explaining their actions, but there isn't any need to roll a check, as there is no challenge. As soon as the characters are in danger, or risking something, if they have stated a goal which is substantial enough to warrant being played out as a challenge or action sequence, then change to the appropriate mode of play.

## **Rest and Recovery**

There are two specific types of interlude which have some specific mechanics attached to them, rests and recoveries. Characters can only press on for so long before they must stop to regain their strength. There are two types of break in HoML, the rest, and the recovery. A rest is a brief interlude in the action, which the players may call at the end of any challenge, in which the characters catch their breaths and see to their more urgent needs. A recovery is a period of rest and recuperation during which characters make a full recovery.

### **Rest**

Characters can take a rest anywhere as long as they are able to stop and catch their breath for a few minutes, that is if they are not in combat or performing some other task. When a rest begins all effects with durations extending until a rest end. As soon as the rest ends the characters gain all its benefits. Power points may be spent to recover hit points at a rate of one PP for 1 healing value worth of hit points. Any characters who were below 1

hit point recover to 1 hit point and regain consciousness unless they are subject to some affliction which prevents this. Each character also recovers one power point at the end of the rest.

Note that characters may not take multiple consecutive rests, some other type of activity must intervene between them. The GM may also dictate that a trivial scene or activity doesn't count. Characters can't simply find a way to have an inconsequential scene in order to stack up rests solely so they can quickly accumulate power points.

There are generally no narrative consequences to a rest. It is assumed that characters will rest at the end of each challenge, or action sequence, or even scene in a longer challenge, unless they don't wish to do so. However, if the PCs are being pursued, or pursuing, or otherwise in a highly time-constrained situation, they may not be able to get even a rest.

## **Recovery**

A recovery is a much more significant pause in the action. The PCs make their way to some sort of safe shelter, retreat to a secure location, or return to their place of residence. This type of break means that they have consumed a significant amount of time and possibly left whatever location they were previously at. Typically a party will take a recovery at the end of some sort of adventure or at a natural stopping point.

Recoveries have narrative consequences. The players are allowed to decide, at any point, that they wish to avail themselves of a recovery. At that point the GM will inform them of the full narrative consequences of taking that action: "If you make camp in the cave you can recover, but the orcs are going to march on through the night and they will have a full day head start. They may eat some of the captives." Depending on how significant the stakes are at the moment, the consequences could be anywhere from trivial to Earth shattering. In terms of an ongoing challenge, taking a recovery could be tantamount to failing, it could cost the PCs an automatic failure, or it might not matter at all.

There is no specific fixed length in narrative terms which a recovery takes. Normally it will represent camping, eating, sleeping, etc. but it could represent a break of 5 years in the narrative, or the great god Atur could come down from on high and zap the PCs back to full strength in an instant, for a price. It is up to the GM to offer options, but the players should always be given the choice, recover and pay the price, or forge onwards with the resources at hand instead.

It can be assumed that characters can gain the benefits of a rest at the start of any recovery. At the end of a recovery characters hit points recover to their maximum value. Any daily effect is renewed, and the characters power points are reset to their maximum value as well.

Sometimes the GM might allow for a 'partial recovery' in which some benefits accrue but not all of the full benefits of a recovery. In that case the narrative consequences are also probably lessened. The GM could also

decide that the level of recovery is tied to the results of a challenge, or one of the checks making up a challenge. Thus the GM might set a "making camp in a howling storm" challenge. If the PCs are totally successful -no failures- they get a full recovery. Lesser levels of success -1 or 2 failures- provide a smaller benefit, and with 3 failures the PCs gain nothing, sleeping out in the freezing weather!

## **Challenges**

Challenges are the second mode of play in HoML. A challenge is a way to play through a conflict in which characters endure some sort of risk. It could be something they attempt to do, or a danger or other circumstance which they have to deal with. The challenge framework can also be used to handle more extended circumstances such as a long journey or quest. The challenge rules can also be adapted to handle several types of situations such as afflictions, which are covered in their own rules sections.

In essence a challenge is simply a story which has a beginning, some events which take place, and finally an ending. It might be a very simple story of a burglar attempting to get into a house. Or it could be a long and more complicated story involving a group of characters trying to negotiate an alliance of hostile warlords in order to face a terrible common foe. As the GM unfolds the circumstances of the story, the players attempt to take actions in order to control the direction of the plot. When they succeed things move in their favor, when they fail, things go against them. Once a certain number of successes or failures have been tallied, the challenge comes to its conclusion. If the required number of successes have been achieved, the characters achieve their goals. If three failures have been tallied, then they fail and suffer the consequences.

## **Challenge Design**

The GM should determine, ideally ahead of time, what the general structure of the challenge consists of. Are there specific steps which must be followed in order to achieve success? Are there specific conditions which trigger failure? As the challenge progresses how does its plot develop? The GM should also consider the overall framing of the challenge. Are success and failure distinct measurable outcomes? Are there discernible narrative consequences to success and failure? Does the challenge 'hang together' in a narrative sense? Finally, the challenge needs to have an internal plot which unfolds instead of simply a series of repetitions of the same action. What levels of success and failure exist? The answers to these questions will form the basis for the construction of the challenge. If the challenge is not cohesive, if it can't be expressed as a plot, if there isn't a distinct conflict, if success and failure do not have distinct consequences, then reframing or dispensing with the challenge should be considered.

Once the GM has determined what the challenge is about, and determined the consequences of failure and the rewards of success, then some basic decisions need to be made. Each challenge must be given a level, this will determine the DCs of the checks required to gain successes in the challenge. Normally this will be the level of characters, but more difficult

situations may be considered higher level. The GM will also need to determine the complexity of the challenge. A challenge which will be a significant focus of play is complex, challenges which are less involved will be moderate, and very straightforward challenges without a lot of added factors will be simple.

Nesting challenges. A challenge might be either embedded within another mode of play, or it might form a framework within which play proceeds in any of the three modes. For example an action sequence might include a challenge within it, so that while the PCs deal with enemies in combat, they must also accomplish some other task, disarming a bomb, carrying out a ritual, etc. The challenge could be long-running, such as successfully crossing a great distance. Along the way there are smaller challenges, fights, disasters, etc. Each of these might be a challenge or action sequence of its own. Instead of making checks to decide the success of the journey, these included episodes build the success/failure tally of the journey challenge.

## Mechanics

Challenges follow a specific mechanical framework, however this framework should be considered somewhat flexible. When it makes sense, in the context of the fiction, any circumstance might represent successes in place of making a check, for example.

### Complexity

Complexity	Progress Points	Difficult Checks	
Simple	4	0	Every challenge has one of three levels of complexity, simple, moderate, or complex. The complexity table
Moderate	8	2	
Complex	12	4	

indicates how many progress points are required for success in each type of challenge, as well as the expected number of difficult checks which the GM is expected to employ.

### Scenes and Moves

Challenges are organized into scenes and moves. The GM describes scenes, and the players make moves, usually by describing what their characters do. Once a scene is resolved by a move, the next scene is created, as a logical narrative extension of the last one. The new scene could simply be the same situation as in the last scene, with some change wrought by the players last move, or it could be a new situation. In either case, some obstacle exists at this point which the PCs must overcome in order to progress to their goal. When the challenge is completed, the GM will describe the final scene and play will continue in a new mode.

## **Procedure**

1. The GM frames the scene. If this is the start of the challenge then it is the initial situation, otherwise it is the situation post-move. At this point a player could expend a plot point to alter or amend this fiction by invoking an attribute of her character, or of the scene. She could also ask the GM to invoke such an alteration in order to gain a plot point for use later. In the later case the alteration is likely to make the situation less favorable to the PCs.
2. Decide which player makes the next move. There is no hard and fast rule for this. Often it will be obvious, or a player will volunteer. If the players don't agree on who goes next, they can toss dice or put it to a vote. Often the GM will make the decision implicitly by directing the action in the scene at a particular PC.
3. The move is now resolved by taking an action, see the procedure under *Checks and Actions*.
4. Success or failure is tallied. One progress point is awarded for success, two for complete success. If the check was a failure, then it is recorded on the failure tally.
5. The tallies are compared to the number required. If the PCs have accumulated the required progress points, they succeed at the challenge and it ends. If three failures have been tallied, the PCs fail the challenge and it ends. Otherwise go back to step 1 above and continue the challenge.
6. The GM describes the scene at the endpoint of the challenge and the game continues in a new mode of play, the challenge is over. The characters may choose to rest, unless the final scene requires some immediate action.

## **Action Sequences**

Action sequence is a mode of play in which the characters engage in some highly risky kind of physical action. The characters will be attempting to negotiate various dangers and carry out tasks, usually as quickly as they are capable of. Most action sequences are combat, and many of the rules found here will deal with combat specifically, but the same general framework can be used even when no actual fighting is taking place, or when the action is a mixture of fighting and other elements.

Characters will encounter and battle strange monsters and evil villains, probably on a regular basis. These rules are designed to allow for both quick resolution of combat challenges and fun tactical game play while remaining as simple and providing as many role-playing opportunities as possible. They are not designed to be particularly faithful to real life, but instead should evoke the battles of myth and legend.

## **Turns and Rounds**

Action sequences progress using turns. In each turn a given character will take most of his actions. Once the character's turn is over the next character (see initiative) will take her turn. A 'round' is said to have gone

by when a given character's turn comes up again (IE play has come round to the first player again). There is no specific start or end of a round, it is just a measure of time which lasts from the start of a character's turn to the start of that character's next turn. Any time a character can take an action or gain some benefit "once per round" said resource can be used once and not again until after the start of the character's next turn.

## Grids

HoML places the action on a grid, which is a map of the location where the action is taking place, which is divided into 2 meter squares by a regular grid. Just as time is divided into turns and rounds, the grid divides up the space where the action is happening into squares and each thing within the location occupies some space within this grid.

At higher tiers grids can be scaled, breaking the action out into a larger and more epic scale. Optionally the participants in an action sequence at legendary tier may scale the grid up to 10 meter squares. Since many interior features will occupy a fraction of a square this large the GM should typically just assign each room or corridor to a single square, unless it is a very large area. Outdoor areas will be more amenable to the heroic tier procedure, noting that, at this scale, quite a few terrain features will either become trivial or simply occupy the borders between squares. Mythic level action can be set on an even larger scale, 30 meters per square.

The effects of scaling are described in the detailed rules on space and grids in a later section. The key question at the start of an action sequence is simply which scale is being used, and then during setup the map can be laid out, and creatures, objects, and terrain placed on it appropriately.

## Procedure

When the GM determines that an action sequence has arisen he or she will carry out the following procedure:

1. **Surprise Determination:** The GM will determine if any of the participating creatures are surprised (see the next section). This will effect the course of the battle in various ways.
2. **Setup:** The characters locations and initial status are determined and any playing aids which are being used are set up.
3. **Initiative:** The players will make an initiative roll for each creature in the combat. The GM may choose to group some NPCs and monsters together for this purpose instead of rolling for each one separately in order to speed up combat. See the Initiative section below for details about initiative checks.
4. **Turns:** Each player describes and resolves the actions for his or her characters in order of initiative as described below. Any effects are resolved as they occur. During each turn a character will go through the Start of Turn phase, the Action Phase, and the End of Turn Phase.
5. Turns are repeated until the GM determines that the combat has ended, either because one side has been defeated, one or both sides

have disengaged, or both sides agree to stop fighting. Action sequences might also end for other reasons, at the GM's discretion.

## **Surprise**

The effect of surprise in terms of combat are described here. Any, all, or none of the creatures in a combat may be surprised. This is largely up to the GM, though often Perception or Insight checks, or possibly other types of check may determine who is actually surprised. When a creature is surprised two things happen. First of all any creature which is surprised rolls its initiative check with disadvantage. This generally means the creature will act after unsurprised creatures in the turn order. Additionally during the setup process the GM should give consideration to surprise. Generally speaking surprised creatures should make and announce any decisions they need to make during setup before unsurprised creatures. Surprised creatures have the surprised condition imposed on them until after their first turn.

In many cases where surprise is a factor one side or the other may be in a prepared state. This would be the case for instance if one side had prepared a successful ambush. In these cases the GM should allow the prepared characters the benefit of one turn's worth of action during setup. Only non-attack actions may be taken during this time and no actions which would negate surprise (IE a concealed character cannot move into plain view of the enemy). Characters can utilize powers, make skill checks, and move within the above limits. Generally this can simply be handled as part of initial setup and assumed rather than played out in detail. The GM is of course always the final arbiter on these matters.

Thus if Mortimer the elf is crouching in the shadows above a doorway awaiting the arrival of an unsuspecting orc the action can simply be taken up at the point where the orc walks out the door. Mortimer will almost surely move first and will have advantage over the surprised orc, which will not be able to get opportunity, and will attack with disadvantage in its first turn.

## **Setup**

Setup and its relationship to surprise has already been mentioned above. In general the GM should 'set the scene', allowing the players to explain what their characters are doing, where they are located, etc. when the combat begins. A scale should then be established and the map and grid laid out.

The GM can then set up the NPCs in a logical way, with whomever is surprised generally being positioned first and the other characters then getting to choose their positions in relation to them. Often the situation will simply present itself, some orcs emerge from the woods, see the PCs 20 squares away across the clearing, and charge! Neither side is surprised, so the GM places the orcs on one side and the PCs take up positions on the other, and then initiative is checked.

## **Initiative**

To determine the order in which characters take their turns in an action sequence initiative is used. At the start of the action sequence each character's player rolls an initiative check and records the results. When the action sequence starts the character with the highest initiative check result will take a turn first and other characters will go in descending order until the character with the lowest check result has gone. The turn order will then start again at the highest initiative character. If 2 characters have the same check result then the one with the higher DEX modifier goes first. If they have the same DEX modifier then simply choose one by an opposed DEX check. Once this order is established it can be followed for the rest of the action sequence.

An initiative check is a standard check, which might be governed by different aspects depending on the situation. Each character makes a check, with the aspect depending on their fictional situation. A character who is watching out for an ambush might use Perceptive, another might use Insightful, etc. Some boons may also have an effect here. If a character could use more than one aspect for this check, the player (or GM) can pick the one to check against. If a character is surprised then she will have disadvantage on this roll (IE roll 2d20 and take the lower roll). In some cases it may be simpler for the GM to allow a surprising character to roll with advantage instead. For example if Malvin the Marvelous surprises 5 goblins it is easier to roll 2d20 and take the higher of the two instead of rolling 2d20 and taking the lower of the two for each of 5 goblins since the relative effect will be the same.

## **Turns**

Each turn consists of several phases which are followed in order. First is the Start of Turn Phase; any effect which interacts with this phase happens now. Second is the Action Phase; during this phase the creature is granted a move action and a major action which the character may expend to invoke feats or take other actions. Finally the turn has an End of Turn Phase; effects which interact with the end of turn happen at this point, as well as all other automatic effects which don't specify some other time of action, such as regeneration, expiration of powers, etc.

## **Actions**

Actions represent all the things which heroes do during action sequences. Every time a PC acts, they are performing an action. Actions come in several types, as described next. Anything can be done during an action, but there are certain typical actions which characters take, and these are defined below. If an action doesn't seem to be one of these, then the GM should simply decide which type of action it is.

Note that action sequences are *action* . Long drawn out activities are generally not possible in the middle of combat or while attempting to escape from a burning building! Thus it isn't normally feasible for a

character to don armor, rummage around in their backpack for something they weren't prepared to access quickly, etc. Carefully stowing an object wouldn't be feasible, tossing it in a bag or dropping it on the other hand is perfectly possible. If there is some doubt as to whether a character can accomplish something, it is perfectly reasonable to require a check of some sort. Did Ragnar pack that healing potion at the top of his pack, or not? It sounds like a wisdom check!

<b>Name</b>	<b>Action Type</b>	<b>Description</b>
Talk	Free	The character may say something, shout a warning, etc. The speech should be no more than a few seconds in duration.
Drop	Free	The character may drop an item which is in his or her hand(s). The item will normally remain where dropped until retrieved.
Pick Up	Free	The character picks something up. If the object is bulky, heavy, or difficult to handle, then this should be assessed as a full move action instead.
Open	Move	The character opens a door or other similar item which is closed, but not locked.
Use	Major	The character uses some item. This would include using a key to unlock and open a door, drinking a potion, using an item, etc. Some items may use other action types to trigger feats.
Remove	Major	The character can shed some piece of equipment which is attached to him such as a shield, backpack, helm, gloves, boots, etc. This is something beyond simply dropping an item.
Invoke a Feat	Varies	Uses whatever action type is required by the feat in question.
Move	Move	This could be movement using any movement mode, so it might be walking, swimming, flying, etc. A character could even mix modes in one move action.
Improvise	Varies	This is generally an improvised attack, but it might cover other similar situations where a character is attempting something difficult and unusual. Most of these will be major actions.

## **Action Types**

There are four types of actions in HoML, Major, Move, Free, and Opportunity. The first two are granted, one each, to characters during the Action Phase of their turns. Free actions are not granted at all, characters may simply invoke a free action at any time during the action phase of any character's turn, including their own. They may even invoke these during the resolution of some other action, potentially changing or negating it. Opportunity actions can only be invoked on other character's turns. Like Free actions they may interrupt another action by any creature, possibly

altering its outcome, but they require a character to have an opportunity (see below) in order to use them.

Note that actions cannot come into play in the Start or End of turn phases, these are purely mechanical book keeping devices during which the players and GM perform certain necessary tracking functions. Therefore the only effects which could come into play during these phases are No Action feats or effects specifically designated to happen in these phases.

If a character does not use a major or move action granted during the character's turn it is normally lost. A player may choose to have his character utilize his major action as a second move action if desired. This allows characters to potentially move twice in their turns, thus achieving a higher rate of speed at the expense of not doing other things. The character could also potentially invoke 2 different move actions of other types in this way if they have access to them.

A character can use a Free action at any time and there is no specific limit on the number of free actions which a character may take. However the GM may decide to impose a reasonable limit (for instance a character can't speak a 10 minute speech during a turn even though speaking is a free action unless the GM decides that the action should allow it at this point). Likewise, while picking something up from the ground is a free action the GM will likely rule that a character can only pick up one thing this way in a round.

Opportunity actions represent a character's ability to do something in response to another character's actions, such as attacking a retreating opponent. Each character is able to perform one opportunity action per round. That is, the character is granted an opportunity action at the start of the action sequence and again at the start of each of his turns. This action cannot be used during the character's own turn, only during the turns of other characters, and only when the character is granted an opportunity.

## **Feats and Actions**

As outlined in the feat rules most feats require some sort of action. Any time a character takes the Use a Feat action, they must have available the type of action required by the feat. Feats always have a feat block which indicates one of the four action types which the feat requires, Major, Move, Free, or Opportunity. There are a very few feats which have 'No Action' for an action. These are termed 'no action feats' and represent automatic effects which are triggered purely by other game mechanics. For instance a Medallion of Life might trigger its feat when a character acquires the dying condition. This doesn't require any action to be taken by any character, it is simply a feat which is invoked. Such a feat could even be triggered during the start or end of turn phases since it is not using an action.

## **Triggers**

A trigger is an attribute of a feat which indicates some sort of invoking condition. This is essentially just another way to state a requirement, but in

the case of triggers the requirement is for some sort of event or action to take place, or some sort of condition to come into effect. At the point where the trigger condition is met, the character may use the feat, subject to all of the other action rules. Until the trigger condition is met, the feat may not be used.

Triggered feats effects generally take place instantly, before anything else resolves, as soon as the trigger condition is met. Thus a triggered no action feat could grant a character advantage on a defensive check against an attack which is being resolved at that time, bolstering the character's defenses instantly. If a feat is triggered on a hit, then it is considered to be taking the place of the hit and may alter the results of the check in question. So a feat which triggers when a character is hit, could give them advantage on their defensive check, which would mean the player rolls an additional d20. If the second roll is higher, the attack misses, but the trigger still takes place.

## **Holding**

When it becomes a character's turn the player of that character may elect to hold the character's Major action. He simply performs the start of turn phase immediately as normal, takes the character's move action, and then uses a Major action to invoke the Hold action, and then takes the end of turn phase. When invoking hold, the player must describe the fictional situation which the character is holding for, and the action being held, including any choice of feat which he wants to make use of. It could be an action expected of another character, or some sort of environmental change, etc. as long as it is something that the character can sense. It is not possible to "hold until the cleric's end of turn phase" or something similar, because this is not something that the character can be cognizant of, nor can most feats be used at that time.

Once the condition is met which was specified in the hold action, the character's major action is triggered. At this time the character is shifted in the turn order to just after whatever creature is now taking its turn. The character's triggered feat is resolved, and it may interrupt another action just as any other triggered feat.

A player may choose not to trigger a held action, and might still trigger it later in the round. If an action was held and never triggered by the time the holding character's next turn comes around, then they simply retain their original place in the turn order, and the held action is lost.

You cannot change your mind about what the triggering condition for a held action is. For example if it becomes apparent that the trigger will not take place, the character cannot simply use the action to do something else.

## **Interrupting a Move**

A character can interrupt his own moves to take a major action. That is, characters can 'split move', making part of their move, attacking an opponent, and then completing the rest of the move afterwards. Any

change in the character's condition, effects which come into effect on the character etc. will need to be taken into consideration when finishing the move. Thus if a character moves 3 squares, attacks, and suffers a loss of 3 squares of movement as a result of the attack (perhaps from a triggered response) then the character will not have any more movement left (unless their speed is above 6 to start with).

## **Opportunities**

An opportunity is exactly what it says it is, a chance for a character to do something. An opportunity is basically a type of trigger which is set off by a standardized set of situations. An opportunity allows the character who gets it a chance to expend an opportunity action, assuming they have one available. Each character gets one of these per round, but can only use them when it is another character's turn.

Actions you can take with opportunity include only those which require an opportunity action, it cannot be exchanged for any other sort of action. Normally, by default, the only available action is to use the feat Opportunity Attack. However, some boons may grant other feats which might be used instead.

## **Opportunity Triggers**

Two main situations will create opportunity. First of all, if an opponent moves from a space within the control of an enemy then, before the movement takes place, that enemy gets an opportunity. The other situation is if a character makes a ranged attack while occupying a space within the control of an enemy. Likewise in this situation the enemy resolves its attack before the character making the ranged attack resolves hers.

## **Movement and Terrain**

Characters move on the grid, and all the objects and terrain in the game occupies either the squares of the grid, or the edges between the squares. Objects and terrain also effect the characters movement.

## **Squares**

The grid consists of a regular arrangement of squares. Each square is adjacent to the 8 squares touching it. In higher tier play the regular division of squares may be deviated from somewhat, but the same basic definition holds, any square which touches another square to any degree is adjacent and the distance between them is one square.

Heroic tier squares are 2 meters by two meters square. Legendary squares are up to 10 meters by 10 meters square, but in many situations they may instead conform to the natural limits of the terrain. Thus a small room is probably one legendary square in size. When designing legendary scale maps the GM will need to decide exactly which squares go where. Likewise with mythic tier's 30 by 30 meter squares. Regardless of scale the

rules generally work the same in all three cases, although there will be some simplifications and generalizations at the larger scales.

## **Space and Size**

Space is how the positions of objects on the grid and the area they occupy is defined. Every object, including characters, has both a size and a space. Size simply determines how many squares the object occupies, and the space determines which ones those are. Each object has a space, and their location on the map defines where the object is located.

## **Sizes**

Sizes were discussed previously in the section on player characters. Every object has a size rating, tiny, small, standard, large, huge, or gargantuan. At heroic scale a standard character has a space of exactly one square. This is the typical situation for PCs and many other characters. Thus in this case we can say that the character is 'in square X on the grid'.

Smaller objects also have a space of one square, but they don't fully occupy the square. Small objects are generally treated the same way as standard sized ones in terms of space and the grid. Other rules may treat them slightly differently. As a general rule several small objects can fit comfortably into a square, though only a single small creature can occupy it for combat purposes.

Tiny objects also have a space which fits in a single square, but they are much smaller. Many tiny objects can be in the same square. Up to four tiny characters can occupy the same square for combat purposes without interfering with each other.

Objects larger than standard size have spaces which extend into multiple squares. Large objects occupy between 2 and 4 squares. All of these squares must be adjacent to one another, and generally the shape will be determined beforehand (IE a horse occupies 2 adjacent squares). When moving larger creatures are only held to be entering terrain when their space first occupies it. Thus a horse would not pay a penalty for entering rough terrain for EACH square of its space which moves into the rough terrain square, only the first one, but if it entered two different squares of such terrain in the same move, it would pay two penalties for doing so (IE it would require 3 points of movement).

The same consideration applies for huge and gargantuan objects, they are just even bigger.

## **Squeezing**

Characters may reduce the space they require, at a penalty. Creatures larger than standard size can reduce their space to as little as half as many squares by squeezing.

In the case of standard, small, and tiny creatures squeezing represents entering very tight spaces. These will be designated as conditional terrain. The smaller sized creatures might be able to negotiate such areas without being penalized, and in some cases terrain might not allow larger creatures to pass at all.

Any time a creature is squeezing it incurs disadvantage on all checks it makes which rely on strength or dexterity based aspects.

## **Terrain**

Terrain is the condition of the squares in the grid. Are they firm dry stone, slime covered rocks, sticky mud, or filled with dense underbrush? Is the air clear, or is there smoke, dust, or fog obscuring vision? All of these things and many others make up the terrain of the grid. Each square is said to have some terrain attributes, although the default is assumed to be firm dry even ground.

Different types of terrain impose different conditions on characters. It may have an effect both on movement and other aspects such as line of sight, line of effect, or impose other rules and conditions.

Terrain can also exist at the edges of squares. Thus a wall might simply impose a barrier between one square and the next, but not occupy either one of them. Other sorts of things might fall into a similar category, such as a low curb, or the side of a tent or a curtain. Doors also fall into this category, generally speaking, as do windows and other similar openings.

## **Clear Terrain**

This is the default terrain when no other type is specified. It costs one movement point to enter and there are no other restrictions on movement across it. It assumes the footing is good and creatures generally should have no trouble crossing it. Line of sight and effect are unimpeded by clear terrain.

## **Empty Square**

This simply represents open space where there is no floor, etc. It is not normally a designated part of most maps, but it becomes important when considering flight or other vertical movement. Obviously land movement in empty space is not possible, but flight and such are unimpeded. It has no effect on line of sight or effect.

## **Blocking Terrain**

Blocking terrain is a specific type of terrain which represents large solid, generally permanent and immobile, objects and materials which occupy entire squares. When a square is designated as blocking terrain it is considered impassable, no movement through the square is possible. Likewise, unless otherwise noted, blocking terrain also blocks line of sight

and line of effect. Blocking terrain fully occupies the square, right to the edges. It is not possible to 'cut the corner' of a blocking terrain square and move diagonally around it. Characters negotiating their way around must move horizontally and then vertically (assuming this is possible).

Contiguous squares of blocking terrain represent a single unbroken expanse of material. This is true even if they only contact each other at the diagonals of their squares.

Blocking terrain is also considered both complete cover, and obscuring terrain, unless noted otherwise.

## **Difficult Terrain**

Difficult terrain represents rough ground or some other condition of the surface which impedes easy movement. Its only effect is to add one point to the cost of moving into the square. Remember, larger creatures only pay this cost once when part of their space enters the square, not each time part of their space moves into it. If the difficult terrain is the edge of a square, then moving to a directly adjacent square across that edge costs an additional one point of movement.

## **Concealing Terrain**

Some terrain may have an effect only on the line of sight. This is termed concealing terrain. It might be a fog, foliage, a curtain, etc. There are two types. Basic concealing terrain simply makes sighting things within or beyond it more difficult. See the rules on vision, and line of sight for an explanation of concealment itself. Obscuring terrain is a more significant form of this. It entirely blocks the line of sight into or through it. Thus, while a flimsy curtain might simply conceal what is beyond, allowing a glimpse or the discerning of shapes beyond, a heavy curtain entirely blocks sight, nothing is visible beyond at all, though effects might still penetrate.

As with difficult terrain, this type could be either a full square, or occupy the edges of a square. Either way the effect is the same.

## **Cover**

Cover is any hard material which provides substantial impediment to attacks. There are two cases of cover, complete cover, and basic cover. Complete cover means no line of effect exists. A closed door, assuming it is heavily enough constructed, is complete cover. An open window behind which a character hides and peers out is basic cover, LOE exists, but attacks are disadvantaged. A breastwork would be cover, but if it was, say, waist height then it would provide complete cover against attacks from the other side to a prone character. COVER/

## Terrain Conditions

A terrain condition is some sort of effect which is located within a square. When a character moves into the square, the effect is applied to them. Most conditions are negative, but this is not mandatory, some squares could grant positive effects too. A character can only be affected by a condition of terrain in a specific square once per turn. Some conditions might be designated to have a space larger than one square, in which case entering the entire space can only have an effect once per turn.

Again, the edge of a square could also contain a condition.

## Vertical Terrain

As discussed in the three dimensional space section the grid can be extended into the third dimension when necessary in order to provide for non-flat locations, drops, etc. As such all terrain should be thought of as having a vertical dimension. Usually this won't matter, the walls of the cave continue all the way to the roof, 10 meters (5 squares) above. However, there are likely to be many cases where there are balconies, ledges, stairs, pits, cliffs, steep slopes, etc. and the GM should define exactly where they are in a vertical sense. Characters may traverse space in this vertical direction in many ways, but generally the concepts of terrain work in the same way as in the standard square grid. If a cliff face is difficult to climb, that surface may be considered difficult terrain. A steam vent set in a wall might produce a terrain condition (IE it might burn you if you move across that surface). Likewise concealment and such may exist at different levels. Some terrain effects may extend upwards to the limits of the area of play, others don't.

## Line of Effect

Line of Effect is a condition that can be determined to exist or not for any 2 squares on the grid. In order to determine LOE, draw a line from each corner of one of the squares to each corner of the other square. If any of these lines does not cross terrain which grants total cover, then LOE exists between the two. Generally this will be fairly obvious, but the test given here is definitive. This can be extended into three dimensions as well.

## Line of Sight

Line of Sight is similar to LOE, but it is also blocked by obscuring terrain. Pick a corner of the originating square. If a line drawn to *any* corners of the target square pass through obscuring terrain, then LOS does not exist to the target square. In the case of basic concealing terrain, the effect only exists if a line drawn from one corner of the originating square to *all* corners of the target square pass through basic concealing terrain.

Practically speaking this means that fog only blocks LOS if one attempts to peer through a square of fog into squares beyond it. On the other hand a solid curtain completely blocks all view of anything behind it.

## **Movement**

Movement is measured in squares on the grid. Every character has a movement rate, which is expressed in terms of squares. In order to easily handle different conditions this is expressed in terms of movement points. A character with N squares of movement will have N movement points to spend whenever they take a move action. Thus a typical human, with a movement rate of 6 squares will have 6 movement points to spend when they use their turn's move type action allocation to take the move action.

As defined in the terrain section above, difficult terrain, and possibly terrain conditions, will require that the character spend additional movement points. If a character does not possess enough movement points to pay the full cost of moving into a square, then they may not make that movement.

## **Movement Modes**

There are various movement modes. The default mode is land movement. When nothing else is specified, this is the assumed mode. It consists of walking, crawling, running, or some analogous process. Characters are assumed to be walking unless otherwise specified.

Other modes of movement include climbing, flying, swimming, etc. Each of them has specific additional rules which apply. Subsequent topics will detail all of these considerations.

## **Land Movement**

This is simply the default type and any movement rate not specifying a mode is a land movement rate. The character simply follows the default movement procedure.

Crawling is a slight variation on standard land movement. If a character has the prone condition, then their movement rate is divided by two, rounded down. A prone character may also be capable of, or incapable of, negotiating specific terrain features, and may benefit from concealment, or cover, in cases where an upright character would not. Different pieces of terrain may detail these factors, or they may be decided by the GM in play as appropriate.

## **Climbing**

This mode works like land movement, except it applies to vertical surfaces. If a creature has the spider climb tag, then it can also apply this mode to inverted movement, crawling across ceilings and other similar horizontal surfaces. In either case the creature simply moves normally, no climbing checks are required when the character has this mode.

Characters who lack a climbing movement rate can still use this mode to traverse vertical surfaces, but they must pass a climbing check governed by the athletic aspect. If they succeed they can move, but for them all vertical

surfaces are difficult terrain. Failing a check means the character is unable to proceed, their movement immediately ends. Only one check is required for each move action needed to climb, there's no need to check for each square, the first check governs this aspect for the whole climb. Should the character continue the same climb, this check will remain in effect in subsequent rounds.

If a character is climbing and they are subject to forced movement, they must make another climbing check. If they fail, they fall. If they are attacked and suffer damage, they must likewise make a check, or fall. This does not apply to characters with a climb mode speed, they never lose their grip unless specifically stated otherwise.

## **Flying**

Flying works similarly to other movement modes, but when a character flies, they can move anywhere in three dimensional space. See the section on three dimensional space, and the section on aerial combat for more details.

## **Swimming**

Swimming is similar to flying or other movement, the character simply moves at her swimming mode movement rate. Characters without such a rate may also swim, but they will be forced to treat water as difficult terrain, and may be forced to make a check governed by the athletic aspect in order to remain afloat and make forward progress at all. Those failing will begin to drown, and may sink. See the section on aquatic combat for more information, and note that 3d movement is also possible underwater if there is sufficient space (water depth).

## **Jumping**

Jumping is a form of movement governed by the athletic aspect. The character makes a check with a DV appropriate to the situation. If the situation is heroic tier, then characters can simply jump over any gap of 1 square (2 meters) from a standing start with an athletic check. This is roughly a level 1 challenge. Likewise a running start requires a check to cross a 2 square distance. A standing jump of 2 squares or a running jump of 4 squares will be difficult and approaches world-class athletic standards. These types of jumps should be fairly routine for Legendary characters, who can probably manage a 3 square standing jump or a 5 square running jump (these are superior Olympic class performances) and can certainly attempt even longer jumps, with characters of beyond 11th level making thoroughly superhuman leaps and bounds. Mythic characters are potentially capable of jumps of beyond 30 meters (15 squares) and might even make larger leaps in some situations.

The above guidelines are intentionally vague, HoML does not dictate a specific formula for athletic or other types of performance. The challenges should be scaled to the degree of epic feel which the narrative demands,

and it is likely that properly equipped, trained, and empowered characters may go far beyond what is outlined here.

A jump is simply a single movement. It will expend 1 movement point per square covered, but lack of sufficient movement points will simply mean that the character lands at the ending point of the jump, and cannot move further in that action. Otherwise, if they have movement points remaining, they can be used as normal.

A character failing a jump check might be left hanging on the edge of the precipice. If they succeed they might still be off balance or lose something if the jump was particularly difficult. If the jump is extreme then the GM might inform the player that his character will fall entirely short on a failure, and in that case success might force the character to stop moving and recover his footing, or scramble for purchase when landing.

## **Shifting**

Shifting is a special form of movement in which the character carefully maneuvers from one square to an adjacent square. Doing so requires the character's full allotment of movement points, plus any extra costs for terrain. Thus a PC cannot normally shift into difficult terrain, or any other terrain which requires additional movement points.

When shifting, the character does not present enemies with opportunity. That is, if a character shifts out of a square which is in the control of an enemy, that enemy cannot make an opportunity attack on the shifting character. This is the only completely safe way to move away from an opponent.

Characters may not shift when they are prone.

## **Standing Up**

Coming from a prone state to one's feet requires a full movement action. The character may shift as a part of this action if they desire.

## **Teleportation**

Sometimes characters have the ability to teleport, which means moving directly from one square to another without entering any of the squares in between. Teleportation does not give opponents opportunity. The character simply disappears from the starting space, and appears a number of squares away equal to their teleportation mode movement rate. This may also work as an effect, such as 'Teleport 5', which means the target is teleported 5 squares to a destination square of the choosing of the originator of the effect in most cases.

## **Forced Movement**

Forced movement is a special category of movement in which a character is repositioned without their willing participation. It comes in three flavors,

push, pull, and slide. Forced movement does not give opponents opportunity, and operates in a way similar to shifting in that regard. In other respects forced movement is similar to other types of movement. Whenever an effect calls for pushing, sliding, or pulling a target, it will specify a number of squares of movement. Terrain effects are not assessed against this value, a three square push will always be three squares, regardless of terrain, except that it is impossible to force move a target into blocking terrain.

Forced movement is generally along a surface. That is, a creature can be pushed three squares across the room, but not three squares straight up into the air! A few effects may specify otherwise, and if a forced move results in a character moving off the edge of a drop, then they will simply go over the edge and fall, unless they are capable of flying or something similar. A flying creature could be moved in any direction by such an effect however, as could a swimming one in the water.

The player who's character generated the forced movement effect controls the movement, as described below for each type.

## **Pull**

Pulling is an effect which force moves a target closer to the origination point of the effect. This movement will always be directly towards the origination point, with the player controlling the effect deciding which squares are moved through in the event that there are two equally closer squares. Each square of the pull must move the target closer, or if this is impossible, then no further from the origination point and always in a direction which obviously leads closer (IE not into a cul-de-sac or something similar unless no other path exists).

## **Push**

Pushing is an effect which force moves a target further from the origination point of the effect. This movement will always be directly away from the origination point, with the player controlling the effect deciding which squares are moved through in the event that there are two equally more distant squares. Each square of the push must move the target further away, or if this is impossible, then no further from the origination point.

## **Slide**

Sliding is an effect which force moves a target in any direction desired by the controlling player. Each square of the slide is considered independently, so a slide could move a target back and forth, etc.

## **Danger**

Players may decide to expend a power point to allow their character to fall prone if at any point the character would be subject to an effect if it was

forced to move into a specific square. The player simply expends the power point, and their character acquires the prone condition instead of being force moved. The effect in question must be either a terrain effect, a fall, or the effect of a zone, etc.

## Combat

Combat consists of making attacks and defending against attacks. It also introduces concepts like range, zones and areas of effect, and control which are explained here.

### Attacks

An attack happens when a character uses a feat with an attack attribute and targets another character. An attack might also be carried out using improvisation, which will amount to the same thing. If the target is an NPC then the attacker makes an attack check against an appropriate defense of the target as the DV. If the target is a PC, then that PC's player makes a defense check using an appropriate controlling aspect or ability.

For the purposes of any rule which is triggered by an attack, the taking of an action which constitutes an attack represents one triggering event. If there is some sort of effect, trigger, or other situation which would be applied "if you make an attack" or "when you make an attack" it happens once when the player declares the action, before the action is resolved.

If an effect, condition, trigger, or other circumstance makes it impossible for an attack to continue, then the attack fails at that point. Thus if an opponent triggers a response to a character's attack, and that response results in the attacker being unable to take actions for any reason, such as acquiring the dying condition, then the attack ends at that point. If there are multiple targets, then each one is considered independently. If resolving the attack on one of them prevents the attack, then none of them are attacked. Likewise if the damage would be reduced, etc. by an effect applied to the attacker, that adjustment applies to the damage generally and benefits all the targets equally. On the other hand, any effect which applies to one of the targets applies only to that target, unless otherwise stated.

### **Procedure for Attacking an NPC**

First the player needs to expend an action to either use a feat, or make an improvised attack. The action must be of the type designated by the feat. In the case of an improvised attack the GM will determine the type of action required. As described under actions, the character must have an action of the required type available for use. The process is as follows:

1. **Pick Targets:** The player first decides what square and/or creatures are targetted using the Type/Target attribute of the feat, or the GM will make this determination for improvised attacks.

2. **Make Attack Check:** The player will make an attack check against each target. The feat's attack attribute generally determines what the defense is. If there are multiple targets check each of them and note which ones are hit, and whether the check was a success or a complete success.
3. **Roll Damage:** Damage dice are rolled for the attack. These dice apply to every target which was hit. If different numbers of dice are required for different targets, you can roll the lower damage on one set of dice, and roll some additional dice to provide enough to make up the number of DD for the other targets. Any additional, special, situational, or bonus damage should also be rolled as needed. Note the amount of damage each target takes, adjusting for any resistance, vulnerability and damage reduction. Apply the damage to each target in any desired order, applying any effects this triggers or conditions the damage applies (IE dying or bloodied).
4. **Apply Effects:** Any effects, either due to a success/complete success, or any miss effects, or any effects not dependent on an attack roll are now applied to the targets, in any order, and any triggers resolved. The resulting conditions are placed on the targets.

## Procedure for Attacking a PC

When a PC is attacked, either by an NPC, or possibly as a result of being in the AoE of another PC's attack, then the player must decide how they will defend. This is accomplished using the standard check rules given under *How to Play*. First the player describes what the character is doing, or what aspect of their nature, resists the damage. A character may declare the use of an feat which contains a 'defense' attribute as well. Then the GM decides what aspect is governing the defense. In the case where a player declared defensive use of a feat, the feat normally defines which aspect or ability governs. The player then makes the check in the standard way. If the check fails, then the success clause of the attack is applied to the character, otherwise the fail clause.

In other respects the procedure here is identical to that used when NPCs are attacked. Damage is rolled in the same fashion, etc. Note that attacks don't normally achieve the complete success level against PCs.

## Type and Target

This attribute of a feat defines whom it will attack, and/or the type of effect. First comes the type, which is one of two types, either close or ranged. Close attacks are those which originate in a square of the space of the initiator of the attack. Ranged attacks originate from a square designated by the attacker within a given distance from the attacker's space. Next is the area of effect designation, if present. There are four possibilities:

1. **No Designation:** If there is no AoE designation, then the feat is a single-target attack, it will effect only one target

2. **Burst:** A burst will consist of a statement of the form *burst N* where N is a number designating the burst radius in squares. A burst targets all eligible creatures within the given distance from the origination square. Thus a *burst 2* will target every character within 2 squares of the origination point.
3. **Blast:** A blast will consist of a statement of the form *blast N* where N is a number designating the blast size in squares. A blast is a square area, whose sides have a length equal to the blast size, drawn such that it touches the origination square and one of that square's sides is shared with part or all of one of the blast area's squares.
4. **Wall:** A wall consists of a statement of the form *wall N×M* where N is a number designating the length of the wall and M indicates its height in squares (for cases where this matters). The area affected will be N squares, where each of the squares in the wall is adjacent to no less than one, and no more than three, other squares in the AoE. All squares of the wall must be valid target squares (see below).

For ranged attacks there is a range clause, which is stated as *within N* where N is the maximum distance from a square in the space of the feat's initiator to the origination square of the attack. Thus a type of *ranged within 5* is a single target attack which can originate anywhere within 5 squares distance from one of the squares of the initiator's space. Since this attack is single-target, the one target must be in the origination square. If the type was *ranged burst 3 within 10* then the origination square could be anywhere within 10 squares of a square of the initiator's space, and all valid targets within a radius of three squares from that point would be in the AoE and considered as possible targets.

Finally, there is a target clause, which qualifies who the target's eligible targets are. It may take a number of forms, but it will clearly indicate which creatures within the Area of Effect (AoE) are subject to attack. It could state *all creatures* which means every single creature in the AoE is attacked. It could state *all opponents* meaning only creatures which are the enemies of the initiator of the feat. It could specify *all allies* meaning only the allies of the initiator, or *one creature* meaning one of the creatures in the AoE (usually these are limited to single target attacks).

## Origination Square

In the above discussion, origination square refers to the square where the effect of the feat is centered. For all close effects, this is the square designated by the initiator (the attacker) within its space. The player is free to choose any square in the initiator's space for this.

For a feat with a ranged type, the origination square is any valid target square within the range given.

## Valid Targets

In order for a creature to be attacked, it must be a valid target. In order for a square to be the origination square of a ranged attack, it must also be valid.

Creature's are valid targets if there exists a line of effect (LOE) between the origination square, and one square of the space of the target. In the case of a single-target attack, this means the origination square is in the target's space. This means, for instance, that a creature will be shielded from a burst if none of its squares can trace an LOE to the origination square of the burst (IE it is behind blocking terrain for instance).

An origination square is valid if the attacker can trace LOE from one of it's squares to the origination square, and that square is in range.

Walls are a special case. While the first designated square of the wall effect is its origination square, all the other squares to which the wall extends must also be valid origination squares. In other words, you cannot extend a wall beyond the range of your feat, or into an area where you don't have LOE.

## **Attack Check**

The attack attribute of a feat describes how the attack check is carried out. It consists of a clause naming the aspect of the check or a tool used to make the check, 'vs' a clause naming a defense which is the check's DV. NPCs have three defenses, Fortitude, Reflex, and Will. Every attack is made against one of them. The check can fail, succeed, or be a complete success.

Players may amplify the level of success by one degree at the cost of a power point. Some feats may have an 'enhanced success' result, which cannot be achieved without paying a point, and getting a complete success on the check.

In some cases the area of effect, or other attributes of the attack, may be modified by the level of success.

## **Damage**

When an attack hits, the target will usually suffer damage. This damage is subtracted from the target's hit points. If their hit points are brought below half, they will immediately acquire the bloodied condition. If their hit points are brought below 1 then they will acquire the dying condition. There may be a few exceptions for monsters which have unusual abilities.

Some characters have either vulnerability or resistance. This will always indicate some damage types which it is effective for. If a target takes damage from a feat with this tag, then this attribute will modify the damage. If a character is damaged by a source with a tag to which it is vulnerable, the damage is doubled. If the character has resistance, the damage is halved, rounded down, but never less than one point.

Some characters have Damage Reduction, DR. This is usually a consequence of being armored. When a character has DR each instance of damage it takes from a different source will be reduced by the amount of the DR. Thus DR 4 would cut 8 damage to 4 damage.

## Non-lethal Damage

Some damage may be determined to be non-lethal. This covers cases where an attacker takes an action which isn't physically injurious to the target, but which reduces their morale and ability to fight. It might be a psychic attack, or even a well-aimed comment or observation aimed at breaking the enemy's will to fight. It could be a subdual hold, or a blow with a fist or weapon calculated more to mildly incapacitate than to kill.

In game terms, when a player wishes, they can declare an attack to be non-lethal. If it is something inherently damaging, like fire, then the attack is assumed to be aimed just over the heads of the targets, or demonstrates the attacker's great skill by some feat of marksmanship, etc. Whenever a character reaches zero hit points due to non-lethal damage, the character acquires the *broken* condition instead of the dying condition.

Mechanically the character is still defeated, but they remain conscious and responsive, or at the GM's option unconscious but not dying. Note that any effects which take place when a character reaches the dying state don't take place, but any which are triggered by reaching zero hit points will.

## Effects

Many attacks have effects beyond simply doing damage. These can be almost anything, but there are some common effects which are seen often.

First of all an attack might impose a condition on the target. See the section on *Conditions* . Another common effect is Forced Movement REF/, either a push, a pull, or a slide of a certain number of squares. Some attacks might impose an affliction, others could impose some other sort of penalty or have some other effect, which will be described in the feat block.

## Zones

Commonly a feat will specify an area of effect, and also a duration. In this case the effect persists as a zone of temporary conditional terrain. The effects of that terrain will be described by the feat. Note that this kind of effect doesn't normally depend on a hit or any sort of check. Often these zones will be described in an *effects* attribute of a feat, not in a success *attribute* .

## Defense

As with attacks, there are two cases with defense. In the case of an NPC the situation is described above, the attack check is made against a fixed DV number, one of the target's defenses. In the case of a PC being attacked, instead of an attack check, there is a defense check made by the player of the target. In all other respects attacks against PCs work the same way as attacks against NPCs. Simply substitute the defense check for the attack check. If the attacker would get advantage, the target gets disadvantage.

NPC attacks will specify a DV which should be used to defend against them. They will also specify an aspect or ability of the target, as well as a damage type, and may contain some kind of narrative description.

## Defense Procedure

When a PC is making a defense check, it is necessary to find an aspect, ability, tool, or feat which will govern the check. First the player makes a narrative description of their defense, including any feat or other effect which they wish to invoke. This defense should relate, narratively to the nature of the attack in order to be effective. Some defenses may include clauses which clarify what they are effective against. Once this declaration is made, the GM will determine what governs the check.

The player can now determine the total bonus they receive for their defense check. At this point any "if you are attacked" type triggers will be resolved, which might also alter this bonus, provide advantage or disadvantage, etc. A player might also invoke fate at this point.

The GM can now determine if advantage or disadvantage applies to the check, and then the player makes the check.

The check will either pass or fail. If it passes, then a hit has been made and the same process is followed as if an NPC was hit. Any "if you are hit" triggers would take place at this time.

If the check passes, then the character is missed. They may still be subject to a miss effect, if the attacker's feat describes such. Any "if you are missed" triggers would take place at this time.

Either way, any damage or imposition of conditions or effects might invoke other triggers, etc. and these are resolved, along with the effects of the attack themselves, as described under attacks. At this time any *Upping the Stakes* can be resolved (IE the player may offer to accept a wound or other affliction in lieu of some damage or effect).

## PC vs PC

It may frequently happen that a PC catches another PC in the area of effect of an attack, or for some story reason a PC might target another PC. In that case the targetted PC is temporarily designated as an opponent for purposes of target determination.

The attacker should make an attack check, add any bonuses, advantage or disadvantage, etc. and determine a final resulting check number. This number is used as the DV for a defense check by the target, as described here. Note that in the case of a PvP attack it might be possible for the attacker to achieve complete success if the defender's check falls far enough short of the DV.

## **Grappling**

Sometimes characters will grab hold of each other. One character, using a free hand or other appendage, can make a grappling attempt on another. If the attack succeeds the attacker imposes the grabbed condition on the target. Various other powers may also impose this condition. The attacker may continue to impose this condition as long as it is able to take actions and has a free hand to grab with, and as long as the target remains within its reach. If either the target or the grabber is subject to forced movement treat this as an attempt to break the hold.

## **Breaking a Hold**

In order to break free from a hold the target must succeed with an athletic check against the fortitude defense of the target, or for an NPC the PC must fail an athletic check against a DV of the target's level plus its STR. Some other effects might also allow an escape. Anything which moves the target beyond the reach of the creature maintaining the hold will also break it automatically.

## **Moving While Grabbing**

Either of the two, the grabber or the grabbed, may attempt to move. If the grabber attempts to move and is the stronger of the two, then both of them move together. When the two creatures are the same size, this movement is at half the grabber's speed. If the grabber is larger, then it can move at its normal speed, and if it is smaller, moving is not possible. If the grabbed is stronger, it can also move in the same way, but the grabber is free to release the hold instead.

## **Ending a Hold**

The grabber can simply release a hold as a free action at any time.

## **Take Down**

An acrobatic check can be used to attempt to take down a grabbed or grabbing opponent. Success renders the opponent prone and allows either an automatic reversal, or to break the grip if desired.

## **Moving to Close Combat**

A grabbing character may decide to move to close combat. If he is larger than the target, then he pulls the target into his space. If he's smaller than the target, he shifts into the target's space. This consumes the grabber's move action.

## **Reversal**

As a major action a character may attempt to reverse a grab, such that it goes from being grabbed to grabbing. This is simply a grappling attempt made against the other creature, but note that being grabbed gives disadvantage.

## **Close Combat**

Close combat involves any situation where two hostile combatants occupy at least some of the same squares -that is their spaces overlap. This can happen due to ordinary movement, by the effects of some power, by taking an explicit action to do so, or possibly other means. As soon as this situation arises the combatants are deemed to have entered into close combat. Note that no penalties for squeezing are imposed on characters making close combat attacks on each other.

## **Entering**

This generally happens when one character enters the space of an opponent. A character can do so by declaring their intent to enter close combat and moving into the opponent's space, at which point the character stops moving. At this point the moving character must use his major action to either attack or grapple the opponent. If the attack is successful then close combat is entered, otherwise the opponent has fended off the move, unless they desire to accept it. If the move is fended off, the attacker is returned to their previous space.

## **Leaving**

Leaving simply requires one character to move such that the two no longer share space. This may subject the moving character to opportunity attacks, or it may not be possible if they are grabbed.

## **Grappling**

This is handled normally in close combat.

## **attacks**

Close attacks may be used in close combat, but only weapons with the close tag are usable (small blades basically) or unarmed techniques. In other respects powers pretty much work normally. If attacks are made *into* a close combat from outside, then flip a coin to determine which character is hit, it is basically impossible to be sure who your blow will land on.

## **Combat Modifiers**

Certain situations will come up often in combat situations which will give advantage or disadvantage to one party or the other. Since the players make all the checks, these modifiers are always framed in terms of their

perspective, but any situation which works for the players can also work against them. In that case they should be granted disadvantage. Thus when a PC is concealed or under cover, they gain advantage on defense checks, but if the target of one of their attacks is under cover, then they will receive disadvantage on the corresponding attack check. The following table lists common situations and who gets advantage or disadvantage.

<b>Circumstance</b>	<b>Attack Checks Get</b>	<b>Defense Checks Get</b>
Target is concealed vs single-target attack	Disadvantage	Advantage
Target is concealed vs area of effect	No modifier	No modifier
Target has cover	Disadvantage	Advantage
Close attack vs prone target	Advantage	Disadvantage
Ranged attack vs prone target	Disadvantage	Advantage
Target cannot see attacker making single-target attack	Advantage	Disadvantage
Target cannot be seen by attacker making single-target attack	Disadvantage	Advantage
Target is flanked.	Advantage	Disadvantage

## **Flanking**

Flanking is a tactical situation which arises when a character is attacked from multiple directions at the same time. If a character has opponents which are on opposite sides of its space, that is, if you drew a line between a square of each of these opponents and that line crossed 2 opposite sides of one of the character's squares, then the character is flanked. These opponents must be capable of making a close attack on the character, meaning they are currently capable of taking actions, although they need not actually possess an action they could use at this instant (IE they may have expended their Opportunity action already and it isn't their turn).

## **Effects**

As defined in the combat section and in other rules, effects are special rules which are imposed on characters as a result of some sort of something which happens in the game. Usually these are a result of some sort of attack, but effects might be imposed by terrain, environmental conditions, afflictions, or for an endless variety of other reasons. While effects are described here as part of the action sequence rules, they have wider applicability and may also come up in challenges, or even interludes. These rules can be generalized to those situations as well.

## **Duration and Timing**

Effects may have a wide variety of durations; many are simply instantaneous, others may continue to apply for longer periods. The rules for feats describe the basic durations. The only thing to be added here is

that the duration of an effect will generally be until the end of a turn, or until the end of the action sequence. A few might specify other situations where they end. When no other rule specifies, the end of turn phase is when conditions end. If an effect is assessed on a character every round, then this happens in the start of turn phase.

## **Voluntary Ending**

Some effects may be ended by a character whom they effect voluntarily. This might require the character to use a specific action, or pass a check. In many cases the player simply needs to declare the character's intent to end the effect. This is generally the case with any effect which a character has placed on herself. For instance a character might have a feat which allows them to become invisible with a continuous duration. The feat states that it can be ended voluntarily at any time, thus the player can simply declare that the character ends the effect, and he becomes visible again.

Characters can also attempt to end effects like being hidden by taking free actions such as shouting in order to reveal themselves. The GM may either simply allow this to succeed, or require that other characters make perceptive checks to notice, perhaps when the environment is particularly chaotic or they are heavily distracted.

## **Continuous**

Continuous duration feats have effects which last until the initiating character cannot take actions. Certain tags modify this: Technique and Transformation tags apply to effects which are exclusive. Only one effect with these tags may be applied at the same time to a given character. Thus a character using a certain technique cannot use a different technique, or a transformation, at the same time. If a new exclusive effect is placed on the character, then the previous one ends immediately.

Any time a character who is subject to continuous effect becomes subject to another effect which prevents the character from taking actions, all continuous effects produced by that character end immediately.

## **Conditions**

Conditions are essentially standardized effects which are applied to characters either as a result of an attack, or for some other reason specified in the rules. Their purpose is mainly to simplify and standardize the wide range of possible effects which could be imposed during play. It is recommended that these should be used whenever possible as opposed to inventing new ad-hoc effects. While each condition has a name which reflects a common fictional description of its cause or purpose, players should feel free to take these with a grain of salt. Thus *Dazed* might be applied to a situation where a character has been made nauseous by some kind of toxin instead of inventing an entirely new effect which essentially produces virtually the same end result. This makes the game much easier to play!

## List of Conditions

The following conditions exist in HoML. Others might be added in additional material, but these should cover the vast majority of all cases:

- **Blinded:** The character cannot see. She has no line of sight to any other creature (unless she has some other sense which grants an LoS). She cannot flank. She has disadvantage on any Perception checks.
- **Dazed:** The character is shaken or partially incapacitated. He cannot take opportunity actions. He cannot flank.
- **Compelled:** The character is under the magical control of another. The character cannot take actions. He is dazed. On the compelling character's turn the compelled character will take one major action only, under the control of the compelling character. The compelled character cannot be commanded to expend a power point as part of this action.
- **Dying:** The character is dying. She has the incapacitated, and prone conditions. She must make death saves.
- **Grabbed:** The character is being held by someone or something. He cannot move. Attacks have advantage against him.
- **Incapacitated:** The character is unable to act. She cannot take any actions. She has no line of sight to anything. Attacks against her gain advantage. She may be subject to a Coupe de Grace. She cannot flank.
- **Engaged:** The character is under immediate threat of attack by another character. If he makes an attack which doesn't include this character as a target, the attack is made with disadvantage.
- **Prone:** The character is knocked down. He suffers disadvantage on all close attacks. He can only move by crawling. He falls if he is climbing. Prone characters may gain added cover in some situations. Note that a character can end this condition by standing up as a move action during their turn.
- **Removed:** The character has left the battlefield. No line of sight or effect exists between her and the rest of the battlefield.
- **Slowed:** The character moves at half speed. His speed is reduced to  $\frac{1}{2}$  normal, rounded down.
- **Stunned:** The character is badly shaken. She can only take either a move or a major action, not both in her turn. She suffers disadvantage on all attacks. She cannot flank or take opportunity actions, nor free actions.
- **Surprised:** The character is caught by surprise. He cannot flank. He cannot take opportunity actions. All attacks against him have advantage. He makes all attacks with disadvantage. Surprise normally ends after the first round of combat.
- **Broken:** The character's morale has been broken and she will flee, only making attacks against opponents which stand in the way of her most immediate escape route. If escape becomes impossible she may surrender at the GM's option. Broken characters are also dazed.

## **Healing and Injury**

Many misfortunes may befall a hero in a dangerous and magical land. These vary from the most basic sorts of general wear and tear, fatigue, and even psychological and moral injury, all the way up to terrible disabling injuries, curses, disease, and poison. Ultimately characters may succumb to death if they are subjected to too much damage or as a consequence of an affliction.

## **Damage and Healing**

Every character has a hit point total. This represents a general quantity of misfortune and abuse which the character can withstand before becoming disabled or unconscious. In some cases the results might also indicate the character has given up or that his morale has failed and he surrenders or flees.

### **Hit Points**

In HoML damage is measured in hit points. It is a result of characters being subjected to injury, such as being struck with a weapon, falling, or being set on fire. It could also represent the effects of fear, trauma, or other similar adverse circumstances. Every character has a hit point attribute which records the characters current hit points. This attribute also has a maximum value, which is the number of hit points the character will possess when they are at full health and fitness.

### **Damage**

Various situations can result in damage to a character. The relevant sections of the rules detail how much damage various things cause and how to calculate it. Once an amount of damage is known, then it is subtracted from the characters current hit points. Should the characters hit points be reduced to half or less of their starting total, the character immediately acquires the bloodied condition. If the hit point total is reduced to zero or less, the character immediately acquires the dying condition.

Note that the GM might sometimes impose, or feats might have rules specifying, that reduction to 0 or less hit points results in some other condition or effect. If the damage was non-lethal in nature, then the character acquires the incapacitated condition. If the damage was from a psychic effect or something similar, then the character might acquire the broken condition instead. In any case, reduction to 0 or less hit points represents the character becoming unable to act.

### **Catastrophic Damage**

If a character has been reduced to a hit point total equal to half of their maximum hit points below 0 (IE -50 for a character who starts with 100 hit points) then the character has suffered a catastrophic amount of damage.

The character immediately dies at this time. If the damage was non-lethal (psychic or similar) then the character's mind is broken, and they are unable to recover. Such a character will remain in an incapacitated condition until they are either slain, or some form of powerful magic or medicine is used to treat them.

## **Dying**

Whenever a character has the dying condition they are in danger of perishing. Even characters who's damage is non-lethal are in danger of becoming permanently disabled. If a rest can be taken at the end of a scene in which a character is dying/incapacitated by damage, and the character is treated, then the character recovers to a state in which they have one hit point and the condition is removed. The character can now spend power points to recover additional hit points. If no treatment is possible, then the character will die soon. If they are recovered within several hours, then they will simply receive the affliction Badly Wounded, otherwise they reach death's door.

## **Stabilization**

Emergency treatment, delivered promptly, will stabilize a character who is dying/incapacitated. The dying condition is treated by application of a heal action. At this point the character will remain incapacitated but is no longer dying, and will recover to one hit point at the end of the scene. Psychic or other non-lethal damage can be treated by using the rally action on the afflicted character. Again, they will simply stop and do nothing until the scene ends, at which point they will recover to one hit point.

## **Healing**

### **Healing Value**

Each character has a healing value which is calculated as  $1/4$  of the character's maximum hit points, rounded down. This value is used whenever the character is healed in order to determine the amount by which they heal.

### **Resting**

Taking a rest allows a character to catch their breath, bandage their worst injuries, recover their wits, etc. As discussed in the section on rests, a character may expend power points to increase her hit points by the character's healing value per power point expended. Thus even a character with one hit point will be fully restored at the cost of 4 power points.

### **Healing Effects**

Many feats and boons exist which will allow a character to spend a power point to gain healing. When the character is healed she does not need to

take any action, the power point is deducted and she regains hit points as described by the effect, usually equal to the character's healing value plus some bonus. If the character has no power points to spend then such effects will have not heal the character, but any other effects will still apply normally. Note that a character may also refuse to spend the power point if they wish.

## **Regeneration**

Regeneration is a magical effect of a healing nature which is sometimes encountered. A character may be granted regeneration as an effect, or it could be an attribute granted to the character by a boon. In any case, it will have a numeric value, which is the quantity of hit points which are regained by the character during each of its turns. If the character's hit point total goes to zero or below, then regeneration has no effect. Once the character reaches maximum hit points, they cannot benefit further from this effect. Some forms of regeneration may have other/different conditions and restrictions which override these.

## **Afflictions**

Not all the consequences of damage are simply loss of hit points. There are also other dangers in the world which have more complicated effects than simply wearing a character down to death. Afflictions come in several categories. Specific rules for each one are provided below. HoML is a magical world and thus curses, diseases, and poisons in particular are all magical in nature to some degree, while wounds are a bit more mundane in nature.

An affliction is a special case of a challenge. That is it works according to the challenge rules, requiring some number of progress points to cure, and becoming worse, and possibly fatal or at least reaching an end state, when the third failure is accrued. Many afflictions can only be treated using esoteric methods, such as intricate ritual magic, the brewing of potent medicines, or the extraction and refining of powerful anti-toxins. All of these processes are considered magical in nature. The GM will present the PCs with opportunities to attempt to progress towards a recovery, failures may represent delays, botched cures, or other circumstances. Sometimes these cures may take quite some time to affect.

Once an affliction reaches stage 3, it cannot be cured anymore. Instead it becomes a permanent disability, at least until it can be removed or mitigated. Thus a character who's limb injury proceeds to 'the limb is lost' might recover by acquiring a magical replacement limb, or by application of some powerful regenerative magic. A wooden limb might also reduce the disability significantly. One might obtain a ward against a curse, putting its effects in abeyance, at least as long as the ward lasts!

Since afflictions are challenges, it is naturally easy enough for the GM to simply deploy them in play without any formal process of damage. Most likely an NPC will be encountered who has an affliction which the PCs may

wish to cure, for whatever reason. The GM might also, judiciously, impose one of these on a PC, although the player should probably be given a chance to make a choice which will avoid the affliction, but it might force them to suffer other fictional consequences instead!

## **Acquiring an Affliction**

Afflictions could be acquired in many ways, but one primary way is as a result of an effect. That is, a character may fail a defense check against an attack by an opponent in combat, or a check in a challenge. Thus a monster might hit a character with a poison sting, resulting in a poisoning affliction. Likewise with curses and diseases.

## **Upping the Stakes**

Wounds are generally received when a character is subject to an especially traumatic situation. This is handled in a slightly different way than other afflictions. While the following rule specifically applies to wounds, it could sometimes be applied to other types of afflictions as well. For example the trauma of some psychic damage might be manifested instead as a type of disease, in this case a sort of mental illness or curse.

When a player decides that their character is in an especially bad situation and the character is subjected to damage or an effect, then the player may volunteer to accept an affliction instead. There must be a narrative logic to this substitution, and it must be proportionate. While this rule is intended to allow players to recover from bad or impossible situations, it is mostly intended to allow for natural consequences that fit the story. For example Roger the Rogue has fallen into a terrible pit trap filled with spikes. He was already pretty beat up, and he has taken 20 points of damage, enough to reduce his hit points to a negative value equal to his bloodied value. Normally this would mean Roger dies instantly. However the player has other ideas. He proposes that Roger is impaled by a spike and suffers a serious debilitating wound (see the Wounds section). In recompense he only suffers 12 points of damage (he has a healing value of 8). Roger is now unconscious at the bottom of a pit, and even if he's pulled out he'll be suffering the ill effects of the wound for a considerable time, but he has a fighting chance.

As a rule of thumb, allow a character to accept a wound, or some similar affliction, in lieu of one healing value worth of hit points of damage. Allow a character to suffer an affliction in lieu of a similar effect, if they can explain narratively how they achieved this result. For example: a player might propose that his character grabs hold of the sting of the giant scorpion, which then crushes his leg with its pincer instead of injecting its lethal venom (toxic damage and stun effect). The damage is still taken, but the character now has a broken leg instead of being poisoned.

The GM is always within her rights to disallow any specific use of this rule. It should be used to produce interesting consequences that give the players a way to enhance their character's stories, not to simply avoid every unfortunate die roll and turn it to their advantage. Note that players also

have the fate rule which they can use as well. Fate can get you something for no cost (except using up fate, a temporary expenditure) whereas upping the stakes always drags the characters deeper into conflict in some way!

Imaginative players and GMs may want to experiment with other possibilities as well. A character could trade loss of major or minor boons in return for a damage reduction or decrease in severity of a condition for example. This could be explained in any feasible way. A character could for instance give up all his supply of cash "As he's about to hit me I toss my purse in his face and he grabs for the gold coins instead of taking the killing blow!" These sorts of tricks should be considered as something like Improvised Actions (see World and Play), requiring checks to succeed.

## Types of Affliction

While, for story reasons, there are four types of afflictions, these types largely follow the same rules. They are broken down here by these types for easy reference. The lists given here are by no means exhaustive. In fact they barely scratch the surface of the possible horrors which might afflict characters.

## Affliction Description

This sample explains the attributes of afflictions:

- **Name** - The name of the affliction, note that the background color of the header indicates the type of affliction.
- **Level** - The level of the affliction is indicated at the far right of the header.
- **Tags** - The tags applying to this affliction appear below the header.
- **Onset** - This indicates how and when the affliction begins.
- **Stages** - This lists the effects of the affliction at each stage, 0 meaning no failures, and Final meaning 3 failures.
- **Description** - This is the description of the affliction. It usually describes how the affliction is acquired and its appearance, general progress, etc.
- **Cure** - This provides an explanation of how the affliction can be cured. This is useful in creating a challenge for this affliction.

### Sample Affliction

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#### Disease, Necrotic

**Onset:** Stage 0 is manifested 2 days after infection.

#### Stages:

- **0** - The victim's maximum hit points are temporarily reduced by their healing value.
- **1** - Things get worse.
- **2** - Its really bad now!
- **Final** - The victim is pushing up daisies.

**Description:** This is a very nasty and virulent blight which is contracted due to GM delight in torturing PCs.

**Cure:** You must make a poltice from the infamous yellow fungus and apply it to the patient before stage three is reached.

## **Wounds**

These are the effects of physical trauma, and are thus fundamentally non-magical in nature. They include broken bones, severed limbs, and other similar injuries. Instead of attempting to produce a long list of medical horrors only a few generalized injuries should suffice, with the GM providing any needed additional details of the specific wound if need be. These are treated using the healing knack, survival might also be relevant.

**Wound**

**Onset:** Stage 0 begins when the character receives a serious blow to the head.

**Stages:**

- **0** - The victim is dazed.
- **1** - The victim is stunned.
- **2** - The victim is helpless.
- **Final** - The victim enters a helpless vegetative state from which only powerful healing magic can bring recovery. Even then the victim will almost surely suffer effects such as permanent memory loss.

**Description:** The victim has damage to the brain, usually caused by head trauma. Depending on the severity of the trauma the victim might actually begin at a later stage such as stage 1 or 2. Immediate medical care is urgent. If the victim continues to attempt to carry out activities they are extremely likely to aggravate the condition, thus failed checks when attempting other actions may count as failures here too.

Note that the affliction level should be set to reflect the level of the source of the wound, generally. Once the character is wounded they will need to make a Survival check every eight hours. This check will have disadvantage unless they are resting. Treatments, such as medical checks may also improve or worsen the patient's condition.

**Cure:** Healing herbs and poultices can be used to improve the patient's condition. If the wound reaches stage 2 then it may be necessary to resort to trepanning or other extreme measures. Less

severe cases which receive reasonable care under favorable conditions should be treated as low complexity, but most head injuries are medium complexity challenges, and they may be high complexity in cases of severe injury in a remote location under poor conditions.

## Leg Wound

Challenge

### Wound

**Onset:** Stage 0 begins when the character is wounded.

### Stages:

- **0** - The victim is slowed.
- **1** - The victim is slowed to a speed of 2.
- **2** - The victim is prone.
- **Final** - The victim permanently loses the use of one leg. With the aid of a prosthesis they may move at their original speed -2 squares. This only effects land movement. Only major regenerative healing can cure this.

**Description:** The victim's leg is broken or otherwise seriously injured. At stage 0 the limb is still marginally useful, but serious versions of this wound may start at stage 1 or even 2, in which case the wound is probably something like a major/compound fracture, etc. Increases in severity represent the onset of infection, circulation failure, etc. The wound will naturally progress every 2 days, with a Survival check determining if it is better or worse. Stage 3 represents a point where the limb must be amputated or is otherwise permanently unusable.

**Cure:** Healing herbs and poultices can be used to improve the patient's condition. Surgery, casts and splints, etc. are generally recommended for the more serious cases. Infections may need to be cauterized, etc. This can all be accomplished with healing checks, and/or checks to obtain the required medications and such. Complete rest and proper care usually result in recovery, but natural healing will require considerable time, up to a month or more per stage.

## Diseases

While in the real world these are caused by either microorganisms or some malfunction of the body, the world of HoML doesn't really have natural processes or microscopic life. Instead it has magical forces, which can manifest in the form of bodily disease, or mental illness. In practical terms there is no real difference between these and curses. However, because they afflict the physical body, they are treatable using the healing knack.

## Curses

Curses are more varied and less related to physical bodily processes than diseases are; they include such things as therianthropy. Usually a curse will require some sort of specific requirements in order to effect a cure, or a specific magical ritual, etc. Treatment is generally accomplished via using arcana, or in some cases religion.

## Poisons

Poisons, which herein includes other sorts of toxins, lethal or non-lethal, are substances introduced into the body of the victim in some way, where they act as an affliction. They are very similar to diseases and can also be treated using the healing or sometimes arcana knacks. There may be magical means to achieve a cure, as with any affliction, but it is common for poisons to have a specific antidote.

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# Myths & Monsters

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The World, Monsters, and More

## Monsters

The world of HoML is filled with terrible beasts, cunning foes, and strange creatures of all types. Often the heroes will be asked to fight these beings. Here we will define the rules which cover monsters, and any other character which is an NPC.

## Magic Items

The world of HoML is a magical world. Wizards cast spells, priests invoke the power of the very gods to perform miracles, and even fighters draw upon their inner magical strength to perform deeds of heroism far beyond the reach of ordinary men. Dragons circle in the skies, and giants lurk in the high mountains. The very world itself is a magical place; crops grow, the Sun rises and sets, and the seasons pass all due to the workings of magical processes.

Powerful magical items fill the pages of myth and legend, great warriors wield mighty swords, wizards draw power from magic wands, and witches

brew noxious potions full of magic. All of these sorts of items may be encountered in HoML. When player characters come into possession of magic items they are counted as boons. Some items, the less powerful or those which are quickly exhausted, are minor boons. The more unique and potent items on the other hand are major boons, helping to define the very nature of their wielders.

Any boon may be manifested as an item. Practically any boon could be cast in this form if it is story appropriate. Such items will also normally have properties which provide their users with permanent benefits as long as they possess, wear, or use the item in question. GMs should feel free to embody any boon they see fit into an item, providing appropriate narrative explaining its function. Thus for instance a 'Girdle of Dwarven Kind' might be a magical girdle which grants its wearer the racial boon of being a dwarf, complete with all its associated benefits.

In some cases an item might be a limitation instead of being a boon. Such items are 'cursed' and characters will usually want to be rid of them as soon as possible. An item might potentially have more than one aspect, being highly useful in some fashion but also possessing drawbacks.

## **Item Attributes**

Items literally are boons. They have the same format as any other boon, and in fact it is quite feasible to turn any boon into an item, or take the definition of an item and use it for another form of boon. In many cases an item may simply be described as 'granting boon xyz', meaning it is that boon, but with the form of an item, or perhaps in some cases it may include an additional attribute, plus the attributes of some existing boon.

Items will contain in their descriptions the type of item, and any needed explanations regarding how it works which might be needed (IE how to activate it or any other similar information). Its history and such may also be described. If the same boon were to be reworked into a different form, this information might not apply in the new form, but the general benefits, etc. would still be applicable as stated.

## Creating Items

Player characters will inevitably desire to create certain items for themselves. This is perfectly acceptable and can be pretty straightforward. In general a character might do this in one of two ways. First the character could invest a part of his or her existing power into an item. This might be undertaken so that the item can be given away to another character or for purely narrative reasons. The character gains no power out of this, they simply invest one or more of their existing boons into the item via the Enchantment ritual and the item then becomes magical and takes on the characteristics of that boon. If the character loses or gives up the item, then they will also lose the boon (and may lose a level in the process if the boon was a major boon). Obviously the appropriateness of this process is up to the GM to determine, some boons simply don't make sense as items, others may require very special selection of the item to be used, etc.

A character may also construct an item AS a boon. That is the construction of the item and investing it with power could be the subject of an adventure of some type, with the item being the reward for success. In this case the character gains a new boon and if it is a major boon also a new level. The same considerations apply as above, the process may require the Enchantment ritual and will almost surely involve some sort of process by which the power to be vested in the item is acquired.

## **Making Consumables**

Consumable production is the process of imbuing a ritual into a material form, such that it can be invoked later, and possibly by a person other than the character who has access to the ritual. In order to accomplish this process the character must have access to the ritual in question, as well as the proper materials for the type of consumable they will create, such as paper and ink for a scroll, or appropriate ingredients for a potion. They must also be in possession of the equipment and facilities needed to transform the ingredients into a consumable of the desired type. In addition a certain amount of time must be spent to make the item.

## **Costs**

Rituals used via consumables are no less costly than normal. If the consumable has not been invested, then the cost is simply paid at the time of consumption. Note that in many cases the item itself represents the ritual cost. Thus most potion creators will include whatever materials and whatnot are part of the ritual's cost in the ingredients to create it, meaning they don't have to be paid at consumption time. However, any power point costs required will be levied against the user of the consumable.

## **Equipment**

Producing consumables requires the use of specialized equipment. The exact costs are commensurate with the magnitude of the effect to be obtained. Heroic tier consumables require heroic equipment, etc. The costs

of the equipment will generally be a major expense, but this only needs to be paid once. Other alternatives might include gaining access to someone else's equipment, but note that most owners of such are jealous guardians. They will surely, at least, want to charge a significant fee for its use.

The exact form the equipment takes is determined by the form which the creator wishes the consumable to take, as well as the magical tradition, power source, etc. being utilized. It could be a cauldron and ladle, a set of beakers, alembics, and retorts, even some sort of magic producing plants, fruits or herbs perhaps.

## **Forms**

There are various forms of consumables, and certain types of rituals are traditionally invested in certain ones. However there are no hard and fast rules implying that it is impossible to try to create consumables in different forms. It is likely however that doing so will prove more difficult, as the required knowledge is probably less easily found. The types of consumables are covered in the section on item types.

## **Making Permanent Items**

Making permanent items is a more difficult and time consuming process than making a simple consumable. Because these items are able to function indefinitely and provide all the benefits of a boon, they generally require actually placing a boon which the character either currently has, or which they are gaining access to, into the item. This investment generally requires an enchantment ritual. It also requires that the item to be enchanted is present and in the possession of the one doing the enchanting. Normally such items are of the highest quality, since the time and energy needing to be invested can be quite high.

Note also that making items is not something exceptionally beneficial to the maker, in general. While in some cases enchanting an item is the only way to acquire a given boon, in most cases the creator of the item is divesting themselves of an existing or potential capability which is now, at best, something they can lose. There are sometimes reasons to produce these items, the creator may wish to invest the boon in another person, or they may be suitable compensated for their trouble.

In ancient times it is said that certain groups were able to create a significant number of items, or items which access power not available to any mortal person today. These sorts of items cannot be produced today. Certainly the techniques used are not within the reach of people in the current ages. Some of these items were also produced by the very gods themselves, and are thus works of art which mortals cannot aspire to replicate.

## Item Types

There are several types of items. Generally each item type embodies a boon which is appropriate to its form, but this is more a matter of narrative interest than it is a rules consideration. For example, many enchanted weapons sport a permanent bonus to attacks made with them, but there's no reason why such a bonus couldn't be an effect of wearing a ring, etc. The only real consideration with item types is the logical consequence of which ones can be equipped at a given time. A character can wear a ring on each hand, a gauntlet on each hand, a shield or weapon can be held in each hand, etc. One can wear only one suit of armor, one cloak, one suite of cloths, one set of footwear, etc.

In general these kinds of limits are simply narrative. Because each item represents a boon, many of which increase a character's level, there isn't any reason to need to limit how many items a given character can carry or use. Characters will need to make choices about which weapons to equip, or implements as the case may be, but beyond this, and wearing one suit of armor, they can generally use all the rest of their items as they please.

## Consumable Types

Consumables are single-use items. Either they produce an immediate effect and are then expended, or the user expends them, and some sort of ongoing effect is created which lasts for a period of time, as noted in the description of boon. Because of this all but the very most powerful consumables are considered to be minor boons. Their effects may be substantial, but they can only be produced one time. Almost any feat of the ritual type can be placed in a consumable, as well as a variety of other effects.

Consumables come in a myriad of types, the most commonly observed being listed here. Other sorts might also exist, and each of the listed types can have a variety of specific appearances, as desired.

- **Potions:** This category is fairly broad. Any ritual which might effect the one using it is likely to take the form of a potion. This is particularly true of those which enchant or transform the user.
- **Salves:** This category includes many curative, restorative, and healing effects.
- **Scrolls:** Rituals which create things, summon things, or otherwise act on the outside world and not the user very often take the form of scrolls.
- **Powders:** This category generally covers things which can be mixed with food or beverage, or possibly delivered to another person by dispersal, such as by a trap, blowgun, or a projectile which releases it on impact. Most of these are bateful to the recipient.
- **Ammunition:** This category generally includes single target attacks. That is, an effect which can target a single individual is invested into the item. When the ammunition is fired, the effect is unleashed. If it hits, then it takes effect, otherwise the enchantment is usually lost.

- **Ingredients:** These are things which are used to enhance the effects of feats, or grant a single-use bonus to a check of some sort. The ingredient is expended in the use of the feat or other action, generally granting advantage on the check.

## **Permanent Items**

As noted in the section on creating items, permanent items produce effects which are either repeatable or ongoing. Repeatable ones being triggered under specific conditions, or when commanded. Some of these may require the payment of a price, generally one or more power points. Others simply produce an ongoing effect which is not subject to a duration, such as most protective items, which grant bonuses against certain types of attacks, DR, or some other sort of permanent bonus or similar effect. Common sorts of permanent items include:

- **Armor:** These items usually provide either increased DR, protection against certain types of damage, or possibly other generally ongoing defensive or personal effects. A few have other kinds of uses. Generally it is not possible to wear more than one armor at a time.
- **Weapons:** This is a very large category. In order to be effective the weapon must generally be in hand, although non-offensive boons should be operable as long as the item is carried. Almost all weapons have offensive enchantments, usually including a permanent bonus to all attacks made with them, sometimes specific to certain types of targets. They might also have other properties related to making attacks.
- **Rings:** Rings may have either permanent effects or grant the use of various feats. In either case the ring must be worn in the normal fashion in order to be used or to take effect. A character may only wear up to two rings, one on each hand. Characters without hands/fingers may or may not be able to utilize this sort of magic at the GM's discretion.
- **Shields:** These items must be equipped and in use in order to function. A character may only use one shield at a time. Most shields have beneficial properties, some may also grant feats similarly to other permanent items.
- **Wearables:** These generally provide effects, properties, or feats related to the type of gear they represent. Some of them may be hard to wear at the same time, such as a helm and a crown, or more than one belt or sash. The possible forms they can take are quite wide.
- **Implements:** These are much like weapons. Some implements may be used as weapons, and vice versa. If they have properties which would make sense in either role, then the property functions normally regardless of whether the specific feat requires a weapon or an implement. Thus a +1 Rune Weapon would produce a permanent bonus either to weapon or implement attacks
- **Fixtures:** Fixtures are large items which must be installed in order to be effective. They are often things like doors, tables, altars, etc. Their effects are generally felt in the area where they are installed, or can be called upon by their owners while in those areas. A few mighty fixtures might be powerful enough to be invoked from anywhere, or at least in nearby regions.

- **Equipment:** Any sort of equipment or gear might potentially be enchanted, usually in a way which enhances its normal function. These items generally function when they are employed in their proper role, though a certain amount of improvisation might be possible.

## Artifacts and Relics

Artifacts & Relics are a separate class of magic from other items. These are items of the greatest power, unique in all of creation. Mortals cannot construct artifacts, they are the province of powerful beings and forces. Only the very most mythic figures have constructed, become, or left behind relics. Now and then such an item will come into the possession of a PC. This never happens by chance! Relics are instruments of the gods, fate, or other higher powers and their appearance in the world is always a sign of the involvement of such forces in worldly affairs. These items are always major boons, merely acquiring one increases a character's ties with fate.

Unlike normal items, Artifacts and Relics are embodied with will, purpose, and personality. This means they act much like NPCs, sometimes cooperating with their owner, and sometimes not. Because an artifact has a purpose or agenda of some sort it will also have goals, or at least preferences. If the artifact's owner shares these goals, or at least gives them some priority, this will enhance the loyalty of the artifact and may have an effect on its granting of powers.

Artifacts are often impermanent. That is they don't usually remain in the possession of player characters permanently. As agents of fate and the higher powers, they generally move on once their task is complete. However, if an artifact's loyalty to its former owner is high then it will surely leave behind a major boon in its place. If not then it may disappear at an inopportune moment, not only leaving its owner in the lurch, but short a boon! A wise adventurer will treat his artifacts well.

### **Purpose**

Every artifact has a purpose or agenda. When using an artifact the character must take this agenda into consideration and try to maintain the loyalty of the artifact, lest the item up and abandon the character! This is simulated by constructing a challenge, similar to an affliction, which represents the status of the ongoing relationship. Artifacts are extremely willful and often capricious or operate with obscure and sometimes difficult to comprehend agendas. They often don't particularly care whether the character carrying them around understands this agenda or not. In fact they may well hide their true purposes.

## **Relationship**

When an artifact enters the game and is acquired by a character, the GM should set up a challenge track, similar to the type used for afflictions. Each artifact provides the outline of such a challenge, detailing the consequences to the PC artifact relationship for failures as well as outlining some positive consequences of certain degrees of success.

Whenever the player can come up with actions and circumstances which reflect a degree of progress towards the artifact's agenda, or indicate a degree of alignment between the artifact's goals and the PC's stated goals or actions, then successes can be tallied on the track. However, artifacts are ancient sentient objects placed in the world by the most powerful magic. They cannot simply be convinced by mere talk or a few token acts. In the end they are driven only by one thing, achieving the goals and ends for which they exist. Thus the GM, or the artifact description, will set specific milestone achievements. Progress on the success track beyond these points will only be possible when the character achieves these. While attempting to achieve them may mollify the artifact for a time, only actual success will bring its story forward towards its conclusion.

If the character is not genuinely interested in achieving the artifact's goals, or does not appear to be capable and making progress in that direction, then the artifact may abandon the character. Whenever a setback occurs, a failure is noted on the artifact challenge tally and its confidence in the character is reduced. After three failures, the artifact will certainly move on. Some artifacts may simply disappear, or slip from their user's grasp. They may enlist the aid of other forces to liberate them, or simply ask to be transferred or placed in a specified location. A keeper may also intervene and remove the artifact. Under these conditions the character will simply lose the item. Items may sometimes change their standing with characters too. Achieving a milestone in the item's agenda may erase a failure, or at least motivate the artifact to forgo denying the character benefits.

## **Keepers**

In addition to the artifact itself, many of these items are also associated with a Keeper. The keeper is a person, spirit, or being which is associated with the artifact. Keepers don't directly act to achieve the artifact's goals, and may not even share its agenda, but they do serve an artifact in various ways. The GM may devise a keeper for any artifact. He should determine what the keeper's purpose is, what kind of control or influence it has over the artifact, their relationship, etc.

Keepers never intervene directly in the actions of the artifact or its users. They are passive forces who may only carry out a few limited actions. A keeper may present an artifact to a character. A keeper may recover an artifact from a character when either its purpose is achieved or it leaves the character. A keeper might appear when an artifact itself is in danger in order to provide some sort of information or assistance. It might bring allies to assist either the character or the artifact, etc. Certainly many

keepers are ancient beings in their own right and have great stores of lore and a deep understanding of their charges. While they will not intervene in the story, taking actions, they might share some of this information.

Keepers can take almost infinite forms. They might appear as beings, as spirits such as angels, or they might appear to be humans, or objects. However they appear, they can communicate in some way with the artifact's user when they need to. Ideas for a keeper might include the spirit of the artifact's creator, a guardian angel assigned to watch over the artifact, a guard intended to prevent the artifact from causing harm, a former possessor of the artifact, etc. The term 'keeper' should be interpreted loosely, not all of these beings have much influence over the artifact they are associated with. Some may simply appear to give warnings or try to convince the user to destroy the artifact!

## **Destruction**

Artifacts are ancient relics of power and might, containing extremely potent magic. They were created under extraordinary unique conditions. Destroying them will require equally extraordinary circumstances. In a few cases destruction might not truly be possible, such as a case where an artifact represents a universal principle. However, even items of this sort can generally be unmade, even if they will reappear in some future time. If the players decide that they wish to destroy an artifact, then the GM should come up with a way for them to do so. It should be difficult and involve great risk. The artifact itself will surely oppose such a plan, and any keeper might also, although other keepers might actually assist!

The actual destruction should involve either titanic forces, such as volcanoes or something of the sort, or else some situation or circumstance related to the artifact. Thus a weapon might be destroyed when its nemesis breaks it. A suit of armor might be unmade on the forge where its plates were first created. A book might be consumed by a vat of universal acid. A mighty magical war machine might be undone by simply commanding it to self-destruct in some long forgotten language. Some artifacts may come with a fated ending, a prophesy of some situation or circumstance under which they will be undone. Finding the method of destruction is unlikely to be a simple task!

Should a hero destroy an artifact, then there could be a reward. This is unlikely to fully compensate for the great cost of carrying out the destruction, but it may provide the character with a happy ending of sorts.

## **Sample Artifacts**

### **Balzak's Axe**

Balzak's Axe      Arifact Level: 12  
Major

**Association:** Dwarves      **Prerequisites:** None

**Description:** This axe appears as a large waraxe made of hard dark steel, with a handle of black wood and iron fittings. It appears worn but solid, its blade is sharp, and never grows dull.

**Benefits:** +3 permanent bonus to attack rolls, damage 7 (Free Action) once per turn when you hit a demon the target is dazed and pushed 2 squares (Free Action, activation cost one 1 martial power point) once per turn when you hit a demon the target is stunned and takes 2DD+10 extra force damage from the attack. (Free Action) You can detect any demon or any object or effect with the demonic keyword within 10 squares

Far back in the deeps of time, after the Younger Gods had created the Speaking Peoples, but before they warred with the Elder Gods, lived a great dwarven hero, Balzak Balug's Bain. He forged a mighty axe by long-lost dwarven craft with which to fight the demons who invaded his people's homeland. In the end he slew the mighty demon Balug. Long ago his city was abandoned and lost, his tomb forgotten, and the axe vanished into the depths. However, it is said that it sometimes turns up at a time and place where a great champion of the dwarves is needed.

At first the Axe appears to be nothing special. Its blade is of a dull gray metal and the handle appears to be no more than a stout hickory haft. Overall it looks to be an old and somewhat worn double-bitted war axe. However,

once a warrior claims the Axe and wields it in combat, then it will begin to show its true nature, proving to be a powerful weapon.

Once awakened in this way the Axe will begin to speak telepathically with its wielder, giving advice, asking the character to perform certain tasks, and questioning their actions when they don't comport with its purpose and goals.

**Purpose:** The Axe's purpose is to act as the weapon of great champions of the dwarvish people. Although it usually prefers to be wielded by a dwarf, this isn't a requirement. As long as the wielder is willing to take up the cause of the dwarves and fight for them, the Axe will be satisfied.

**Goals:** In keeping with its purpose the Axe will attempt to find and defeat the most dangerous enemy of the dwarves which is currently present. If no serious threats to the dwarves exist, then the Axe will desire to find such a threat, for surely if it has appeared in a given time and place, such a threat is not far off. The Axe isn't too particular about the costs involved in achieving its goals. It is perfectly happy to send the characters on a suicidal mission if that achieves the desired ends. However the Axe doesn't demand such sacrifice, another plan which has a better chance of survival is always acceptable.

**Personality:** The Axe remains mostly focused on its mission. It may, grudgingly, praise its user for some extraordinary feat, and may criticize him for failing to further its ends, but mostly it keeps fairly quiet. It may

sometimes offer advice, insight, or useful facts regarding ancient dwarven lore, but only if it is directly related to its mission. If asked questions of this sort it may answer, but such answers will generally be succinct and to the point.

## **Power Sources**

Power sources are the fundamental types of magical energy which run the world of HoML. Everything runs on this power, it underlies all of nature and all other phenomena. For the most part this is just assumed in how things work, so people walk around, crops grow, the weather happens, the Sun rises and sets, etc. Characters don't need to expend power points to do ordinary things as their life energy and other energies are more than adequate to most mundane tasks.

However, everything extraordinary in the world requires extraordinary and explicit power. The amounts required even for basic feats such as just swinging a sword are reasonable and sustainable. Characters can generally perform these sorts of actions without needing to expend their power points, but when they attempt truly heroic actions, or need to summon up superhuman amounts of will and toughness, then this is reflected in power point expenditures.

This chapter is concerned, however, more with the nature of these powers and how they relate to the world and the characters in a fictional sense.

## **Source Descriptions**

As outlined in the chapter on PCs, *Player Characters*, there are five power sources which operate in the world. Each of them has some distinct traits and works in its own slightly different way from the others. Note that each source does overlap with the others in some degree, so that it is not possible to say absolutely that you cannot heal someone using elemental power, etc. It is true however that each source has certain characteristics which suit it particularly to specific kinds of magic.

### **Martial Power**

As described previously, martial power is a form of internal and inherent power which is possessed by complex, usually living, beings. It isn't just 'life force', but is a factor of willpower, discipline, and training. Generally most people associate this power source with combat and the use of weapons and combat techniques. It is also frequently associated with physical activities such as feats of athleticism or endurance.

In reality there is as much a mental component of martial power as physical. However, most practitioners are either not aware of this or do not have the skill to attain the higher forms. They skim the surface of martial power by learning various weapon techniques and physical skills, practicing them and increasing their power levels but not really exploring its more subtle and powerful aspects. Thus martial power is both the

easiest source to tap into, and the most reliable, but is also the hardest to fully master.

The lower forms of this power obviously manifest in terms of extraordinary feats of skill with weapons and athletic activities. It can be used to make powerful attacks, amazing defenses, and things like superhuman leaps and such. Even more basic is the digging into one's reserves to replenish fortitude and stamina, which is reflected in using power points for healing purposes. Every hero can do this. More advanced practitioners can control their bodies so as to resist damage, directly heal their own wounds, throw off magical effects, and even directly project the force of their will and personality as if it was a weapon. At the very highest forms the practitioner can actually reshape their own flesh and change forms. Only the most skilled practitioners attain this level of ability.

Because martial power is an internal form of power, not derived from any external source, it cannot really be cut off or restricted. At most it might be possible to temporarily drain a person's martial power through some form of toxin or something similar. By the same token, it is difficult at best to combine more than one person's power, and external sources of this power are not generally available.

## **Spirit Power**

Spirit power is a granted source of power. In order for living mortals to access spirit power they must bargain with, or petition, these spirits. What this means is that spirit power is both readily available, and not always provided. It also means that, potentially, the amounts of power which might be available could be large, but then the price for accessing it would be very high. Users of this power can only handle channeling so much before they will suffer some sort of damage or backlash.

Thus the main issues with spirit power are first of all to obtain it. This is accomplished by several routes, which are reflected in different callings. Shamans build relationships with specific spirits, often ancestors, which are in close contact with the mortal world. They align with these spirits and create a relationship of alliance and friendship. The spirits grant them power and the shaman give them respect, consult with them, and help maintain their connections with the living world. Shamans are bound by these obligations and will never violate these relationships lest they lose their access to power.

Witches utilize a different strategy, making pacts with certain types of spirits. These are binding agreements of magical force which obligate each party to the other. Thus they are able to count on a grant of power, but at the same time they must sometimes pay back their patrons, and may owe them service. Some patrons are relatively benign and make few demands. Other patrons are harsh task masters, demanding constant service and even making other impositions on their clients. Characters using this kind of strategy do have some options however, they can contact additional spirits and bargain with them. If one demands too high a price, another may be more reasonable.

Finally there are those who are simply willing agents of powerful spirits, generally gods. These are priests, the mortal servants of the gods. This is a relationship in which the priest reveres and worships the god, and the god in turn grants the priest access to spirit power in order to further its agenda and support its worship. The advantage is that the god is heavily invested in its worshipers and gods are powerful beings which can and do both grant power, but also have authority over various aspects of the world, their domains. The disadvantage with worship is that the relationship can be somewhat one-sided.

Spirit power is highly flexible. Since it is granted by specific spirits with specific agendas, abilities, and spheres of interest these factors must be taken into account to understand what sorts of effects can be achieved. A nature spirit will be able to provide power for one sort of effects, and a war god would grant access to somewhat different effects. Thus the war god worshipper might have access to feats which create fear effects, make physical attacks, and enhance military capabilities such as leadership, and possibly the curing of common types of combat wounds. The nature spirit might grant feats relating to influencing and communicating with animals and plants, taking on the attributes of various creatures, etc. This might be pretty similar to effects which can be achieved using life power.

Note that spirit power tends to be bolstering and enhancing, or its opposite. It is a primarily mental and social kind of force. It can achieve direct material effects, but its primary orientation is going to be towards more indirect effects. It is rare for spirit power to generate a highly forceful direct effect, the spirits are forces which manipulate and direct the world, so their powers tend to operate by influencing or shaping the world vs creating an effect whole cloth.

## **Elemental**

Elemental power is a fundamental force of the universe which is very direct and forceful. Elemental power creates things directly, destroys things, or reshapes them by use of raw power. Interestingly most of its practitioners access elemental power by use of skill and knowledge. Alchemists work out procedures by which they can infuse elemental power into their creations, for example. Spell blades carefully construct their rune weapons as tools with which to channel elemental power in order to make powerful attacks. However, there are other approaches. Sorcerers for example mix elemental forces directly into their own bodies, bringing elemental power directly into themselves and then channeling it to create powerful effects. This is a hazardous and chaotic process, but it can produce mighty effects.

When people think of 'magic' they often think of elemental power. It is showy and not usually very subtle. On the other hand the various elements can be harnessed in their raw forms to produce enhancing and strengthening effects of various sorts. There are also many elemental beings which can be summoned. It is fairly common for a feat to involve producing an effect indirectly by pulling an elemental into the world for a brief instant.

Elemental power is quite dangerous in that it is an inherently unruly kind of force. It stems from the outer chaos which is said to surround all of material existence and from which matter itself was originally derived. Sometimes mistakes or attempts to harness power in ways which are not well-understood can result in backlash or unintended effects. There is also the question of availability. While elemental power is plentiful and usually close to hand it may be that in certain times and places it is harder to access, or only some of the elements have influence. Thus it may be quite hard, or impossible, to produce an effect which relies on elemental water when standing on the rim of a lake of volcanic fire. Most elemental practitioners try to acquire a range of effects or flexible feats which allow for use of more than one element for this reason. Protections against elemental damage are also fairly common, since it is used offensively quite often.

## **Life**

Life is the power source which imbues living things with their animating force. Thus it is a power source which is capable of great influence over all living things, which includes the vast majority of characters. For the most part those who attune themselves to the life force are linked to settings where life is abundant and thus life power is in great supply. This can include both natural settings as well as places where many people or other beings congregate.

Life power is typically seen as healing, restorative, or enhancing in its effects, but it can also include control over living things, summoning, and transformative effects. Life power source practitioners work magic with the living, and can create a wide variety of effects, though most of them will involve something alive. Thus a life power source feat might make a ranged attack by bringing forth a poisonous stinging insect which attacks the target(s).

One of the obvious limitations with life power is that it draws on living things. In a dead land there is very little of this power available to draw from. That being said, one must never be too quick to dismiss the possibilities for living things. Particularly in the magical world of HoML there are relatively few truly lifeless environments. Likewise, life power has relatively less influence over non-living things and non-natural materials than it does over the living.

## Shadow

Shadow is the least easily accessible of all the power sources. It embodies the dissolution of things, their change and aging and return back into the non-living materials from which they came. Thus shadow power can be seen as the power of death, however it is much more than that. There is a strong mental component to shadow power, such that it is very effective at hiding and obscuring things, clouding the minds of the living, and creating illusions and other such effects. At the same time, it can be controlled in such a way as to bring about the condition of undeath, and the study of shadow power allows its practitioners to see into the hidden realms and paths of the dead.

Shadow power is difficult to obtain in the first place, usually requiring some form of self-sacrifice, a sort of symbolic death or loss. The practitioner thus obtains a degree of insight into the hidden realm. Once obtained, this power is quite potent and is readily used for many purposes. It also comes with few immediate strings attached. Instead the downsides of shadow power manifest themselves over a longer period of time. Inevitably all of those who follow this calling will have their life forces, bodies, spirits, and core self slowly eroded away until they become ether shadows themselves, or else undead monstrosities, or become lost in the shadow realm for all time.

## Source Interactions

There are interactions between the power sources. Spirit and Elemental power sources form a sort of dichotomy between the mental and spiritual as opposed to the purely physical and energetic. Practitioners know that the best counter to an elemental attack is a spiritual defense which can rob the elements of their potency and bring order to them. The opposite is also true, a spiritual effect is often countered with raw elemental power, which can break it and cause it to become disordered and ineffective.

Life and Shadow powers likewise tend to oppose one another. Shadow power can wither the living, and the power of life can fence out and disperse shadow. Thus it is common to see a shadow attack countered with a life defense, and vice versa.

However, it should be noted that these oppositions are only part of the story. These supposedly opposed power sources are also closely linked. Each one is the manifestation of a single underlying principle. There can be no spiritual order without universal chaos to define it and insure that change is possible. Likewise absolute chaos cannot produce anything and it is necessary to impose structure and order through spiritual power. The material world is thus a product of the balance between the two forces. If either one predominates, then the world will end. The same is true of life and shadow, without death there cannot be life. Growth requires decay and the two sources together form the principle of the endless circle of existence. Even the world is governed by this circle, entire worlds come into existence, and eventually age and crumble away again.

In the end these four sources can all interact in both constructive and destructive ways. The calling of wizardry is particularly associated with understanding this balance of forces and using it to achieve mastery over all of them.

The fifth force is also key. It is not well-understood how martial power arises. It seems to be related in some way to all of the other sources, but it doesn't arise out of the same principles that form them. Instead it seems to be an emergent power which arises out of the similarities and differences between the others. As such it doesn't really oppose any of them in particular, but neither does it align with them either. This is why it is very difficult to suppress martial power. Its origin is everywhere and it doesn't wax and wane, nor is it specifically countered by any one other power source.



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