

BLADES UNDER TYR.

A Blades in the Dark reskin by
RAVEN DAEGMORGAN

Blades Under Tyr is based on material by Troy Denning and Timothy Brown, and from Walter M. Baas.

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BLADES UNDER TYR.

a Blades in the Dark hack for the Dark Sun campaign setting

Release Version 1.0 – April 12, 2026

To play this game: a copy of the 1st edition *Dark Sun* campaign setting boxed set may be useful if you would like more detailed information on the setting, and a copy of the *Blades in the Dark* core book can clarify complex play concepts – however, some specific rules details differ.

Tyr, a wretched hive of scum and villainy. The safest oasis for hundreds of miles. Surrounded by the monster-haunted desert wastelands that make up the rest of the world, the only thing that keeps the city safe are the god-king's warded city walls. Within, the noble houses vie for power, merchant caravans hold goods hostage for water chits, and thieving elves fight to sell the scraps that are left. But worst of all are the Templars, the de facto rulers of the city, enforcing the will of King Kalak from his Golden Palace.

And then there's you. You just want a piece of it all before you die. Water. Food. Safety. A fist full of ceramic. A little opulence. All before the sands claim your bones.

A dark sun rises over the city every morning.
Two strange moons hang in a foul-colored sky.

Welcome to Tyr, scoundrel.

The latest public release version of this document is available on Wild Hunt Studios' website: wildhunt.daegmorgan.net.

In early 2022, I realized the core fictional conceits of *Blades in the Dark* aligned well with the presentation of Tyr in the original *Dark Sun* boxed campaign set: a post-apocalyptic city full of scheming factions with an immortal ruler at the top, surrounded by a deadly wasteland full of monsters, with strange powers and restless dead everywhere you looked.

Other than a few cosmetic differences, it was chocolate and peanut butter. I knew I had to make this real. But at the time, I didn't have time to craft a full conversion with new playbooks and actions, so created a reskin, with close attention paid to the sections that make a Blades game really work: the people, districts, and factions, the ability to personalize details, the narrative-supporting mechanics, the assumption of competency.

After four years of effort, this has become a mostly self-contained ruleset. The core Blades rulebook is still useful as a resource, but reliance on it is less necessary. There are fewer gaps to fill-in now as factions have been detailed, and their various power struggles made more apparent.

You may still wish to have a copy of the *Dark Sun* setting material, but there should be enough here to get the drift of what the setting is and fill in the rest yourself: this is *your* Tyr.

If you are already familiar with *Dark Sun* and its various supplements, you will note I have taken liberties with some of the details, changed or removed small elements, and added others. This is necessary as D&D is focused on adventure, heroism, big quests, and tactical combat, and as such, the details of the presented setting reflected this focus. Blades needs a different garden in which to grow. This text focuses on schemes, politics, mysteries, and con jobs – on the people who make the rules and the people who want to make the rules.

~ *Raven Daegmorgan, April 2026*

This book and additional supporting material are available from the Wild Hunt Studios itch.io page. If you paid someone else money for this PDF, scoundrel, you were robbed.

THE BASICS

Blades Under Tyr is a game about a group of daring scoundrels trying to survive and prosper in a corrupt, authoritarian society on a weird, dying desert world. We play to find out if the fledgling crew can thrive amidst the teeming threats surrounding it.

THE PLAYERS

You, a player, create one or more characters (PCs) and work with the other players to create the crew to which all your characters belong. You should strive to bring your character to life as an interesting, daring protagonist who reaches boldly beyond their current safety and means – or as they say in Tyr: **ride it like a stolen crodlu**.

As co-authors of your game, you collaborate with the gamemaster (GM) to establish your game's tone and style, and make judgment calls about the mechanics, dice, and consequences.

Because characters should *take foolhardy risks* and *act against their best interests*, and so sometimes disappear for days or weeks before turning up again, each player creates additional characters – other members of the crew – that they, or other players, may play as needed or desired. This is known as **troupe play**.

THE CREW

As a group, decide what kind of crew to play by picking a type of criminal enterprise that interests everyone, then work with the GM and the other players to define the nature and details of your crew. You may decide on a crew type before or after creating your characters.

In play, you will develop your crew by taking on jobs – called scores – and contending with threats from enemies and rivals, further fleshing out the crew and its members, their obligations, their values, and their history.

THE GAMEMASTER

The GM helps organize the conversation to keep it focused on the most interesting parts of play. They aren't in charge of or in control of the story and don't plan events ahead of time. Instead, they present interesting opportunities, then follow the chain of action and consequence wherever it leads. The GM helps describe the dynamic world the characters inhabit and plays all the non-player characters (NPCs) in the world, giving each a concrete desire and preferred method of action.

PLAYING A SESSION

Sessions can last anywhere from two to six hours, depending on the preferences of the group. Make sure to stay hydrated and take regular breaks to stretch and move around! And remember to have fun!

During a session, your crew of scoundrels works together to choose a goal they want to accomplish – a score – then makes a few dice rolls and jump straight into the action *in media res*. You take actions, suffer consequences, and succeed or fail at obtaining the goal. Then you take some downtime, during which you recover, pursue side-projects, and indulge your vice. After downtime, the crew once again looks for a new opportunity, or creates their own, and we play to find out what happens.

It helps to think about each session of *Blades Under Tyr* like an episode of a television show in which your characters are the protagonists. Each episode has one or two main events and some side-story elements, all of which fit into an ongoing series.

Thinking about each session like a TV show also helps play: if you are ever uncertain about what your character would do, ask yourself *what would this look like in the TV show?* And if you are ever wondering if something is interesting enough to spend play time on, ask yourself *would this scene catch your attention if you were channel-surfing?*

THE GAME STRUCTURE

Blades Under Tyr has a loose game structure to help guide play. By default, the game is in **free play**— characters talk to each other, they go places, they do things. Rolls during free play are made without worrying about the serious and dangerous consequences that can arise during scores, as the characters can act with time and foresight: free play provides safety. Though that may not always be the case. Rolls during free play are not without narrative consequence.

When the group is ready, the crew chooses a **goal**, a **target**, and a type of **plan**. This triggers an **engagement roll**, which establishes the situation in the opening scene, and the game shifts into the **score** phase, where the PCs **take actions**, overcome **obstacles**, deal with **consequences**, and try to accomplish what they've set out to do.

When the score is finished, whether the crew succeeds or not, the game shifts into the **downtime** phase, where they get their **payoff**, but also deal with **fallout**. Everyone gets to take some personal **actions** while various factions in the city **advance** their own plans. When everyone's downtime activities are complete, the game returns to free play and the cycle starts over again.

These phases are a conceptual model to help you organize the game and keep play moving towards the most interesting moments. They're not meant to be rigid structures that restrict your options. Think of the phases as a menu of options to fit whatever it is you're trying to accomplish in play, and each phase suits a different type of play.

- ❖ A character using the flashback mechanic could temporarily shift play from the score into downtime.
- ❖ A series of downtime events might lead to a pivotal, dangerous scene that seems more like a score than free play, triggering an engagement roll and moving the game into a score until the situation is resolved.
- ❖ You might ask for a scene with your vice purveyor during downtime, shifting play temporarily into free play before returning to downtime.

FICTION FIRST

Unlike other RPGs you may be familiar with, *Blades Under Tyr* is a fiction first game: in this game, the dice are not the fiction.

You might be used to overcoming or dealing with a situation described to you by looking at your character sheet and picking a skill or trait to roll against, but in this game you don't ask if you can do something or roll a die to do it, you *tell us what you do* first, and then the GM decides if that warrants making a roll to avoid trouble. Actions are conversations and you roll only when the conclusion is "let's find out!"

You may also be used to rolling dice to successfully accomplish tasks — opening a lock, swinging a sword, reading a mysterious scroll — and seeing if you are able to accomplish that task. In *Blades Under Tyr*, rather than answer "can I?" we instead roll dice to ask "what happens?"

If you're unsure of the difference, the rest of this manual will help clarify.

D&D AND DARK SUN

The tradition of fantasy gaming is that of heroic adventure in the manner of epic fantasy or sword & sorcery: heroes undertake a quest, proving themselves, overcoming adversity, and pursuing an ultimate destiny. In gaming pastiche, this involves delving dungeons or exploring strange new lands, seeking treasures and fighting monsters and NPCs-of-the-week while an overarching story-plot is slowly revealed.

Dark Sun differs from this only in that it is often treated as a postmodernist grimdark or dark fantasy re-interpretation of this minimalist Tolkien-pastiche. Its heroes are often brooding, morally suspect protagonists achieving their means through questionable ends, or are even the outright cruel and rapacious icons of narcissist power-fantasy — regardless, they plunder dungeons or quest into exotic lands, both lean on epic fantasy's moral concepts of good and evil and cosmic struggle, and their characters are often bereft of the foundations of *character*.

WHAT BLADES IS ABOUT

If you are coming to *Blades Under Tyr* from a familiarity with the *Dungeons & Dragons* game and the *Dark Sun* setting as it is portrayed therein please know that approaching *Blades* in either of these modes will fail because this game is not meant to be *D&D* – *Blades* is not about heroic (or anti-heroic) quests to strange lands nor world-shaking plots.

The epic fantasy mode of shining heroes and monster-of-the-week (or in the grimdark mode of “edgy” cardboard sociopathy) while wandering the world doing stuff with a GM leading you by the nose to reveal some grand story misses the point: *Blades* is a game about scoundrels and criminals trying to survive and prosper in a corrupt and dying city – it’s about taking down your rivals, racking up wealth and influence, and expanding your criminal enterprise.

But it is not just or only this, nor is morality *absent*; your characters are people in a realist literary sense rather than mytho-poetic archetypes or sword & sorcery icons.

The protagonists of our stories are complicated: flawed, with heated relationships, self-destructive needs, intense desires, families and obligations, codes of behavior, and meaningful histories. These are the roots of play.

Everyone at the table is a player, including the GM, each working together to tell a story about these characters, the world in which they exist, and the exploits of the crew they are a part of.

In *Blades*, the GM has a specific job as a player: to be the arbiter of rules and maintainer of illusions, not the story-teller. This story, your story (“the plot”) is not written or planned or conceived by them ahead of time – it arises organically: improvised, jagged, and alive, built from your character’s history and their choices.

Actions and momentum stem from character, not quest; the pursuit of your character’s and the crew’s wants and desires, where the stakes aren’t in defeating the “Big Bad” or getting the treasure, but in how each job changes who they can trust, who has it out for them, and who they are at the end. (But maybe a little bit about the treasure.)

WHAT DARK SUN IS ABOUT

Tyr (and Athas) is cruel in comprehensible ways: slavery, poverty, corruption, the casual violence of scarcity and greed – these are human evils, horrible, but explicable. But something is wrong with the city, and with the world, in ways that go beyond human evils, something that exists beyond human ability to confront, contain, or mitigate.

Dark Sun is post-apocalyptic fiction. The world is in its death throes thanks to hundreds of irreversible actions taken a thousand generations ago. Defilers have wounded the land itself and it necrotizes with dark magic. The Wasteland spreads inexorably. The spiritual dissolution of the Gray bleeds into the world. Ancient things hungry for life sleep in Under-Tyr. Kalak is building something terrible with the ziggurat (...or is he?).

Human struggle is absurd in the light of inescapable ruin. The scoundrels’ victories are real, they’re the only thing that *can* matter, but are *also* just rearranging the deck chairs on a sinking silt-barge. This friction between incompatible truths existing alongside one another is a large part of what gives *Dark Sun* its unique aesthetic.

Without these post-apocalyptic undertones, you’re just running a crime game set in a harsh fantasy desert world. This is one of the mistakes people often make: the idea that because inhumanity exists, it means “savage” or “amoral” are the mode of play and represent *Dark Sun*.

A more accurate understanding of the setting is that survival-necessitated savagery co-mingles with the moral-necessity of civilization and decency: both matter in urgent, immediate ways. Cruelty and kindness, loyalty and betrayal, resistance and submission co-exist, contrast, and struggle against one another in the city, alongside reminders that the world is unraveling *regardless*: ruins of a lost age, undead spirits, encroaching deserts, vanishing resources, all frame these conflicts as petty.

Choices have costs. If the players decide amorality makes sense because the world is ending, make it hurt. If the players decide heroism makes sense in the face of doom, make it hurt. Betrayal, revenge, loss. Don’t steal their victories, but make them wonder sometimes if their choices were worth the price. Neither kindness nor cruelty can stop what’s coming, so what do you do? We play to find out.

BEST PRACTICES

To bring the savagery and desolation of the city to life and support the narrative, fiction-first environment, there are best practices both players and GMs must follow which help ensure the game remains fair and fun. These are not suggestions, they are the foundational rules of playing the game – as real as any other game mechanics.

PLAYER'S BEST PRACTICES

❖ **RIDE IT LIKE A STOLEN CRODLU:** Life is brutal and short on Athas, and you can't change that, so don't talk yourself out of fun for the sake of safety. Unlike other games, restraint in *Blades Under Tyr* isn't rewarded. The mechanics reward momentum, so when you are presented with a choice, advocate for actions that will be the most interesting and exciting: risk it all on dangerous gambles that could get your scoundrel into trouble, take big chances, and reach boldly beyond your means.

❖ **CHOOSE THE NARRATIVE, NOT THE BENEFICIAL:** Say what you do in the fiction first, then use the action that matches what your character is doing in the fiction, not the one where you have the highest rating. If you want to use an action that doesn't fit, earn it: set it up, change the situation, or pay for it with *WATER* and trouble. Otherwise, that roll will be more difficult, maybe even desperate or impossible!

❖ **EMBRACE CONSEQUENCES AND DIFFICULTY:** When a consequence lands, you have the tools to mitigate the fallout if you don't like it...but you can also simply take the hit and see what it leads to! Remember that consequences are not failures, they are plot twists that make the game more interesting, and they accompany both failures *and* successes. They aren't punishments, so lean into them!

❖ **WATER IS LUCK:** Gear and other expendable resources, like *WATER* are leverage, hoarding them is wasting potential. They are the difference between "I can't" and "I do anyways", letting you break the rules and resist the dehumanizing brutality of the city. Use them to squeeze your way out of trouble, act beyond your ability, and turn desperate situations to your advantage. Things aren't interesting unless they're utilized.

❖ **ACT NOW, PLAN LATER:** Do not spend hours debating hypotheticals. Your scoundrel knows what they're doing (they've discussed it "off-screen") so choose a plan and a detail, and use the mechanics in play to reveal the preparations your scoundrel has already made. Be amazed at how clever they were!

❖ **KEEP THINGS MOVING:** If you're stuck for an idea in play, ask questions and accept suggestions. You do not have to come up with everything off the top of your own head. The GM will offer you options and details as needed, and the other players can add details or make suggestions as well. It's not up to just you to play your character without any outside input, you just have final say.

❖ **BUILD THE WORLD AND THE CHARACTERS AS YOU PLAY:** You do not need, nor should you write, a complete backstory for your character at the start of the game. Begin with a sharp silhouette, then let play carve out the details: who you used to be or have always been, the people you care about, who you owe and why, who owes you and what, who you could never betray, what line you won't cross and what line you will. Write a single sentence for your background, your friend, your rival, and then decide in play what those mean and what your history is. And if you can't think of something off-hand, decide as we learn who they are through play.

❖ **ABSTRACTION VS. DETAIL:** Not everything needs to be a full one-page play with voiced dialogue. Resolve some scenes and actions with simple descriptions. Pull back or push in the view as needed, moving from the personal to the summary, and focus on where it becomes interesting. Push scenes towards conclusion, and establish the next scene.

❖ **TELL THE STORY:** You are a co-author in this game, so make decisions that bring life to the kind of setting and story you envision. Is it deadly? Allow your character to take deadly harm instead of resisting the result. Is betrayal and repentance a theme? Focus on actions that bring this to the forefront. Highlight the themes, tone, and style your group has decided on using your character's choices and behaviors.

❖ **ANNOUNCE THE WEIRD:** Lean into the superstitious, irrational, and bizarre elements of the setting; mention them in the background, or use them outright. Make the weird a physical, tangible part of the world. Mention kank herds and fire beetle lanterns, describe the use of bone-craft in common goods and structures, suggest the activity of spirits, give life to the Weird. Tie supernatural terror to the world: describe sensory details like the smell of corpse dust when you defile, the psychic resonance that causes the air to hum when someone reaches out with the Way, or the booming voice of a Templar's divine proclamations – make the supernatural *cost* something in the fiction.

GAMEMASTER'S INSTRUCTIONS

If you are the player who chooses to take on the role of GM, all of the above apply to you as well, if some slightly differently, but you have the additional responsibility of keeping the game moving by responding to the other players' interests and actions.

❖ **BURN THE SCRIPT:** Develop material, not plots. You are playing to see what happens, not to steer the game towards particular events. Since everyone playing is a co-author of the story, focus on creating places and people that feel real: give them character, motivations, and histories. Have them react to the players and the world around them. Since the other players have a degree of control over setting details and are in charge of deciding what to do, so you never know how they might change things from what you've imagined, treat your cool ideas as "potential fiction" that can be drawn from, rather than absolute truth. Hold on loosely and let what ends up being true emerge through play.

❖ **FOLLOW THE FICTION:** Player goals, NPC goals, relationships, and consequences will naturally produce a story. This is the engine of play; it is based on everything you developed as players in Session 0 and further events – get it running and trust it to work its magic, no railroad needed. In that spirit, use the material developed. Throw established details into immediate crisis, because *change* is how you get *story*. The crew's favorite gang boss? Her lieutenant has her on the ropes and is in the middle of a coup: enter the crew! Their best friend? Dragon's Deal for a betrayal!

❖ **BE A FAN:** Your role isn't that of the opponent or antagonist. While you should never pull your punches, be there to celebrate the characters' successes and mourn their losses as much as everyone else at the table. Celebrating 'your' victories at the cost of the other players makes you *that* guy; don't be that guy. By the same token, when the scoundrels earn something – a victory, a secret, a powerful contact, an advantage they worked hard to create – don't hold back or hedge what they've rightfully won. If they uncovered a secret, tell them all of it. It's more interesting to see what they do with the knowledge than to hoard it!

❖ **CUT TO THE ACTION:** Don't describe every footstep down every corridor and street, or account for every second of the day. Tension will be created naturally by the system, so jump-cut to scenes where choices matter and trouble is ready to bite. End scenes where it seems natural and before they become stale, and zoom out to abstract minor events. Players can always (and should) flashback to previous scenes as needed.

❖ **KEEP PLAY MOVING:** When play stalls, get it moving: ask leading questions, offer the players opportunities, and suggest options for action. To help the other players make decisions that matter, tell them what their characters see and hear, what they notice, and even just what they suspect, to make the world legible and interactive. When the game devolves into planning, get it moving – planning isn't playing – help them tie up scenes and then quickly establish the next scene, focusing on their goals and moments of action.

❖ **REMEMBER THEIR GOALS:** Frame goals by explicitly polling the group about what they're trying to accomplish in the big picture or the right now, then build the conversation around opportunities and approaches to that goal. Opportunities are concrete and actionable: a target, a location, and a situation. Pivot as needed as the players' goals and desires change.

❖ **DON'T BUILD WALLS:** If the scoundrels try to do something seemingly impossible or dubious, rather than saying "no", consider what they would need in order to try: an opportunity, leverage, a specific contact, a distraction, knowledge of a weakness, and tell the players. Then let them decide how much blood and **WATER** what they want is worth. Use **MOONS** to navigate these complicated actions, showing the price left to pay.

❖ **PAINT THE WORLD ACCURATELY:** Every location in Tyr should feel crowded, sweltering, and dust-choked. The world is dusty breezes, sweat, stained cotton, austere mud-brick and adobe, bone carts and crude stone tools, and maze-like streets littered with discarded waste, dangerous beggars, sly elves, and cruel Templars. Have *NPCs* act according to their desires and personality, not in the service of a plot; portray them truthfully and memorably.

❖ **MAKE THE WORLD INTERESTING:** Make the social powder-keg of Tyr come to life: show how some see the Templars as a god-granted necessity, and others see them as a necessary evil; show how many are fully invested in the divinity of Kalak, the righteousness of the Templars, and the primacy of their worldview, and then show how most suffer silently under the crushing heel of the god-king. Reveal the instability and brutality: show how people kill one another over water chits, that food is scarce, how the city is coming apart at the seams and the ziggurat is on everyone's mind.

❖ **GO BEYOND "GOOD CHARACTERIZATION":** Powerful and dangerous *NPCs* should not be passive. They can and should act pre-emptively towards their own goals in the fiction, driving the engine of the setting. Remind the table of likely responses to a scoundrel's actions, whether supportive or oppositional. This helps you maintain *NPCs* as active, independent actors in the fiction, not just as reactionary elements. One method to highlight this is, when in direct conflict with the scoundrels, have *NPCs* act pre-emptively, showing their capability, motivations, and existence as independent actors in the fiction.

❖ **HIGHLIGHT COMPETENCY:** Scoundrels aren't bumbling fools, they are skilled criminals facing difficult odds. Action rolls are not just about the scoundrel's ability but *also* about the opposition's ability, so when they go badly it reflects changing situations and dangerous events, not incompetence. This means even a scoundrel with no rating in an action is a competent, skilled actor, thus when describing a failure, describe them as capable and active, then add the complication that made things difficult despite their skill, because they are facing competent opponents and a living, changing world.

❖ **REMINDE PLAYERS ABOUT THEIR TOOLS:** When the scoundrels act, remind them about the various mechanics and mechanisms they have at their disposal. "Seems like a good time to use a flashback?", "You could Push to get another die?", "You can always resist the consequence, even if you fail.", "Does anyone have an idea for a Dragon's Deal here?"

❖ **BE VISIBLE:** Use notecards or a whiteboard to keep *NPCs*, *MOONS*, locations, and plot points visible and present for the players. This is part of keeping the players informed so that they can make interesting, thematically meaningful decisions and know what's at stake.

❖ **SHOW THE THREATS AND TROUBLE BEFORE THEY LAND:** Show off the threat in the fiction well before any roll. This helps consequences feel organic and never arbitrary, so that they follow naturally from what has been established, and avoids situations where the actual trouble and therefore the purpose of the roll is unclear. After you've vividly clarified the dangers, state the consequences plainly and ask what the scoundrels do – this keeps the players in control of whether to press forward, resist, or find another way, and makes their choice feel meaningful.

❖ **FOLLOW THROUGH:** When a roll is made and things go wrong, follow through completely on the consequences. Don't soften the outcomes: players have the tools to handle adversity – like resistance, armor, or trauma – and they should feel the weight of consequences so that choosing to take that action, to confront that risk, and to use those tools to mitigate the outcome feels worthwhile.

❖ **MAKE THE MECHANICS MEANINGFUL:** Don't just roll or compare numbers; use the mechanics to bring the game to life. When a status changes – a Templar is bribed to let an associate go, a faction shifts their loyalties, a resistance roll results in trauma – tells us what it looks like in the fiction? Mechanics are descriptive. Similarly, don't roll just to see if the scoundrels accomplish something; rolls should matter in a narrative sense. Don't use them for tasks or as skill checks.

❖ **OFFER A DRAGON'S DEAL:** One way to avoid blocking, or to introduce narratively juicy complications, is by offering players a Dragon's Deal. These are not traps but invitations to see something interesting. If you don't have a good idea for a deal, ask the other players at the table. (If no one does, move on.) **HEAT** is always a good offer: there are always eyes on you in the city: a Templar patrol rounding the corner, an informant in the crowd, a Guild spy or a Dust Peddler. Nowhere is ever as empty as it seems. Consequences tied to the fiction are the most interesting.

❖ **FILL THE MOONS:** Think about what is happening off-screen: what deal is being struck in the Elven Market while the crew is occupied at the Brickyards? What warning is a Templar sending to his informants while the scoundrels celebrate a win? The city never stands still and it doesn't wait for the crew to act. **MOONS** act your primary pacing tool here. You should fill them to show how factions are moving their schemes forward even when the Crew isn't involved, creating opportunities and problems that push things towards dangerous, interesting, or problematic shifts in the power structure of the city's underworld, culture, or government.

❖ **THE MECHANICS AREN'T THE FICTION:** Numbers and ratings should never override established fiction. If the mechanics say one thing, and the established fiction says something else, the fiction overrules the numbers. If you've established a small gang has an impressive set of traps guarding their lair, their tier doesn't matter: make the traps impressive and dangerous, not easily overcome simply because tier says so. The mechanics are guidelines. If a player says their scoundrel kicks down a twenty-foot thick wall barefoot, that's simply not possible: they do not get to roll to see if they can just because they have dice. The world can say "no" if actions are genuinely limited by the fiction, which differs from the GM imposing arbitrary preferences.

❖ **DON'T ROLL TWICE:** The action roll determines whether a consequence occurs. If the player succeeds at doing something, a second roll cannot negate that success in the fiction. If a player fails at doing something, a second roll cannot grant them success in the fiction. Do not ask players to roll a second time for the same action or to avoid the same consequences. When a player resists to reduce the fallout of the established fictional consequence, it is the severity of the consequence that is reduced, not the outcome. This maintains the integrity of the fiction and makes rolls meaningful rather than redundant.

❖ **DON'T OVERCOMPLICATE:** Not every problem or difficulty needs a roll, and when a consequence isn't obvious or isn't meaningfully driving the fiction forward, let the scoundrels succeed and let play move forward. When a consequence isn't obvious but it feels like there should be one, keep it simple: **HEAT**, ticking **MOONS**, or temporary harm ("Shaken" or "Exhausted").

❖ **BE KIND, REWIND:** If you realize you've made a mistake, whether by giving an incorrect detail, making an error in judging a result, inflicting an inappropriate consequence, asked for a roll where the consequence wasn't obvious, or players have taken actions based on misunderstanding a situation, can back up and reset the situation to account for the mistake. Be open and honest about this. Don't try to shoehorn the error or the results in: say you made a mistake, and explain that a roll wasn't needed and they actually just succeed, that you gave an incorrect detail and are resetting the scene, that you are removing a consequence, or whatever. Take open responsibility for the err and rewind.

❖ **DON'T HOLD ON TO INFORMATION:** Foster an atmosphere of inquiry and exploration at the table. Encourage questions and take input and feedback from both the perspective of the players and of the scoundrels to establish the world and ground situations in the fiction. Encourage being asked questions and offer full information so the players and characters can make exciting choices – it's more fun to act when you know something than when you don't!

ASKING QUESTIONS

For both the gamemaster and the players, one of the most important tools of play is asking questions and leaning on the other players when you are stuck, or even when you aren't, then building on the answers.

Ask **establishing** questions. Set the stage for the forthcoming action. *Who is in front? Are you focusing on the Templar, or the crowd? Is everyone participating, or is someone hanging back?*

Ask **provocative** questions. Make players think about their characters. *Can they really do that to their mentor? Are you really going to just let them go? Moon's motivation doesn't seem to be revenge, is it love?*

Ask **leading** questions. Show the players what you're thinking and give them options. *Do you want to see if the wall could be scaled? Does something seem off to you here; maybe roll Intuit or Study?*

Ask **trivial** questions. Establish fiction, habits, and personality. Be curious. *What's your favorite tavern in the Warrens? Do you have any little spirit charms hung up in the lair? Do they dye it their favorite color?*

Ask for **help**. Lean on the other players when you're stuck or uncertain. *I'm drawing a blank, what seems like a dangerous problem here? How could this scene be more exciting? I'm not sure...does this seem risky or desperate? What's a good Dragon's Deal here?*

Switch up who you're interrogating. Ask a **player**: *How do you feel about this, Sara? What makes sense to Nails here, Tim?* Ask their **character**: *Axos, what do you do? What are you thinking, T'ick'klick?*

❖ **INTERROGATE THE FICTION**: Involve the players in describing the setting. Ask: "How does your character do that?" Let the player describe it in the fiction, suggest possibilities, then say what action(s) it sounds like. This gives players creative ownership, rather than feeling like they are just matching actions to a menu or trying to pick the best action. Suggest details. "You're trying to lose your pursuers. There are some barrels on a cart nearby, maybe you send them tumbling to create a distraction?" or "You're from this district. Do you know anyone in the City Watch you could bargain with?" helping to personalize each character's connection to the setting and the city's intrigues.

THE ATHASIAN PALETTE

When you need to reach for a detail about the world, reach past the generic fantasy imagery and find something Athasian and strange: strangeness signals that this world is different, and should be something that doesn't require explanation to make the point.

The sky isn't blue, it's olive-tinged. The sun isn't small and yellow, it's huge and bleeds up from the horizon, dark crimson like a wound. People don't just walk: student-monks of the Way levitate in solemn processions over the rooftops. The law isn't just paper: Templars tell you what to do, and when they speak the law of the King it makes your arm-hair stand on end. Couriers don't arrive on horseback, they arrive on the back of a lizard-ostrich, the clawed feet clicking on mud-brick. Thugs don't draw glinting steel knives, they clutch bone-handled flint shivs and wear spiked lizard-hide gloves. Merchants haggle for lizard skins, flint, feed or good bone, and squint in distrust at ceramic bits stamped with the King's face.

Two immense moons – flaxen-yellow Ral and dusty-gold Guthay – spin and creep through the dusty heavens. Sandstorms, glass-storms, and worse weird weathers shatter against the walls. Ancient ruins appear and disappear like mirages, and are sometimes found even inside the city.

The setting details matter: common tools are constructed from bone and obsidian lashed with giant-hair. Crates and wooden objects are a rarity; people store things in ceramic pots and use thick hide and bone for doors that must be kept shut. People decorate themselves with iridescent chitin or sashes of flowing spidersilk; warriors wear mekillot shell breastplates.

Mammals like sheep, horses, or dogs are replaced by insects, reptiles, and avians. Herds of kank whose bellies drip with honey globules; lanterns that hold fire beetles to cast light; distemperate, beaked crodlu run on two legs; colorful lizards drape their masters like scaled shawls; flocking, furred lizards lay pallid green eggs harvested for food.

The weird touches everything. Rings of dead ash in fertile fields whisper of lurking dark magics; fruit is illegal, powerful and dangerous; the air hums in resonance with the Way; chill vapors ease from fissures between life and death and dead voices echo in psychic realms. People speak mind-to-mind; body shape holds no certainty and mutation is common.

LINES & VEILS

Slavery, forced breeding, environmental destruction, authoritarianism, and brainwashing are deeply uncomfortable subjects. These issues are utilized in this setting to showcase the casual cruelty, brutality, and inhumanity of the ruling classes, and the society's cultural view that life is cheap. This material does not shy away from these subjects, but does not present or presume them to be acceptable from a modern or moral perspective.

Ultimately, this is a game we play for fun: don't emphasize subjects that will make it un-fun for any of the individuals in your group. At the same time, some of these are core elements of the setting so we do not suggest ignoring them. If your group feels uncomfortable with certain elements of the game setting, they can be placed behind a **veil**.

Lines & Veils are safety techniques, originally developed by Ron Edwards for *Sorcerer*, allowing players to set the tone of their game and prevent it from straying into unwanted or upsetting territory, similar to how movie ratings limit what topics and depictions are included in a particular film:

- ❖ A *line* is a subject that will never come up and never be referred to in play; it is off-limits for inclusion whether openly or behind-the-scenes.
- ❖ A *veil* is a subject or event that must never be spotlighted or brought to the foreground, but may be referenced in the background.

Everyone at the table should openly raise or submit privately/anonymously to the GM elements they need to draw a line on or that they want placed behind a veil. The GM should list and make clear the lines and veils at the start of play. Either may be added to during play as things happen players may not have anticipated – it's OK to rewind play to address this.

SLAVERY

Slaves are a common sight within the city, providing most of its labor, and outnumber freemen two-to-one. Members of all sentient peoples are enslaved, whether for hard labor on the farms or mines, or to serve death sentences in the gladiatorial arena for the entertainment of the population. They are not treated well, and all desire freedom from their chains – though most are too terrified to make the attempt.

Ex-slaves are not safe from mercenary slave-catchers sent to retrieve them, but neither are freemen caught in the wrong place at the wrong time.

Muls are often – not *always*, not *mostly* – the product of forced breeding by cruel nobles and despotic public works within the Templarate to work the mines and fields due their perceived docility, superior strength, and resilience. Many enslaved mul, desperate for freedom, attempt to escape into the city warrens or the deserts, and often killed in the attempt. Others are the children of freemen, born to freedom (such as it is) and as likely or unlikely to take to slavery or blood-sport as any other person.

Half-giants, as a people, were originally created through sorcery by the god-kings, who desired strong and obedient servants. The god-kings keep the descendants of their creations close: there are few templars who are not served by a half-giant bodyguard raised since birth to protect their ward at all costs. But half-giants are also found throughout the city, working as skilled craftsmen in the markets and smithies, mercenaries and guards to noble houses or merchant guilds, and are no more inherently loyal to the Templarate or god-kings than any other individual.

BIO-ESSENTIALISM

Race isn't biology, but species is. Species have specific physical or behavioral traits inherent to their genetics. The problem with reflecting this in gaming is where this line is: differentiating between biological traits, those expressed as a part of a cultural up-bringing, and those created by the narrative of a dominant culture. It is difficult to capture this complexity through game mechanics so we do not use an abstraction of absolute bonuses, penalties, or traits. This avoids troubling or hateful real-world fallacies that such systems can come dangerously close to mirroring; it is too easy for differences between culture or environment to become blurred or confused with false beliefs in "biological reality", or the general confused with the individual. Instead, we present different sapient species with optional, non-absolute heritage traits to reflect general patterns within populations, but also that not every member of a species shares the same physical or mental attributes, behaviors, or culture.

THE CORE SYSTEM

Blades in the Dark uses six-sided dice. You'll usually roll a "pool" of several dice at once and read the *single highest result*.

- ❖ If your highest die is a **6**, it's a *success* – things go well. You do exactly what you were trying to do and your opponents don't succeed. If you roll **more than one 6**, it's a *critical success* – you gain some additional advantage.
- ❖ If your highest die is a **4 or 5**, that's a *success with consequences* – you do what you were trying to do, but there are consequences: trouble, harm, reduced effect, etc. from successful actions taken by your opponents.
- ❖ If your highest die is **1-3**, it's a *bad outcome*. It all goes wrong. Things go poorly. You don't succeed at what you were attempting but your opponents do, and you suffer consequences and complications from their actions.
- ❖ If you ever need to roll but you have **zero** or fewer dice, instead roll two dice and take the *single lowest result*. Note that you can't roll a critical when you have zero dice.

When you're first learning the game, if you can't remember how something works, you can always fall back on a simple roll to judge how things go, then look up the exact rule later when you have time.

To create a dice pool, pick up a number of dice equal to a trait or rating (like your Finesse, or Prowess, or your crew's tier); this will usually be from one to four dice, but even one die is pretty good – a 50% chance of success. The most common traits used to build dice pools are a character's action ratings. You might roll dice for your character's Skirmish action rating when you describe them fighting a dangerous enemy, for example.

The four types of rolls that you'll use most often in the game are the:

- ❖ **ACTION**. When you attempt an action that's dangerous or troublesome, you make an action roll to find out how it goes. Action rolls and their effects and consequences drive most of the game.
- ❖ **DOWNTIME**. When the crew is at their leisure after a job, they can perform downtime activities in relative safety. You make downtime rolls to see how much they get done.

- ❖ **FORTUNE**. The GM can make a fortune roll to disclaim decision making and leave something up to chance. How loyal is an NPC? How much does the plague spread? How much evidence is burned before the Templars kick in the door? How much face do you lose with the tribes at the Elven Market?
- ❖ **RESISTANCE**. You can make a resistance roll when your character suffers a consequence you don't like. The roll tells us what the mechanical cost was to reduce the consequence's severity.

JUDGEMENT CALLS

Everyone gets to contribute to making certain judgement calls, but either the players or the GM gets final say depending on what a specific judgement call is about:

- ❖ Which actions are reasonable as a solution to a problem? Can a person be swayed? Must we get out the tools and break apart this dry-rotted door, or could it also be quietly finessed open?
The players have final say.
- ❖ How dangerous and how effective is a given action in this circumstance? How risky is this? Can this person be swayed very little or a whole lot? **The GM has final say.**
- ❖ Which consequences are inflicted to manifest the dangers in a given circumstance? Does this fall from the roof break your leg? Do the guards merely become suspicious, or do they already have you trapped? **The GM has final say.**
- ❖ Does this situation call for a dice roll? Is your character in position to make an action roll or must they first make a resistance roll to gain initiative? **The GM has final say.**
- ❖ Which events in the story match the experience triggers for character and crew advancement? Did you express your character's beliefs, drives, heritage, or background? **The players have final say.**

The simplest way to put this all is that the players always get to say *what* they're doing and *why*, and the GM always gets to say *how* effective and risky that action is.

ATTRIBUTES

There are three **attributes**, each encompassing four **actions**. Each attribute has a rating equal to the number of associated actions in which you have one or more dots. Attributes are usually rolled when you want to resist one or more consequences suffered as the result of an action roll.

INSIGHT : Craft, Hunt, Intuit, Study.

PROWESS : Finesse, Prowl, Skirmish, Wreck.

RESOLVE : Attune, Command, Consort, Sway.

ACTIONS

There are twelve actions scoundrels can take in play, separated into three groups of four actions. Each action has from zero to four **dots** assigned to it. These actions help guide the kind of fiction we are aiming for by showcasing what sorts of activities scoundrels involve themselves in, what kinds of obstacles they often face, and how they solve their problems.

Actions are not a measure of a scoundrel's ability. Even with zero dots in an action, *you are considered competent* – unless you decide to describe your scoundrel otherwise. Similarly, failures aren't because you messed up or didn't have the skill to pull it off, they're because the opposition is just as tough, skilled, and prepared as you are.

ATTUNE

Employ the (sometimes latent) psychic powers of which all beings are possessed, or gain access to and contact with spiritual realms and forces. You might even draw upon and shape other-planar energies.

You could understand the nature of a psychic or immaterial force or being or learn a magical ritual (but Study might be better), enchant a mystical device (but Craft might be better), or strike at someone with sorcerous powers (but Skirmish or Hunt might be better).

CRAFT

Repurpose basic materials into a new tool or weapon, carefully take apart or put together a complex object (like a shelter or trap), hide a door or entryway. You might even mix potions and shape obsidian spheres.

You could understand a trap or complex puzzle or plan a garden for growing potion fruits (but Study might be better), or disable tripwires and open sealed doors (but Wreck might be better).

COMMAND

Compel swift obedience from others with force of personality, quietly intimidate or loudly threaten to get what you want, or lead others in an assault or project.

You could demand people listen to persuade them (but Consort might be better) or to get information on someone you're looking for (but Hunt might be better), or plan a raid (but Study might be better).

CONSORT

Socialize with friends and contacts to gain access to resources, people, information, or places; make a good impression or win someone over with your charm and style; make new friends from your heritage or background.

You could manipulate your contacts using social pressure (but Command might be better), decorate to set the mood for an evening (but Intuit might be better), or convince someone you're related (but Sway might be better).

FINESSE

Manipulate or misdirect with dexterous skill, such as palming ceramic coins or untying tricky knots, or dueling an opponent with graceful fighting arts. You might even direct a mount while riding or flying.

You could employ those arts in a chaotic melee (but Skirmish might be better), disarm a complex trap (but Craft might be better), or sneak past undead guardians (but Prowl or Attune might be better).

HUNT

Track a target carefully across the desert or discover their location by finding subtle signs or clues. You might arrange an ambush and attack from prepared ground, or attack with precision from a distance.

You could fire a bow or blow poisoned darts in a melee (but Skirmish might be better), learn intimate details about your target (but Study might be better), or lure an animal to you (but Consort or Sway might be better).

PROWL

Move skillfully and quietly along narrow streets, or remain hidden in the shadows, slip away without being noticed, or attack someone from hiding with a dagger or sap.

You could kidnap someone during a fight (but Skirmish might be better), cautiously stalk someone (but Hunt might be better), or leap gracefully across the rooftops (but Finesse might be better).

SKIRMISH

Entangle a target in close combat so they can't easily escape, brawl or wrestle to overpower an opponent, attack with a weapon in a frenzied melee, or seize and hold a position in battle.

You could fight in a formal duel (but Finesse might be better), or fire an arrow at a target (but Hunt might be better), or direct others to hold their ground (but Command might be better).

STUDY

Scrutinize details and interpret evidence, closely analyze a person to detect lies or true feelings; research on an esoteric topic, gather information from documents and books.

You could examine events to understand a pressing situation (but Intuit might be better), try to locate someone with clues (but Hunt might be better), or invoke ancient powers (but Attune might be better).

SWAY

Lie convincingly, influence someone with guile; trick and mislead someone into doing or believing what you want. You might even persuade someone by arguing a compelling case without clear rebuttal.

You could trick people into giving you their affection (but Consort might be better) or obedience (but Command might be better), or lead a target into a trap (but Hunt might be better).

WRECK

Unleash savage force to smash down a door or wall with a sledgehammer, shatter stonework or upset a ritual or plan; employ chaos and sabotage to create a distraction or overcome an obstacle.

You could overwhelm an enemy with sheer force in battle (but Skirmish might be better), or roughly manhandle or scare them with savagery to get your way (but Command might be better).

INTUIT

Observe and anticipate outcomes, "get a feeling", spot trouble before it starts, or exploit a momentary opportunity or weakness; use knowledge arising from experience or gut-sense, like detecting someone's motives.

You could defend yourself with magical wards or use psychic senses to read the future (but Attune might be better), or figure out the meaning of an ancient warning (but Study might be better).

ACTION ROLLS

If a question is a binary yes/no, we don't roll. We use conversation and judgement calls to decide the outcome, erring on the side of "yes".

Action rolls are *only* used to see how an action turns out when there is a potential problem that could arise from the attempt – something dangerous or troublesome. Simple failure is not dangerous or troublesome.

Every group will have their own idea about what this means, but the foundational rule is we don't roll if there aren't any interesting consequences or if your character would be expected to simply succeed (such as at a simple task for anyone, like speaking telepathically; or for that character, like a kank-rider riding a kank).

You choose which action to use after you have described what you are doing and only after the GM has told you it will require a roll; the GM will then tell you what your position and effect will be for the roll.

You must have described that action in the fiction to choose it. However, many actions overlap by design, so what you described having done could be covered by different actions. Some choices of action will be safer or riskier, or more or less effective than others, as determined by the GM.

Roll a number of dice equal to the rating you have in that action, indicated by the number of dots recorded in that action on your playbook. You may have additional dice from assists, pushing yourself, or a Dragon's Deal; or fewer dice due to complications and wounds.

These are the steps involved in an action roll:

- ❖ The **player** has described their goal.
- ❖ The **GM** decides if the action requires a roll.
- ❖ The **player** chooses the action to use.
- ❖ The **GM** sets the position for the roll.
- ❖ The **GM** sets the effect level for the action.
- ❖ Add *bonus* dice then subtract *penalty* dice.
- ❖ The **player** rolls the dice and judges the results.

The goal is the concrete outcome your character wants to achieve, the *why* of what you are doing and what you hope it achieves. Often this is obvious in context, but the GM should ask questions to clarify as necessary.

If the GM decides what you have described doing requires an action roll because there is some danger or problem, they'll tell you what the problem you're risking is and ask you what action you are rolling.

Based on the goal and the action used, the GM decides how dangerous or troublesome the consequences could be and tells you if the action is *controlled*, *risky*, or *desperate*. This is called the **position** of the roll. By default, actions are *risky*, but the GM may decide a situation is more or less dangerous due to other factors.

The GM also decides how effective your chosen action will be in achieving your goal, and tells you if the action's outcome in this situation will be *limited*, *standard*, or *great*. This is called the **effect** of the roll. By default, outcomes are *standard*.

The choice of effect level and position can be strongly influenced by the choice of action. Players are always free to choose the action they perform, but that doesn't mean all actions are equally risky or problematic, or effective or potent for different characters.

The game can run effectively only using *risky-standard*, so these other positions and effects are presented as useful options to add additional mechanical stakes and differentiate conflicts once you feel comfortable with the basic system.

The GM may also tell you something you've described is not possible, if your approach does not fit the fiction, if you lack the opportunity, or is beyond the scope of the game. In most cases they should work with you to give your character a chance at success.

Since *NPCs* don't roll for their actions, the result of the action roll not only tells you how well the character performs but also how well the opposition performs. When you narrate the action after the roll, you collaborate with the GM to say what happens "on-screen".

POSITION

A measure of your advantage in the situation and the possibility of suffering a certain level of harm. Your playbook, heritage, and the narrative might affect your position, or you might **trade** or perform a **setup** action if you don't like the position you're in. Position is usually **risky**.

Controlled positions are special situations that allow you to withdraw from the action instead of suffering the consequences, or even re-roll by describing putting yourself in a riskier position.

Regardless of position, when you roll a:

- ❖ **Critical:** You do it with *increased effect*.
- ❖ **6:** You do it.

CONTROLLED: Act on your own terms; exploit a dominant advantage. Withdraw cleanly.

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

RISKY: Go head-to-head; act under fire; take a chance.

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

DESPERATE: Overreach your capabilities; in serious trouble. When you take a desperate action, mark +1 xp in that action's attribute.

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

EFFECT

A measure of your ability to achieve your goal; how much your action changes the situation. Effect can be altered by potency, scale, or quality. **Scale** is an advantage in number or size; **potency** is having the right tool or environment; **quality** refers to Fine tools and gear, and stacks with tier. Your opponents might have potency, scale, or tier against you, putting you at a disadvantage. The GM might use **magnitude** instead to make a determination.

If you don't like your odds, or need to be more effective, consider **trading position for effect** (or vice versa): increase or decrease your effect to make the situation more or less risky by describing how you change your approach. Otherwise you might **push** to gain greater effect, exerting yourself to a greater than normal degree and spending **WATER**, describing what extra effort you go to and how it helps.

In most cases, you achieve exactly what you were attempting to do, but there may be situations where you need to do more to succeed at your goal. Each level of effect can also be interpreted as resulting in a certain amount of movement towards a goal, measured by a number of phases. In some cases, the GM may rule the effect of an action would go beyond *great*, or that it might have *no effect* whatsoever.

- ❖ **EXTREME:** You fully capitalize on your success. How does your success extend to the rest of the situation, or what else happens in the scene? Phases: 4
- ❖ **GREAT:** You can achieve more than your planned goal. What extra results manifest? What additional benefits will you enjoy? Phases: 3
- ❖ **STANDARD:** You can achieve your desired goal. *Is this enough, or is there something else left to do?* Phases: 2
- ❖ **LIMITED:** You can achieve a partial or weak effect. How is your impact diminished? What effort remains to achieve your goal? Phases: 1
- ❖ **NONE:** Your efforts would amount to nothing. You cannot move closer to your goal. *What is preventing success? What would make it possible to make headway here?* Phases: 0

CONSEQUENCES

As part of the conversation before the roll, the GM will have told or telegraphed to you the potential consequence(s) for that action roll. You suffer these consequences when you roll a 1-3 or a 4/5. You might fail the action, or you might succeed at the action, but things don't go entirely right – your opponents have succeeded, too. If you don't like the consequence, you can reduce or avoid it with Resistance rolls or Armor.

The level of effect of a consequence depends on the position of the roll, and while the basics are the same, the severity of the chosen consequence will differ. In some cases, the GM might select multiple minor or lesser consequences instead of a severe or serious consequence.

- ❖ **REDUCED EFFECT** : Impaired performance; not as effective as anticipated. Essentially reduces the effect level of your action by one after all other factors are accounted for. This will never reduce the effect of a successful roll below Limited.
- ❖ **COMPLICATION** : Trouble, mounting danger, or a new threat. You must deal with an immediate problem stemming from the failed action, add a phase to an existing MOON, or start and add a phase to a new MOON. Or you might take HEAT, lose face with or anger a faction, be betrayed by a friend, lose needed gear, get noticed, etc. A complication can never negate a successful roll.
- ❖ **LOST OPPORTUNITY** : A sudden shift in circumstance making that action impossible; you need a new approach – try a different action, or a change in circumstances or tactics is necessary.
- ❖ **WORSE POSITION** : You've lost control of the situation and end up in a more dangerous position; the action and the danger escalates; deeper trouble. You can try again from a worse position.
- ❖ **HARM** : A wound, long-lasting debility, or death. When you suffer harm, record the specific injury on your playbook equal to the level of harm you suffer. Lesser harm is recorded on the bottom row; moderate harm goes in the middle; severe harm is on the top. You suffer the penalty indicated on that row if it applies to the situation at hand. When you're impaired by an injury, your character can't do anything without help, or must push.

MARKING HARM

When you need to mark a harm level, but the row is already filled, the harm moves up to the row above it. If you suffer a level 3 harm but the row is already filled, you instead suffer a catastrophic, permanent consequence like the loss of a limb, permanent blindness, or even sudden death, depending on the circumstances and the surrounding fiction.

- ❖ **LESSER (1)** : Battered, Drained, Distracted, Scared, Confused.
- ❖ **MODERATE (2)** : Exhausted, Cut, Concussion, Panicked, Seduced.
- ❖ **SEVERE (3)** : Impaled, Broken Bone, Badly Burned, Terrified.
- ❖ **FATAL (4)** : Electrocuted, Drowned, Stabbed in the Heart.

If you suffer a level 4 fatal harm and don't resist, you die. This is a choice: if you feel like it wouldn't make sense for the character to survive or it fits the fiction for your character's story to end, you do not have to resist the consequence.

If your character dies and you don't have another character ready to play, or don't want to play one of your other characters, you may:

- ❖ "Promote" one of the NPC gang members to a PC.
- ❖ Create a brand new character who joins the crew.

TEMPORARY HARM

Harm normally applies long term, requiring rest, a healer, or some kind of action to take care of, but some harm might be temporary and shaken off after a scene or two if the circumstances warrant.

The GM may decide a lesser harm is only temporary if it doesn't make sense for it to last beyond the score, or even beyond the scene (though the latter is better reflected by a reduced effect consequence). If you become exhausted from a run, a brief rest will restore your vigor. A psychic blast that leaves you stunned may wear off after you have a quiet moment to collect your thoughts.

RESISTANCE

When you want to resist or avoid dangerous consequences suffered as the result of an action roll, or “say no” to a troublesome or dangerous event, you can use **resistance**. This is not a way to negate things that have happened in the fiction, only the consequences. If something happens in the fiction, it happens: the thug stabs you, you fall off a roof, the telepath reads your mind, the gang boss threatens to send his thugs after you. The consequence, however, is removed: the stab wound is shallow, you land in a pile of canvas and loose hay, you protect your most important thoughts, the gang boss laughs and says he’s just kidding...for now.

Mechanically, resisting either reduces the severity of the consequence by one step, or negates the **consequence**. This is left to the GM’s discretion to establish as it will influence the overall tone of your game, from daring to gritty. This means you should always have a good idea of how effective resisting is before you take any action and you won’t be surprised by a constantly changing utility for resisting actions. In a game where resistance can have a mixed effect, the GM will let you know before play which effects will be negated and which will only be reduced in severity.

RESISTANCE ROLLS

The GM will tell you which attribute you can use to **resist**. You roll a number of dice equal to that attribute’s rating, then describe how you’ve avoided the danger. If you are threatened by several consequences at once, you may choose which to resist, and roll for each separately. You may only roll against a given consequence once (but might also use armor).

- ❖ **INSIGHT** : consequences from deception or understanding.
- ❖ **PROWESS** : consequences from physical strain or injury.
- ❖ **RESOLVE** : consequences from mental strain or willpower.

Resisting always succeeds, but you expend **WATER** according to your highest result (1-3: 3 water; 4-5: 2 water; 6: 1 water). If you get a critical result, you *restore* 1 **WATER**. You may *not* roll resistance to see how much **WATER** you would expend, then decide whether or not to do so.

ARMOR

If you have a type of armor that applies to the situation, you can check one or more appropriate armor boxes to reduce or avoid a consequence instead of rolling to resist; you may check it in addition to reducing consequences with a resistance roll. Once an armor box is marked, it can’t be used again until after the next downtime.

SPECIAL ARMOR

Every character has a **special armor** box, and every character may check this box to resist psychic attacks or probes. Certain special abilities allow you to use special armor to resist other kinds of consequences, too. Once you tick your special armor, you can’t use it again until after the next downtime.

MASTER NPCs

Some non-player characters in the game world are so powerful, important, or prepared they may take initiative, acting and inflicting consequences before any action rolls are made. When the GM tells you this has occurred, you must either accept the consequences of the action or resist. These pre-emptive actions can be resisted as normal: with a roll, or with armor or special armor, as applicable.

WATER

Every scoundrel in the city has an abstract resource called WATER, representing the effort they can put into the tasks they undertake before it catches up with them. WATER allows you to perform feats of daring and resist bad **consequences**, but since WATER is precious under the constant blaze of the dark sun, running out can be dangerous.

You have eight WATER marks to start with, though some heritages and special abilities provide additional marks. Some special abilities are activated using WATER, you can **push yourself** to greater heights by using WATER, and a **flashback** or **resistance** may result in the use of WATER. Some activities might require an expenditure of WATER (most often for the use of **magic** or **psychic powers**). The GM should discuss with you any atypical costs for actions or activities before play begins.

WATER is replenished during downtime when you indulge your vice, or after you suffer a trauma, restoring all your WATER marks.

PUSHING

When you want to improve your chances when acting, or be more effective in your action, or both, describe what you do that adds extra effort to your action and **push yourself**.

Expend 2 WATER per benefit desired to:

- ❖ Gain +1d to any roll.
- ❖ Gain +1 to effect.
- ❖ Act when incapacitated.

When you have pushed to gain a die, you cannot also take a **Dragon's Deal** to gain a die, but you may still push to gain the other benefits.

FLASHBACKS

You can expend WATER to create a narrative detail or to detail an action you undertook in the past that affects the current situation. You can't use this to undo an event, but you might use it to change the context of the event.

Sometimes you need to make an action or fortune roll to determine the effectiveness of the flashback, but some care needs to be taken in determining consequences for actions rolled during flashbacks (MOON phases, HEAT gains, and CERAMIC loss tend to work well).

Using a flashback usually expends WATER:

- ❖ **FREE**: an ordinary action you had ample opportunity for.
- ❖ **1 WATER**: a complex action or unlikely opportunity.
- ❖ **2+ WATER**: an elaborate action or special contingency.

Note that if you flashback to a downtime activity during a score, you spend 1 REP or 1 CERAMIC *instead* of WATER.

TRAUMA

When you have marked the last of your **WATER**, you take a trauma condition. Choose one from the list below or make one up. A trauma doesn't go away once taken and can't be healed, but you gain xp if you choose to have it interfere with a score or otherwise use it to cause you or your crew trouble. *Taking a trauma counts as that trauma causing trouble, so you gain xp!*

You are never required to bring up your trauma in play if you do not want to. It affects your character as much or as little as you want it to.

-
- ❖ **COLD** : Not moved by emotional appeals or social bonds.
 - ❖ **HAUNTED** : Often lost in reverie, reliving past horrors, seeing things.
 - ❖ **OBSESSED** : Enthralled by one thing: an activity, a person, an ideology.
 - ❖ **PARANOID** : Imagine danger everywhere; can't trust others.
 - ❖ **RECKLESS** : Little regard for your own safety or best interests.
 - ❖ **SOFT** : Lose your edge; become sentimental, passive, gentle.
 - ❖ **UNSTABLE** : Rage, fall into despair, act impulsively, or freeze up.
 - ❖ **VICIOUS** : Seek to hurt to people, even for no good reason.
-

When you take a trauma, it removes you from the scene (*not* the score, *not* the session), as you are forced to deal with the consequences – you flee or are left-for-dead, but return later, shaken – but you and the GM may decide the consequences of the trauma require more than a scene to deal with – you may suffer a critical injury, or be captured and in need of rescue. When the character returns to play their **WATER** is fully replenished.

When your character is removed from the action, you may instead choose to take the playbook for an existing, unused character, or fill out a new playbook for a named **NPC** in the crew, or friend or contact, and re-enter the action in some fashion as that character for the remainder of the score.

Once your scoundrel takes four trauma conditions, they retire – whether they do so to the gutter, a squalid room in a crowded tenement, or a luxurious estate, is dependent on how much **STASH** they have accumulated.

DEHYDRATION

When you expend *more* **WATER** marks than you have available, you become **dehydrated**. As normal when you expend all your **WATER** marks, you also take a trauma and are removed from the scene, returning later with full **WATER** marks. However, you remain dehydrated until you use a downtime action to **Recover** and spend either 1 **SUPPLY** or 2 **CERAMIC**. You may use a flashback for a downtime action to recover.

While dehydrated, you cannot push yourself or resist consequences. You may still use flashbacks or spend **WATER** for other purposes (rituals, psychic powers, and special abilities that do not include the words push or resist).

THE DRAGON'S DEAL

There is but one Dragon. Many stories are told about it. Some believe it is a story told to frighten children.

When you want to gain an additional die for a roll, and can't or won't expend WATER, consider taking a Dragon's Deal: these are consequences that take immediate effect, and usually involve collateral damage, unintended harm, sacrificing CERAMIC or an item, betraying a friend, offending a faction, starting or adding phases to a troublesome MOON, adding HEAT, taking harm, or etc.

Anyone can suggest a Dragon's Deal to anyone else. You are never required to take an offered deal; you are always free to reject it, or suggest a modification of a deal that you *would* take. If needed, the GM has final say on whether or not a suggested deal is valid.

The consequence of a deal occurs regardless of the results of the roll. Deals can't be resisted, negated, or reduced like other consequences.

You always pay the price.

If you have pushed for an extra die, you may not also take a Dragon's Deal for an extra die, and vice-versa. You may push for other benefits and still take a Dragon's Deal.

TEAMWORK

Scoundrels can work together to accomplish tasks. The ways you can help your crew vary, but if you can't communicate or coordinate with them, you can't use teamwork actions – though if you are proficient in the Way or have a strong psychic bond, you may be able to do so at a distance.

ASSIST

Help another member of your crew, describe how and expend 1 WATER to give them +1d on a roll. If there are consequences, you both suffer them. You can only do this once per action, and only one person may assist on a roll this way.

PROTECT

When another member of the crew suffers a consequence, you might decide to suffer the consequence instead. Describe what you do to protect them, and take the consequence yourself – you can resist it as normal. The individual you protected does not have to suffer the consequence.

SETUP

Provide support for a following action, either yours or another member of the crew. When you successfully make the set-up roll, you make things easier for the next action, and choose to improve either the position or effect by one level. If you fail the set-up roll, one of the consequences might be that you instead make things harder for the next action.

GROUP ACTION

When more than one individual wants to act together, describe how you all do so and pick someone to lead the action. Everyone rolls the same action and if anyone succeeds, everyone succeeds; if there are consequences, everyone suffers from them. For each failed roll, the leader expends 1 WATER.

FORTUNE

When you or the GM need to make a determination about a situation you aren't directly involved in, and you don't want to simply decide the outcome; or when an outcome is uncertain and either no other roll applies to the situation at hand; or there's no mounting danger in the situation, you make a fortune roll. Many downtime actions are fortune rolls.

FORTUNE ROLLS

Use any trait (action, attribute, tier, magnitude, etc.) to determine the size of the dice pool for the fortune roll, and add or subtract a die for each major advantage or major disadvantage that can affect the outcome. If no trait applies, roll 1d for sheer luck or create a dice pool (from one to four) based on the situation at hand.

- ❖ 1-3 : Bad result / Poor, little effect.
- ❖ 4/5 : Mixed result / Limited, partial effect.
- ❖ 6 : Good result / Standard, full effect.
- ❖ Critical : Exceptional result / Great, extreme effect.

When two parties are directly opposed, you can make a fortune roll for each side, then assess the outcome of the situation by comparing the results. You might do this when you create two MOONS to fill against one another.

GATHERING INFORMATION

By default the GM should be informing you what you perceive, suspect, and intuit, but there's too much to describe every location and interaction in perfect detail. Gathering information helps you fully investigate the fictional world.

When you want to know something, ask a question: if the answer is common knowledge or in plain sight, the GM will answer, no need to roll.

If it's not common knowledge, then explain how you obtain the information (or how you obtained it in the past, using a flashback), and make a simple fortune roll to determine the quality or completeness of the answer. If there's danger in discovery of the information, then the GM will tell you what the obstacle is and call for one or more action rolls.

Each attempt to gather information takes time. The opportunity to gain information is fleeting, and you'll only get one chance to roll for any particular question. However, The GM must always answer honestly.

- ❖ GREAT : Exceptional details. May reveal more than you hoped for.
- ❖ STANDARD : Good details. Clarifying questions are possible.
- ❖ LIMITED : Incomplete or partial information.

INVESTIGATION

Some questions are too complex to provide an immediate answer. Start an Investigation long-term project to work on during downtime. When the project MOON is full, you may ask several questions at Great effect. There are many ways to advance these clocks, actions that use Study, Hunt, Consort, Sway, or Intuit are likely candidates, but shaking someone down for information using Command or Skirmish, trailing a target with Prowl, planting a psychic listening device with Finesse, or so on, are all possibilities.

MAGNITUDE

Whenever you need to assess unusual entities or powers, determine the quality or cost of assets or crafted artifice, measure how strong, far-reaching, or long-lasting an effect is, how much attention it draws, how well-suited an action is to a situation, or what a faction's tier indicates, you or the GM can use magnitude as a guideline to help decide the outcome, to create a dice pool, or to adjust position and effect.

Levels of magnitude are not additive, nor a rigid prescription or formula to replace judgment calls. They are a framework of consideration.

- ❖ An ancient bone blade once wielded by an Arena champion surpasses the quality of a fresh-forged obsidian knife.
- ❖ A fire that burns down a warehouse is different than a conflagration that consumes an entire city block.
- ❖ One defiler can scorch a courtyard; a cadre can blight an entire ward.
- ❖ A bribe to a water merchant might keep them quiet for a day; a blood oath sworn before their ancestors might last for years.
- ❖ A windbreak shelters a single tent; a massive dune wall shields an entire caravan.
- ❖ A rumor whispered in a palace garden spreads slowly; a proclamation from the ziggurat echoes through every ward within the hour.
- ❖ Fire from an elemental shrine burns hotter than any mundane torch.
- ❖ A psion's mind probe works swiftly on the weary and dehydrated, but struggles against someone freshly bolstered with rest and shade.
- ❖ Felling an obsidian arch in the center of Tyr will be remembered — and investigated — for generations.

You can make judgements with magnitude when you ask:

What makes your tool, ally, or method better than average – or worse?

Are you targeting a single person or thing, or many at once?

Do you want this to be over quickly, or long enough for others to notice?

Are you keeping this close, or are you trying to reach farther?

Why is this method especially effective – or why might it struggle here?

Do you want this to be noticed – and if so, by whom?

SCALE

- ❖ 0 : a closet; 1 or 2 people; a few moments; within reach; poor; weak
- ❖ 1 : small room; small gang (3-6); a few minutes; dozen paces; adequate
- ❖ 2 : large room; medium gang (12); an hour; a stone's throw; good; strong
- ❖ 3 : several rooms; large gang (20); a few hours; down the road; excellent
- ❖ 4 : small building; huge gang (40); a day; several blocks away; superior
- ❖ 5 : large building; massive gang (80); days; district-wide; overwhelming
- ❖ 6 : city block; colossal gang (160); a week; across the city; legendary

QUALITY

- ❖ 6 : mansion, large caravan, rare essences or arcane artifacts, demon
- ❖ 5 : large townhouse, small caravan, custom-tailored clothes, city walls
- ❖ 4 : townhouse, luxury vehicle, powerful ghost or undead
- ❖ 3 : howdah, fashionable clothing, small home
- ❖ 2 : respectable clothing, private room, mindless undead
- ❖ 1 : fighting blade, ordinary clothing, apartment, cheap food or drugs
- ❖ 0 : rusty knife, worn & tattered clothing, rickety shack on the street

FORCE

- ❖ 6 : Hurricane wind, molten lava, maelstrom
- ❖ 5 : Explosion, raging dust-storm, massive fire, lightning
- ❖ 4 : Charging horse, burning forge, whirlwind
- ❖ 3 : Crushing blow, staggering wind, searing fire
- ❖ 2 : Powerful blow, howling wind, burning brand
- ❖ 1 : Solid punch, steady wind, torch flame
- ❖ 0 : Firm shove, candle flame, breeze, static shock

MOONS

Guthay and Ral, silky yellow companions in the heavens; the dust in the sky sometimes makes her bulk look the dark, pregnant green of milky jade, though the other, he glows dusty gold whether a crescent or burgeoning. Together they tell of the seasons and the ages.

MOONS are a simple way to track progress and changes over time in the fiction or measure how close something is to happening – good or bad. MOONS make the world feel more active and alive by tracking the schemes of various factions, escalating dangers, and long-term goals creeping towards brilliant success or disastrous failure.

When the GM starts a MOON, they decide how many phases it has, then fill in phases as events, rolls, or the passage of time bring it closer to full. Smaller MOONS have 4 or 6 phases; larger MOONS have 8 or 10+ phases.

- ❖ 4-phase moons are for small or quick events, easily filled.
- ❖ 6-phase moons are for events or tasks of moderate complexity.
- ❖ 8-phase moons represent complex or difficult undertakings.
- ❖ 10-phase or greater moons involve extremely difficult tasks.

When a GM introduces a MOON, they will say what it is tracking and how many phases it has (e.g.: a Danger MOON with 6 phases, something is hunting you). When that MOON is full, the event it was tracking comes to pass. What a MOON tracks is usually known to everyone, but the GM might occasionally make it secret in order to create tension and suspense.

MOONS will almost always be visible to the players, creating a sense of urgency and helping establish the world is alive and in motion outside of (or because of) the crew's activities. Many MOONS change phases during downtime or due to actions or events in the fiction, not just rolls.

The existence and progress of faction MOONS might be reported to you and the crew through rumors, contacts, or direct exposure; they might also be tied to omens in the fiction – “Ral grows fat in the night sky” or “Guthay's face darkens”, or “As the MOON Guthay swells, the Templar agents grow bolder” – or the GM might narrate celestial omens and environmental effects when a MOON is full.

There are different kinds of MOONS you can utilize for various tasks, though they all function similarly at base. MOONS never describe *how* you must take care of a challenge, only the problem to overcome. Changing a MOON's phase for the worse is often a good option for a Dragon's Deal.

Danger Moon : track the approach of trouble. Examples: “Templars arrive to investigate” (4), “Silt storm hits the caravan” (6), “Arena match turns lethal” (4), or “Silkworm mating season begins” (8).

Countdown Moon : track the time to the occurrence of some event. Examples: “The box is opened” (4), “The Grand Festival starts” (6).

Linked Moons : one MOON must be full before the other can start or finish. Example: “Find the Veiled Alliance contact” (4) must fill before “Earn the Alliance's trust” (6) can progress.

Racing Moons : track two or more parties working at cross-purposes or towards the same goal; first full MOON succeeds. Example: “Smugglers move the contraband” (8) vs. “City Watch seizes contraband” (6).

Tug-of-War Moons : a MOON that fills or empties depending on circumstances – useful for unstable situations or on-going turf wars. Some actions fill phases, others empty them – the balance shifts with each turn of events. Example: “The Warrens erupt into a riot” (8) with the moon changing alongside the attitude of the city.

Long-Term Project Moon : tracks a goal that unfolds over many sessions, usually through downtime actions (but score or free-play actions might also advance it). Examples: “Sabotage House Vordon's trade network” (8) “Unearth the ruins beneath the Ziggurat” (12), or “Learn Tug's secret” (6).

Faction Moon : track faction goals. Examples: “Merchant House Stel corners the grain market” (8), “Templars Capture Unethas” (6).

Mission Moon : tracks the crew's progress towards completing the score or another task inside the score. Examples: “Abscond with the amethyst idol” (8), “Deliver the honey-wine shipment to Barrakas” (6), or “Deal with the Templar's half-giant guardians” (6).

MONSTERS & BEASTS

Deadly creatures are often brought into the Arena for slaves to fight – or rather, for the creature to slaughter to the delight of blood-thirsty citizens – but professional and experienced gladiators, either singly or in groups, often choose to battle such beasts to prove their prowess. The crowd is just as thrilled to watch their favored warriors spill the blood of wasteland monsters as to watch the desperation of the condemned.

When the crew faces off against something unnatural, monstrous, or just plain dangerous, the GM may assign the creature a tier based on how tough and dangerous it is. A monster's tier reduces your effectiveness by one level per tier of the creature, as makes sense for that creature.

Higher tier creatures may mean certain actions taken in an encounter start and remain at Desperate – No Effect unless you know or can figure out a way to overcome whatever is preventing you from being effective against it. They may also require one or more MOONS to overcome, using different strategies to fill the phases. Basic rules of thumb based on tier:

- ❖ Tier 1 : Even a single member of the crew should be able to handily deal with a creature or small group like this with little effort.
- ❖ Tier 2 : A tough beast. Can be slain or handled, but it will take a little time – more than one action. Create a 4- or 6-MOON.
- ❖ Tier 3 : A dangerous beast. You might win, but you'll need a plan – multiple, complex actions. Create an 8-MOON.
- ❖ Tier 4 : A complex mission against a deadly creature that likely has supernatural powers or powerful inherent psychic ability, being confronted on its own turf. Some of you will die. Create a 10-MOON.
- ❖ Tier 5 : A creature of extreme power and resistance, with little obvious way to injure it. Its strikes are immediately fatal. Some of you might survive, but don't count on it. Create a 12-MOON.
- ❖ Tier 6 : You jest, surely?

The difference in the tier of a more powerful creature and the tier of the crew can be used to alter the level of harm inflicted on a character as a consequence, increasing the amount taken and inflicting more serious injuries. Apply this difference in the same manner as Scale or Potency.

If there are multiple monsters, you may use any difference in Scale to alter the position or effect that the crew starts with, or in any consequences of harm. Do not use multiple MOONS for different tiers; use one MOON and the highest tier of all those monsters present if that one has an outsized effect on the encounter, otherwise use the tier of the majority.

The GM might also telegraph the power and danger of such beings or group of beings to you by using one or more pre-emptive resistance rolls during encounters, particularly those of tier 3 or above.

CHARACTER CREATION

You'll be creating a scoundrel who works from the shadows and forgotten underground passages of the city of Tyr. Follow these steps.

CHOOSE PLAYBOOK

Fists, Eyes, Fingers, Teeth, Brains, Soul.

CHOOSE HERITAGE

Human, Elf, Half-elf, Dwarf, Halfling, Mul, Half-Giant, Thri-Kreen, Aarakocra, Other. Write a sentence about your family life.

CHOOSE BACKGROUND

Philosophy, Labor, Law, Trade, Military, Noble, Underworld.
Write a detail about it specific to your character.

ASSIGN FOUR MORE ACTION DOTS

One dot should reflect your heritage, and one your background.

CHOOSE SPECIAL ABILITY

Go with the first one in your playbook if you can't decide.

CHOOSE FRIEND & RIVAL

Pick one contact from your list who is a close friend.

Pick one contact from your list who is a rival or enemy.

CHOOSE VICE

Faith, Gambling, Luxury, Obligation, Pleasure, Stupor, Weird.

NAME, ALIAS, AND LOOK

Names often come from heritage. Pick a mutation if you'd like. Pick or make-up an alias or nickname you use when you're being a scoundrel.

MUTATION

Additional limb, third eye, sizeable tail, antennae, unusual coloration, stripes/spots, large/small horn(s), bony protrusions, acidic blood, clawed fingers, exoskeletal plate(s), compound eye(s), split tongue, fanged jaw, gills, patches of scaly/furred/feathered/bare skin, oversized forehead, marsupial pouch, extra/missing fingers, prehensile toes, redundant eyes, suckers, barrel chest, crab claw, neck/rib frills, mouth-on-palm, arm-legs, webbed fingers, hair tentacles, bloated features, a single eye, second face, frog tongue, elastic skin, extra-long neck/torso/limbs, rooster comb, serrated teeth, eyestalks, misaligned camel hump, no lip/ear/nose, transparent flesh, warts and carbuncles, skin ridges, emaciated features, porcupine quills, whiskers, bioluminescence, anemone tendrils, fused fingers/toes, vertical eyelids, elongated skull, brain shell, trunk-nose, enlarged muscles, tusks, tiny extra arms, wrist shell.

ALIAS

Amethyst, Bell, Biter, Bones, Bricks, Bug, Chime, Coil, Cross, Cutter, Echo, Eyes, Flint, Flute, Gith, Grime, Grip, Hammer, Hook, Jankx, Junker, Lirr, Moon, Nomad, Red, Ringer, Sands, Skinner, Slug, Song, Spur, Tackle, Thorn, Twelves, Vixen, Well, Worm, Whip, Wicker.

LOOK

Collared Shirt	Inix-skin Bodysuit	Fitted Dress
Fitted Leggings	Half-Cape	Leather Gloves
Bandoliers	Hide & Furs	Hood & Veil
Hooded Cape	Bone/Obsidian Knife	Knit Cap
Sun-Goggles	Leathers	Airy Robes
Scarf	Loose Silks	Mask & Robes
Rags & Tatters	Rough Tunic	Scavenged Uniform
Sharp Trousers	Short Cloak	Woven Skirt
Slim Jacket	Soft Boots	Straw Hat
Necklaces/Jewels	Sandals	Chitin Greaves
Head-wrap	Bone Pauldron	Leather Collar
Wide Belt	Silt Mask	Work Trousers

HERITAGE

Heritage is a mixture of physical and cultural traits. You *may take heritage traits from another heritage(s)* if you wish, if they fit your character, but the first trait listed below for each heritage is always specific to that people and cannot be taken or copied by any other (with the exception of mixed-heritage individuals); if not taken, you do not have its mechanical benefits but still have traits ascribed to your people for narrative purposes (e.g. elven endurance) and may engage in any related cultural expressions you wish to engage with.

Choose **two** heritage traits. Record their effects.

HUMAN

The most numerous of the Rebirth peoples. Theirs are the cities and farmlands. Fractious and inconstant, and yet clever and adaptable.

- ❖ **Adaptable** : gain an additional dot in any action (max 2).
- ❖ **Lucky** : you may tick special armor to re-roll a die that came up 1-3.
- ❖ **Enduring** : if you succeed at a risky action without pushing, gain a free push for 1d (not effect) later. Only have one free push at a time.
- ❖ **Variable** : when you gain a new Special Ability, you may also choose to exchange an existing Special Ability for a different ability.

ELF

Nomadic desert herdsman with a reputation for banditry and dishonesty. Can run for days without rest. Tall, light, and noticeably long-limbed.

- ❖ **Wind-swift** : gain +1d to maneuver when running.
- ❖ **Clan-loyal** : test someone's loyalty; if they pass, you may provide them with one free assist during that score or the next.
- ❖ **Lore-keeper** : gain +1d to recall information about ancient legends, secrets, events, or places.
- ❖ **Desert-dweller** : gain 1 additional WATER box.

HALF-ELF

Considered untrustworthy half-breeds by both elves and humans. They prefer the company of dwarves and others. Relatively tall.

- ❖ **One of You** : add this xp trigger to your playbook – *You took a desperate action to impress or gain the acceptance of a group.*
- ❖ **Warren-rat** : gain an additional dot in Finesse (max 2).
- ❖ **Self-reliant** : if you choose not to participate in a group action, but attempt the same action in your own way, gain +1d.
- ❖ **Animal Lover** : you have raised and trained a small, loyal pet that follows you, and have potency when you Consort with beasts.

DWARF

A dying people whose cities are long dead and buried. Short but broad shouldered, with iron-like muscles. Hairless. Often weigh 200 pounds.

- ❖ **Focused** : long-term projects gain increased effect. You may only pursue one at a time and you *must* work on it during downtime.
- ❖ **Stout** : you may perform a feat of near-supernatural strength or physical endurance by using 1 WATER (you may not also push).
- ❖ **Uncompromising** : when you resist with Resolve, use 1 less WATER.
- ❖ **Content** : when you indulge in your Vice, you can't overindulge.

HALF-GIANT

Created long-ago for strength and obedience, they have an undeserved reputation for being half-wits. Twice as tall as humans, a ton in weight.

- ❖ **Copycat** : choose a companion's heritage trait at the start of a score; you act as if you have that trait and benefit from its effect.
- ❖ **Mountain-of-flesh** : if you take physical harm, take one level less.
- ❖ **Protector** : when you take consequences for someone else, you gain improved effect when resisting.
- ❖ **Giant** : you can fight small gangs on equal footing by using 1 WATER (you may not also push).

MUL

The bastard children of dwarves and humans, bald and barren. Often the favorites in the gladiatorial pits, as well as for hard labor.

- ❖ **Pack-bearer** : when you take Heavy load, you move as if you were in Normal load; this does not prevent you from being noticed.
- ❖ **Built-to-fight** : your Skirmish action may advance to 4 dots.
- ❖ **Nihilist** : when faced with fear, including from supernatural sources (magic, undead), you do not need to make a resistance roll to act.
- ❖ **Stubborn** : gain +1d when you resist with Resolve.

HALFLING

Head-hunters from the mountain jungles who look like children. They have a deserved reputation for cannibalism, and a vibrant, ancient culture.

- ❖ **Old-ways** : can use Attune to call upon the local spirits of a place for help, without needing to resist fear when they answer.
- ❖ **Sneaky** : tick your Special Armor to gain potency when hiding, or for +1d to Gather Information.
- ❖ **Artistic** : gain potency when you use song, dance, poetry, or art to communicate or distract.
- ❖ **Curious** : add the following xp trigger to your playbook *You Gathered Information for this score.*

THRI-KREEN

Four-armed mantis-folk as likely to view you as food than as friend. Rarely seen in the cities. They can craft their venom as crystal blades.

- ❖ **Alien** : either *throwing knives are always load 0* – tick special armor to cause a paralyzing bite on a successful Skirmish action.
- ❖ **Calculating** : gain an additional dot in hunt (max 2).
- ❖ **Hive-mind** : when you take a group action with your clutch-mates or your imprinted parent, gain +1d.
- ❖ **Hardened** : you may tick your special armor to resist blunt force physical trauma; ticking armor has improved effect.

AARAKOCRA

Brightly-feathered, vulture-beaked bird-folk. Agile fliers with twenty-foot wingspans and hollow bones. Rarely seen in the cities due claustrophobia.

- ❖ **High-flier** : gain +1d to resist consequences of flying.
- ❖ **Watchful** : gain an additional dot in Intuit (max 2).
- ❖ **Covetous** : you gain +1 CERAMIC on a successful score.
- ❖ **Ritualist** : gain an additional dot in Attune (max 2).

OTHER HERITAGES

These are not the only sapient creatures that can be found within the walls of Tyr. Other beings, some unique to themselves alone – born from the dark, wild sorcery of the desert – may find themselves in the city for a time, or make the city their home on a long-term basis. Either give such a being two heritage traits based on their culture, personality, or traditions, or take no heritage traits and instead gain two additional dots to add to actions based on their heritage or the nature of the being.

You may create new heritage traits to use with the GM's approval.

BACKGROUND

Scoundrels aren't born scoundrels. Their **background** describes what they did before they joined the crew. There are seven general categories: pick one and then **add a detail** to it for your character.

Backgrounds are narrative detail, they provide back story for your character but they can also affect situations you get into: maybe having once been a merchant on the Caravan Way gives you a bump in your position when you try to consort with an old contact in the district, or maybe you lean on it to describe how you know of a secret tunnel that used to run underneath an alleyway. Perhaps your time as an acolyte at the Temple of the Four Elements explains why you know how to craft a ritual chamber for the crew, or makes an elemental spirit demand less of you when you petition for its services.

❖ **Philosophy** : You were once a poet or a historian, a student of the Way at an academy or a monk under a wandering master, a shrine-keeper at the Temple of the Four Elements or a wasteland druid communing with dying spirits, an initiate of a mystery cult or a mad prophet.

❖ **Labor** : You were once the backbone of the city, a guildsman, or a simple laborer conscripted to haul stones for the ziggurat or unload freight from caravans, a domestic slave in a noble house, a street-sweeper in the Golden City, a herdsman driving erdlu or kank, a pickman in the iron mines, an obsidian worker, or a farmer indentured to a noble house.

❖ **Law** : You were once involved in forming or enforcing the bureaucracy and governance of the city; you might have been a magistrate, or an overseer at the Brickyards, a Templar enforcing the King's will, a city watchman, a Senate scribe or functionary, or a district alderman.

❖ **Trade** : You were once a merchant, or a guildsman, even a simple street hawker in the Elven Market. You might have worked on the caravans, or been a contract liaison between the Houses, a shopkeeper on Caravan Way, an obsidian dealer, or a trade broker.

❖ **Military** : You were once a soldier or mercenary, captain or private, you might have manned the walls, or guarded a noble house, defended caravans crossing the wastes, fought as slave or athlete as a gladiator in the arena, trained recruits and warriors, or been a spy gathering intelligence on rival houses or foreign cities.

❖ **Noble** : You were once part of the elite of the city. You might have been the scion of a now-fallen house still clinging to your name, a courtier skilled in intrigue or a dilettante who never had to work, a functionary managing a noble family's affairs, a disgraced Senator, or the kept plaything of someone wealthy. But you had prestige and power.

❖ **Underworld** : You have always been a part of the city's shadow. You might have been a street orphan surviving on scraps and theft, a gang runner carrying messages or a pickpocket working the crowds, a fence moving stolen goods, a smuggler, or an assassin who learned violence young. You might have been an outcast, or born from some darkness.

VICE

A scoundrel's life is full of hardship and thirst, and each is inevitably seduced by a **vice** to deal with it. Your vice is an obsession, but also a source of relief that lets you continue facing overwhelming challenges. When you indulge your vice, you restore a number of WATER marks.

A vice is not a reliable, controllable habit – it drives you to act against your best interests and make bad calls. Alongside your heritage and background, it tells us what kind of person you are. There are seven general categories: pick one and describe what it entails, then choose the **vice purveyor** who provides it to you and **where** you go to get it. You can create the purveyor yourself or ask the GM for a few likely options.

- ❖ **Faith** : Dedication and devotion to an unseen power or ideal; reverent praise of the god-king, secret devotion to a dead god, service to an elemental spirit, pilgrimages to shrines in the wastes, rituals and observances – some disturbing, flagellation or sacrifice.
- ❖ **Gambling** : Games of chance, bets on chariot races and gladiatorial games or underground fighting rings, wagers on caravans or what slaves will survive the week, dice games in back alleys or in high-stake noble salons, no matter how much you lose.
- ❖ **Luxury** : The expensive, the ostentatious, only the best, at any cost, from fine silks to chilled water, perfumed oils to drive out the stink of the city and rare spices, furniture made of real wood, private shade-tents and viewing boxes at the Arena.
- ❖ **Obligation** : Devotion to a family or community, an organization that demands your unwavering loyalty, a charity that depends on your support – financially or otherwise – a cause you believe in despite the danger, or debts of honor that must be repaid.
- ❖ **Pleasure** : Gratification of the body and mind, sensuous experience whether that be lovers, fine food and wines, bardic performances at the Golden Inix, indulgence at the bath-house, exotic dancers, or even the spectacle of the Arena.
- ❖ **Stupor** : Chasing oblivion through excess. The haze of honey-wine, stupefying narcotics, losing oneself in psychic echoes and illegal thought-forms, the adrenaline crash of being beaten in unlicensed fights, anything to escape the weight of the world.
- ❖ **Weird** : Following strange paths, experimentation with unusual essences, trafficking with strange spirits from the Gray or Black, bizarre and forbidden rituals and practices, collecting relics of the lost past, or engaging in transgressive art and philosophy.

NAMES

Human : Agis, Albeorn, Aristes, Beryl, Borys, Caldon, Canth, Damras, Dote, Dyan, Etheros, Gallard, Garreth, Haakar, Herminard, Ictinis, Jedra, Jun, Katid, Larkyn, Lyra, Marut, Narissa, Neeva, Phatim, Quay, Rayne, Ryana, Sacha, Sycia, Tara, Tithian, Ulyness, Wyan, Xamres

Elf : Alaa, Bademyr, Coranuu, Faenaeyon, Gaefal, Jaarati, Jirah, Kama, Keyvas, Luubarra, Meredyd, Miiri, Mutami, Nysia, Rhayn, Riv, Ruvella, Santhaal, Tala, Tamana, Utaa, Wik, Yalana

Dwarf : Bontar, Brul, Caelum, Daled, Fyra, Gralth, Ghedran, Hai, Jo'orsh, Jurgan, Kesi, Kov, Krom, Lazra, Ltak, Lyanius, N'kadir, Portek, Rkard, Sa'ram, Sult, Thurin, Yerik, Zareb

Halfling : Agu, At-horg, Anezka, Cha, Derlan, Dote, Fullgrin, Horgan, I'toc, Ibl, Jun, Kilay, Kor, La, La-lai, Lokee, Nok, Ojoba, Orel, Pauk, Puy, Sa-rea, Taiy, Tar, Toth, Urga, Ves, Weom, Wyan, Zivlil

Aarakocra : Aera, Arraako, Aial, Aur, Awnunaak, Cawthra, Driikaak, Deekek, Errk, Gazzijja, Heehk, I'kki, Kariko, Kekko, Kleeck, Kraah, Krekkekelar, Lisako, Nakaaka, Orr, Quierk, Thraka, Salleek, Urreek

Thri-Kreen : Chkik-i-chikk, K'kikrik, K'kivir, K'kriq, Kk'tkk, Klik'l, Krikik, Nnn'tkk, T'kkyl

Mul and **half-elves** tend to be raised in human cultures and thus given human names, though sometimes they may bear a name from their non-human parent's cultural heritage instead. **Half-giants** have no separate culture of their own and mimic the majority local culture.

Aarakocra can both learn and speak the tongues of other creatures quite well, and other peoples are usually able to do a passable imitation of the bird-folk's tongue (heavily accented and lacking the proper beak-clicks).

Most **non-kreen**, lacking the mouth-parts necessary to properly reproduce kreen sounds, have trouble pronouncing kreen names, and so call them by nicknames, or shortened versions or approximations of their name like: "Click-click", "Kick", "Caver", "Crick", "K.T.", "Enik", "Tickle".

Depending on the kreen, this might not bother them, or they may find it deeply annoying or even rude. Most kreen who have spent enough time in the city accept that the food-people are simply unable to speak properly.

Thri-Kreen have difficulty pronouncing the softer consonants of non-kreen languages: when telepathic communication is not an option (kreen minds are quite alien to non-kreen), the convention is for the kreen and a translator to learn to understand one another's language so they can each communicate in their native tongues while still being able to understand one another.

SCOUNDREL PLAYBOOKS

While all scoundrels are accomplished at all of the actions in a playbook, every scoundrel also has some things in which they're uniquely effective. This is represented by their playbook, which also lists the special abilities they might take showcasing that talent, their starting action dots, experience triggers, the two individuals they have relationships with (one friendship and one rivalry), and five items distinctive to their person (items in italics cost no load during a score). Your playbook and the narrative details of your character are often a factor that will be considered in setting the position or effect of an action.

- ❖ You may choose pre-selected background detail for your character, with **action ratings** and a **special ability**, or make up your own details.
- ❖ When you choose a **friend** and **rival**, there is no need to detail their entire history – a one-sentence summary is enough or if nothing comes to mind immediately, choose and/or fill out details in play.
- ❖ All characters have a **Special Armor** box which may be ticked to resist psychic attacks or probes.

The following Special Abilities are part of **all** **playbook** lists.

- ❖ **VETERAN** : choose a special ability from another playbook. (max 3)
- ❖ **MASTER OF THE WAY** : gain potency with simple Attune actions involving some psychic ability – which?; you may have access to deeper mysteries through extensive training. *Who trained you & why?*
- ❖ **MUTANT** : your mutation provides a benefit, usually allowing an action that would be *impossible* otherwise (e.g. breathing silt), or that would be *significantly* more difficult otherwise (improved position), etc. Work with the GM to decide the benefit your mutation provides.

EXAMPLE MUTATION SPECIAL ABILITIES

THE BIG BRAIN : Your cranium is swollen to twice normal size, and somewhat oddly shaped. Sometimes it pulses. You are naturally, and exceptionally, good at stealing thoughts from others.

FOUR-EYES : You have twice the number of eyes normal for your kind, sitting above and slightly off-center of your normal set. They provide you with exceptional visual perception as well as visual clarity in low-light.

MAN-E-ARMS : You sport a dexterous pair of extra, though oddly-placed, limbs. Sometimes they twitch, grasp, or make unintended gestures.

NOT JUST FASHIONABLE : You have patches of beautiful, anemone-like tendrils growing from irregular locations on your body; they are sensitive and cannot be covered, but make you able to detect coming changes in the weather, up to a few hours away, with perfect accuracy. And perhaps sense other things.

OH SNAP! : One of your arms and hands is a deformed, shelled pincer, slightly larger than a normal arm and hand. You're always considered armed – the pincer can be used as a weapon, and as special armor against some violent assaults. If torn off or removed (painful!), the arm slowly regrows over a period of time (but provides no benefit until fully regrown).

CYCLOPS : You have one-eye instead of the normal number for your people; asymmetrically placed. While this creates difficulties with normal vision and depth perception, it is mitigated by the strange, additional sense you have developed – the foresight of danger you will face, or a predilection for sudden prophecy.

GILL-IGAN : A series of obvious slits and frills on your neck or ribs provides you the ability to breathe the silt of the Silt Sea or perhaps the thick salt-water of the Last Sea as if it were air. This doesn't necessarily give you sensory abilities when immersed in the obscuring dust or murk.

FISTS

Good at winning fights, engaging in violence, and intimidation.

Start with 2 •• **Skirmish** and 1 • **Command**.

You earn xp when you address a challenge with violence or coercion.

- ❖ **GLADIATOR** : Consort +1, Intuit +2, Craft +1, Champion.
- ❖ **THUG** : Command +1, Wreck +2, Sway +1, Savage.
- ❖ **MERCENARY** : Consort +1, Sway +2, Intuit +1, Bodyguard.

Friends & Rivals : Coran, a renowned gladiator. Thumper, a vicious thug. Akkad, an experienced mercenary. Akiik'lii, a reputable healer. Faylen, a crooked gamesman.

Playbook Items : Fine Hand Weapon, Fine Heavy Weapon (2 load), Scary Weapon or Tool, *Manacles & Rope*, *Potion Fruit (Enrage)*, *Spirit Charm*.

SPECIAL ABILITIES

BATTLEBORN : You may expend your special armor to reduce harm from an attack in combat or to push yourself during a fight.

BODYGUARD : When you protect a teammate, take +1d to your resistance roll. When you gather info to anticipate possible threats in the current situation, you get +1 effect.

PSYCHIC FIGHTER : While your body battles on the physical plane, you may defend yourself and strike back in the psychic realms; you have potency with attacks made using the Way.

LEADER : When you Command a cohort in combat, they gain +1 effect, 1 armor, and continue to fight even when they suffer level 3 harm and break.

MULE : Your load limits increase by 2. (Light: 5. Normal: 7. Heavy: 8.)

CHAMPION : You can push yourself to perform a feat of physical force that verges on the superhuman – engage a small gang on equal footing in close combat, gaining scale.

SAVAGE : When you unleash physical violence, it's especially frightening. Take +1d When you Command a frightened target.

VIGOROUS : You recover from harm faster. Permanently fill in one of your recovery MOON segments. Take +1d to healing treatment rolls.

EYES

Good at hunting, tracking, and following and finding things and people.

Start with 2 •• **Hunt** and 1 • **Inuit**.

You earn xp when you address a challenge with tracking or violence.

- ❖ **RANGER**: Attune +1, Craft +2, Intuit +1, Survivor.
- ❖ **EXPLORER**: Prowl +1, Study +2, Wreck +1, Scavenger.
- ❖ **BOUNTY Hunter**: Consort +1, Skirmish +1, Prowl +2, Scout.

Friends & Rivals: T'zzzhiik, an experienced hunter. Iyrilis, a sketchy herbalist. Mari'sae, an old wanderer. Dasak, a loyal guardsman. Salleam, a shady collector.

Playbook Items: Fine Ranged Weapon (2 load), Mystic Ammo, *Trained Hunting Pet*, Maps & Spyglass, Fine Throwing Weapon, *Fine Crystal Focus*.

SPECIAL ABILITIES

ARCHER: You may push yourself to *make a ranged attack at an extreme distance – improve effect one additional level with a ranged attack*.

FOCUSED: You may expend your special armor to *resist a consequence of surprise or mental harm (fear, confusion, losing track of someone) – push yourself for ranged combat or tracking*.

PSYCHIC HUNTER: your pet can fight and defend itself with potency in the psychic realms and (choose one) *you gain a mind-link with your pet, sharing its thoughts and feelings – your pet can psychoport over short distances at will – your pet can imbue its muscles with psychic vigor, outpacing any other creature or vehicle*. You may take this a second time and choose one additional psychic ability for your pet.

SCAVENGER: You may tick special armor to gain an item you wouldn't normally have access to; the item is on loan, you must return it at the end of the score if you still have it. If you don't, the person you borrowed it from may be upset or require repayment.

SCOUT: When you gather info to locate a target, you get +1 effect. When you hide in a prepared position or use camouflage, you get +1d to rolls to avoid detection.

SURVIVOR: Gain +1 WATER box. you are able to subsist on the strange flora and fauna of the desert and are adept at finding safe shelter and avoiding its monstrous predators.

MEKILLOT HIDE: Penalties from harm are one level less severe (though level 4 harm is still fatal).

VENGEFUL: You gain an additional xp trigger: *You got payback against someone who harmed you or someone you care about. If your crew helped you get payback, also mark crew xp*.

FINGERS

Good at the weird stuff, growing potion fruits, crafting and fixing tools.

Start with 2 •• **Craft** and 1 • **Wreck**.

You earn xp when you address a challenge with skill or mayhem.

- ❖ **CARTOGRAPHER**: Skirmish +1, Study +2, Hunt +1, Analyst.
- ❖ **GARDENER**: Intuit +1, Attune +2, Study +1, Alchemist.
- ❖ **SMITH**: Finesse +1, Consort +2, Study +1, Artificer.

Friends & Rivals: Ajani, a tall-tale telling wanderer. Fyris, a desperate honey-addict. Lelil-i, a daring smuggler. Naram-Sin, a fanatic priestess. Nen'ar, a questionable guildsman.

Playbook Items: Fine Crafting Tools, Fine Demolition Tools (2 load), *Blowgun & Poison Darts*, Potion Fruit, Drugs & Poisons, Gadgets (3 load).

SPECIAL ABILITIES

ALCHEMIST: When you craft a potion fruit or weird substance, take +1 result level to your roll. You begin with one special formula already known.

ANALYST: During downtime, you get two ticks to distribute among any long-term project **MOONS** that involve investigation or learning a new formula or design plan.

ARTIFICER: When you invent or craft a gadget or specialized tool, take +1 result level to your roll. You begin with one special design already known.

FORTITUDE: You may expend your special armor to resist a consequence of fatigue, weakness, or chemical effects, or to push yourself when working with technical skill or handling alchemicals.

SUPERNATURAL WARD: You know how to **Wreck** an area with arcane substances and methods so it is either anathema or enticing (your choice) to spirits or undead.

HEALER: You can craft with bones, blood, and bodily humours to treat wounds or stabilize the dying. You may study a malady or corpse gain information. Everyone in your crew gets +1d to healing treatment rolls.

SABOTEUR: When you **wreck**, the work is much quieter than it should be and the damage is hidden from casual inspection.

VENOMOUS: Choose a drug or poison (from your bandolier stock) to which you have become immune. You can push yourself to secrete it through your skin or saliva, or exhale it as a vapor.

BRAINS

Good at being prepared, and *always* has a plan.

Start with 2 •• **Consort** and 1 • **Study**.

You earn xp when you address a challenge with calculation or conspiracy.

- ❖ **TEMPLAR** : Intuit +1, Command +2, Hunt +1, Calculating.
- ❖ **FALLEN NOBLE** : Study +1, Sway +2, Command +1, Connected.
- ❖ **CONVICT** : Wreck +1, Command +2, Skirmish +1, Jail Bird.

Friends & Rivals : Mikki-Lelil, an obsequious servant. Nillor, a greedy architect. Bael, a brazen alchemist. Talathra, a sly noble. Rhamassu, a curious templar.

Playbook Items : *Fine Cover Identity*, *Fine Honeyed Wine*, *Blueprints*, *Slumber Fruit*, *Small Concealed Hand Weapon*, *Spirit Charm*.

SPECIAL ABILITIES

FORESIGHT : Two times per score you can assist a teammate without expending **WATER**. When you do, tell us how you prepared for this situation.

CALCULATING : Due to your careful planning, during downtime, you may give yourself or another member of your crew +1 downtime action.

CONNECTED : During downtime, you get +1 result level when you acquire an asset or reduce **HEAT**.

FUNCTIONING VICE : When you indulge your vice, you may adjust the outcome by 1 or 2 (up or down). An ally who joins you in indulging in your vice may do the same.

OATH OF SERVICE : When you shake on a deal, you and your partner – human or otherwise – both bear a mark of your oath. If either breaks the contract, they take level 3 harm, "Cursed". Normal rest and treatment can't remove this harm.

JAIL BIRD : When incarcerated, your wanted level counts as 1 less, your tier as 1 more, and you gain +1 faction status with a faction you help on the inside (in addition to your *Servitude* roll).

MASTERMIND : You may expend your special armor when you protect a teammate, or to gain a free push when you gather information or work on a long-term project.

WEAVING THE WEB : You gain +1d to **Consort** when you gather information on a target for a score. You get +1d to the engagement roll for that operation.

FEET

Good at going unnoticed, sneaking around and getting into places.

Start with 2 •• **Prowl** and 1 • **Finesse**.

You earn xp when you address a challenge with stealth or evasion.

- ❖ **BURGLAR** : Finesse +1, Wreck +2, Skirmish +1, Infiltrator.
- ❖ **SPY** : Intuit +1, Consort +2, Study +1, Shadow.
- ❖ **MESSENGER** : Hunt +1, Consort +2, Attune +1, Reflexes.

Friends & Rivals : Bug, a friendly beggar. Anok, a young city guard. Kriste'i-shin, a daring noble. Jhorim, an unhappy templar. Tarmos, a respected craftsman.

Playbook Items : *Fine Burglary Tools*, *Fine Shadow Cloak*, *Light Climbing Gear*, *Silence Fruit*, *Sun Goggles*, *Spirit Charm*.

SPECIAL ABILITIES

INFILTRATOR : You are not affected by quality or tier when you bypass security measures.

AMBUSH : When you attack from hiding or spring a trap, you get +1d.

DAREDEVIL : When you roll a desperate action, you get +1d to your roll if you also take -1d to any resistance rolls against consequences from your action.

ACROBAT : When you push yourself, you may also perform a feat of athletics that verges on the superhuman – maneuver to confuse your enemies so they mistakenly attack each other.

EXPERTISE : Choose one of your action ratings. When you lead a group action using that action, you expend 1 WATER at most regardless of the number of failed rolls.

PSYCHIC VEIL : Use the Way to make your body shadowy and insubstantial for a few moments. Expend 2 WATER when you shift, plus 1 WATER per to *make it last for a few minutes – become invisible – become weightless and float*.

REFLEXES : When there's a question about who acts first, the answer is you (two characters with Reflexes act simultaneously).

SHADOW : You may expend your special armor to resist a consequence from detection or security measures, or to push yourself for a feat of athletics or stealth.

TEETH

Good at charm, subterfuge, and fast-talking.

Start with 2 •• **Sway** and 1 • **Consort**.

You earn xp when you address a challenge with deception or influence.

- ❖ **BARD** : Consort +1, Sway +2, Finesse +1, Subterfuge.
- ❖ **GRIFTER** : Intuit +1, Study +2, Finesse +1, Trust in Me.
- ❖ **SIREN** : Intuit +1, Attune +2, Command +1, Mesmerism.

Friends & Rivals : Ojoba, a twitchy honey dealer. Miri, a young prostitute. Nysia, a secretive bard. Rhayn, a connected grifter. Alaa-la, a friendly tavern owner.

Playbook Items : Fine Clothes & Jewelry, Fine Disguise Kit, Fine Loaded Dice & Trick Ivories, Trance Powder, Hidden Blade, Spirit Charm.

SPECIAL ABILITIES

ROOK'S GAMBIT : Expend 2 WATER to roll your best action rating while performing a different action. Say how you adapt your skill to this use.

CLOAK & DAGGER : When you use a disguise or other form of covert misdirection, you get +1d to rolls to confuse or deflect suspicion. When you throw off your disguise, the resulting surprise gives you the initiative in the situation.

SPIRIT VOICE : You know the secret method to interact with elemental spirits and thinking undead as if they were normal humans, regardless of how wild or feral they appear. You gain potency when interacting with the supernatural.

REFLECTION : You can always tell when someone is lying to you.

A LITTLE SOMETHING ON THE SIDE : You have other side-hustles. At the end of each downtime phase, you earn +2 STASH.

MESMERISM : When you sway someone, you may cause them to forget that it's happened until they next interact with you.

SUBTERFUGE : You may expend your special armor to resist a consequence from suspicion or persuasion, or to push yourself for subterfuge.

TRUST IN ME : You get +1d vs. a target with whom you have an intimate relationship.

SOUL

Good at magic, mysticism, and dealing with the supernatural.

Start with 2 •• **Attune** and 1 • **Study**.

You earn xp when you address a challenge with knowledge or supernatural power.

- ❖ **STUDENT** : Sway +1, Intuit +2, Study +1, Second Sight.
- ❖ **ELEMENTALIST** : Command +1, Sway +2, Consort +1, Tempest.
- ❖ **WIZARD** : Craft +1, Prowl +2, Wreck +1, Ritual.

Friends & Rivals : Kotolu, an angry spirit. Mord'akim, a scheming undead. Vovuruk-dai, a mysterious druid. Wick, a veiled wizard. Gorrog, a rapacious smuggler.

Playbook Items : *Fine Focus* (your choice), *Fine Psychic Ward* (2 load), *Potion Fruit* (any), *Summoned Spirit*, *Obsidian Spheres* (2), *Spirit Charm*.

SPECIAL ABILITIES

COMPEL : You can attune to summon a nearby spirit (elemental, land, undead, etc.), forcing it to appear and obey a single command you give it. You are not supernaturally terrified by this being (though others may be).

SECOND SIGHT : You are always aware of any nearby supernatural entities, and you may gather information by supernatural means with +1d.

IRON WILL : +1d to resistance rolls with Resolve. You're immune to the terror that acts of sorcery and some supernatural entities inflict on sight.

OCCULTIST : You know the secret ways to consort with ancient powers, forgotten gods or demons. Once you've consorted with one, you get +1d to command cultists who worship it.

RITUAL : You can study an occult ritual (or create a new one) to summon a supernatural effect or being. You know the arcane methods to perform ritual sorcery. You begin with one ritual already learned.

STRANGE METHODS : When you invent or craft a creation with arcane features, take +1 result level to your roll. You begin with one arcane design already known.

TEMPEST : You may push yourself (gaining the normal benefit of doing so) to do one of the following: unleash an elemental strike (fire, earth, water, air, etc.) as a weapon or a psychic blast – summon a violent “storm” of elemental or psychic nature.

WARDED : You may expend your special armor to resist a supernatural consequence, or to push yourself when you deal with arcane forces.

EXPERIENCE

As you explore the world and undertake scores, you gain experience points (xp) which are used to improve your action ratings and gain new special abilities. During and at the end of each session, you decide how many experience points (xp) you earned and how to divvy them up.

- ❖ **BE DARING** : immediately mark 1 xp in the attribute for any action roll made from a desperate position, whether or not you succeed.
- ❖ **TRAIN** : mark 1 xp in an attribute or the playbook if you take a training action. Each xp track can be trained only once per downtime phase. *What does training look like for your character?*
- ❖ **ACT OUT** : take action, tempt trouble, give in to your failings, and show us who you are. Mark xp according to your playbook's triggers.

You do not need to start or complete a score in order to gain xp, and events during free play and downtime count towards your triggers during a session. The GM and other players can remind you of events they feel count as triggers, but you do not have to take the xp if you do not wish to.

TRIGGERS

At the end of a session, mark xp using the triggers listed in your playbook. You may mark end-of-session xp on either one of your attribute tracks or on your playbook track. For each trigger you decide occurred during the session, mark 1 xp if it happened once, or 2 xp if it happened repeatedly.

- ❖ *Your playbook specific xp trigger*; you took an action that expresses the core nature of your playbook. It doesn't matter if the action is successful or not, only that it was attempted.
- ❖ *You expressed your beliefs, drives, heritage, or background*; if you acted to express your heritage or *used a heritage trait*. Your character's personal beliefs and drives are yours to define, session to session; tell the group about these beliefs and drives when you mark them.
- ❖ *You struggled with issues from your vice or traumas*; mark this if your vice tempted you to take a problematic action or caused you or your crew trouble (indulging your vice doesn't count; but overindulging your vice does); or if you *took a trauma* or your vice caused you trouble.

GETTING DESPERATE

Whenever you roll a **desperate** action, you gain +1 xp in its attribute. This happens whether-or-not you succeed at the action. You can trade for position, describing how you increase the danger of the situation and how that will improve your results: if this makes your position desperate, you gain xp from the roll for choosing to be daring.

You gain this xp immediately; if you fill an xp track this way during a Session, you must wait until the end of the session to gain a dot in one of the attribute's actions, and then clear the track. You can't gain spill-over xp in a filled track.

ADVANCEMENT

When an xp track fills, clear all the marks and take an advance.

- ❖ An advance from the playbook track lets you choose an additional special ability from your playbook, or from another scoundrel playbook up to three times.
- ❖ An advance from an attribute track lets you add an additional dot to any of the actions under that attribute (usually to a maximum of rank three). *Say what you did to learn this new ability.*

You may have a maximum of six special abilities and twenty-four dots across all actions.

CHANGING PLAYBOOKS

If you realize during the first few sessions that you've chosen the wrong playbook, the rewind principle can be applied: use a copy of the new playbook, transfer over your action dots, and pick a new set of special abilities from the new playbook equal to the number you had.

If this is a narrative evolution for your character, then transfer everything as-is to the new playbook (action dots, xp tracks, friends and rivals, etc.), with one limitation: you may only keep up to 3 of your old playbook's special abilities as Veteran Advances. Your mutation(s) and any deeper mysteries of the Way you have learned are retained.

STANDARD ITEMS

All playbooks have access to these items. If lost or damaged, unless permanently removed from the playbook by a consequence, they are easily replaced without any roll needed to reacquire or repair them between scores (scoundrels always have a supplier on hand).

Items can alter position and/or effect from Limited, give you potency in specific situations or against specific obstacles, or grant you Limited Effect when you would otherwise have No Effect or would simply be *unable* to attempt the action.

- ❖ **a Blade or Two** : hand weapons such as an obsidian knife, bone hand-axe, or sword; one or two.
- ❖ **Throwing Knives** : six honed, balanced bone knives, shards of obsidian, or throwing stars of hardened crystal.
- ❖ **Sling or Blowgun** : a leather strap with a pouch of heavy, smoothed (or sharp-edged) stones; or a small blowgun with envenomed darts (mildly toxic), range of ten paces.
- ❖ **a Large Weapon** : a war-hammer, polearm, bow or crossbow (range of 150 long-paces).
- ❖ **an Unusual Weapon** : something you've turned into a weapon (spiked gloves, a whip, a wheat flail).
- ❖ **Armor** : a few pieces of thick, flexible leather, with bone or chitin pauldrons. **+Heavy** : the addition of a helmet, greaves, a chestplate, and a shield.
- ❖ **Burglary Gear** : a bone hand saw, solid wood prybar, some oil, thread and small bone hooks.
- ❖ **Climbing Gear** : coils of giant-hair rope, bone or wood grapples, chalk dust, harness with wood or bone rings, a mallet and wooden pegs.
- ❖ **Maps & Passes** : crude, unmarked maps (or with symbols at best) and forged ceramic passes and identification.
- ❖ **Spiritual Implements** : ceramic symbols, a bag of soil, a pinch of defiled ash, vial of citrus, blessed water in a small ampule.

- ❖ **Subterfuge Supplies** : theatrical make-up, costume jewelry, forged badges, stolen guard uniform or Templar garb (reversible) and head covering.
- ❖ **Demolition Tools** : stone sledgehammer, wooden stakes, wood or bone crowbar, bone or stone hatchets.
- ❖ **Tinkering Tools** : picks, pliers, cord, needles, a sharp stone.
- ❖ **Torches** : oil-treated wood and prepared wrappings.
- ❖ **Focusing Crystal** : a small crystal attuned to psychic energy.

WEAPONS & TOOLS

Most tools and weapons are made of wood, bone, obsidian, or other non-metallic materials. When using such tools, gear, and weapons, a serious consequence may be that the item breaks. This destruction may be resisted using your crew's tier, but note that the tier of the opponent may remove dice from this roll.

Due to the scarcity of metal, many of the weapons available to scoundrels are dissimilar to those you might know. Review this list for ideas.

- ❖ **TALID** : spiked, plate-leather glove.
- ❖ **CHATKCHA** : three-bladed boomerang of crystalized kreen spit.
- ❖ **CAHULAKS** : two large hooks or triple-hooks attached by a rope.
- ❖ **TRIKAL** : polearm with a flanged head of sharp shoulder bones.
- ❖ **ALHULAK** : multi-headed hook on a short rope with solid handle.
- ❖ **CARRIKAL** : twin-headed axe made from a sharpened jawbone.
- ❖ **GYTHKA** : polearm with three slashing blades made from the crystalized spittle of thri-kreen at one end, and an impaling blade mounted at the other.
- ❖ **WRIST RAZORS** : heavy wrist-band with three six-inch blades.
- ❖ **MACUAHUITL** : flat, heavy club embedded with obsidian shards.

ARMOR

Armors are made from various leathers (inix hide and drake hide are popular materials), chitin (from kreen, kank, and gaj), shell (mekillot), woven giant hair, lashed bones, and even skulls. Metallic armor is rare, and even more rarely worn in the desert heat. Some warriors, particularly those fighting in the gladiatorial games, complement their armor with pieces of metal armor – such as pauldrons, greaves, or (carefully padded) bracers – as marks of status. While useful for short bouts, and for showmanship, pieces such as breastplates or helms (let alone full metal suits) worn over long periods become flesh-searing hot and dehydrating for the one wearing them.

When you have armor or shield made of wood, bone, chitin, or other non-metallic materials and have already checked it for resistance, and you resist a physical consequence, you may choose to negate the WATER cost on a 1-3 result and instead cross the armor off your playbook. It has been broken and rendered useless. This cannot be done with Heavy Armor until after the second use is ticked during a score.

Treat this like a Dragon's Deal: it cannot be resisted. In order to equip that item in the future, you must take an *Acquire Assets* action or otherwise find a way to replace it.

The GM is still free to use the loss or destruction of armor as a serious consequence, but in this case, as a usual consequence, it can be resisted.

MOUNTS

The various beasts commonly seen inside the city as riding mounts are crodlu, erdlu, kank, and sometimes inix. Erdland, inix, and mekillot are more commonly used as mounts, or wagon teams, in the desert.

- ❖ **CRODLU** : a large, swift, bipedal lizard commonly used as a mount; difficult to train. Careful, they bite.
- ❖ **ERDLU** : a skittish, flightless bird about 7' tall with a crushing beak, used as a mount, or raised for eggs and meat. Delicious.
- ❖ **KANK** : a large, ant-like insect commonly used as a mount; inedible, but produce nutritious globules of honey.
- ❖ **INIX** : a 16' long, herbivorous lizard commonly used as a desert mount; can carry up to four individuals on its back or in a large howdah.
- ❖ **ERLAND** : the wild, two-ton version of the domesticated Erdlu; commonly used to pull caravan wagons, and by the Tyrian army as war mounts; psionic; high endurance but slow-moving. Difficult to train and handle.
- ❖ **MEKILLOT** : a thirty-foot, six-ton lizard (at their largest) with a segmented shell and a long, sticky tongue. Used to transport large cargo and troops inside protected argosies or to pull mobile fortresses; irritable, unruly, they require well-trained psionic handlers.
- ❖ **ASKRA** : a large bee- or wasp-like insect used by elite aerial warriors; psionic. Stabled in large, well-tended hives underground.

PLAYBOOK ITEMS

Some playbooks have items specific to their playbook not found on the standard list, or which are of higher quality than those available in general. When equipment is marked as *Fine*, it is iron (etc.), contains additional items, or is otherwise improved from standard. You are assumed to have a reliable source for any item in your playbook and so can replace these when lost or damaged (unless affected by a consequence).

- ❖ **Fine Heavy Weapon** : a finely crafted two-handed weapon with better reach and harder hitting, which might grant potency when it matters. A warhammer, a greatsword, a military pike, a battleaxe, etc.
- ❖ **Scary Weapon** or **Scary Tool** : a standard item you've modified into something much scarier looking than it is; doesn't inflict more injury, but increases your effect when you intimidate someone.
- ❖ **Manacles & Rope** : a set of manacles and heavy ropes, suitable for restraining a prisoner or slave. *A souvenir from a stay in the slave pits, perhaps?*
- ❖ **Potion Fruit (Enrage)** : a fruit which, once eaten, greatly enhances the user's strength, resistance to pain...and irrational aggression for several minutes. You suffer two consequences you may resist: *Can't Tell Friend From Foe* and *Can't Stop Until They're All Broken*.
- ❖ **Potion Fruit (Slumber)** : a fruit whose juices are sufficient to put someone to sleep for an hour if imbibed; a deep sleep, but not supernatural – they can be roused with some effort.
- ❖ **Potion Fruit (Silence)** : a small fruit which, upon eating, negates all sound within 10 paces of the eater for a span of several moments.
- ❖ **Spirit Charm** : a trinket that spirits and supernatural creatures prefer to avoid; will not keep them at bay if they consciously intend you harm but may improve your position when dealing with them.
- ❖ **Fine hand weapon** : a finely crafted one-handed melee weapon. *Is it a standard weapon or something exotic?*
- ❖ **Fine Ranged Weapon** (2 load) : a finely crafted long-bow or heavy crossbow. Deadly at long range but unwieldy in close quarters. Military gear, but you have a (forged) pass for this one.

- ❖ **Mystic Ammo** : arrows, stones, darts, or similar blessed or enchanted to be especially potent against supernatural creatures and threats, but less so against physical beings. Enough to stun a person, but it would take a few hits to incapacitate them. Use of this ammunition causes psychic resonance; start a 4-phase MOON called *Attention from the Templars* with one phase already filled plus another for each use.
- ❖ **Trained Hunting Pet** : a small creature trained to help track and flush out prey; knows simple commands and perhaps a few tricks. Anticipates your actions. Loyal. Cohort: Expert (Hunter).
- ❖ **Maps & Spyglass** : A set of maps of the local area on parchment or papyrus, and a leather tube with lenses that allow long-distance vision. Quickly disassembles.
- ❖ **Fine Throwing Weapon** : Balanced for greater accuracy, and light enough to throw more than one in quick succession. *Were they crafted by Grik's hands, Penn & K'trikk, the Knife's Edge, or another weapon smith? How do they stand out?*
- ❖ **Gadgets** : A variety of small, unusual items as simple as caltrops or an alchemical light stick, or as complex as blessed chains to bind undead or life-crafted psychic alarms. *Which can you craft?*
- ❖ **Fine Cover Identity** : Planted stories and rumors, false relationships, and paperwork or passes sufficient to pass as a different person. Use a long-term project to craft more. *Who are you? Who are you, really?*
- ❖ **Fine Honeyed Wine** : A rare and technically illegal distillation taken from your personal collection, potent both in its effects and in its ability to impress.
- ❖ **Blueprints** : painted canvas, papyrus sheets, or etched clay tablets showing the layout of buildings or structures and various city plans.
- ❖ **Small Concealed Hand Weapon** : a small weapon hidden inside an item of clothing or as jewelry or harmless accoutrement; not obvious.
- ❖ **Fine Shadow Cloak** : a hooded cloak made of a rare shadow-silk and mirrored psychic thread which causes light and perception to blend into the darkness around it, which improves your effect level when you sneak around wearing it. Illegal.

- ❖ **Light Climbing Gear** : a well-crafted set of climbing gear that is less bulky and heavy than a standard set (-1 load). Just strong enough to hold the weight of one person.
- ❖ **Sun Goggles** : An arcane device that allows the wearer to see in pitch darkness as if it were well-lit; a more common form prevents sun-blindness by protecting the eyes (useful against any bright light).
- ❖ **Fine Clothes & Jewelry** : an outfit of such fine make, accompanied with gems, pendants, and similar accoutrements, you appear to be a wealthy noble. (If you are carrying this item as a second outfit to change into, it counts as 2 load.)
- ❖ **Fine Disguise Kit** : a theatrical make-up kit equipped with an impressive array of expert appliances to fool the eye, such that it may increase the effect of your deceptive actions when you use it.
- ❖ **Fine Loaded Dice & Trick Ivories** : subtly altered gambling devices to favor particular outcomes, which may increase the effect of your deceptive actions when used.
- ❖ **Trance Powder** : an alchemical dust crafted from kank pheromones and mushroom spores that calms and dulls the mind and makes those who inhale it suggestible. Dangerous. Addictive. Illegal.
- ❖ **Hidden Blade** : a small weapon with no reach, but easily concealed in a sleeve, boot, hair, or elsewhere; very difficult to detect on your person, even if you're searched.
- ❖ **Fine Focus** (your choice) : a hand-sized charm that grants potency when you use an attune action for a sorcery, spiritual, or psychic method. *What does it look like?*
- ❖ **Fine Psychic Ward** (2 load) : grants potency against psychic attacks and warnings of psychic intrusions and investigations.
- ❖ **Summoned Spirit** : an unquiet spirit, elemental, or similar being you have previously bound; it is not your pet or your friend, but it may occasionally do favors for you...or cause trouble.
- ❖ **Drugs & Poisons** : a set of glass vials, pouches, or similar that hold a few potion fruits or reagents that can be quickly and easily combined into a drug or poison, or hold a small, useful gadget. When you employ this item, choose one from the list to the right or one of your own formulas. During Downtime, replace them as long as you have access to a supplier or workshop. *Who is your supplier?*

DRUGS, POISONS, AND GADGETS

- BLUEBERRIES** : the seeds of this small, blue fruit provide an effective anti-toxin; more effective when ground into a powdered form. Beware, the berries themselves are highly toxic.
- PIT SCORPION** : the stinger of this palm-sized scorpion is loaded with a powerful venom that can incapacitate even large creatures for short period due intense pain; note that milked venom quickly loses potency.
- DUNE MIST** : a fragrant orange fruit whose pungent aroma, when peeled, temporarily clouds the minds of those exposed; fills a small area.
- SUN GRAPE** : a large, golden fruit that temporarily grants the one who eats it a few moments of enhanced physical strength and resilience.
- NIGHTSHADE** : a powdered root that induces sleep and sweet dreams in the user; in higher doses, unconsciousness and terrifying nightmares. Usually taken with tea to help dull the bitter aftertaste.
- BLACK SALT** : undead and spirits cannot cross any line drawn with these specially treated salts; circles of it can entrap supernatural entities.
- SMOKE PELLETS** : a set of small, fragile glass marbles that, when shattered, release a thick cloud of obscuring smoke, allowing the user to escape or move unnoticed.
- LAMP BEETLE** : a large stub-winged beetle that glows in the dark after storing energy from the sun; can be used as a portable source of light.
- SAND GOGGLES** : a simple but effective device made of cloth and leather, designed to protect the eyes from sand and sun while traveling across the desert.
- DESERT BEACON** : a small, handheld device that projects a psychic signal which can be used to repel creatures or mark a location.
- PSYCHIC ESSENCE** : distilled from a dream or thought; when ingested, the user re-lives the distilled experience with lucid clarity.
- FOOT-TRAP** : a small, pressure-activated device that snaps tight around the foot and ankle, trapping a creature; includes giant-hair rope and stake.

POTION FRUITS

Insects, grains, and meats are the staples of the world's diet, along with some fibrous tubers and root vegetables. But growing out in the deserts, at forgotten oases only the elves know of (and some say carefully cultivated in the King's gardens) are fruit-bearing bushes and trees. Fruit is not mere nutrition, but power and strange experience. Berries, rinds, seeds, and juices can by themselves, or in combination, allow for everything from the treatment of minor malady, to the granting iron-hard flesh or ability to walk into the dreams of others. Because of this, fruit is almost entirely illegal to sell, as well as dangerous to simply devour.

This is not to say the noble houses do not keep a few carefully-nurtured fruit-trees well hidden in their personal gardens, or that such produce cannot be found in the Elven Market.

There are also those who measure and combine the pulp, juice, and extracts of various fruits, and other substances, and quietly sell the concoctions they have invented through successful experimentation to interested patrons, for a significant fee. Of course there are as many (or more) snake-oil salesmen passing off watered-down, dye-colored honey as miracle remedies as there are honest alchemists – though both activities are illegal and likely to result in arrest.

OBSIDIAN SPHERES

Powerful spells are often worked into beads and spheres of treated and polished obsidian. This practice is safer for the wizard than channeling the energies normally called forth, and can allow for more effective results. The stored energies or spells may only be released when the sphere is crushed or shattered, with more powerful spells requiring increasingly larger spheres, or even sets of spheres.

PSYCHIC CRYSTALS

Those who study the Way have found that psychically “attuning” themselves to certain, special crystals only found naturally in deep caverns and cut in specific fashions, can help focus their abilities and ease the effort of concentration normally required to access and maintain the forces required of the deeper mysteries.

Some students have found that large, carefully crafted and polished spheres of obsidian can mimic the benefits of a psychic crystal, though these are less suited to the practice and often fracture or explode (can be used as a serious consequence).

CERAMIC AND IRON

Trade and barter are the most common methods of exchange in the city. Even though Tyr mints and issues a kind of “currency” in the form of ceramic discs, most merchants haggle for possessions or goods over taking ceramic, particularly from those of questionable reputation – merchants may call upon Templars to examine bits before accepting them, as the Templars are able to tell if a ceramic bit is counterfeit.

Metal is rare and precious and not wasted on common coinage. Only a few “iron notes” – also called orange notes or rusts due their tendency to become discolored over time – are issued by the Templarate every year to cover larger sums paid to the merchant houses.

CERAMIC

The city provides two ceramic bits per day to every citizen – coin-sized, blue ceramic disks stamped with the King’s likeness, also sometimes called ‘water chits’ or ‘a bit of blue’. A single bit is worth one full drink from a well or a loaf of bread. This ‘shows’ that the King provides for the people of Tyr.

Originally intended for use to buy water at the public wells or bread from the public ovens – and still their main use – the public began to use these ceramic bits in barter, and they now exist as a de facto, secondary currency. Bits are stamped, then colored using a distinctive dye to prevent counterfeiting. (The exact ingredients used in the creation of this dye are a closely guarded secret.)

Two bits is often the most anyone from the warrens can afford per day, so some citizens choose to live on the street in order to save their bits for more water. It is illegal, however, to be without tenancy, and the Templars make regular sweeps through the city, arresting homeless “vagrants” and putting them to work in the fields or mines.

METAL

Metal (of any kind) is extremely scarce – only the wealthy can afford even the smallest amount. Even though Tyr is famed for its iron mines, they produce only a few tons per year. Given its scarcity, even this paltry amount is enough to keep the city’s coffers full and make Tyr a common destination of trade caravans seeking large profits, despite the horrors of the wastelands.

OTHER MATERIALS

Wood is expensive, but not prohibitively out-of-reach. The giant agafari trees harvested in the cursed forests of the Goddess Lalai-Puy of far-away Gulg provide for almost all wood used in construction in the city. Agafari wood is nearly as hard as iron, and equally difficult to work. Because of this, it can be prone to cracking when stressed, as it cannot be tempered as can iron from Tyr’s mines, making carpenters careful with their designs.

The most common materials used in place of metal or wood are bone, chitin, and obsidian, various types of hard stone, and mud-brick for construction.

Luckily, stone is cheap and common, as is brick – though the exact formulas are a carefully-kept secret of the Brickmaker’s guild. The monstrous beasts beyond the King’s walls are harvested for bones and meat, while herds of giant insects provide chitin and honey, though citizens are also a source of bone.

The problem with weapons or armors made of such materials, however, is they are prone to cracking or shattering when subjected to force, and even in general use. Workmen and artisans need to constantly replace their tools as they wear down or break, making for a brisk trade in raw materials to skilled craftsmen who can replace their tools.

PERSONAL WEALTH

As most material wealth in the city is in the form of trade goods, your available wealth is abstracted as a number of CERAMIC. While this wealth *can* be in the form of ceramic bits, it more often takes the shape of a collection of common items useful for barter: water jars, obsidian shards, even livestock. A single dot of CERAMIC is worth a good-sized purse of bits or a few items of valuable barter, not the actual number of bits you have.

- ❖ **1 CERAMIC:** A full purse of ceramic bits. A week's wages.
- ❖ **2 CERAMIC:** A fine weapon. A weekly income for a small business. A fine piece of art. One set of luxury clothes.
- ❖ **4 CERAMIC:** A satchel full of bits. An orange note or small amount of metal. The total month's wages for a common laborer.
- ❖ **6 CERAMIC:** An exquisite jewel. A fine metal sword.
- ❖ **8 CERAMIC:** A good monthly take for a small business. A small safe full of valuables. A very rare luxury commodity.
- ❖ **10 CERAMIC:** Significant asset; wagon, kanks, small property deed.

If you want to use some bits of ceramic or your tradeable assets to achieve a small goal (like bribing a doorman), you use your lifestyle quality as a fortune roll. We don't need to get into the details of what, precisely, you've traded, unless you want to.

SPENDING CERAMIC

In most cases, for small purchases, services, or bribes, you can roll a number of dice equal to your lifestyle quality (see below) to represent small expenses (1-3: can't afford it; 4/5: spend 1 or more CERAMIC; 6: covered). But there are also various situations where you can and will want to spend your CERAMIC to your benefit.

- ❖ Spend 1 CERAMIC to get an additional activity during downtime.
- ❖ Spend 1 CERAMIC to increase a downtime activity's effect level.
- ❖ Spend CERAMIC to avoid certain crew entanglements.
- ❖ Put CERAMIC in your STASH to improve lifestyle and retirement.
- ❖ Spend CERAMIC to advance your crew's tier.

STASH

STASH is comprised of expensive luxury goods, plots of farmland, herd animals, or similar. An iron note is worth a whole line of STASH...but they are difficult to convert to CERAMIC by anyone not authorized to own one, and rare enough that altering the ownership – or creating a forgery – is a difficult task (they are carefully tracked by the Templarate). However, as your STASH grows, the quality of your lifestyle improves.

You can't practically keep more than 4 CERAMIC of bits and barter lying around, so before your next score, you must either use the excess, or put it into your personal STASH. The latter converts those goods into less liquid assets. You can decide what kind, or leave it as an abstraction.

Similarly, your crew can only store up to 4 CERAMIC in their lair, or more if they upgrade to a vault – first to 8 and then to 16 CERAMIC – and any amount beyond this must be spent before the next score or distributed amongst the crew. Note that every CERAMIC you take along on a score takes up one load.

SPENDING STASH

When you take CERAMIC out of either your personal or the crew's STASH in order to spend it during downtime or on a score, you may do so at a cost, representing you trading off some of your expensive assets and investments for quick access to their value: for every 2 STASH removed, you gain 1 CERAMIC in immediately tradeable goods or ceramic bits.

If you want to gain full value from STASH, you'll need to take your time selling it off (use a long-term project to convert 1 STASH for 1 CERAMIC).

SUPPLY

Athas is a world of scarcity, where wars are fought over food and water. **SUPPLY** represents the availability of abstract, immediate survival resources to the Crew like fresh water, food, salt, and crafting materials. Gaining a point of **SUPPLY** requires taking an **Acquire Asset** action during downtime and spending 2 **CERAMIC**.

If the Crew does not have **SUPPLY** at least equal to their tier, they may not be able to replace gear that was damaged, destroyed, or lost, or gear they checked off as used, this may result in -1 to the engagement roll representing their lack of ability to prepare, or they may instead face problems such as starvation or dehydration.

A lack of **SUPPLY** can also make scores in the Wastelands more dangerous as the crew will not be prepared for the things they encounter.

Note that a crew may have up to 4 **SUPPLY**. They may also take downtime actions to temporarily increase their **SUPPLY** above 4 before and during the next score, but all **SUPPLY** beyond 4 is lost after the score ends.

LIFESTYLE & RETIREMENT

Your day-to-day lifestyle is dependent on your current **STASH** and determines if you can pass as or are correctly dressed as someone of the appropriate social class!

It also determines if you can obtain various goods and services. If a purchase seems well within your lifestyle, there is no need to roll to see what happens (though maybe you want to anyways!). At other times, the GM may ask you to roll your lifestyle to determine if you have enough to get what you want.

- ❖ 0-10: **POOR** (1). End up in the gutter, awash in vice and misery.
- ❖ 11-20: **MEAGER** (2). A tiny hovel that you can call your own.
- ❖ 21-39: **MODEST** (3). A simple home or apartment, with some small comforts. You might operate a tavern or small business.
- ❖ 40: **FINE** (4). A well-appointed home or apartment, claiming a few luxuries. You might operate a medium business.

When you mark your character's final trauma and they retire from the scoundrel's life, the amount of **CERAMIC** they have put in their **STASH** determines how well-off they are. Each full row of **STASH** (10 **CERAMIC**) indicates the quality level of the character's lifestyle, from zero (down-and-out in the gutter) to four (lap of luxury).

THE WAY

Almost all beings under the dark sun have slight psychic abilities. This is usually limited to a crude telepathy that allows them to project their thoughts, but some express stranger powers such as psychokinesis or foresight. This extends to include the various beasts and animals of the desert, and there are even pests like agony beetles that prey on these psychic energies.

Sending thoughts via telepathy to someone nearby is not a form of mind-reading. If you can't understand the other being's language, you likely can't understand their thoughts, either. You may be able to share mental images with some concentration and perhaps make yourself understood.

Unless a Scoundrel has received formal training at the School of the Way, they are not well-versed in the practice of these mental powers. Those with the wealth to gain entry to study at the temple with the Masters of the Way learn the philosophies of the mind and – with the requisite degree of ability – the deeper mysteries, increasing their connection to and understanding of psychic forces.

If you want to be able to do more than project your thoughts in a limited fashion, discuss your idea with the GM to see if it makes sense for your character to have additional psychic capabilities. What other forms of psychic power you are able to manifest, if any? Does such a power qualify as a deeper mystery? What the strength or limits of those capabilities?

You might also take an ability such as *Master of the Way*, *Mutant*, or a *Veteran* advance that provides you with a psychic-flavored ability from another playbook.

When you attempt deeper mysteries without the proper training, you have *Desperate – No Effect*. You may be able to expend *WATER* to gain *Limited effect*. All the same is true of calling upon spiritual aid, or even an unconscionable attempt to use the black art of sorcery: when you attempt supernatural actions without the proper training, you have *Desperate – No Effect*, and must explain how you came to have the knowledge to use these powers, or you may just not be able to do so.

DEEPER MYSTERIES

Some few are able to do more than merely send thoughts, either naturally or due to greater experience with and training in the Way. They may be able to understand the thoughts of beasts, read the history of objects, view other places as if present, ignore crippling pain, glimpse future events, or lift or push small objects. Those most adept with such psychic forces often bear marks of mutation.

A psychic power can normally affect one person or object, duplicating any action a person might normally take, but with an additional weird effect: *at a distance – is illusory – incorporates a supernatural effect – normally requires knowledge of a skill – done without necessary tools – is abnormally instantaneous – always succeeds*.

The GM may choose to assign a *WATER* cost from 0-2 to a use of the Way if they feel more than one weird effect above applies or if the power qualifies as a deeper mystery, but a psychic might use a *Dragon's Deal* to reduce the *WATER* expenditure of an action such that the use of deeper mysteries may cause severe headaches, confusion, exhaustion, or worse, or draw the attention of other users of the Way.

ELEMENTAL SPIRITS

The people of the city worship the King as a saviour god, but they also give thanks to the elements : earth, wind, fire, and water. These spirits grant boons to some who work the proper rites and make the proper sacrifices and obeisance. Among citizens, there are many superstitions regarding elemental spirits, and many people believe various actions (e.g. wearing red armbands during High Sun, or never spitting near water) are noticed by the elementals, who will grant a blessing (or will prevent their wrath). Whether or not these superstitions are true, or which ones are, and what superstitions exist, are up to your group to decide.

There are also mad hermits who dare live in the wastelands, guarding sites of power and oases at the behest of powerful spirits of the land. These people are rarely seen in the cities, but are known to be vicious, implacable enemies of sorcerers. Some few madmen worship corrupt elemental spirits as well: those of ash, dust, silt, and sun, hoping to gain the patronage of dark powers.

However, unless you have a background in philosophy, a religious upbringing, or a special heritage trait, gaining the attention of a spirit such that it speaks with you, let alone grants you a boon, begins at *Desperate – No Effect* without an inner sanctum or a known ritual.

Elementals must be cajoled, convinced, promised to, and placated; there is no guarantee they will act on your behalf when asked, nor are they servants – they are of their own mind on how to undertake and complete requests to which they agree. If you gain a spirit's attention (such as with a religious ritual) and present it with the proper sacrifices and reminders, add that spirit to your list of friends and rivals. When you thereafter call upon it, you may rely upon a specific response in exchange for agreed-upon rites or offerings which invoke the agreement.

Religious rituals allow you to perform rites during a score to summon and ask an elemental for specific boons, which they are likely to grant, especially if you or your crew has the ritual sanctum upgrade or you have been granted access to a sanctified place of power to perform those rites. No two rituals, nor the boons they grant, are the same. Some may require a sacrifice of goods, promises, or a WATER expenditure.

TEMPLAR MAGIC

The god-king of Tyr trusts his servants are working to fulfill his wishes and enforce his decrees, and grants them access to his power through a special ceremony and the gifting of a religious token – their badge of office. Templars may speak the law and recite the writ in order to call down the god-king's judgement, or be gifted momentary power. However, most Templars avoid drawing the god-king's attention too often, except in situations where their zeal might be rewarded.

Templars must attune to call upon the powers of the god-king, declaring what powers of the state they are invoking, but doing so too often or invoking great power will gain the attention of the King and may lead to an audience and an accounting of their use. However, certain Templars executing certain orders or duties are exempt from such oversight.

When you utilize Templar magic, the GM may start an **Eye of the King** MOON to determine how long it is before you are summoned before the god-king for an accounting. This MOON might also be used as a consequence or offered as a Dragon's Deal.

Even if the god-king is not looking, rival Templars are. They scrutinize others over "proper use" of the King's power, and regularly calling upon the powers of the state risks creating political enemies.

SORCERY

Magic-users are known as “wizards” or sometimes “sorcerers”. Usually, they’re called “defilers.” Whatever they’re called, though, everyone knows they’re the ones who destroyed the world and created all its monsters. Everyone isn’t wrong – it’s because of magic that everything is barren sand and hungry beasts.

To use magic, you must know spells. When you use spells, it draws life-force from the nearest living things, starting with plants, and if you aren’t very careful, it *drains* the life from whatever it draws from.

In the case of plants, it turns them and the soil in which they are rooted into dead ash. When a wizard uses a spell, people or larger animals *usually* just feel ill and weak, but when a wizard uses a powerful spell, it can kill those near them, turning them to ash as well.

When you use magic inside the city, if witnesses can see you, or *if anyone defiled* regardless of witnesses, gain +2 HEAT as a consequence.

This is also a good time to offer a Dragon’s Deal, or to start a MOON that slowly fills until someone or something comes to investigate or until bad things happen in the district because of the destruction wrought by the draining of life-force from defiling.

DEFINING SORCERY

The exact nature of sorcery is left open for the group to decide: is sorcery dangerous because anyone can do it, with the right words and knowledge? Or because those who perform it are experts in its practice, fully cognizant of and embracing the toll such studies take on mind, earth, and soul?

What are the limits, the necessities required in its performance (words, gestures, wands, none, some, or all?), and what is difficult or easy for it to accomplish? Why would someone choose wizardry and not the Way or elemental boons instead? Is its danger in ease-of-use and easy power? The answers to these questions help define the feeling of your game.

PRESERVING

To avoid *draining* life-force when using magic, you must make a resistance roll. Most wizards don’t care enough to waste their own precious energy equalizing the draw of life force. Some aren’t even aware you can.

Those who have learned to do so call themselves “preservers” and like to think of themselves as ethical practitioners of sorcery. This does not mean they cannot defile, only that they (usually) choose not to.

Those nearby a preserving wizard who uses magic feel the same tug upon their life force, and while it does not weaken or sicken them, it produces *sensations* like insects crawling all over the skin, a sudden chill that taps on the spine, even momentary numbness.

In some areas, already stripped of life, such sorcerous methods may be impossible (defiling, too, in such cases). Or if there remains something, though barren, takes far longer than normal to manifest, has a reduced duration, or draws from the life from people and animals present (or even the wizard’s own!), etc.

SUPERNATURAL TERROR

Seeing and feeling sorcery worked is terrifying. Sorcery isn’t invisible; there are lights, smells, sounds, sensations – none of them natural: the smell of charred earth, whispers from the Gray, chilled shudders – *even if the wizard doesn’t turn the fields and soil to ash*. Most people freeze up or run away. Those who don’t form mobs to hunt the wizard down.

Unless you have been trained in the dark arts or have a relevant special ability, whenever you witness wizardry performed by someone else, *even an ally*, you must make a resistance check to take any action other than fleeing. If not, you freeze in terror.

GM asks : Beyond any effect a spell itself causes, and the draining of nearby life, say *what actions must you take to cast a spell and what supernatural effect manifests when you cast any spell?*

These actions and strange effect are unique to each wizard.

SPELLS

Once a spell is known, you may cast it as if taking any other action – but only if the price has been paid. Resolve this like any other action roll, with consequences like severe headaches, confusion, exhaustion, injury to yourself or a companion, or attracting unwanted attention (a mob, the Templars, or something worse), plus the spell's unique risks and costs.

Spells cannot be derived off-the-cuff, they must be learned through study or created via exhausting research. Start a Long Term Project, and work with the GM to answer the following questions:

GM asks: What is the spell and what does it do?

Player answers: Give the spell a name and a brief description.

GM asks: What resources do you need to learn this spell? How did you gain access to the things you need?

Player answers: Tell the GM what resources (strange materials, time, a hidden space) and forbidden knowledge (tomes, scrolls, tablets, a teacher) the spell needs. The GM may add or change elements.

Player asks: What must I do to cast the spell and what is its price?

GM answers: The price may be nothing more than a few words and gesture (and a commensurate cost in life-force per its magnitude); or it may have other requirements, such as a sacrifice, a rare item prepared as a focus, strange ingredients, or the start of a dangerous MOON. A powerful spell may drain WATER or require the use of a downtime action; the most rare and powerful of spells might cost a trauma to cast. You may use the magnitude table as a guide, using the highest level as a WATER cost or to measure the extremity of the consequences.

GM asks: What new belief or fear does knowledge of the spell instill?

Player answers: What knowledge of dark and occult forces is gained from the beings who instruct the wizard on how they must twist and pull aside the veil of reality to access the energies and dimensions inimical to the established laws and order perceived by those who dare not part these veils? What unpleasant truth the wizard subjected themselves to, or what new worry has arisen from the knowledge gained?

EXAMPLE SPELLBOOK

If such things could be said to be 'common' in any sense, most wizards have learned a few shared tricks and manifestations, as below, but whether rare or common, wizards must keep this knowledge recorded in some way, yet hidden – perhaps as beaded strings, or columns of numbers scratched into slates, or as patterns hidden within detailed frescoes – for reading and writing are illegal, let alone wizardry. The most concerning part of such records is that the nature and necessary implementations of the spells sometimes change, or differ between wizards, as if alive.

PHANTASM

An illusion of minor sort, without sound or shadow, or other presence, a wise viewer may note these problems; the less wise fall victim to their own belief and will "feel" its actions or intended effect, possibly falling unconscious, fleeing in terror, feeling full or sated, etc.

This spell requires the wizard to be blind in at least one eye or have replaced at least one eye with that from a monstrous creature.

Knowing this spell requires pulling the veil of the world aside and recognizing the temporary and illusory nature of all beliefs – a previous certainty now rings hollow. *What truth do you no longer believe?*

MAGIC DART

A sharp dart or lashing tendril of solidified energy that can draw blood or kill as well as any scoundrel's knife; some claim this sorcery can never miss its intended target.

This spell requires the wizard cut, stab, burn, or otherwise cause themselves pain or injury to cast; the injury need not be severe, but it cannot be insignificant (a pinch). Drawing blood is always enough.

Knowing this spell requires the wizard commune with certain spirits or daemonic powers, who may regularly seek them out for favors. *What payment do you owe to the daemons and spirits?*

CHARMING HEX

A change of features and voice in the mind of a victim beguiles them into faithful service. They will perform tasks almost without reservation, for they trust and respect the wizard implicitly and cater to their demands. A simple sentence or less, with no further influence, often leaves the target unaware of what has happened. Longer periods of enchantment and repeated demands may cause the spell to unravel, leaving the victim aware and enraged.

Knowing this spell results in a paranoia at how easily one can be fooled and the mind clouded; you worry others are not truly friends, but deceiving you. *What friend is now a rival?*

DIVINATION

By whatever method used – whether that is reading the intestines of a slaughtered beast, interpreting carved ivory slates or dice crafted from a sentient creature's bones, or charting the wandering stars on hides whose source is best left unnamed – a hint of the future is revealed, though its nature and context may not always be obvious.

Knowing this spell results in peering into an unchanging future against which action is pointless, understanding the inevitability of time's desires. *How have you foreseen you will you die?*

BARRIER

Of lesser use against physical attack and injury, this glimmering, transparent shield can be summoned with a gesture or a word and floats in front of the wizard, providing total protection against minor hexes and some protection against other forms of force and inflicted injury.

This spell requires the wizard have bonded a metal plate bearing a particular sigil to their own flesh, somewhere, in some manner, and revealing it to activate the barrier.

Knowing this spell requires the wizard to learn of and access certain shifting dimensional energies on the verge of touching the material world. *What terrible thing happened the one time the energies did touch?*

SHADOW'S KISS

A sweet, cooling wave of air spreads out and causes all whom it caresses to fall into a deep slumber for a short period. Loud noise and injury can easily awaken those so enchanted, however, and sometimes they recall strange and haunting dreams.

This spell requires the caster to bond a piece of living shadow to their own flesh. Where they might obtain such materia, or even what it might be or how to bond it with their own body, is left to the wizard to discover.

Knowing this spell leaves the caster's dreams open to *something* they have glimpsed in the dream-realms. Something dark and uncertain; nightmares are certain to follow. *What dream keeps awakening you?*

SHADOW-BORN STEED

A summoning ritual that brings into being a number of large, shadowy, quadrupedal beings with ice for eyes whose forms waver and smoke in the dry desert heat. The terrifying creatures are solid enough to ride upon, highly intelligent, tireless, and require no food or water.

However, the forces required to restrain the creatures are taxing. The longer the wizard forces the beasts to serve him on this plane, the more vicious they become and the more exhausted the wizard becomes. Returning them to their own dark plane requires a rite of banishing. The death of the wizard will, of course, immediately release the creatures from service...but not necessarily return them wherefrom they come.

Knowing this spell opens the wizard to unsettling whispers of dark thoughts when they meet the eyes of a beast, even briefly. *What terrible things has the caster heard the shadows whispering?*

FLAME'S WRATH

By drawing and concentrating the ambient heat and light from the surroundings, the wizard can cause flame to consume everything in a small area, from starting small fires, to immolating living beings caught inside the affected area.

This spell requires the wizard have committed his body to the flame and retains the scars of a severe burn upon their body. When cast, the area surrounding the wizard becomes dark and chill momentarily – a sure sign of sorcery at work.

Knowing this spell leaves a weak flame glowing in the depths of the caster's eyes. It will usually go unnoticed upon casual inspection, but it makes their eyes shine like a desert beast's at night. Some say this means elemental lords of fire have marked them for transgressing on those spirits' domain. *Do you wear goggles or a veil to hide your eyes from sight?*

WAKE THE DEAD

Dark sorcery indeed, allowing the wizard to raise and command corpses, even animate skeletal remnants – bones bound together with ligaments of sorcery – to do the wizard's bidding. These undead abominations are clumsy and slow, but tireless and invulnerable to pain. The only way to stop them is to destroy their bodies, hack them into bits, bury them, or trap them. Once given a task, the undead corpses work to complete it until destroyed or verbally commanded otherwise by the wizard. Once the task is completed, the bodies fall dead once more.

The more dead the wizard awakens, the more exhausted he becomes, taking increasingly higher levels of harm, until they fall into a near-death comatose state they do not awaken from until fully recovered.

Knowing this spell leaves a physical mark upon the wizard, having sacrificed some of their own essence to the misty gray dimension between life and the spiritual dissolution of the Gray, and leaves them permanently pale and gaunt. *Whose ghostly shade spoke to you and what secret did it tell?*

ADJUDICATING THE WEIRD

Whether summoning elemental spirits, practicing sorcery, invoking priestly powers, or embodying the psychic powers of the Way, the supernatural has no shared real-world baseline from which we can judge what is “normal” and what is “exceptional” in terms of the use, limits, or effectiveness of the weird, or even visualizations of its manifestation. Left undefined, the weird becomes limitless, inconsistent, or both.

We know, for example, that outside of the halflings, elementals rarely deign to speak with mortals without being attracted by special offerings and prayers; but what kind of actions can elemental spirits take, what effects they can manifest, and what they demand in return?

Similarly, we know sorcery is not a casual act – it is a specific set of instructions that must be carried out, and therefore first be known – but can someone perform sorcerous rituals without years of study (making sorcerers feared and dangerous experts) or can the common man act out rituals (making its heresy an ever-beckoning finger to the desperate)? What can sorcery do that other weird powers cannot?

These shared foundations need to be established conceptually, based on this text, your decisions in play, and agreed to rules-of-thumb.

- ❖ **Anchor weirdness in the fiction** : How does the weird look and sound in the world? Use sensory details to imply its use, its scale, and its manifestation. If what you describe ‘feels’ big, it should be big, with equivalent costs; if it ‘feels’ small, it should have an appropriately minor cost and effect.
- ❖ **Judge in comparison to the mundane** : Is this something the average individual could do themselves, physically or mentally; something they could do with a complex tool or skill, or significant time; or something impossible, strange, or costly? This helps establish cost.
- ❖ **Utilize magnitude factors as a guideline** : These can prescribe limits to effectiveness, such as number of individuals affected, the area of influence, reach, or duration; whether training is a necessity; or the qualities of the manifestation. Do not treat magnitudes as additive. Just decide what the largest or most demanding influence on the action is and assign a cost(s) accordingly. Lean on the narrative.

Weird effects can carry a cost when they are not minor or mundane, or when minor effects are utilized consistently or regularly. Story rules apply here: if it doesn’t matter to the story we don’t worry about the “cost”, we only need to track these things or apply costs when they are important.

- ❖ Losing **WATER**
- ❖ Marking **load**
- ❖ Filling a **moon** phase(s)
- ❖ Drawing **attention** or enmity to yourself
- ❖ Suffering a backlash or taking **wounds**
- ❖ Spending downtime action(s) or losing access to other actions
- ❖ Special or **rare** components or environmental conditions

EFFECT LEVELS

Mundane effects might include punching someone *from a distance*, easily lifting a crate *heavier than you can handle*, wielding a weapon *telekinetically*. Stranger, more uncommon or rare effects could be lifting a crate *heavier than you can handle without touching it*, lighting a fire *with your mind*, *instantly* putting an individual to sleep *with a wave of your hand*, ringing *every gong* in the district *at once*, *summoning a herd of spectral horses to carry your army*, *summoning lightning from the sky*.

Just as your character, if described as a trained swordsman, in a sword fight might alter effect level or start with improved position because of their skill, so too might a trained practitioner of weird powers be better equipped to utilize or respond to the weird.

ATTUNE & ACTIONS

You do not always need to use an attune action to manifest psychic or weird powers! Dependent on your actual goal, it might be appropriate to choose a different action, or you might instead roll attune as a set-up action – especially if you know an applicable ritual or mystery – use it for teamwork, or pair it with flashbacks – or simply manifest a supernatural effect in exchange for a Dragon’s Deal.

CREW CREATION

You'll help detail the resources of the other scoundrels you work with and flesh out how your crew is seen by other factions. Follow these steps.

CHOOSE PLAYBOOK

Mercenaries, Smugglers, Cultists, Bards, Rogues, Dealers.

BEGIN WITH...

2 CERAMIC, a Strong hold at tier 0, and your lair as claimed Turf.

CHOOSE REPUTATION

How do others in the underworld view your crew? Pick one: Ambitious, Brutal, Daring, Honorable, Professional, Savvy, Subtle, Strange.

CHOOSE LAIR

Choose a district and pick a modest or abandoned place for your initial hideout.

- ❖ A hidden, partially-collapsed grotto in Under-Tyr.
- ❖ The private back rooms of a merchant's store.
- ❖ A noble's abandoned estate at the end of a cul-de-sac.
- ❖ A crude bone and fabric shack on a rooftop.
- ❖ A junked mobile caravansary from a mekillot.
- ❖ A set of private booths at a tavern.
- ❖ Or create your own.

CHOOSE CREW CONTACT

Pick one contact who helps out your crew.

- ❖ One faction is friendly with this contact, gain +1 status with them.
- ❖ One faction is unfriendly with this contact, gain -1 status with them.

You can decide the factions have an intense relationship with this contact and instead take +2 and -2 status with them respectively.

ESTABLISH HUNTING GROUND

Where does your crew do most of their "work"? Which faction's feet are they stepping on that already claims that area as their territory?

You will need to pay this faction a cut of every score's profits, or your relationship gradually worsens. To start :

- ❖ Pay them off. Give them 1 CERAMIC to let you work the area. Or...
- ❖ Pay them 2 CERAMIC as a show of respect; gain +1 status with them.
- ❖ Otherwise, keep your CERAMIC and take -1 status with that faction.

PREFERRED OPERATION

Choose one type from your playbook as your preferred criminal activity. Gain +1d to gather information and one free downtime activity action when you prepare a score of your preferred type in your hunting ground.

CHOOSE SPECIAL ABILITY

Go with the first one if you can't decide.

ASSIGN TWO CREW UPGRADES

Pick any two from the crew specific and general lists.

- ❖ One faction helped you get this upgrade; they like you, and you get +1 status with them. *How did they help you get it?* You may spend 1 CERAMIC to repay their kindness, and take +2 status with them instead.
- ❖ One faction was screwed over when you got this upgrade; they don't like you, and you get -2 status with them. *How did you screw them over?* You may spend 1 CERAMIC to mollify them, and take -1 status with them instead.

CREW PLAYBOOKS

The type of jobs your crew is most noted for and best equipped to handle is reflected by your crew playbook. These are not scoundrel playbooks and cannot be chosen for individual characters; instead, the crew type provides benefits for the entire group of scoundrels based on the nature of their criminal activities and overall flavor.

As a group, decide what sort of criminal enterprise sounds most fun to tell stories about and pick that crew playbook.

Don't forget this is a fiction-first game: while a rough group of thugs is a rough group of thugs, you might be the thug who is good at tracking down targets, or the one who knows how to get stuff. Everyone has their talents.

This is why crews can contain a mix of scoundrel playbooks: a group of mercenaries does not need to consist of only Fists (even though it could)! A group of Rogues might not have any Feet (or they might all be Feet)!

If you really want to use a particular scoundrel playbook but you just can't figure out how they fit with a particular crew, you can always choose to take a Veteran special ability as your first pick to choose an ability you feel is more oriented towards the crew's nature.

When starting out, it's ok for the crew to consist of just a half-handful of individuals, and add more members as the fiction suggests. If you've played Blades before, you can also detail a few other members of your crew for use when things get hairy and one or more of the crew needs to drop out of sight for a while, gets carried off by the Templars or the City Watch, disappears into a honey-wine haze, or just to change characters and tell a different story for a bit.

All crew playbooks include the following xp triggers in addition to their specific playbook trigger. Crew xp is assigned at the end of the session and like scoundrel xp the players decide if an xp trigger applies, and remind us of the triggering event:

Your crew gains 1 xp if they:

- ❖ Contended with challenges above their current station
- ❖ Bolstered the crew's reputation or developed a new one.
- ❖ Expressed the crew's goals, drives, inner conflicts, or essential nature.

The following special ability is part of all playbook lists.

- ❖ **VETERAN**: Choose a special ability from another crew. (max 2)

MERCENARIES

Thugs, ruffians, and killers for hire. The city's walls and alleys are a battlefield, and there is no shortage of ceramic to sharpen your blades. Mercenaries thrive on violence. Their scores involve escort, protection, ambushes, and bloody brawls. You rise or fall by your reputation.

Are you violent thugs, sly sell-swords, or glory-seeking gladiators?

Crew xp Trigger : Your crew earns xp when you execute a successful battle, extortion, sabotage, or smash & grab operation.

Favored Operation : **BATTLE**: defeat an enemy with force. **EXTORTION**: threaten violence unless you're paid off. **SABOTAGE**: destroy something to gain an advantage or cause harm. **SMASH & GRAB**: fast, violent armed robbery.

Starting Upgrades : Training: Prowess, Cohort: Gang, type Thugs.

Contacts : Fyris, a young gladiator. Ajenna, disillusioned city watchman. Edgarde, a cautious weapon crafter. Byrtus, an untrustworthy healer. Aghkam Dred, a high-ranking templar. Xachil, a sympathetic tavern owner.

TURF

- ❖ **Barracks** : Your Thug cohorts get +1 scale.
- ❖ **Templar Confederates** : +1d to the engagement roll for assault plans.
- ❖ **Templar Intimidation** : -2 HEAT per score.
- ❖ **Fighting Pits** : During downtime, roll dice equal to your tier and earn CERAMIC equal to the highest result, minus your HEAT.
- ❖ **Infirmary** : +1d to healing treatment rolls and beds for convalescence.
- ❖ **Informants** : +1d to gather information for a score.
- ❖ **Protection Racket** : During downtime, roll dice equal to your tier and earn CERAMIC equal to the highest result, minus your HEAT.
- ❖ **Street Fence** : +2 coin for scores on lower-class targets.
- ❖ **Terrorized Citizens** : +2 coin for battle or extortion scores.
- ❖ **Warehouses** : +1d to acquire assets.

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Dangerous : Each member of the crew may add 1 dot to Hunt, Skirmish, or Wreck (up to a max rating of 3).

Blood Brothers : Your cohorts gain +1d for setup and group actions when you fight alongside them. All of your cohorts get the *Thugs* type for free in addition to any other type(s) they have.

Door-kickers : When the crew executes an assault plan, they get +1d to the engagement roll. It must be an assault plan.

Fiends : Your crew is feared for its brutality. You may count each wanted level as if it were Turf (up to a maximum of 4; this can not lower the cost to advance your tier below 6 rep).

Forged in the Fire : Each member of the crew has been toughened by cruel experience and gains +1d to all resistance rolls.

Patron : When your crew advances in tier, halve the CERAMIC cost. *Who is your patron? What do they get out of making you stronger?*

War Dogs : When your crew is at war with another faction, they do not suffer -1 hold and you still get two downtime activities instead of one.

CREW UPGRADES

- ❖ **Mercenary Rigging**: Each member of the crew gets 2 free load worth of weapon or armor items on a score.
- ❖ **Arena Contacts**: Your crew's tier is effectively +1 higher in prison, including for the Servitude roll.
- ❖ **Elite Rovers**: All of your cohorts with the Rovers type get +1d to quality rolls for Rover-related actions.
- ❖ **Elite Thugs**: All of your cohorts with the Thugs type get +1d to quality rolls for Thug-related actions.
- ❖ **Hardened**: Each member of the crew gets +1 trauma box. This costs three upgrades to unlock rather than one. *This can bring a character who was retired due to trauma back into play.*

SMUGGLERS

Caravanners, tunnel rats, mules, and black-market fences. Tyr is starved for resources, but you're good at moving illicit contraband, wanted persons, and information. Smugglers thrive on movement and secrecy. Their scores involve crossing hostile territory, obtaining goods, and making deliveries. They rise by ensuring their people get what they want.

What kind of things do you transport? Do you have any rules about what you will or won't carry?

Crew xp Trigger : Your crew gains xp when they execute a successful smuggling operation or acquire new clients or contraband sources.

Favored Cargo Type : **ARCANE/WEIRD**: spirits, sorcerous items, memories. **ARMS**: restricted weapons, dangerous creatures. **CONTRABAND**: honey-wine, banned art, books. **PASSENGERS**: slaves, dissidents, spies.

Starting Upgrades : Training: Prowess. Vehicle: a mount or carriage.

Contacts : *Baldirik*, a savvy caravaner. *Fray*, a strung-out drug dealer. *Krikik*, an amoral arms dealer. *Agu*, a weird arcanist. *Bruul*, an unhinged anarchist. *Mallus*, an imperturbable tavern owner.

TURF

- ❖ **Ancient Gate** : Safe passage in the Wasteland.
- ❖ **Cover Operation** : -2 HEAT per score.
- ❖ **Caravan** : Your cohorts run a caravan of quality equal to your tier.
- ❖ **Informants** : +1d to gather information for a score.
- ❖ **Luxury Fence** : +2 coin for scores against high class targets.
- ❖ **Secret Routes** : +1d to the engagement roll for transport plans.
- ❖ **Side Business** : During downtime, roll dice equal to your tier and earn CERAMIC equal to the highest result, minus your HEAT.
- ❖ **Tavern** : +1d to Consort and Sway rolls on-site.
- ❖ **Vice Den** : During downtime, roll dice equal to your tier and earn CERAMIC equal to the highest result, minus your HEAT.
- ❖ **Warehouses** : +1d to acquire asset rolls.

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Like Part of the Family : Create a transport as a cohort with transport edges and flaws. It has quality equal to tier +1 and can be a part of teamwork actions (using quality for rolls).

All Hands : One of your cohorts may perform a downtime activity to acquire an asset, reduce HEAT, or work on a long-term project.

Psychic Passage : From harsh experience or occult ritual, all crew members are immune to mind control and potent against psychic attack; may safely "carry" psychic thoughtforms and constructs between people.

Just Passing Through : During downtime, take -1 HEAT. With a HEAT of 4 or less, take +1d to deceive people when you pass as ordinary citizens.

Leverage : Your crew supplies illicit goods for other factions. Your success is good for them. Whenever you gain rep, gain +1 rep.

Reavers : Gain +1 effect for transport damage and speed in a conflict. Your transport gains armor or an additional armor box.

Renegades : Each member of the crew may add +1 dot to Finesse, Prowl, or Skirmish (up to a max rating of 3).

CREW UPGRADES

- ❖ **Smuggler Rigging** : Two of your carried items are perfectly concealed even against a pat-down or brief search.
- ❖ **Camouflage** : Your transport(s) are perfectly concealed when at rest, blending in as part of the environment or as uninteresting and civilian.
- ❖ **Elite Rovers** : All of your cohorts with the Rovers type get +1d to quality rolls for Rover-related actions.
- ❖ **Howdah** : Your lair is mobile and can be moved to a new location as a downtime activity.
- ❖ **Steady** : Each member of the crew gets +1 WATER box. (This costs three upgrades to unlock).
- ❖ **Ride** : All smugglers start with a transport. When the transport is upgraded (two boxes), it also gets armor.

CULTISTS

Fanatics, visionaries, and prophets. You are the instrument of a greater power to which the world will bow, or you will burn it down. Cultists thrive on influence and belief. Their scores involve dangerous ceremonies, obtaining forgotten knowledge, and spreading influence. They rise by serving their calling and gathering believers.

Do you serve, or pretend to serve, the elements, dead gods, or things best unnamed? Or is your calling a fervent ideology?

Crew xp Trigger : You gain xp when you advance your agenda or embody your precepts through action.

Favored Operations : ACQUISITION: Procure a weird artifact.

AUGURY: Do what you must to gain supernatural attention and counsel.

CONSECRATION: Seize an ancient place of power. SACRIFICE: Destroy something valuable in pursuit of your goal.

Starting Upgrades : Training: Resolve. Cohort: Gang, type Adepts.

Contacts : *Ka'tal*, a low-ranking templar. *Kalee*, a creepy defiler. *Oron*, a sun-addled explorer. *Screib-Dhaqor*, an ancient undead. *Kal-malek*, a perverse noble. *Is-kari*, a panicked astronomer.

TURF

- ❖ **Ancient Altar** : +1d to the engagement roll for occult plans.
- ❖ **Ancient Gate** : Safe passage in the wastelands.
- ❖ **Ancient Obelisk** : -1 WATER cost for all arcane powers and rituals performed anywhere by your cult.
- ❖ **Ancient Tower** : +1d to Consort here with spirits & magical beings.
- ❖ **Cloister** : Adept cohorts get +1 scale.
- ❖ **Offertory** : +2 coin for scores that involve occult operations.
- ❖ **Sanctuary** : +1d to Command and Sway rolls on-site.
- ❖ **Secret Garden** : You get +1d to Attune rolls on-site.
- ❖ **Sacred Nexus** : You get +1d to healing treatment rolls.
- ❖ **Vice Den** : During downtime, roll dice equal to your tier and earn CERAMIC equal to the highest result, minus your HEAT.

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Chosen : Each member of the crew may +1 dot to Attune, Study, or Sway (up to a max rating of 3).

Anointed : You gain +1d to resistance rolls against supernatural threats. You get +1d to healing rolls when you have supernatural harm.

Bound in Darkness : Use teamwork maneuvers with any cult member, regardless of distance. Spend 1 WATER to whisper a message to every other member of the crew.

Conviction : Each member of the crew gains an additional vice: Worship. If you make a sacrifice that supports your beliefs, don't overindulge. Gain a free assist from your convictions until you indulge this vice again.

Glory Incarnate : A powerful, ancient being takes up your cause. A great boon, but their goals may not be your goals. You have been warned.

Hidden Power : You know the secret arts to blunt the obviousness of your spell-casting; do not generate HEAT when you are seen using magic, unless you defile.

Zealotry : Your cohorts have abandoned their reason to devote themselves to the cult. They will undertake any service, no matter how dangerous or strange. They gain +1d to rolls when they act against enemies of the cult.

CREW UPGRADES

- ❖ **Cult Rigging** : You get 2 free load of document or implement items.
- ❖ **Ritual Sanctum in Lair** : This counts as a sacred or arcane workshop for occult practices and rituals.
- ❖ **Elite Adepts** : All of your cohorts with the Adepts type get +1d to quality rolls for Adept-related actions.
- ❖ **Elite Thugs** : All of your cohorts with the Thugs type get +1d to quality rolls for Tug-related actions.
- ❖ **Ordained** : Each member of the crew gets +1 trauma box. This costs three upgrades to unlock, not just one. (A PC with 4 trauma can be brought back into play if you wish.)

BARDS

Assassins, poets, and poisoners. You are death wrapped in beauty; a hidden knife behind a smile. Bards thrive on manipulation and distraction. Their scores are assassinations, staged accidents, and kidnappings. They rise by gaining patrons and remaining hidden in plain sight.

Do you kill for a purpose, or merely for money?

Crew xp Trigger : Your crew earns xp when they execute a successful "accident", disappearance, murder, or ransom operation.

Favored Operation : **ACCIDENT**: Kill or harm a target leaving no telltale sign. **DISAPPEARANCE**: Make a target vanish without a trace.

MURDER: Send a message by killing someone. **RANSOM**: Kidnap a target and demand for payment for their return.

Starting Upgrades : Training: Insight, Training: Prowess.

Contacts : *Big Red*, a scheming gang boss. *Xarel*, a cold deal broker. *Karnak Tol*, a vicious noble. *Ulu-lahaalit*, a soft-spoken bounty hunter. *Imid*, a power-hungry templar. *Hurukhen*, a self-absorbed merchant lord.

TURF

- ❖ **City Records** : +1d to the engagement roll for stealth plans.
- ❖ **Cover Identities** : +1d to the engagement roll for social plans.
- ❖ **Cover Operation** : You get -2 HEAT per score.
- ❖ **Envoy** : +2 coin for scores against high-class clients.
- ❖ **Fixer** : +2 coin for scores against lower-class clients.
- ❖ **Inix Farm** : If you reduce HEAT during downtime after a score that involves killing, take +1d to the roll.
- ❖ **Infirmary** : +1d to healing treatment rolls and beds for convalescence.
- ❖ **Informants** : +1d to gather information for a score.
- ❖ **Protection Racket or Vice Den**: During downtime, roll dice equal to your tier and earn CERAMIC equal to the highest result minus HEAT.
- ❖ **Training Rooms** : Your Skulks cohorts get +1 scale.
- ❖ **Victim Trophies** : +1 REP per score.

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Deadly : Each member of the crew may add +1 action rating to Hunt, Prowl, or Skirmish (up to a max rating of 3).

Artful Veil : You are simple entertainers and above suspicion.

Psychicdeath : Take 3 WATER to channel the Way to twist and confuse the psychic veil around the victim; the murder cannot be viewed by mystical means or traced back to you with such efforts.

No Traces : When you keep an operation quiet or make it look like an accident, you get half the REP value of the target (round up) instead of zero. When you end downtime with zero HEAT, take +1 rep.

Patron : When you advance your tier, it costs half the CERAMIC it normally would. *Who is your patron? Why do they help you?*

Predators : When you use a stealth or deception plan to plan to commit a murder only, take +1d to the engagement roll.

Vipers : When you acquire or craft poisons, you get +1 result level to your roll. When you employ a specific poison, you are specially prepared to be immune to its effects; immunity lasts for the entire score.

CREW UPGRADES

- ❖ **Bard Rigging** : You get 2 free load worth of weapon or gear items.
- ❖ **Arena Contacts** : Your tier is effectively +1 higher in prison. This counts for any tier-related element, including the servitude roll.
- ❖ **Elite Skulks** : All your cohorts with the Skulks type get +1d to quality rolls for Skulk-related actions.
- ❖ **Elite Thugs** : All your cohorts with the Thugs type get +1d to quality rolls for Thug-related actions.
- ❖ **Hardened** : Each member of the crew gets +1 trauma box. This costs three upgrades to unlock. This may bring a member of the crew with 4 trauma back into play if you wish.

ROGUES

Thieves, burglars, and scoundrels. Everyone in Tyr wants what everyone else has; you're just better than most at taking it. Rogues thrive on scarcity and greed. Their scores are classic burglaries, infiltrations, and scams. They rise by getting people what cannot be bought.

Are you serving your own interests or can your services be bought?

Crew xp Trigger : Your crew earns xp when they execute a successful espionage, sabotage, or theft operation.

Favored Operations : BURGLARY: break, then enter. ESPIONAGE: gain valuable information covertly. ROBBERY: threaten to break, profit. SABOTAGE: destroy something to enrich yourselves or hurt someone.

Starting Upgrades : Hidden Lair. Training: Prowess.

Contacts : Kroft, an eager explorer. Yan, a clever city watchman. Ethelesa, a well-connected deal broker. I'kree, a curious collector. Demirakes, an angry noble. Mikki, a drunken tavern owner.

TURF

- ❖ **Covert Drop** : +2 coin for scores that involve espionage or sabotage.
- ❖ **Drug Den** : During downtime, roll dice equal to your tier and earn CERAMIC equal to the highest result, minus your HEAT.
- ❖ **Gambling Den** : During downtime, roll dice equal to your tier and earn CERAMIC equal to the highest result, minus your HEAT.
- ❖ **Inix Farm** : If you reduce HEAT during downtime after a score that involves killing, take +1d to the roll.
- ❖ **Infirmary** : +1d to healing treatment rolls and beds for convalescence.
- ❖ **Informants** : +1d to gather information for a score.
- ❖ **Interrogation Chamber** : +1d to Command and Sway on-site.
- ❖ **Lookouts** : +1d to Hunt or Survey on your Turf.
- ❖ **Loyal Fence** : +2 coin for scores that involve burglary or robbery.
- ❖ **Secret Pathways** : +1d to the engagement roll for stealth plans.
- ❖ **Tavern** : +1d to Consort and Sway rolls on-site.

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Everyone Steals : Each member of the crew may add a dot to Prowl, Finesse, or Intuit (up to a max rating of 3).

Psychic Echoes : Due to supernatural events or psychic training, all crew members have an uncanny sense for avoiding danger and for finding strange pathways.

Pack Rats : The crew's lair is full of stolen items. When one of the crew rolls to acquire an asset, they take +1d.

Patron : When the crew advances their tier, it costs only half the CERAMIC as it normally would. *Who is your patron? Why do they help you?*

Second Story : When the crew executes a clandestine infiltration, they may take a +1d to the engagement roll.

Slippery : When rolling entanglements after a score, roll twice and keep the one the crew wants. Also, when a crew member reduces HEAT on the crew during downtime, they gain +1d.

Synchronized : When a member of the crew performs a group action, they may count multiple 6s from different rolls as a critical success.

CREW UPGRADES

- ❖ **Rogue Rigging** : Each member of the crew gets 2 free load worth of tool or gear items.
- ❖ **Underground Maps and Passkeys** : You know or can gain easy passage through the underground tunnels and basements of the city.
- ❖ **Elite Rooks** : All of your cohorts with the Rooks type get +1d to quality rolls for Rook-related actions.
- ❖ **Elite Skulks** : All of your cohorts with the Skulks type get +1d to quality rolls for Skulk-related actions.
- ❖ **Steady** : Each member of the crew gets +1 WATER box. This costs three upgrades to unlock rather than one.

DEALERS

Honey-wine dealers, bookies, underground auctioneers, and prostitutes. You know what people want, and you're good at giving it to them. Dealers thrive on supply and demand. Their scores are about making sales, finding suppliers, and creating monopolies. They rise by becoming the indispensable source of what people cannot live without.

Do you sell goods or a service? Is your product illegal?

Crew xp Trigger : Your crew earns xp when they successfully acquire product supply, execute clandestine/covert sales, or secure new territory.

Favored Operations : SALE: move illicit products for a good price, SUPPLY: acquire a new product or supplier, SHOW OF FORCE: dominate territory by making an example of an enemy, or SOCIALIZE: host a social event to improve relations with customers or suppliers.

Starting Upgrades : Training: Resolve, Lair: Secure.

Contacts : *Wrex Damras*, a desperate templar. *Bells*, a disgraced city watchman. *Sharptooth*, a vicious deal broker. *Kesri*, a connected smuggler. *Baroness Sorok*, a seductive noblewoman. *Beater*, a tough gang boss.

TURF

- ❖ **Cover Identities** : +1d to the engagement roll for social plans.
- ❖ **Cover Operation** : -2 HEAT per score.
- ❖ **Foreign Market** : During downtime, roll dice equal to your tier and earn CERAMIC equal to the highest result, minus your HEAT.
- ❖ **Informants** : +1d to gather information for a score.
- ❖ **Local Graft** : +2 coin for scores with a show of force or socializing.
- ❖ **Lookouts** : You get +1d to Hunt or Survey on your Turf.
- ❖ **Luxury Venue** : +1d to Consort and Sway rolls on-site.
- ❖ **Personal Clothier** : +1d to the engagement roll for social plans.
- ❖ **Surplus Cache** : +2 coin for scores that involve product sale or supply.
- ❖ **Vice Den** : During downtime, roll dice equal to your tier and earn CERAMIC equal to the highest result, minus your HEAT.

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Silver Tongues : Each member of the crew may add +1 action rating to Command, Consort, or Sway (up to a max rating of 3).

Accord : You may treat up to three +3 faction statuses you hold as if they are Turf. If your status changes, you lose the Turf until it becomes +3 again.

Arcane Market : You have learned how to prepare your goods for supernatural entities. *What do they pay you with?* If it's a bit mysterious and uncertain, that's good.

The Good Stuff : Your merchandise is exquisite (product quality is equal to your tier +2). When you deal with a crew or faction, the GM will tell you who among them is hooked on your product (one, a few, many, or all).

High Society : You know people. Take -1 HEAT during downtime and +1d to gather information about the city's elite.

Hooked : Your gang members use your product. Add the savage, unreliable, or wild flaw to your gangs to give them +1 quality (max of 4).

Patron : When you advance your tier, it costs half the coin it normally would. *Who is your patron? Why do they help you?*

Note: The quality of your product might be used for a fortune roll to find out how impressed a potential client is, to find out how enthralled or incapacitated a user becomes, discover if a variation has side-effects, etc.

CREW UPGRADES

- ❖ **Dealer Rigging** : One carried item is concealed and has no load.
- ❖ **Arena Contacts** : Your tier is effectively +1 higher in the Arena, including for the Servitude roll.
- ❖ **Elite Rooks** : All your cohorts with the Rooks type get +1d to quality rolls for Rook-related actions.
- ❖ **Elite Thugs** : All your cohorts with the Thugs type get +1d to quality rolls for Thug-related actions.
- ❖ **Composed** : Each PC gets +1 WATER box. This costs three upgrades to unlock, not just one.

CREW EXPERIENCE

As your crew takes on jobs, overcomes obstacles, and fights their way up the underworld's social ladder, they gain xp. At the end of each session, your group (not the GM) decides how many experience points (xp) the crew earned based on the session's events. These can be spent to gain special abilities, specialized gear, secure or upgrade a lair, or to gain other benefits (whether or not the crew can hang on to these is another matter).

CREW TRIGGERS

At the end of a session, review the crew xp triggers and mark **1 xp** for each your group decides occurred during the session, or **2 xp** if it happened repeatedly or in a major way.

- ❖ Your crew-specific xp trigger if the crew successfully completed one or more scores based on this trigger.
- ❖ You contended with challenges above your current station, such as dealing with a higher tier faction or a more dangerous opposition.
- ❖ You bolstered your crew's reputation or developed a new reputation by their actions in play.
- ❖ You expressed the goals, drives, inner conflict, or essential nature of the crew – highlights of elements that make your crew unique.

CREW ADVANCEMENT

When the crew advancement track fills, clear the marks and either take a new special ability from your crew or a different crew playbook (you may only do the latter twice), or mark two crew upgrade boxes. Say how you've obtained this new ability or upgrades for the crew. *Where did it come from? How does it become a new part of the crew?* You might also gain an upgrade through events in play. Your crew may have a *maximum* of five special abilities and 8 upgrades.

It is possible to *lose* a crew upgrade through events in play, such as a faction going to war against you and seizing your claims. Don't worry, you can always try to take the seized claims back, or reacquire them by expending xp and telling us *how?* This helps keep the game dynamic!

PROFITS

Whenever the crew advances, each member of the crew gains *STASH* equal to the crew's tier+2, representing the wealth they've generated through their various on-going enterprises, whether crooked bets on fights or honest gladiator contracts, profits from smuggling or trade, or even pay-offs from patrons or other gangs. *STASH* isn't just coin, in fact it's more often goods and valuables, even land or favors.

REPUTATION

A measure of your crew's clout and renown. As you accrue more *REP*, the other factions take you more seriously, and you attract the support needed to develop and grow, as well as more trouble. Factions might have a bigger problem with you the better known you and your criminal activities are, while others might be more intimidated by your reputation. A crew rumored to have crossed one of the Merchant Houses may find no caravan will trade with them, but the Guilds might try to court their favor.

REP is used to advance the crew's tier and their standing in the underworld. When you're dealing with other factions of equal or lower tier, you or the GM might use your current *REP* or up to six of their Turf as a Fortune roll, to see if and how your notoriety affects the situation.

DEVELOPMENT

To develop your crew, you need *REP*. You need 12 *REP* to fill the *REP* tracker on your crew sheet, minus any Turf you've gained. When your *REP* tracker is full, you can't earn more *REP*. When you fill the tracker, do one of the following:

- ❖ If your hold is Weak, it becomes Strong. Reset your *REP* to zero.
- ❖ If your hold is Strong, you can spend *CERAMIC* equal to the next tier × 8 to increase your crew tier by one. Reset your *REP* to zero, and your hold to Weak.

GENERAL CREW UPGRADES

These upgrades are available for any crew. Specific types of crews have additional upgrades available to their type of crew.

- ❖ **Trade House** : You have a shop, an awning on a trade street, and a small, sturdy shack or room to store...mercantile goods. A second upgrade provides a guard and locks.
- ❖ **City Transport** : You have a chariot, two mounts to pull it, and access to a stable. A second upgrade improves the chariot with armor and larger, faster mounts, or an armored howdah and inix.
- ❖ **Cohort** : A cohort is a gang or a single expert who works for your crew. They scale with your crew's tier.
- ❖ **Hidden Lair** : Your lair is hidden from view. If discovered, you must use two downtime activities and pay CERAMIC equal to your tier to relocate it or lose this upgrade.
- ❖ **Mastery** : You may advance your action ratings to 4 (normally capped at 3). This costs four upgrade boxes to unlock.
- ❖ **Quality** : You may take this upgrade multiple times for different types of items each time (Documents, Gear, Arcane Implements, Subterfuge Supplies, Tools, or Weapons). Each upgrade improves the quality rating of all your items of that specific type.
- ❖ **Quarters** : Your lair includes living and sleeping quarters for the crew; otherwise, you all sleep elsewhere and are vulnerable when you do so.
- ❖ **Security** : Your lair has locks, alarms, and traps to thwart intruders. A second upgrade improves the defenses to include arcane measures that work against undead and psychic forces. Roll your crew's tier if these measures are ever put to the test.

- ❖ **Training** : Choose a track (Insight, Prowess, Resolve, or Playbook) to earn 2 xp (instead of 1) when training during downtime.
- ❖ **Vault** : Your lair has a secure vault. This increases your crew's storage capacity for CERAMIC to 4, and a second upgrade increases it to 12. It can also be used as a holding cell.
- ❖ **Workshop** : Your lair has a workshop containing tools for crafting and alchemy; it might have a small library of maps, or even written documents. You may accomplish long-term projects using these assets without leaving your lair.
- ❖ **Sanctum** : Your lair has a ritual area for meditation, study, and worship, appointed with arcane objects and material. You may accomplish long-term projects involving the supernatural or psychic using these assets without leaving your lair.

CHANGING CREW PLAYBOOK

If you realize during the first few sessions that you've chosen the wrong playbook, apply the rewind principle: use a copy of the new playbook and choose a number of upgrades and abilities equal to the number you had in your old playbook. You may need to reframe or rewrite certain narrative details, such as your crew contact, if they no longer make sense.

If this is a narrative evolution for your crew, keep your hold, heat, wanted level, xp, general crew upgrades, stash, SUPPLY, cohorts, and any turf that still makes sense or that is shared with the old playbook, and gain the new playbook's initial upgrades. But you've changed your position in the underworld hierarchy and started a new enterprise: you may lose REP and tier and must prove yourselves anew. You may retain up to two special abilities or playbook specific upgrades, but lose all other advances.

COHORTS

A cohort is a gang or an expert who works for your crew, drawn by your power, leverage you have, or personal connections, such as recruited gladiators, smugglers who defected from another faction, or a rogue practitioner of the Way. You can recruit a cohort by spending two upgrades, then choose a type:

- ❖ *Artisans*: scholars, craftsmen, and healers.
- ❖ *Grifters*: con artists, spies, and bards.
- ❖ *Rovers*: explorers, caravaneers, and draquomen.
- ❖ *Sneaks*: scouts, infiltrators, and thieves.
- ❖ *Thugs*: mercenaries, brawlers, and gladiators.
- ❖ *Mediums*: psychics, priests, and wizards.

GANG: has scale and quality equal to your current crew tier, and increases in scale and quality when your crew gains tier.

EXPERT: has quality equal to your current crew tier +1, and increases in quality when your crew moves up in tier. Their scale is always zero.

Give each cohort one or two edges and an equal number of flaws.

EDGES

- ❖ **Fearsome**: has a terrifying reputation and appearance.
- ❖ **Independent**: trusted to act wisely on their own initiative.
- ❖ **Loyal**: can't be bribed or turned against you.
- ❖ **Tenacious**: can't be deterred from their orders.

FLAWS

- ❖ **Principled**: has an ethic or values they won't betray.
- ❖ **Savage**: excessively violent and cruel.
- ❖ **Unreliable**: unavailable due to obligations, pursuit of vices, etc.
- ❖ **Wild**: debauched, loud-mouthed drunks.

Name your expert/give all or a few members of your gang names. Established cohorts are a great source for secondary characters you can create playbooks for when needed.

USING COHORTS

When you send a cohort to achieve a goal appropriate to their type, roll their quality to see how they fare. Otherwise, roll *od*. An Elite gang rolls +1*d* when they roll to accomplish a task appropriate for their type.

You can oversee their activity by leading them in a group action: roll command to direct them with orders, or roll the appropriate action if you act with them.

UPGRADING COHORTS

Spend two crew upgrades to add a new type to a cohort, allowing them to use their full quality rating for different kinds of undertakings. A given cohort can have up to two types.

COHORT HARM & RECOVERY

Like you, cohorts can suffer four levels of harm if an action goes sideways, even if successful, but especially if they fail:

- ❖ *Weakened*: the cohort has reduced effect.
- ❖ *Impaired*: the cohort rolls -1*d*.
- ❖ *Broken*: the cohort can't do anything until they recover.
- ❖ *Dead*: the cohort is destroyed, scattered, or slain.

All cohorts heal during downtime if circumstances warrant. Remove one level of harm from each cohort. You may use a downtime activity to remove two levels of harm to help them recuperate.

If a cohort is destroyed, you may use two downtime activities to recruit new members and spend *CERAMIC* equal to your tier +2. They must be of the same type as the destroyed cohort, but you may choose different edges and flaws than the prior cohort. They don't have to be the exact same: if you lost a gang of gladiator thugs, perhaps you hire some mercenary muscle instead.

TRANSPORT

A transport is a special kind of cohort. This is usually a vehicle like a chariot or an argosy, but it could as easily be a group of trained crodlu, a mekillot or inix with a howdah, or a hive of askra. Smugglers often have a specific transport unique to their crew and outfitted specifically for them. Give the transport one or two edges and an equal number of flaws.

EDGES

- ❖ **Nimble** : Handles easily; treat as an assist for tricky maneuvers.
- ❖ **Simple** : Easy to repair; remove all its harm during downtime.
- ❖ **Sturdy** : Keeps operating even when broken.

FLAWS

- ❖ **Costly** : Costs 1 coin per downtime to keep in operation.
- ❖ **Distinct** : Has memorable features; +1 HEAT if used on a score.
- ❖ **Finicky** : Has quirks that only one person understands; has -1 quality if they do not operate it.

CLAIMS

Claims are more than territory – they are water, shelter, and the fragile power that allows you to live another day. They are the bones of Tyr’s underworld and provide structure to your crew’s growth and the story of your rise (or fall). Each claim you seize means another faction hates you, and each claim you hold means another day of survival in a city that would just as soon grind you to dust.

But in Tyr, every parcel of land, every well, every dusty city block and dirty street is already claimed by one faction or another. To survive, your crew has to seize claims from whomever already holds them.

Each crew sheet has a map of claims with a default roadmap for your crew type. Claims should usually be seized in order by following the paths from the central square (your crew’s lair); however, you may attempt to seize any claim on your map, ignoring the paths (or even seeking out a special claim not on your map) but such operations will always be especially difficult and require exceptional efforts to first discover and then seize.

SEIZING A CLAIM

To seize a claim from another faction, tell the GM which claim on your map your crew intends to capture. The GM might tell you that you’ll need to investigate and gather information in order to discover a claim of that type before you can attempt to seize it, or you might already be familiar with it from play and can simply move forward with your plan.

Claims have a location and a description. The GM will tell you which faction currently controls that claim, or offer you a choice of a few options for similar claims held by other factions, if available.

Execute the operation like any other score and, if you succeed, the claim is yours and the targeted faction becomes angry with you: seizing a claim is a serious attack on a faction, usually resulting in -2 faction status with the target, but potentially a +1 status with its enemies.

As soon as you seize a claim, you enjoy the listed benefit for as long as you hold the claim.

TURF

Some claims provide special benefits to the crew, such as bonus dice in certain circumstances, extra CERAMIC generated for the crew’s treasury, or new opportunities for action, others provide Turf. Each piece of Turf you claim represents abstracted support for the crew, thanks to the locals’ fear or respect (or both), informants, paid-off law enforcement, or physical holdings. Turf is power.

The more Turf your crew has, the better their reputation and infamy with the other gangs and factions of the city, and the larger the scope of your crew’s hunting grounds. To represent this, for each Turf claim your crew holds, you can reduce the REP COST to increase the crew’s tier by 1. Your crew can have a maximum of 6 Turf.

Like other claims, Turf is gained by laying claim to it and holding it. When you go after a Turf claim, describe what it is. If your score to claim it is successful, note it in the appropriate Turf spot on the playbook map.

Other factions are likely to come after Turf you’ve claimed to take it for their own purposes, so it is possible to lose Turf, particularly if one is at war with another faction.

LOSING A CLAIM

No claim is safe forever. An enemy faction may try to seize a claim that your crew holds as a consequence of the crew’s actions. During downtime, the GM may advance faction MOONS that threaten your holdings; rivals might sabotage your mine, poison your well, or lure away your contacts. You can fight to defend your claim, or negotiate a deal with the faction, depending on the situation. This could be played out as a score, or handled in free play.

When a claim is lost, you lose its benefit immediately. To reclaim it, you must strike back. If you lose a claim, you lose all the benefits of that claim. If your lair is lost, you lose the benefits of all your claims until you can regain your lair or establish a new one. To regain or establish a new lair, accomplish a score to do so.

ARENA CLAIMS

When one of your crew ends up convicted and sent to the Arena, you can seize an arena claim instead. These claims give you a better chance of surviving a stint in the arena until the crew can convince the authorities to let you out or they buy you back.

Nothing says you can't also attempt a jail-break, but depending on how loud it ends up, that might put you on the Templar's radar (if you weren't on it before), and they might come looking or start an investigation (the GM could create a MOON to represent this interest, or increase the HEAT gained for scores as the Templars close in).

These claims can be lost the typical way; for example, if you fail to pay off the Arena Master, it may damage the "goodwill" you've built; the gladiator you've control of suffers the worst of a lethal bout; etc.

GLADIATOR CONTROL: Your crew has a gladiator and his trainer under their total control; you can't trauma from being thrown in the arena. It's still terrible, though.

ARENA MASTER PAYOFF: The Arena Master of the farm or mines is in your pocket, and arranges for members of your crew to have a nicer stay when they visit. +1d to your tier roll when you are incarcerated.

MATCH WINNER: You gain a reputation as a favored gladiator. Take +1d to your tier roll when a member of your crew is thrown in the arena.

ALLIED CLAIM: You made a friend in the arena pits or slave pens and they owe you a favor; take a claim for your crew from a different crew type (but not Turf).

WATER RIGHTS: You gain a reputation as a favored slave, with first-come access to water and food.

MINE & FARM CLAIMS

Though a less likely placement for criminal offenders – depending on the crime – if a member of the Crew is sent to the farms or the mines instead, or elsewhere such as the ziggurat and its brickyards, you can use the same claims as the Arena, but tailored as necessary for the difference in situations and for dealing with the Templars and their guards. Do not use a new Claims sheet: you have gained that claim for use in the mines or on the farms, or elsewhere.

SMUGGLING: You're able to move small goods in and out of the slave pens; you have +2 load while incarcerated (normally you have 0 as a prisoner). Taking this the second time increases your load to +4. You may carry CERAMIC in place of load for purposes of bribing or acquiring assets.

RELEASE INFLUENCE: Pressures and ceramic can be applied to reduce the time and cost needed for your crew to buy you back from your enslavement. Treat your Wanted level as one lower.

GUARD CONTROL: Your crew has the shift guards for the slave pens on their payroll or otherwise under the crew's thumb.

OVERSEER PAYOFF: The farm or mine overseer is in your pocket, and arranges for members of your crew to have a nicer stay when they visit. +1d to your tier roll when you are incarcerated.

THE SCORE

When we follow the criminal endeavors or personal missions of the crew, we zoom-in on the gritty, dangerous action of a score.

To start a score, the GM listens for the players making note of a *target* and a general *goal*, then tells them the crew has made a plan off-screen and asks for the *type* of plan the crew came up with along with a specific *detail* of that plan. Then we cut to the action *in media res*.

Players don't discuss the nitty-gritty of their plan ahead of time because their savvy master criminals already have (and they're better at planning crime than we are), but no plan is fail-proof – and it wouldn't be fun if they were! The point in this is to get to play rather than speculate and detail contingencies for events that might not even happen. We can still have clever set-ups and special preparations for situations that our scoundrels saw coming, but we instead handle those through flashbacks and load.

There are six types of plan, and a detail question to answer about each. The chosen plan type doesn't limit the crew's actions or approaches during the score, but it *sets the scene* and provides a narrative framework.

When the detail is established, the crew might bring in personal or crew contacts, or make one or more gather information rolls to establish what else the crew knows.

- ❖ **ASSAULT** : Do violence to a target.
Detail: The point of attack.
- ❖ **DECEPTION** : Lure, trick, or manipulate.
Detail: The method of deception.
- ❖ **STEALTH** : Trespass unseen.
Detail: The point of infiltration.
- ❖ **OCCULT** : Engage a supernatural power.
Detail: The arcane method.
- ❖ **SOCIAL** : Negotiate, bargain, or persuade.
Detail: The social connection.
- ❖ **TRANSPORT** : Carry cargo or people through danger.
Detail: The route and means.

COMPLEX PLANS

When a goal seems to encompass more than one type of plan, just pick the type that sounds the most interesting to the group to focus on in the first scene, then move forward from there – you can and should “skip ahead” to the interesting parts, including the beginning of the score.

You might also consider either making a set-up action based on one of the types, or running two or more linked scores. Only split a score if it would be *interesting* to play out each.

When you split a score, usually because one score can't happen without the success of the prior, each score will also have its own goal, detail, and engagement roll. Run downtime between the scores as normal – but if, for some reason, there's no delay between the end of one score and the start of another, remember to keep the fiction in mind.

LENGTH

Scores can be long and involved, with lots of rolls and lots of trouble; or short and sweet, over in just a few action rolls. You usually can't tell which it is going to be until you're already in the middle of things, so let it be what it is. This is another reason we don't sweat the planning.

GIVING UP

There is no shame in deciding the score is a failure or things are getting too hot or dangerous to continue. You may decide to cut your losses and pull out before it's too late. There's no need to play this out; assume you make it out and narrate a short scene about your crew's escape. You don't gain any CERAMIC or rep, but you'll still gain HEAT and an Entanglement – the failure might have other consequences as well.

Don't shy away from these: there were going to be consequences anyways, and this is where the fun in playing scoundrels lives.

LOAD

After coming up with the plan's detail, you choose your load: an abstract representation of how much gear you're taking on the score. Rather than choosing individual equipment for a score ahead of time, you mark a box next to the equipment when you use it, representing your scoundrel's planning. You can only mark as many boxes as you have load, but some equipment costs no load and you can always mark it.

You can use load for gear not listed on your sheet or to bring CERAMIC, but rare items might require a roll or downtime activity to acquire. Each scoundrel chooses their own level of load.

ENGAGEMENT ROLL

The GM's job is to keep things moving towards the action, so if planning starts happening, stop and make the engagement roll, then describe the scene as the crew encounters the first obstacle.

Make a fortune roll to see how smoothly or not-so-smoothly things are going in the first scene. The result can have a huge impact on how simple or troublesome the score turns out to be.

Start with **1d** for sheer roguish luck, **add 1d** for each Major Advantage, and **remove 1d** for each Major Disadvantage.

- ❖ Is this operation particularly bold or daring? Take +1d.
- ❖ Is it overly complex or contingent on many factors? Take -1d.
- ❖ Does the plan's detail expose a vulnerability of the target or hit them where they're weakest? Take +1d.
- ❖ Is the target strongest against this approach, or do they have particular defenses or special preparations? Take -1d.
- ❖ Can any of your friends or contacts provide aid or insight for this operation? Take +1d.
- ❖ Are any enemies or rivals interfering in the operation? Take -1d.
- ❖ Are there any other elements that you want to consider? Maybe a lower-tier target will give you +1d. Maybe a higher-tier target will give you -1d. Maybe there's a situation in the district that makes the operation more or less tricky.

The result of the engagement roll determines the position the crew finds themselves in when the action starts *as the result of their plan type*.

- ❖ **Critical:** Exceptional result. Things go better than expected because *your intel provided the perfect opportunity to capitalize on – everyone is already in position for the next part of your plan*. You've overcome the first obstacle and you're in a controlled position for when the action starts.
- ❖ **6:** Good result. Everything is going smoothly and according to plan, and it's time to capitalize on the situation. You're in a controlled position when the action starts.
- ❖ **4/5:** Mixed result. The success of the plan is uncertain and everyone is still moving into position. You're in a risky position when the action starts.
- ❖ **1-3:** Bad result. Things do not go as planned. Circumstances changed because *the crew was given bad intel – someone flubbed their part or was seriously delayed*. You are in a desperate position when the action starts.

A bad engagement roll is not a bad thing: your scoundrels are professionals and know what they're doing, even if it's suddenly going to take some creative thinking to pull it all off. Remember, a desperate position is a chance to earn xp, and you can always mitigate the situation by using a flashback to narrate how you planned for this contingency.

DOWNTIME

After a score, the crew is paid, gains HEAT, and makes an **entanglement roll**. Then each member of the crew who participated in the score gets to take two downtime actions, and may spend REP or CERAMIC for more.

During this phase of play, you aren't under constant threat and racing from obstacle to obstacle. To represent this, different mechanics and rules are used during this phase as we focus on lower-energy, quieter elements of the game and explore personal aspects of your character.

Your crew gains REP and CERAMIC for a successful score as well as improving or decreasing the approval of other factions towards them.

- ◆ Rep
- ◆ Faction Status
- ◆ Pay-off
- ◆ Heat
- ◆ Wanted Level
- ◆ Entanglement
- ◆ Downtime Actions

GAIN REP

Gain 2 REP by default; +1 REP per target's tier difference higher than you, or -1 REP per lower. If no one outside your crew hears about the score, the crew gains 0 REP.

ADJUST FACTION STATUS

The GM determines if you gain -1 or -2 status with factions that were hurt by your actions during the score; or if you gain +1 status with a faction that your actions helped. (If you kept your operation completely quiet, no one knows it was you, and your statuses don't change.)

PAY-OFF

The crew may earn CERAMIC from a patron or client for the job, plus anything else they've seized. Some of these earnings can be kept as part of the crew's funds – more if their lair has a vault – or divvied up among the crew as desired. This payoff may be the literal ceramic coins the city distributes, or equivalent barterable goods, depending on the fiction.

- ❖ 2 Ceramic : A minor job; several full purses.
- ❖ 4 Ceramic : A small job; a strongbox.
- ❖ 6 Ceramic : A standard score; decent loot.
- ❖ 8 Ceramic : A big score; serious loot.
- ❖ 10+ Ceramic : A major score; impressive loot.

Don't forget, after a score you'll be expected to pay a tithe to a larger criminal organization for the privilege of continuing to exist. This tithe is your crew tier +1. If you're supposed to be paying a tithe, but you don't or can't, the GM will start a MOON and fill a phase whenever you don't pay. When it is full, you lose 1 faction status with that organization.

Set the scene and play out a meeting with a client or patron who's paying the crew if there's something interesting to explore there. If not, just gloss over it and move on to the next part of Downtime.

DOUBLE-CROSS

The crew should never be deprived of their reward for a successful crime, such as in the classic double-cross situation. The GM can *never* simply say that the client lied and there's no reward, or that the payoff was a trap – the crew always gets paid for a successful score.

However, if everyone agrees it seems interesting, you can narrate an off-screen crime with the score starting at the point of the double-cross and the crew dealing with the fallout. It may even be foreshadowed in play as *part of* the current score if the GM discusses it with the players. This gives you the chance to turn things to your favor; or it can be handled as an Entanglement, where the crew has the choice of either losing the payment or getting out of the situation by losing faction status.

HEAT

Tyr is full of prying eyes, desperate informants, and psychic echoes. There's always evidence and witnesses, and the god-king's magics. To reflect this, after a score your crew takes HEAT for their activities.

- ❖ 0 Heat : Smooth & quiet; low exposure.
- ❖ 2 Heat : Contained; standard exposure.
- ❖ 4 Heat : Loud & chaotic; high exposure.
- ❖ 6 Heat : Wild; devastating exposure.

Add +1 HEAT if :

- ❖ the score's target is **high-profile** or **well-connected**.
- ❖ if the score took place on **hostile turf**.
- ❖ if you're **at war** with another faction.

Add +2 HEAT if :

- ❖ someone saw you use **magic** or if you **defiled**.
- ❖ one or more **killings** occurred (deliberate or accidental).

WANTED LEVEL

When your crew reaches 9 HEAT, you gain a Wanted level and clear your HEAT, rolling over the excess. The higher your Wanted level, the more serious the repercussions from law enforcement when they act against you – whether they send a couple of watchmen or an elite Templar team with a half-dozen squads for back-up. Wanted level also increases the severity of the Entanglements your crew faces after a score.

The only way to reduce your crew's Wanted level is for someone to be caught and convicted for the crimes connected with your crew : this could be a friend, a contact, an enemy, or it could be one of the crew sacrificing themselves for the good of the others – do your time, or plan an escape.

Play another scoundrel in the meantime.

When a member of your crew is caught and convicted, your wanted level is reduced by 1 and you clear your HEAT.

ENTANGLEMENTS

Your crew has a complex history of favors, commitments, debts, grudges, and promises from their existing contacts, faction statuses, friends, and rivals. As your crew completes scores, these relationships may change or cause problems, and past deeds will catch up to the crew.

After each score, to help flesh out this fiction, roll dice equal to the crew's Wanted level then check the table matching the crew's current HEAT.

HEAT 0 - 3

- ❖ 1-3 Gang Trouble or The Usual Suspects
- ❖ 4-5 Rivals or Unquiet Dead
- ❖ 6 Cooperation

HEAT 4 - 5

- ❖ 1-3 Gang Trouble or Questioning
- ❖ 4-5 Reprisals or Unquiet Dead
- ❖ 6 Show of Force

HEAT 6

- ❖ 1-3 Flipped or Interrogation
- ❖ 4-5 Supernatural Notice or Show of Force
- ❖ 6 Caught

An entanglement may come into play immediately, or not occur until an appropriate moment during Downtime.

Like a Dragon's Deal, you cannot resist entanglements; you can only deal with the trouble it has caused going forward, and any future repercussions. Entanglements are simply the cost of being a scoundrel.

You may either play out one or more scenes involving the entanglement in detail, or simply resolve it as indicated and move on. When a choice is presented, the GM is free to choose which, and may discuss it with the players to see which interests them the most.

Caught : Templars (or perhaps another law enforcement group) are sent to capture you (treat as a gang at least equal in scale to your wanted level). You may pay them off with CERAMIC equal to your Wanted level +3 – hand over a member of your crew, a contact, or cohort, then clear your HEAT – try to evade capture.

Cooperation : A +3 status faction asks you for a favor and you agree to do it – forfeit 1 REP per tier of the friendly faction – lose 1 status with them. If you don't have a +3 faction status, you avoid entanglements right now.

Supernatural Notice : A supernatural entity approaches the crew with a dark offer and you accept their bargain – hide until it loses interest and forfeit 3 REP – deal with it another way.

Flipped : One of your rivals arranges for one of your contacts, patrons, clients, or a group of your customers to switch allegiances due to the heat on you. They're loyal to another faction now.

Gang Trouble : One of your gangs or other cohorts causes trouble due to their flaw(s) and you lose face and forfeit REP equal to your tier +1 – make an example of one of the gang members – face reprisals from the wronged party.

Interrogation : The Templars round up one of the PCs to question them about the crew's crimes and you pay them off with 3 CERAMIC – they beat you up (level 2 harm) and you tell them what they want to know, gaining +3 HEAT (you can resist each consequence separately). How did they manage to capture you?

Questioning : The Templars grab one of your cohorts or contacts to question about your crimes, and you make a fortune roll to see how much they talk (1-3: +2 HEAT, 4/5: +1 HEAT) – pay them off with 2 CERAMIC. Roll 2d for normal contacts; if they're an underworld tough, roll 3d or 4d; if they're soft or loyal to the Templars, roll 1d or 0d.
Who do they think is most vulnerable?

Reprisals : An enemy faction makes a move against you or a friend, contact, or vice purveyor and you can pay them (1 REP and 1 CERAMIC per their tier) as an apology – allow them to mess with you or yours – fight back and show them who's boss.

Rivals : A neutral faction throws their weight around. They threaten you, a friend, a contact, or one of your vice purveyors and you forfeit (1 REP or 1 CERAMIC per their tier) – stand up to them and lose 1 status with them.

Show of Force : A faction with whom you have a negative status makes a play against your holdings and you give them 1 claim; or if you have no claims, lose 1 Hold instead – go to war, dropping to -3 status with them.

Unquiet Dead : A rogue spirit or undead creature is drawn to you and you must acquire assets to gain the services of an occultist to attempt to destroy or banish it; make a Fortune roll using their quality level – deal with it yourself. Perhaps it's a past victim?

The Usual Suspects : The Templars grab someone in the periphery of your crew so you volunteer a friend or vice purveyor as the person most likely to be taken then make a fortune roll to find out if they resist questioning (1-3: you gain +2 HEAT, 4/5: they take level 2 harm) – pay the Templars off with 1 CERAMIC.

GETTING CAUGHT

While many criminals (“vagrants”, i.e. those who were in the wrong place at the wrong time) are sold into slavery or indentured service to noble or merchant houses, or forced to work on the farms or in the mines for the city, the unrepentant, violent, or otherwise dangerous criminals are sent to the Arena to thrill Tyr’s citizens with blood-sport amusements.

The rulers of the city find it cheaper to use criminals in this capacity than to house and feed them in a prison, and in the case of the latter, the arena pits serve just as well as a prison for the violent and dangerous.

Particularly “troublesome” individuals are often “mistakenly” sent to the Arena where “accidents” are arranged for in the cell blocks, or they are sent out to be torn apart by monstrous beasts or brutally killed by popular gladiators on the arena floor before the “mistake” can be rectified.

While not all the arena games are to-the-death, there is often little fairness in the games or in the judgements the Arena Master hands down.

Even if it isn’t rolled as an entanglement, you can get caught and have to deal with being enslaved or put on display : a botched job that puts you into the spotlight or gets you hauled away can put you into the same situation.

CONVICTION

A conviction may result from investigation, or because someone turns themselves in (like one of your crew members) and takes the fall for everyone else. The severity of the conviction, and the length of time it takes to “buy” you back from the city, depends on the crew’s **wanted level**:

- ❖ **WANTED LEVEL 0:** The Templars rob you and give you a beating to teach you a lesson (suffer level 3 harm, no resistance roll allowed – they just keep at it until you’re severely injured). If you’ve nothing to take, they might accept a few favors instead. After you recover.
- ❖ **WANTED LEVEL 1:** A month or two. Stop service and warm-up fights. You probably won’t die. You probably will be injured. You are released with a level 1 harm.
- ❖ **WANTED LEVEL 2:** Several months. Same as above but you are released with a level 2 harm.
- ❖ **WANTED LEVEL 3:** A year or more. You’ll probably fight against arena champions to please the crowds. You might die.
- ❖ **WANTED LEVEL 4:** Life or execution (same thing). The worst fights. Public deathmatch spectacles against monsters and desert horrors.

Servitude in the arena or in public works is dehumanizing and brutal. The renown of your crew is your only real defense from the worst of it. When you are forced to serve in the arena or in public works, make a **servitude** roll using your crew’s tier as the dice pool:

- ❖ **Crit :** You make a name for yourself. Gain +3 REP for your crew, gain 1 arena claim and +1 faction status with a faction whose members you assisted inside the arena.
- ❖ **6 :** You’re accepted into a gang in the arena. Your crew gains 1 arena claim and +1 faction status with a faction whose members you assisted on the inside.
- ❖ **4/5 :** You keep your head down and do your time without incident.
- ❖ **1-3 :** It’s horrific. You suffer a level of trauma from the experience.

DOWNTIME ACTIVITIES

During free play, you can go places, do things, make action rolls, gather information, talk with other characters, etc. without limitation; but if you were part of the last score, you also have **two** specific downtime activities you may undertake – you can undertake more for 1 CERAMIC or 1 REP per **additional** activity.

- ❖ Acquire Asset
- ❖ Long-Term Project
- ❖ Perform Artifice
- ❖ Reduce Heat
- ❖ Recover
- ❖ Train
- ❖ Indulge Vice
- ❖ Lost in Vice

For any downtime activity :

- ❖ Take +1d to the roll if a **friend** or **contact helps** you.
- ❖ Spend CERAMIC after the roll to **improve** the result level one-for-one.

If your crew is **at war**, then you can only undertake **one** downtime activity (you may still spend REP or CERAMIC to gain more).

You may choose to do the same activity more than once, but you can only attempt things you are in a position to accomplish. If you must take a specific downtime activity, resolve that action first.

If you can't decide on a downtime activity, ask the GM or other players for a long-term project idea. Pick something fun that will take the game in a direction you like or that interests you.

If you use a flashback to do a downtime activity **during a score**, you may spend REP or CERAMIC instead of using WATER for the flashback.

ACQUIRE ASSET

Your crew doesn't have everything they need on-hand for a score. You can help prepare by dropping some CERAMIC for special tools (like potion fruits, a map, real land deeds), expert help (a healer, an engineer, a corrupt Templar), or other useful assets...on loan. Acquiring such assets is especially useful as a flashback wherein you gain the use of an asset for a score, or significant-albeit-temporary use:

- ❖ One special item or a set of common items (for your whole gang).
- ❖ A cohort (an expert or gang).
- ❖ A vehicle or mounts.
- ❖ A service, transport, temporary storage, legal representation, etc.

Remember, potion-fruits, poisons, enchanted items, and written texts are highly restricted. When you acquire one of these items, you take +2 HEAT. *What other items are the Templars keeping a close eye on?*

To gain an asset, roll the crew's tier; gain +1d to this roll if you are re-acquiring the same asset. The result indicates the asset's quality, plus any CERAMIC you spend to improve the quality of the roll.

- ❖ 1-3 : tier -1
- ❖ 4/5 : tier
- ❖ 6 : tier +1
- ❖ Crit : tier +2

You may improve the roll beyond Critical by spending 2 CERAMIC, plus 2 CERAMIC per additional tier beyond your own.

There may be a minimum quality level to acquire a particular asset. If this involves another faction's gear or assets, you will need to meet at least their tier. Since you can spend CERAMIC to increase the roll value, if you don't meet the minimum, you fail to acquire the asset, though you might have a bonus to attempt to acquire it later.

An asset can also be acquired for "standby" use in the future, or if you want to acquire an asset permanently, you can either gain it as a crew upgrade or work on a long-term project to gain permanent acquisition.

LONG-TERM PROJECT

You undertake a complex, extensive project that is likely to take a good deal of time and effort; this can cover a wide variety of activities (researching an arcane ritual, investigating a mystery, establishing trust, courting a new contact, growing potion fruits, changing your vice, etc).

In order to work on a project, you must first have the means to pursue it – gaining those means can be a project in itself. You and the GM should work together to break a project down into concrete steps. Based on the steps and goal of the project, the GM will tell you the MOON(s) to create and suggest a method by which you might make progress.

- ❖ 4-moons are easy projects you're well acquainted with, already have the proper preparations and gear for, and might have only a single step or series of unremarkable steps.
- ❖ 6-moons are standard difficulty, if perhaps you're reaching just beyond your normal expertise, require more than one step, or for which you are only partially prepared.
- ❖ 8-moons are difficult projects, requiring investigation or the gathering of rare materials, which might be better served as complex projects with multiple steps and MOONS instead, depending on the difficulty.

When you work on a long-term project, describe what your character does to advance the project MOON, and roll one of your actions. Fill phases on the MOON according to your result: 1-3: one phase, 4/5: two phases, 6: three phases, critical: five phases.

TRAIN

Tell us what you do to improve at an activity or work towards a new ability, then mark 1 xp on the xp track for an attribute or playbook advancement. If you have the appropriate crew Training upgrade unlocked, mark another xp (2 total).

You can train a given xp track only once per downtime, but you may train multiple tracks using multiple activities.

PERFORM ARTIFICE

Artifice is the craft of coaxing strange fruits, harvested bones, and obsidian shards into tools, idols, poisons, and tonics. It is dangerous work, and failure can leave scars both physical and psychic. To perform artifice, you use special materials and tools to produce strange elixirs, to craft or modify common or unusual items, or to imbue or enchant implements or weapons. The system for each is similar, though the nature of a given project means the specific details differ.

Make a Craft roll. The result determines the outcome or quality of the item you produce. The base quality level is equal to your crew's tier, modified by the result of the roll.

- ❖ 1d for each appropriate action dot (usually craft).
- ❖ +1 quality per CERAMIC spent on the outcome.
- ❖ +1 quality if your crew has the Workshop (or similar) upgrade.

Your crew's tier determines the overall quality of the workspace and materials you have access to. The GM may set a minimum quality level that must be achieved to craft the item, but items may be crafted to a higher quality if the player wishes to make the attempt (required to craft a *fine* item).

- ❖ 1-3 : Quality level is tier -1.
- ❖ 4/5 : Quality level is equal to tier.
- ❖ 6 : Quality level is tier +1.
- ❖ Crit : Quality level is tier +2.

You may only perform artifice using a formula or design you have learned, not one merely acquired. Common alchemicals and ordinary items don't require special formulas or designs to learn; anyone may attempt to craft them by using commonly available instructions.

REDUCE HEAT

Say what your character does to reduce the HEAT level of the crew and make an action roll to see how well it works; reduce HEAT according to the result: 1-3: one, 4/5: two, 6: three, critical: five.

RECOVER

Seek treatment for your wounds from a healer or cleric, or even a Templar, whether those wounds are physical, mental, or spiritual :

- ❖ Acquire asset to gain temporary access to a healer for the whole crew.
- ❖ A contact or member of your crew able to provide treatment.
- ❖ Treat yourself, but use 2 WATER when you do.

If you have harm, and choose not to seek treatment you must :

- ❖ Tough it out without any treatment, use 1 WATER and roll od.

When you receive treatment (or tough it out), the healer rolls an appropriate action or their quality level. Fill a number of phases on a healing 4-MOON. 1-3: one phase, 4/5: two phases, 6: three phases, critical: five phases, and you may pay CERAMIC to improve the result.

When your healing MOON is full, each instance of harm on your sheet is reduced by one level and you empty the MOON – if you still have harm, you may “roll over” any extra phases.

If there are filled phases on your healing MOON, and you suffer new harm, clear those phases.

When you call on someone else to provide treatment, it does not cost a downtime activity for the healer. If the healer chooses to provide aid to someone else as part of a long-term project *they* begin (perhaps for an injured member of the crew who was not played), it does count.

INDULGE VICE

You visit your vice purveyor to relieve stress, blow off steam, and enjoy yourself. You return refreshed with some or all of your WATER marks restored. *How do you indulge your vice? Which purveyor do you use?*

If you have trauma, you perhaps should indulge your vice, otherwise you start the next score with 1 fewer WATER for each trauma you have. If you don't have any trauma, you don't need to indulge yourself.

When you **indulge your vice** :

- ❖ Roll dice equal to your *lowest* Attribute rating.
- ❖ Regain WATER equal to your *highest* result.
- ❖ If you gain more WATER than you used up, you *overindulge*.

You cannot use a flashback during a score to indulge your vice.

OVERINDULGENCE

If your vice roll restores more WATER than you used, you overindulge. Select an overindulgence from the list below. *What bad decision do you make because of your vice, to obtain it or while under its influence?*

- ❖ Attract trouble : select or roll an additional Entanglement.
- ❖ Brag about your exploits : gain +2 HEAT.
- ❖ Lost in Vice : your character vanishes for a few weeks and returns with all their WATER restored and all their harm healed.
- ❖ Tapped : Your purveyor cuts you off. Find a new source for your vice. You can't indulge yourself until you do.

LOST IN VICE

You may choose to release your character to be “lost in their vice” during downtime, or even during a score as long as it makes narrative sense. The character disappears from play for days or weeks while they indulge themselves off-camera. *What are they doing? Where are they camped out?*

When that character returns, they have regained all their WATER and healed any harm they had.

Pick a different character to play until this one returns from their bender: this might be a gang member, friend, or contact of the crew. Create them as an alternate character, which also helps flesh out your crew and their landscape of connections.

FORMULAS & DESIGNS

To perform acts of artifice such as growing potion fruits or creating strange gadgets, you first need to know the proper formula or design, usually by having the appropriate special ability (*Alchemist*, *Artificer*, or *Strange Methods*). Anyone can attempt to craft simple or common items; though their knowing how to do so should make narrative sense (consider their playbook and background) – though a quality penalty might be imposed on the results (a lifelong academic trying to craft a weapon).

When you want to create a formula or design, or acquire one through some other method, you need to start a Long-Term Project. Work with the GM to answer the following questions:

GM asks : What is it and what does it do?

Player answers : Say if it is mundane, alchemical, or supernatural, and briefly describe its general purpose and its appearance (if needed).

Player asks : What's the minimum quality level of this item?

GM answers : Use the magnitude of the intended effect as a guide.

GM asks : What rare, strange, or adverse aspect of this creation has kept it in obscurity, out of common usage?

Player answers : For arcane implements, this is obvious; for supernatural, psychic, alchemical, or mundane, you may be working with lost, unknown, or secret arts or considerations; it may involve applications no one has considered; use incredibly rare materials; or it may be wildly dangerous. For common items, there may be no obscuring aspects.

Player asks : What drawbacks does this item have, if any?

GM answers : Choose none, one, or more from the drawbacks list.

When you take the *Alchemist*, *Artificer*, or *Strange Methods* special ability, you have already learned one special formula or design and do not need to start a project to learn it. Just go through the questions with the GM (if necessary) to define the nature of the object you can craft.

DRAWBACKS

Pick one, none, or more:

- ❖ **COMPLEX**. Requires multiple stages to complete. One downtime activity and crafting roll is needed per stage.
- ❖ **CONSPICUOUS**. Its effects are quite obvious when used. You take +1 HEAT during any score or situation in which it is used. (All sorcerous rituals and spells have this drawback.)
- ❖ **CONSUMABLE**. Only has a limited number of uses (all alchemicals must have this drawback, usually one use).
- ❖ **RARE**. This creation requires a rare item or material when it is crafted.
- ❖ **UNRELIABLE**. When you use the item, make a fortune roll (using its quality) to see how well (or *if*) it functions as intended. *What happens when it doesn't work? Does it just not work, or does it cause trouble?*
- ❖ **VOLATILE**. This has a dangerous or troublesome side-effect when used; this is considered a consequence and so it may be resisted.

CRAFTING

Once you know a formula, or are dealing with a common item, you can create the item using Craft or a Long-Term Project. For rare or complex items the GM may set a minimum quality level needed, which must be met for the attempt to be successful. You may spend CERAMIC I-for-I to increase the quality (this can raise quality level beyond tier +2).

Note that if a Craft roll would result in something of less than tier 0 quality, the GM may rule you simply did not have the skills or materials required. You may use another downtime action to try again with +1d, or you may spend CERAMIC to increase the final quality result.

Crafting also includes cultivating, growing, or breeding plants, animals, or insects for their various properties.

EXAMPLE FORMULAE

These are examples of formulae you may know or learn. The list is not comprehensive and can be expanded by the GM and the players working together to add possibilities.

SMOKE PELLETS (i/2, alchemical) : small, fragile glass marbles that, when shattered, release a thick cloud of obscuring smoke, allowing the user to escape or move unnoticed.

SAND GOGGLES (ii, mundane) : a simple but effective device made of cloth and leather, designed to protect the eyes from sand and sun while traveling across the desert.

DESERT BEACON (ii/2, supernatural) : a small, handheld device that projects a psychic signal that can be used to repel creatures, or to mark a location.

PIT SCORPION VENOM (iii, mundane) : powerful scorpion venom that can be used to incapacitate or poison targets. Rare and dangerous.

GRIT BEETLE SHELLS (i, mundane) : beetles with naturally abrasive shells that can be used as sandpaper or cutting tools.

CREEPER VINES (i, life-shaped) : fast-growing vines that can be trained to wrap around and immobilize an opponent.

THORNBLADE (ii, life-shaped) : large plants with razor-edged thorns that can be (carefully) cut free and used like knives.

LAMP BEETLE (iii, mundane) : small, photosynthetic beetles that store energy from the sun and can be used as lanterns or portable sources of light. Capable of short hops through the air.

BINDING CHAINS (iii, supernatural) : chains of precious metal, specifically enchanted to prevent an undead creature from taking any action beyond simple speech.

KIP-GUT STRING (i, mundane) : cord made from dried kip lizard intestine treated with desert salt. Near-invisible in low light and as strong as giant hair rope – useful for garrotes, tripwires, and delicate climbing rigs.

DREAMLEAF COMPRESS (ii, consumable) : a folded packet of preserved leaves from the Forest Ridge, steeped and pressed against a wound. Temporarily allows you to ignore a level 1 harm.

FIREFRUIT (iii, consumable) : A fiery red fruit that temporarily imbues the eater with pyrokinesis, allowing them to control fire. Addictive.

SHADOWPLUM (iii, consumable) : A sweet, dark purple fruit that temporarily bends light and shadow around the eater, granting a moment of temporary invisibility. The dark juice stains everything it touches.

ELF-FRUIT (ii, consumable) : A tart, green berry that temporarily increases the eater's speed and agility, but leaves them exhausted (level 1 harm).

NULL-SAND (iii, alchemical) : fine grey powder made from the carapace of dead agony beetles; deadens the psychic field over the area it is spread. Causes extreme pain if used on a person.

SPIRIT CAGE (iii, supernatural) : a small obsidian vessel etched with binding glyphs, capable of trapping a single incorporeal entity – a ghost, a hungry spirit, a shadow – for a limited time. The trapped entity can be questioned or simply contained.

DUST OF DREAMING (ii/2, consumable) : an ochre powder derived from lotus seeds that may be inhaled or dissolved in water as a drink. Induces a brief, lucid trance state that increases the potency of psychic actions, but induces near-catatonia for a time. Addictive.

BLOODTHORN PASTE (i, alchemical) : thick black paste made from the rendered sap of bloodthorn scrub. Increases toxicity of other poisons, prevents them from drying out. Has no effect on its own. Sticky.

FACTIONS

The city of Tyr is crowded with groups of actual criminals, purportedly legitimate organizations, and cults and secret societies (who are really just more well-organized gangs) all struggling for power and turf in the city, whether physical, economic, or political. When you create your crew, you'll pick a few that sound the most interesting to interact with.

Pick a few that interest you and your group and build your story around these factions and their plots. If other factions come to the forefront during play due to the characters' actions, start including them; if you find any chosen factions are ignored, stop including them.

All factions are described by certain elements such as hold and tier. Some of these are included in their descriptions, others must be inferred or decided on by your group.

TIER

Each notable faction is ranked by tier – a measure of wealth, influence, and scale. At the highest level are the tier V and VI factions, the true powers of the city. Your crew begins at tier 0.

Use the tier rating to roll dice when you acquire an asset, as well as for any fortune roll for which your crew or another faction's overall power level and influence is the primary trait. Your tier determines the quality level of your items as well as the quality and scale of the gangs your crew employs – and thereby what size of enemy you can expect to handle.

It also determines just how difficult it is to deal with another faction. Their tier can penalize the effectiveness of your actions against them.

- ❖ TIER 0 : 1 or 2 people.
- ❖ TIER I : Small gangs. (3-6 people)
- ❖ TIER II : Medium gangs. (12 people)
- ❖ TIER III : Large gangs. (20 people)
- ❖ TIER IV : Huge gangs. (40 people)
- ❖ TIER V : Massive gangs. (80 people)
- ❖ TIER VI : Armies. (100+ people)

HOLD

Every faction has either a Weak hold or a Strong hold, representing how well they can maintain their current strength. A Weak hold represents an issue, problem, or complication that could be exploited by a rival to weaken the power and influence of that faction, or solved by an ally to cement and grow their strength.

FACTION DOWNTIME

Just like your crew, NPCs and factions are also busy pursuing their goals. During Downtime, the GM advances their project MOONS and chooses a downtime maneuver (or two) for each faction that is a part of play or that the group is interested in – usually a faction you interact with regularly. Not every faction in the city needs to be tracked.

When factions do things, the GM spreads the news to the players with a friend, contact, or vice purveyor : rumors and gossip lead to opportunity.

Some of the maneuvers factions might take during downtime are :

- ❖ Seize a claim or increase hold.
- ❖ Make an enemy vulnerable; reduce the hold of a vulnerable enemy.
- ❖ Gather information on another faction (including your crew).
- ❖ Achieve a short-term goal they are in position to accomplish.
- ❖ Acquire a new asset.
- ❖ Call in a favor from another faction.
- ❖ Employ political pressure or threats to force someone's hand.

They are also acting to advance one or more of their faction MOONS. When advancing a faction MOON, make a Fortune roll using the faction's tier, modified up or down based on circumstances : 1-3: 1 phase; 4/5: 2 phases; 6: 3 phases; critical: 5 phases.

When the GM turns their attention to a faction that has been ignored for a while, they should give them several downtime actions and add several phases to their project MOONS to "catch up" to current events.

FACTION STATUS

Your crew's status with each faction indicates how well you are liked or hated by that faction. Status is rated from -3 to +3, with zero (neutral) being the default starting status. Track your status with factions on the faction sheet, but don't worry about tracking every faction in the city – just worry about the ones your crew interacts with.

- ❖ +3: **ALLIES**. This faction will help you even if it's not in their best interest to do so. They expect you to do the same for them.
- ❖ +2: **FRIENDLY**. This faction will help you if it doesn't create serious problems for them. They expect you to do the same.
- ❖ +1: **HELPFUL**. This faction will help you if it causes no problems or significant cost for them. They expect the same from you.
- ❖ 0: **NEUTRAL**. This faction doesn't care one-way-or-another about you as long as you stay out of their business.
- ❖ -1: **INTERFERING**. This faction will look for opportunities to cause trouble for you (or profit from your misfortune) as long as it causes no problems or significant cost for them. They expect the same from you.
- ❖ -2: **HOSTILE**. This faction will look for opportunities to hurt you as long as it doesn't create serious problems for them. They expect you to do the same, and take precautions against you.
- ❖ -3: **AT WAR**. This faction will go out of its way to hurt you even if it's not in their best interest to do so. They expect you to do the same, and take precautions against you.

FACTION STATUS CHANGES

You may attempt to reduce the hold of another faction, if you know how they're vulnerable and take action against them. If you succeed, the target faction loses 1 level of hold. If their hold is Weak and it drops, the faction loses 1 tier. When any faction is at war, they temporarily lose 1 hold.

In addition to the changes in status caused by the events and outcome of a score, your status may change if you do a favor for a faction, or if you refuse one of their demands such as when you repeatedly fail to pay the faction that takes your protection money.

AT WAR

When you're at war with any number of factions, your crew suffers +1 HEAT from scores, temporarily loses 1 hold, and PCs get only one downtime action rather than two. You can end a war by eliminating your enemy or by negotiating a mutual agreement to establish a new status rating.

If your crew has weak hold when you go to war, the temporary loss of hold causes you to lose one tier. When the war is over, restore your crew's tier back to its pre-war level.

When your crew is tier 0, with weak hold, and you lose hold, your lair is taken by a faction seeking to profit from your misfortune. It may be the end of your crew and you may be forced to go your separate ways, or you may attempt to retake your lair or find and establish a new one.

CITY FACTIONS

Many of the factions in the city are briefly described below. More specific information on a few of the most significant factions in the city can be found after the information on the city's districts.

TEMPLARATE (V)

The right-hand of the god-king Kalak. The Templatate runs the city, overseeing its public works and enforcing the King's laws and decrees. Their bureaucracy is entirely corrupt, and its members are greedy, power-hungry, utterly amoral, and their prayers and proclamations have actual physical power. If there's something illegal going on in the city, a Templar probably has their hand in it, and are more than willing to put a knife in the back of any partner as soon as it suits their purpose. The Templatate consists of a few dozen of hierarchal bureaus, with the largest being Construction, Planning, Farms, Treasury, Trade, and Slaves.

CITY WATCH (III)

Though under the control of the Templars, the City Watch is one of the least corrupt organizations of significant power within the city...left to their own devices. All patrols are accompanied by or report to a Templar, meaning that, in practice, the city watch are more mob enforcers than law-keepers, doing the Templars' dirty work whether they like it or not.

SENATE (IV)

Every noble house in the city maintains a presence in the Senate, fighting over trade deals, land claims, public recognition, and social status. The god-king's word is absolute law, but he is content to allow the nobles to debate decorum and taxation, as long as they ably run their slave-farms to feed the city and pull iron from the mines. Those with alternative ideas tend to disappear, but they can be a powerful ally (or enemy) for those looking to interfere with the power-structure in the city.

SCHOOL OF THOUGHT (II)

At the sufferance of the King, masters of the Way teach promising students meditation and philosophy, and the deeper mysteries, at their temple in the Golden City. At least for those who can afford such training. They are careful not to run afoul of the Templars through heresy or incitement against the god-king, and often train promising members of that organization as a buffer.

ORDER (III)

A secret society within the School of Thought who practice theoretically impossible, even heretical, arts. Their true purpose is ostensibly keeping the forces of the Way in balance, but no one with that much power has entirely selfless goals. And "balance" isn't peace or brotherhood. They are behind a significant number of events in the city, moving other people in the city, and beyond, like pieces on a board to their own ends. They target powerful users of the Way for membership, or extermination.

VEILED ALLIANCE (II)

Small, secretive cells of rebels and terrorists dedicated to disrupting the Templatate and overthrowing the god-king, led by wizards who refuse to defile the land with their arts...but they are still foul wizards. While mainly committing acts of vandalism, heresy, and theft, occasionally they cross the line into outright assaults on members of the Templatate, or destroy city projects and public works "for the greater good."

ELVEN MARKET (II)

If there's something you want, and you shouldn't have it, the Elven Market will. A gang of smugglers and honey-runners whose membership is constantly changing, making it impossible to pin down, as the elves come-and-go with the winds and the seasons. The Market operates under a veil of legitimacy running an actual market that sells exotic goods, hides, meat, spices and herbs (and strange fruits possessed of wondrous powers).

HARP AND KNIFE (III)

A secret society among bards and entertainers who engage in kidnapping, extortion, and assassination. They say if you murder anyone in Tyr, and the Harp and Knife don't get their cut, they'll take trade in your flesh. The number of back-alley murders that go unavenged would seem to belie this claim, but plotting nobles and merchants know better than to try their luck against their rivals without going through the Harp and Knife (or paying them to stay out of it).

LION'S PAW (II)

King Hammanu, the Lion of Urik, would like nothing better than to take control of Tyr, more particularly its iron mines. A direct war requiring sieging down the walls with an army would be costly, if not impossible. Instead, he has sent his spies and manipulators into the city to sow discord. Some cults have begun to worship Hammanu as a saviour figure who is opposed to the evil tyrant-god Kalak.

MERCHANT HOUSES (IV)

By long agreement, none may do business in the city without the blessing of the Merchant Houses, to whom they must tithe some percentage of their goods for export. The Houses are ostensibly able to conduct business without need to bribe the Templarate, nor are they required to provide tithe or fee to them except as that required from long-standing agreements at the city gates. The Templarate finds this arrangement disagreeable, claiming it hobbles their ability to enact the King's Law, but has never been able to convince the Senate a change is in order.

The Houses are not static, they rise and fall across the years with changes in their fortunes, becoming prominent or fading away, or even being replaced entirely. There are, however, a few long-standing Houses in the city, some centuries old. Some still strong, some ripe for the plucking. Some withered and desperate. As a group, however, they are powerful.

GUILDS (IV)

Similar to the Merchant Houses, but lacking any centralized structure beyond that of sibling-hood by proxy, the Guilds are collections of laborers and artisans who keep the secrets of their crafts hidden from outsiders, such that only members are allowed to learn their trade skills. Violence dis-incentivizes non-membership or the dissemination of guild secrets.

There are many guilds throughout the city, though some jobs do not have a guild, such as the farmers or bricklayers, as these are mostly slave labor. The most powerful guilds in the city rival the Merchant Houses and have brokered deals to reduce the tithes their members must pay, provide other forms of protection, and handle official journeymen licensure.

Of these, the Bonesmithy, the Masons, the Weavers, the Ceramists, and the Dragomen, are the most powerful.

ELEMENTAL CULTS (III)

Each of the four elemental lords – Earth, Air, Fire, Water – has a small, dedicated priesthood who serve in the Temple of the Four Elements, but smaller shrines to one or more of the elementals are found throughout the city, usually tended by a priest or temple acolyte. The King tolerates the priests, but makes certain they are too busy dealing with internal politics to make trouble or challenge his authority as the supreme ruler of all worldly and otherworldly things.

CULT OF THE DRAGON (I)

This secretive cult is dedicated to worship of the creature known as the Dragon: a giant, winged reptile of myth and legend. The exact nature of their rites and beliefs is unknown, but they are thought to believe the Dragon is either a savior who brings rains and will make the desert bloom, or a harbinger of the end whose purposes they wish to serve in order to rule in the aftermath. Many of their rituals are dedicated to its summoning.

CARTOGRAPHERS (II)

Explorers and wasteland travelers. More than a little insane (you'd have to be to wander the deserts). They often pry into things people ought not know, and have heretical ideas, so they are carefully watched. But they are too useful to be rid of. The Cartographers are thought to smuggle books and magic, and teach letters, but the wonders they bring back from ancient ruins make the god-king overlook any such rumored crimes. Usually.

BALICAN REDS (III)

The Reds claim to have been formed from a group of mercenaries who arrived from a distant land and preferred the restitution in Tyr. They are now the city's premier band of sell-swords, well-known for taking any job if the payment is right, and have no code of conduct other than a refusal to fight or oppose brother or sister members. This has ensured the Houses hire members of the Reds as protection against other Reds who might be hired as assassins or bandits – a most enriching situation for the mercenary company.

THE SPIDERS (I)

A secretive group who run a brothel and illegal games of chance inside the "legitimate" businesses found in Shadow Square, and are involved in various blackmail schemes in the Noble Quarter. If someone wants to catch you doing something illicit, they hire the Spiders to gather the information they need.

BONESMITHY (III)

Wood is an expensive resource and metal is scarce, but bones are free, once someone or something isn't using them any longer. The Bonesmithy know the secret arts of shaping bone into strong, effective tools, from weapons to farming implements, making them a powerful and vitally important guild in the city. They pay well for bodies, bipedal or otherwise, and effectively serve as coroner and mortuary services for the city.

MASONS (III)

Not merely stoneworkers, the Mason Guild is instrumental in building and maintaining the walls that protect Tyr from not just the physical monstrosities and hostile tribes that roam the wasteland, but environmental and mystical forces that could bring ruin to those within, such as the Gray Death and the wandering undead spirits. They are said to know secrets that not merely allow them to build strong walls, but imbue walls with spiritual wards against such forces. They also know where all the bodies are buried – literally.

WARREN RATS (II)

A gang of orphans you get kicked out of when you're "too old", they're one of the worst gangs of thieves and beggars in the city. They've also carved out a niche as trusted message-runners for the other gangs in the city, as they can slip through and get into places older folks can't. Membership provides some degree of protection to the street children of Tyr from other gangs and slave-catchers in the city.

PUG'S GANG (I)

Less a gang, and more a rough group of drunks and second-rate pit-fighters who have decided to jump into the mercenary game, with thuggery-for-hire as their main trade. They'd like nothing better than to be on a House patron's payroll, whether above or under the table, but really anyone with ceramic to burn and brawls to start would be fine with them.

DUST PEDDLERS (II)

Professional news-mongers and gossips who, in reality, control the flow of information in the city: their stories are filled with half-truths and outright lies (all paid for, of course). They can be found on corners throughout the city, calling out the current time, the latest news of interest, and anything else of note they have over-heard or "over-heard".

THE DISGRACED (II)

A gang of Templars who fell from grace thanks to the treachery of their fellows, out-played in the game but alive to tell the tale. They would like nothing better than to see their rivals defrocked and hung from Tyr's walls with their own intestines. To those ends, they've recruited former gladiators, spies, and defilers into their network of revenge, and many still have the loyalty of their half-giant guardian. The Disgraced managed to hang onto their garb and badges of office, and have all the secret knowledge of the Templatate, but no longer have access to the powers granted by the god-king. The Templatate – or at least their rivals within – would like this problem to go away.

WESTERN REACH (II)

A club of educated nobles with a penchant for adventure stories and curiosities, which is a cover for smuggling, prostitution, and illegal slave auctions. They are always on the look-out for "associate members" – those who are not blooded nobles, such as actual explorers and wasteland treasure-hunters, but can bring something useful to the table as well as provide an air of legitimacy and take the fall for the core members when the club's activities are scrutinized.

DRAQOMEN (II)

The guild of city guides and message-runners based near the Caravan Gate. They earn their pay by escorting new-comers around the city, answering questions, directing people towards the best food and lodging and away from dangerous areas, and helping out with any "Templar entanglements" new-comers might encounter – using their knowledge of the bureaucracy to argue down the cost of bribes (and charge their clients a small fee for the service) or talk a client out of trouble. Sometimes a scoundrel gets the idea they can fleece a traveler by offering their own services as a guide – but like all Guilds, the Draqomen do not tolerate anyone else working their turf or sully their good name.

THE WATER KINGS (I)

As part of the Bureau of Planning, the Bureau of Waters is responsible for maintaining and protecting the city's wells, collecting water chits and distributing water to the citizens, and maintaining records of water usage and claims by the nobility. A handful of the Templars within the bureau have secretly begun to worship and make sacrifices to the elemental lord of water, feeling that the King's failure to renew the deep reservoir waters will not just destroy the city, but their personal fortunes. They hope that by appeasing and enriching the elemental lord, the waters will be refilled.

BUREAU OF TRADE (III)

This bureau has managed to slyly push its way into a powerful position within the Templatate, choosing to work with the Merchant Houses rather than against them, gaining favor with the Houses and advancing their trade interests with lucrative deals. For now. The bureau's long-term goal is the dissolution of the ancient trade charters giving the Houses independence from law and tax, and the establishment of new charters more favorable to the Templatate.

BUREAU OF HERESY (II)

Once one of the most important bureaus, its power has declined in recent decades. Tasked with rooting out heresy, such as knowledge of letters, practice of wizardry, worship of false gods, and various forbidden activities (the list changes frequently). While they take great glee in torturing suspects for information, the bureau has long offered information bounties, and many are only too happy to inform on their friends and neighbors for a few extra water chits and the god-king's blessing. Accused heretics can swear reformation (making sufficient tithes to the officiating Templar), or face public execution through noose or fire. Wizards, of course, are given no such considerations.

THE THIEVES' GUILD (IV)

The Thieves' Guild is supposedly a group of cut-purses, muggers, grifters, burglars, and pan-handlers at the top of the city's criminal pyramid. If you aren't paying them off to work the streets, whoever you are paying off is. Some claim the idea of a shadowy association of criminal gangs running the entire underworld is nonsense because scum like that would eventually just slit one another's throats and the whole thing would collapse. That's a protection racket aimed at criminals. They recruit the poor, desperate, and ambitious, and in return for the membership fee paid to the guild by the actual cut-purses, muggers, grifters, burglars, and pan-handlers, the guildsmen provide safe refuge, arrange for bribes, and pay the bone-saws.

BLACK PEACE (II)

The King keeps a cabal of defilers in service to the crown, hidden as a branch of the Templarate. Their main offices are inside the Golden Tower, but a dummy office with a few bored, clueless staff are kept in the High Bureaus for appearances' sake. The defilers swear a geas sealed by the King's own sorcery not to use their powers to assault or work against him. In return, the Black Peace have full access to the King's libraries and are tasked with research into ancient artifacts, the preservation and copying of lore too heretical for the Templarate to be trusted with, the study of dangerous magic and demon-binding, fighting and containing powerful undead creatures, and hunting down the Veiled Alliance. Other Templars fear the Black Peace and defer to them when they make an appearance.

IRON LIRR (II)

A small mercenary outfit based out of Tyr which guards caravans for the Merchant House that bids the highest. Their membership has fluctuated wildly over the years and they are always looking for fresh bodies to fill "vacated" positions. They usually serve alongside one or two other mercenary groups hired by their employer, depending on the size of the caravan, and have thus established both friendships and rivalries.

DANCING COIN (II)

Former members of the Harp & Knife who managed to survive banishment, and disguised as bodyguards rather than entertainers, now sell their services as security personnel to nervous nobles and rich merchants, having intimate knowledge of the methods their former colleagues use. The Harp & Knife consider their existence a stain on their honor, but thus far is enjoying the challenge.

DEEP LEGION (IV)

The battalion of the city's army responsible for doing battle with existential threats to the citizens of Tyr out in the deserts. Templars assigned a command in the Deep Legion consider it a punishment and a career dead-end, as there is no prestige in the position, little-to-no chance for wealth or intrigue, and a high chance of a violent death. The Deep Legion soldiers themselves are well-equipped for their job, well-fed, and when not marching through the desert or defending the walls, serve as the Golden Tower's and King's fanatically loyal personal guardians.

UNION OF THE WHITE PALMS (I)

A secret sect within the Templarate with beliefs even the worst of the other Templars find vile. The Union is a death cult that works towards the death of all outsiders, mutants, and non-humans within the city. They aren't afraid to kill "the pure" who get in their way. In an act of unlikely enlightenment, the King has ordered the cult stamped out with extreme prejudice before it spreads – which has more to do with the fact half of the city's slaves are non-humans than true benevolence.

THE EYE, THE EAR & THE HAND (III)

A secret society among bards and entertainers focused on espionage, blackmail, spy-craft, and double-dealing. The Harp & Knife ignores them as long as they don't expand into murder and kidnapping. The Hand, however, has been slowly plotting to take over Harp & Knife.

BEGGAR CULTS (II)

The Beggar Cults are a collection of beggars, cripples, and other lost souls who have come together in worship of the elemental lords or various forgotten gods at shrines in Under-Tyr. The beggar cults view Kalak as a failed god, and express the unmasked ascetism of a beggar's life as virtue, but otherwise have widely varying ideologies and beliefs.

THE TENTH (III)

A slave-army from a distant city who murdered their overseers and took up as mercenaries. They don't make trouble and follow local laws. The Templars believe they're helping free and conceal escaped slaves, but have no proof...yet. Until they do, the Templatate is avoiding direct action against the Tenth only because the company is numerous, incredibly well-armed, and in the regular employ of powerful Merchant Houses.

CULT OF THE BLACK SUN (I)

The high priestess of this cult has repurposed a crumbling temple in Under-Tyr, where she spends most of her time attempting to commune with "the Black Sun", and claiming to her faithful she brings them its holy commands. The cult believes the dark sun is an actual deity, and hold quiet, daily rooftop services watching the sunrise and sunset. The cult's symbol is an orrery encasing a cinder. It is possible an ancient, undead spirit that has made its home in the temple is the actual leader of the cult.

BURNING CANDLE (II)

The Elven Market doesn't have a stranglehold on moving illegal products into the city. The Candle is a failed Merchant House, that, rather than its surviving members scattering, decided to use their connections to help move certain goods inside the walls of the city for discerning clientele. The group communicates via a complex system of burning candles placed in certain windows at particular times of night.

SCARABS (II)

A loose association of alchemists and gardeners in the Artisan Quarter involved in selling potion fruits and other illicit drugs, as well as experimenting in the creation of new substances and experiences. They usually have at least one honey-den for customers, but the locations move. They're also involved in kidnapping, the slave-trade, and assassination.

BROTHERS OF THE EMPTY HAND (II)

A Beggar Cult faction that wages war against the city's slave traders. Those they free are "asked" to join their cause and swear oaths of ascetism, then taught unarmed combat techniques and psychic exercises at their temple in Under-Tyr. Not everyone so freed desires to devote their lives to poverty, but the monks are not above forcible indoctrination.

WEAVERS (III)

The most privileged and corrupt demagogues in the city are the Masters' Council of the Weavers' Guild. While they don't have the absolute power of the Templatate or the sway of the Senate, the Weavers control most of the city's neighborhood aldermen, giving them political influence over numerous local matters and citizens and a wide web of information and sentiment to manipulate in the favor of the Guilds.

THE ACCURSED (II)

Those abandoned and left to die in the desert are exposed to myriad curses, dark magics, and the horrors of the wastes. Most do die. Some of those refuse to stay dead. Among the sane undead not driven entirely by desire and thirst, some have successfully made their way into the city, and now haunt Under-Tyr or the Warrens. It is whispered some have even managed to hide their true nature and taken the place of prominent nobles, merchants, or Templars to further their own unaccountable ends.

WARDENS (I)

A small cadre of self-styled exorcists who deal with ghosts, tomb guardians, restless corpses, hungry specters, vengeful wraiths, and weird hauntings that the Templars are too busy (or too disinterested) to handle. They maintain a fragile alliance with the Templarate, but are constantly short on resources. Some claim they are shady extortionists who "create" hauntings to stay in business.

CHAIN GANG (II)

Recapturing a runaway child for a handful of water chits is considered legitimate work in Tyr, and this group of bounty-hunters specializes in catching not just runaways, but criminals who escaped sentencing and escaped slaves. Some consider them heroes because (for the right amount of ceramic) they can also be hired under the table to enact vigilante justice. The truth is they work for anyone who can pay them...but they might even turn on the Templarate if a big enough payoff beckoned.

MENAGERIE (II)

A guild of hunters and trappers who supply the arena with monstrous creatures from the wastelands, capturing them alive for the city's bloodsport. They also deal with the Scarabs and the Elven Market for certain "exotic" feed, and clash with desert-dwelling tribes who object to them capturing sacred beasts.

CITY DISTRICTS

Everything properly called Tyr is surrounded by stone walls, fifty-feet thick and high, blessed by the god-king to hold back the foulest aspects of the desert weather, such as shard storms and the gray death, as well as to repel attacks by gargantuan desert predators, raids by gathered elf tribes, hungry thri-kreen swarms, and worse. Only the farms lie outside the city walls, guarded by powerful Templars and full units of Tyr's slave armies, plus the forces of the Noble Houses who hold the land-deeds.

Three gates lead into the city: the Caravan Gate, the main gate leading into the trade districts; the Arena Gate leading into the industrial district and slave pens; and the little-used Grand Gate (also called the High Gate), which leads directly into the Golden City. There are always a few makeshift tenements around the first two gates, where anyone can sleep free for the night...unprotected.

The city walls are like two interlocked rings. The section of the city inhabited by the slaves, freemen, merchants, and nobility, is dominated by an immense, multi-hued, as-yet-unfinished ziggurat which casts its shadow across the districts below. While the section of the city that houses Tyr's bureaucracy and extensive (well-guarded) materiel reserves (water, grain, ingots) is dominated by the immense Golden Tower at its center, wherein the god-king and his most faithful reside.

The city architecture is externally austere. Homes and businesses are multi-level mudbrick and adobe buildings with wide doorways and large windows high on the walls – to allow cooling breezes to pass through and heat to escape, and lizard-skin curtains to hold the heat in at night – and floors of tiled mud-brick or hard-packed dirt. Most buildings are pressed up against one another for support, and the city streets are a drunken maze, winding and twisting, with no discernable layout or design, multitudinous cul-de-sacs and random dead-end alleyways.

Over centuries of war, earthquake, catastrophe, and urban planning, the city has been rebuilt on top of itself many times, and there are as many levels below the streets as there are above, though most of those levels under Tyr are sealed off and dangerous – making them the perfect place for scoundrels and outcasts to hide from law and authority.

SITUATION

The city is not doing well. The King's century-long ziggurat project looms, both literally and economically, over the city, draining desperately needed resources as the god-king pushes his Templars to finish its construction, fueling growing rebellion as Templar tactics for keeping on schedule grow ever more brutal: Templar slave-catchers patrol the city, accusing freemen of minor crimes and sentencing them to slavery and work on the ziggurat. Templars seize goods and slaves from the Houses under pretexts that grow increasingly transparent, and foreign caravans are taxed ever more unreasonably – to the point even the iron of the mines begins to lose its luster for those who cross the wastelands to obtain it.

A water shortage is being hidden from the citizens by the highest echelons of the Templarate in order to prevent mass panic, such that even most Templars are unaware of the dire nature of the problem. But thirst and drought will be difficult to hide for much longer: crops are failing, people are starving (not just those relegated to the alleys and Warrens).

There are those who feel the city would be better-off ruled by someone or something other than the god-king, and sentiment has soured in enough citizens that they are willing to voice those beliefs despite the punishment of execution for heresy – and because there are those who use these feelings to advance their own agendas, from inciting an overthrow of the old order entirely, to paving the way for an invasion and rule by the false gods of the wastelands, to the narcissism of preaching that all must be razed to its bones in an apocalypse of destruction.

Deadly, dangerous things and groups are stirring in the desert and beneath the city, ready to move against it as the city's protectors are shackled and eroded from within by the culmination of centuries of greed, corruption, and selfishness now unchecked by the once careful god-king.

CARAVAN DISTRICT

From the grand gate leading into Tyr runs a broad, merchant-lined avenue that twists towards the base of the god-king's ziggurat. The most culturally vibrant area of the city thanks to the multitude of people and goods from distant lands flowing into the city – with an equal multitude of inns, taverns, boarding houses, eateries, and guides competing for their patronage. Maze-like streets spider-web away from the main thoroughfare, with no sign of planning or underlying design to their layout.

Almost anything you care to purchase is available here, often at a cost that will make your eyes water. Every merchant here has fought (lied, bribed, stolen, and murdered) to gain their spot within the district, with the most prestigious being those shops directly along the Caravan Way.

LANDMARKS

The Caravan Gate is a massive entryway, usually left open but always well-defended. In times of trouble – such as during an attack or dangerous desert storms – the “gate”, made up of two huge blocks of solid stone carved with statuary of the god-king, can be moved into place by groups of psychically-powerful Templars to form an unbroken wall and seal the city.

When the need is less pressing, a set of “smaller” gates have been engineered from thick slabs of agafari wood banded and studded with rusting iron, which require “only” a team of half-giants to push into place and bar. The gate is constantly patrolled and well-watched.

Caravan Way is a long, twisting avenue that leads from the main gate to the Merchants' District. The avenue is broad enough to allow a fully-burdened mekillot (a not-uncommon sight) to pass and still leaves more than enough room for street vendors, crowds of pedestrians, and the nobility with their retinues. The avenue is lined with wealthy shops and market stalls selling (almost) everything you can imagine.

The Overlook on the southern edge of the district consists of pricey, long-term lodgings and a few high-end shops built along an escarpment above the broad, shallow ravine below that local legend claims was once part of a river of water that flowed through the city. The northern bank of the ravine is much higher than the southern, and from here one has a grand view of the nobility's large, walled, garden estates on the opposite bank.

SCENE

A riot of colorful street vendors gather along the broad avenue in austere buildings of beautifully white-washed brick, all advertising wares or lodging for person or beast, with painted boards and facades. Crowds flow around the ponderous mekillot and muzzled inix making their way down the broad, winding avenue. Elite patrols of the city-watch, led by templars and backed by half-giants, march through maze-like streets. Nobles and their retinues of slaves and bodyguards move from shop-to-shop, seeking the latest art, fashions, and finest spider-silks from afar.

NOTABLES

Manchus. The mutant human templar who oversees the security forces of the Caravan Gate brooks no variation from schedule or regulation: “Disorder brings opportunity for enemies of the city-state.” He is temple-trained and powerful in the Way. He keeps the dusky yellow markings of his mutation covered out of personal shame. (Nervous, Rigid.)

Mila. Half-elven proprietor and hostess of the Golden Inix Inn, an upscale stop-over for foreigners and merchants spending a day or two in the city. Her regular guests are incredibly loyal. She is secretly a powerful telepath and rumor-monger. (Serious, Inquisitive, Graceful.)

Lira. The senior guard-officer of the City Watch headquartered in the Caravan District. She carries herself proudly. While she dislikes that the Watch is essentially an arm of the Templarate, she is far too loyal to complain or take action against the King's priests. (Decisive, Organized.)

Trink. The half-elven owner of a pawn-shop called The Tarnished Cup, which buys and sells previously owned goods of all sorts, from instruments, to jewelry, clothing, and even chariots. He has multiple black-market contacts. (Sly, Greedy.)

Wealth 2. Safety 3. Criminal Influence 2. Supernatural Influence 1.
Take +1d to acquire an asset here, because chances are good someone has what you're looking for, but take +1 HEAT doing it, because you're probably being watched.

MERCHANT DISTRICT

At the end of the winding Caravan Way, past caravan warehouses and animal pens, under the shadow of the ziggurat, rise the immense, high-walled compounds of the Merchant Houses, founders of the caravans and holders of the merchant guild-titles of Tyr. Large emporiums surround each compound, offering House goods for sale – often the only (legal) place one can purchase certain goods due to ancient trade-rights the Houses have negotiated for themselves, and for which they have not given resale rights to associate merchants elsewhere in the city.

Each compound is a self-contained village, guaranteed a certain amount of independence from city law, and provides its representatives, caravan masters, and guardsmen free tenement. The compounds serve not just as embassy, but estate for the most prominent local House members, whose quarters are often as lavish as those of any noble.

LANDMARKS

Iron Square. The central hub of the district, surrounded by the ten major Merchant Houses in the city, and dominated by the compound of House Vordon – the holders of the city's trade contracts for iron and iron tools – taking up an entire quarter of the square. Each of the ten Houses' trading emporiums are located here, as well as access to their main offices, though the inner compounds are off-limits to non-House members or employees.

The lesser Houses maintain small offices, street stalls, and cramped lodgings around the edge of the square. They often pay the larger houses to safely store their equipment, goods, and animals. Such protection contracts are considered inviolate; Houses that break this trust by stealing from a House under their protection may find their trade contracts and protection-rights revoked, and caravans marked for plunder by the other Houses.

House Shom. An ancient, powerful House based in distant Nibenay, which over the past few decades has become less concerned with trade and more with draining its immense coffers by means of lavish, decadent, very private parties catering to the obscene vices of its founding family. The Shom compound in Tyr is a palatial mansion of delights filled with extravagant artwork, and one of the few buildings in the city designed for aesthetic value, rather than austere utility.

While the family ignores the collapse of their trade empire, its agents fund their own luxurious lifestyles at the House's expense. Through its vast trade network, these agents can easily arrange to smuggle and sell contraband for themselves, or others...with the correctly-sized bribe.

SCENE

The ziggurat looms over the Merchant District, casting its cold shadow upon the Houses, reminding them they only exist at the patience of the King. Guards draped in their House's colors gather at every street corner, making up for the absence of templar patrols. The stench of animal pens hangs in the air and weird animal cries mix with the shouts of porters moving goods – off-loading them into warehouses before transport to shop and emporium, or loading them onto departing caravans. Local craftsmen, hurried traders, and rough mercenaries seeking employment push their way through the crowds and past lumbering caravans.

NOTABLES

Asher Troika. Founder and caravan master of the new House bearing his name. They have a small, cramped compound, but he pays very well and is seeking skilled and loyal guards and handlers. (Tough, Fair, Generous.)

Thaxos Vordon. A merchant lord who would be king, the head of House Vordon secretly plots for revolution and, through a number of dummy lesser Houses, funds select groups also seeking to overthrow the city government. It is unlikely his family would approve of this plan, nor the civil war sure to result when his more honest subordinates refuse his commands. (Friendly, Manipulative, Power Hungry.)

Strabo lanto. The Patriarch of House lanto has relocated most of the House's resources to an ancient fortress some miles south of the city. With the House falling on hard times, he pays well for secrets...and for deniable sorties against the other Houses. (Tired, Desperate, Wrathful.)

Wealth 3. Safety 3. Criminal Influence 2. Supernatural Influence 1.
Operations against warehouses or the compounds are considered **hostile turf** for the purpose of generating HEAT.

NOBLE QUARTER

The walled estates and villas of the nobility begin at the edges of the Caravan District, just beyond the high-end merchant shops selling items such as perfumes and body oils, jewelry, gemstones, colorful feathers and body paint, tapestries, skillful carvings, and other finery. At the district's outer edge, the estate walls press up against those of the city; while at their inner edge, they loom over the slum-like Warrens and Brickyards.

Like all the architecture of the city, the buildings are austere and pressed together, sharing thick adobe walls and overlapping levels, though some prestigious few bear colored tile roofs or golden domes. Within any given estate, however, are dozens of lavish rooms surrounding a broad, open courtyard with carefully tended gardens. All run on slave labor.

LANDMARKS

The King's Square. In the center of the northern section of the Quarter is a wide, diamond-shaped park enclosed by high walls. The nobility come here to relax, but more often to discuss matters of state outside the Senate, and to air personal grievances among one another. An ancient fountain still sits at the center of the square; the priests of the nearby temple keep the waters flowing. The nobility may drink freely from the fountain, but severe penalties await anyone else who does so.

Temple of the Four Elements. A pillared procession leads from the King's Square to an immense, tile-roofed cathedral. Four towers capped with golden bricks praise the elements, one for each. The tower of Water is the largest, followed by Fire, while the smaller towers of Earth and Air are tucked away near the city wall. The temple and its priests only exist by the leave of the King – the Templars occasionally *remind* the priests that the elementals serve the god-king, not the other way around.

The Burning Hand. An open-air spa for the nobility, containing a series of baths heated by summoned fire elementals whose presence has led to rumors the baths are sacred and can cure all manner of ailments. Numerous slaves tend to the varied needs of its guests.

SCENE

Servants move quietly along broad, clean streets alongside nobles carried on palanquins borne by slaves. Patrols of polite private security mix discretely into the foot traffic, watching for ruffians, scoundrels, and the unsuitable to remove from the district. House guards and servants stand outside in the hot sun by the wide doors of each villa, waiting to greet visitors. The broad green leaves of the occasional tree rise above compound walls, casting shade on blue-tiled roofs. All seems calm and quiet.

NOTABLES

Seff. The district's guard captain, loyal to the King, but holds a secret grudge against the elite he has been assigned to protect. He happily informs on the nobility to the Templarate. (Dedicated, Secretive.)

Uthaya. A Templar and the most feared wizard-hunter in the city. He relies on good relations with the elemental clerics to gain leads from citizens reticent to speak with Templars, and often intercedes on the behalf of clerics when particularly harsh punishments are doled out for imagined blasphemies. (Vengeful, Insightful, Quick.)

Baroness Sorok: Her influence extends to the highest levels of the city as she has the ear of her father, the King. She runs multiple slave farms just beyond the walls and is thought to have several mine foremen in her pocket. She seeks to become the city's Queen, whether alone or by her father's side. (Vain, Manipulative, Perverse.)

Lliss. The high priestess of the Temple of the Four, a devotee of elemental water, and the mul daughter of the earth cleric Bontar. She is a skilled diplomat, and helps the nobility with their Quarter's water issues to earn concessions for the clerics from the Senate. (Sly, Tireless, Mercurial.)

Wealth 4. Safety 3. Criminal Influence 1. Supernatural Influence 2. Engagement rolls suffer -1d due to city watch, templar patrols, and private security. The entire district is considered **hostile turf** for the purpose of generating HEAT during a score – the Noble Houses have a long memory.

WARRENS

The narrow, twisting streets and crumbling buildings of the Warrens make up the majority of the northern quarter of the city. These are Tyr's slums, inhabited on its outskirts by poor freemen and laborers, while the tenements further towards the core of the district are increasingly abandoned and serve only as sources of raw material or simply places to dump trash. Gangs and mobs roam the Warrens, mugging, robbing, and murdering. This sometimes extends into the neighboring districts. Templar patrols are rare, and do little good, but some tradesmen have hired mercenaries to serve as a makeshift city watch. The poor souls of the deeper Warrens tell tales of hauntings by dark spirits and monsters.

LANDMARKS

Elven Market. Just past the Elven Bridge, the drab buildings of the city become a colorful riot of tarps and tents, where elven vendors of the various nomadic tribes around Tyr spread their ever-changing wares upon blankets, or hawk them from counters behind quickly-closed windows. Due to its central location and wide variety, the market is frequented by everyone in the city – though quality is not guaranteed, and the market is rife with thieves and con-artists. Almost anything you desire can be found (and sold) here, if you know the right questions to ask the right people.

Shadow Square. A small entertainment district busiest after sunset and before dawn. The technically illegal gambling houses are an open secret. Less so are the pleasure dens catering to honey-addicts, unlicensed brothels, and underground fighting rings, each supported by (or pretending to be) legitimate business: wine and ale shops, hostels, and dance halls.

Veiled Alliance Headquarters. Known only to its proprietor, a hidden passage in the basement of the Drunken Giant tavern – an unpretentious establishment with good food and drink at affordable prices – leads to Under-Tyr and the Alliance. Or at least to one of their contacts.

The Elven Bridge. An ancient bridge worn down by the centuries crosses over a wide, barren gully cutting through the Warrens. The gully supposedly once flowed with water, but now holds only discarded trash. Clandestine exchanges are often held in the shadow of the bridge, and rogues sometimes hide beneath, waiting to waylay the unfortunate.

SCENE

The noise, laughter, and cursing of the unrestrained commerce of the Elven Market gives way to the scratching of vermin scuttling through the detritus that crowds against the edges of ill-kept tenements. Crumbling buildings reek of discarded trash and worse. Hard-looking men and women stand in groups in the shadows of narrow streets, watching passers-by with dark eyes and stony expressions, but scatter when groups of armed, rough-looking mercenaries wearing tradesmen or House sigils stroll down the street, hands on weapons. Heavily-armed Templar patrols ransack the rough shanties, seeking “escaped slaves”, and press-gang “vagabonds” (ie: anyone who can't pay them off) into field-service.

NOTABLES

Krysta. A former half-elven gladiator renowned for her beauty and sensuality. She runs the notorious Crystal Spider: a lavish, three-story gambling house that stands out in the decay of the Warrens. It boasts a private courtyard and working fountain, as well as private meeting rooms and offices on the upper floors. Her employees are known to be fanatically loyal. (Beautiful, Fierce, Provocative.)

Shiral. An out-going elf with a melodious voice. His tribe gathers fresh vegetables and herbs from the Forest Ridge, right under the noses of the halfling tribes, and runs them to the city via a secret route. For especially trusted clients, he can also provide the potion fruits gathered during the tribe's dangerous excursions. (Friendly, Sharp-eyed, Cautious.)

Sarkea. An ancient-looking halfling woman with pale skin, jaundiced eyes, and long fingers ending in sharp, painted talons. She both oversees and never leaves the House of Fingers – a safe-house and holy shrine for the city's bards, where murder and poison are forbidden. The House stands in what is facetiously called “the Bard's Quarter” near the Elven Market, its walls are adorned with thousands of ancient fingers and other appendages from every manner of sentient creature. Destroying one immediately marks a person for death. (Superstitious, Creepy, Insightful.)

Wealth 1. Safety 1. Criminal Influence 4. Supernatural Influence 3.
No one cares: take -1 HEAT to any score being performed in the Warrens.

ARTISAN DISTRICT

On the northern edge of the city, sandwiched between the Warrens, the gladiatorial arena, and the city wall, are the shops and homes of Tyr's freemen. The buildings here are simple but well-maintained. The district's shops provide the basic crafts and goods by artisans such as cobblers, potters, and weavers, that are needed by the citizens. The streets lack the hawkers and street vendors of the more "colorful" trade districts, and a few bars and restaurants cater to locals, with less tolerance for outsiders.

LANDMARKS

The Wayward Trader. A popular, quiet tavern frequented by the locals, offering a variety of drinks and food. Strangers are left-alone as long as they cause no trouble, but are watched carefully, if discreetly, by the regulars. The owner, Quen (Witty, Resigned), is a sassy caravaner who stayed in Tyr rather than risk the journey back to Raam when her merchant house failed. She paints and embroiders curtains with stunning and fantastical scenes; some can be seen hung up around the tavern.

The Critic's Ceramic. A pottery and ceramic shop named for the small, psychic lizard often kept as a pet by Tyrian families. The family who owns it claim it has been in business as long as Kalak has sat upon his throne (ie: the beginning of time). This is unlikely, but the shop is almost an institution in the district, and no one can recall a time it wasn't there. Its placard is a painting of a lizard wrapped around a water chit.

The Serpent-handled Basket. A small, nondescript tavern that runs illegal gambling games in a basement room. One of the owners, Septris (Deceitful, Amoral), secretly drugs customers with doses of toa'd'dup – a sweet, syrupy incredibly illicit substance that has a nasty effect on anyone using psychic abilities: "It cuts down on cheating."

The Spider's Sister. The tailor of this small shop, Isobel (Philanthropic, Secretive), specializes in spider silks, though no one knows from where she obtains the material. Most of Isobel's income goes towards helping her sister pay off serious debts she has incurred with other Templars.

SCENE

Freemen walk along the clean, narrow streets past stoic, aged homes and shops with worn, painted placards. Some sit outside on narrow, shaded porches at street level, or more commonly on the second story. The bulk of the stadium rises in the background, banners waving overhead. Regular Templar patrols sweep through the streets, protecting the citizens from ruffians, and for this service collect the King's Tax in goods or flesh.

NOTABLES

Thra. The last descendant of House Sharpe, whose family was murdered by bards when she was a child and their land and wealth distributed to the other noble Houses. A family slave escaped with her into the Artisan District and hid them both. She suspects House Vordon, as they gained the most from her family's destruction. (Sullen, Impulsive.)

Templar Argys: A sharp-eyed tax-collector committed to ensuring Kalak receives his due from the city's freemen. Plus a little for himself. He plays his part as a mid-ranking Templar well, but is aware of far-more than he lets on as he is actually a spy for a rival city-state. He may be a member of the Lion's Paw, or merely affiliated. (Suspicious, Thorough.)

Alderman Tlevis: The district's go-between for the people and the powers that run the city. He has some sway with the Templarate, and attempts to keep the local overseers happy and well-bribed. Through contacts with the Noble Houses, he subtly plays the Houses and the Templars against one another to gain concessions for his district, but would be killed if discovered doing so. (Daring, Charming, Educated.)

Mir: A mutant half-elf who claims to be a "Prophet of the Two Moons." Quite insane, but mostly harmless. In actuality, she is an informant and spy for the main Veiled Alliance cell that works in the district – the perfect cover, as her thoughts appear confused and chaotic to any who attempt to explore her mind. (Convincing, Perceptive.)

Wealth 2. Safety 2. Criminal Influence 2. Supernatural Influence 2.
It's easy to acquire goods here, but criminal types and outsiders draw attention. Take +1d to acquire assets, but +2 HEAT when you do.

SMITHY DISTRICT

On the southern side of the city, between the stadium and walls, is the industrial district of carpenters, stonecutters, tanners, wainwrights, bonesmiths, and similar craftsmen whose work requires larger spaces, creates intolerable noise, or is similarly unsuited to adjacency with residential locations. Unlike the rest of the city, the streets here are broad and straight, the buildings are one story and free-standing, not clustered and stacked, all with significant yards on one-or-more sides.

LANDMARKS

Arena Gate. The opening is flanked by immense carvings of the Dragon, while the gate itself is carved in the shape of the beast's feral jaws; the tunnel is lined with triangular stones mimicking its wicked teeth. Slaves from the pens are marched daily through this gate to work the city fields, but otherwise there is constant traffic from nomadic elven traders, herdsmen and trappers, and transports of ripened crops and crude materials such as stone and gravel from mountain quarries.

Beast Market. Beast handlers assisted by powerful psychics oversee the high-walled pens of z'tal, inix, and mekillot, crates of jankx, herds of kip and baazrag, pens of kank (trained and untrained), and corrals of crodlu and erdlu that fill the grounds between the stadium and the slave pens.

The Brickyards. Centuries ago, Kalak ordered nearly a third of the city razed to make room for his ziggurat and new stadium, and the brickyards necessary for their construction. The former tenants found themselves enslaved inside the new pens lining the edge of the district. City-owned slaves either haul bricks to and construct the ziggurat, or wallow in the mud and excrement used to craft them.

SCENE

The unpleasant smells of animal musk, urine, and feces choke the air, tinged with the earthy reek of the mud from the brickyards. The crack of whips and the yells of task-masters commanding grunting, silent slaves is a constant, mixed with the crack of chisels working stone. A variety of animals low, squawk and hiss, herded in through the gate at set intervals alongside burdened carts of ore, grain, and other rough material.

NOTABLES

The Gentlemen. Dwarven twins – brothers – who run a stabling business for exotic creatures, located just outside the Brickyards near the gate. Besides Merchant Houses or traders with peculiar needs the market pens cannot accommodate, their pens are most often used to contain dangerous creatures the arena master does not want inside the arena itself (until it is time for the games). (Single-minded, Quiet, Weird.)

Katid. Widely reviled and feared by the slaves of the Brickyards, this former gladiator is an unparalleled trainer of beasts, and breaker of people. She trains both mounts and hunting beasts for the Templarate and Noble Houses, and anyone else who can offer her a good deal; and is often called on to pacify unruly slaves. (Unpleasant, Ruthless.)

Grik. An ex-gladiator mul famous for his ability to craft the finest, sharpest weapons in the city...for a small mark-up. He often has a few select, exotic weapons from distant lands available for purchase, even metal weaponry. He purchases ancient artifacts from explorers, and is an expert on ancient places. A well-known member of the Bonesmithy, though he works in multiple materials. (No Nonsense, Hard Bargainer.)

Axos. The district's trademaster oversees all materiel being delivered through the gate: grain, stone, straw, ingots, etc. It is understood that he favors those who give him small bribes, while others may find themselves stuck outside the walls for long periods. The King's unchecked expenditures are cutting into his business. (Meticulous, Clumsy.)

Wealth 1. Safety 2. Criminal Influence 2. Supernatural Influence 1.
Work on the ziggurat is performed day-and-night, and the district is constantly busy with traders and herdsmen arriving at all hours, so there is no good time for covert operation. People are always willing to look the other way for the right bribe, however...if you have something they want.

STADIUM

Blood-sport gladiatorial games take place here, sponsored by the King and thus of minimal cost to the citizens. Thanks to his largess, even the poorest can afford to watch the slaves and criminals fight one another – in death-matches against arena favorites or monstrous desert beasts captured for use in the games. Slave-gladiators who survive long enough can even earn their freedom, for most of the games are to first blood rather than the death, and many gladiators – whether free warriors or sentenced criminals – have devoted fans throughout the city.

The stadium is sometimes used to host market events, filling the arena with crowded stalls covered by tarps and blankets. However, the smell of cooking oils, spices and sizzling meats, along with the sweet candy scent of citrus, often fail to completely cover the coppery smell of blood and of fermented urine that have soaked into the sands over the centuries.

LANDMARKS

Prisoner Cells. Those condemned to fight in the games are kept in cells beneath the foundation stones of the arena's broad seating. The cells are cramped, and new prisoners are lucky if they have a pile of new hay to sleep on. The bars, made of treated bone strong enough to keep the worst desert monsters caged and fastened with nearly impossible to cut giant's hair rope, are raised and lowered via pulley. Imprisoned gladiators who prove to be crowd favorites gain better accommodations and food.

King's Balcony. Opposite the ziggurat, when he deigns to descend from the Golden Tower, the King and his royal guard watch the games from here beside the Arena Master. The announcer stands just below, calling out matches and whipping the crowds into frenzy. He also stands ready to call the arena guard should any of the combatants get ideas about escaping or about refusing to fight.

The Arena Floor. A broad field of white and gold sands stained red and black with blood and ichor. Four stone obelisks are evenly spaced across the arena floor, providing for some tactical maneuvering as well as markers for games with goals. A broad chariot track runs along the outer edge for use in brutal races of weapon and speed.

SCENE

Roaring crowds sit and stand on the tiered stone to watch the bloodsport on the red sands below, cheering their favorite gladiators, booing and jeering others, thrilling to the monstrous, terrifying desert beasts kept (deliberately barely) under control by trained arena mystics. Nobles are attended by fan-bearing slaves keeping them shaded and cool, often in private boxes, while the lower classes bake under the sun in the public seats. The announcer calls out matches, voice magnified, whipping up the crowd's excitement, bending their mood.

NOTABLES

Sheent the Bloody-Hand. An elven criminal who leads the toughest gang of human and dwarven gladiators kept in the pens. Most of them are vicious criminals serving sentences for unspeakable crimes and have survived multiple death matches. Sheent makes sure his people eat well (usually at the expense of other gladiators), are treated well by the guards, and receive other compensations. Those gladiators who dare cross or anger him end up starved, brutally murdered, or both. (Cruel, Charismatic.)

Arkan. The oldest gladiator still performing in the games; he has won dozens of brutal fights, including several death matches. His role has become largely ceremonial, given his immense popularity, but even the worst of the other gladiators respect and defer to him rather than have the crowds (and thus the Arena Master) turn on them. (Skilled, Patient.)

Teg. The current Arena Master is mainly concerned with keeping the crowds happy, and keeping the King happy by ensuring the popularity of the games. The crowds always want to see exotic desert monsters and blood: he has no compunctions about setting up such games, and with the city's coffers behind him, can pay well for creatures and beings captured in the wastelands. He often taunts the criminals and ill-liked gladiators, which also pleases the crowds. (Brutal, Sadistic.)

Wealth I. Safety I. Criminal Influence I. Supernatural Influence I. scores done within the Stadium are at -1d to the engagement roll.

KALAK'S ZIGGURAT

In the very center of the city, nearly rivaling the Golden Tower in height, and the width of an entire district, is a ziggurat the god-king has spent generations building. Kalak's immense monument to his own glory can be seen clearly anywhere in the city, as can its towering carvings and painted murals. A rainbow of bold colors mark its terraces, topped by the brilliant crimson at top, from which sacrificial fires issue a constant cloud of smoke.

The people say its glazed bricks are mortared with the blood of all the slaves who died in its construction – but they say it quietly. The groaning bodies of the original designers, architects, and slaves are entombed within to protect its secrets, and are said to emerge on dark nights to drag the living inside for a terrible ritual consumption of spirit and flesh.

Its design and construction have been slowly strangling the city of resources and labor necessary to Tyr's survival. It will soon bankrupt the city entirely. Some have noted it seems near to completion, and perhaps the city might yet be spared total collapse.

LANDMARKS

Plaza of the Moons. The top of the ziggurat is essentially a broad, open area broken only by large pits of smoldering coal and elemental fire. Immense banners are planted near its corners, billowing in the winds. The pits are tended day-and-night, and expensive herbs and oils – and slaves and prisoners – are ritually sacrificed into them on a regular schedule set by the cycle of the two moons. There are entrances here into sub-surface rooms where the Templars prepare themselves and their victims for the rites, and perhaps ways deeper into the ziggurat as well.

Chamber of Stars. There are rumors the god-king had tens-of-thousands of obsidian bricks cut and shaped for a multi-leveled maze within the ziggurat, protecting hundreds of chambers filled with treasure. And, if it actually exists, an immense, domed chamber deep in its bowels, walled with polished obsidian bricks set with diamonds – and a few rubies and sapphires hidden among the glittering horde – all connected by thin grooves that appear and take on shapes when light strikes them from the correct angles. At its center a deep well wide enough to accommodate the bulk of a dozen mountain drakes or mekillots plunges into the dark earth.

The Ten-Thousand Steps. A steep, broad staircase without handhold, railings, or landings leads straight up the side of the ziggurat from the Merchant District. It is flanked by a series of titanic statues, and smaller human-sized icons set into the bases of the statues or along the steps, depicting mighty warriors and priests, as well as strange beasts.

SCENE

A constant breeze created by updrafts around the structure do little to cool the glazed, sun-baked bricks. Artisans perched on scaffolds carve the final details into the statuary and add the final brushstrokes to the immense murals. The god-king's faithful ascend the ziggurat in ritualistic worship, ignoring scores of dirty, ill-fed slaves too parched to sweat. The slaves haul bricks to unfinished sections under the threatening eyes of Templars, and some are dragged to the summit, screaming or weeping. The lucky ones return, hauling ash from the fire-pits to the Brickyards.

NOTABLES

High Templar Letergis. The aarakocra Templar in charge of the sacrifices and lunar rituals rarely descends from the Plaza of the Moons. The lower ranking templars who serve him whisper that he has gone mad and now thinks himself a god born from the sky. (Strict, Compulsive, Insane.)

The Black Queen. Long ago, Kalak summoned a mysterious entity to protect the city from spiritual attack by the other sorcerer-kings. Local legend says an ebony figure dressed in regal garb can sometimes be seen walking the walls, and (lying or hallucinating) members of the city watch occasionally claim to have briefly spoken with her. (Protective, Powerful.)

The First Architect. A low-ranking templar in life, with an exceptional mind for engineering and construction (unfortunately). After designing the ziggurat for the King, she was entombed alive in the depths of the edifice so that the ziggurat's secrets would have no chance of being learned. She is now a centuries-old undead. (Clever, Hungry, Hateful.)

Wealth 2. Safety 3. Criminal Influence 1. Supernatural Influence 4.
You should not be here. You are not prepared for what lies within. Scores inside the ziggurat automatically start at Desperate.

THE GOLDEN CITY

Separated from the rest of the city by its own encircling walls, the tiers of the Golden City contain both the King's palace and the city's administrative machinery. Each tier is likewise separated from those below by a wall. The lowest tier consists of the barracks and housing for the lowest ranking members of the Templarite; this level also contains gates leading to the rest of Tyr. The second tier consists of the High Bureaus and the halls of the Senate, as well as providing access to the Observation Tower. The third tier consists of the King's Gardens, a private preserve of exotic plant life, crowding up around the thick base of the Golden Tower.

LANDMARKS

The Grand Gate. Most rarely utilized of all the city gates, it faces into the desert at the opposite end of Tyr from the Caravan Gate. It is opened only for high-ranking officials needing immediate access to the Golden City or for ambassadors from distant city-states. The massive gates, crafted of intricately carved agafari wood, arch high above the wall. A massive stone block carved with the form of the dragon confronts visitors at the entry; Templars trained in the Way can slide the block into place to seal the breach in the wall when the gates would not be enough.

The High Bureaus. Here stand the great edifices and courts of the city's internal bureaucracy. Citizen petitioners must start at the lowest levels, with low-ranking Templars, and make (bribe) their way towards the higher levels to meet with those empowered to resolve their problems.

The Senate. Standing amid the bureaus, overlooking the city below, these ancient halls and chambers are where the nobility meets to scheme, bicker, and enforce the King's will (such little that they are given to preside over) through the Templars and the city guard. It is cheaper, but more difficult, for a citizen to gain the ear of a Senator who can work and bribe the bureaucracy than to deal with the High Bureaus – but they must be able to provide something of value in return.

Wealth 3. Safety 4. Criminal Influence 1. Supernatural Influence 3.

The Templars are corrupt beyond measure, always playing their games of one-upmanship, and thus always alert. Scores here generate +2 HEAT.

SCENE

Clean, orderly streets surrounded by many-leveled austere buildings packed between the high walls of each tier. The watchful eyes of silent half-giants at attention outside every building. The hint of lush greenery around the base of the wind-polished stone of the King's gleaming palace above. Squads of Templarite soldiers march and drill in the hot sun, attended by as many slaves, while high-ranking Templars lead groups of citizens in prayer services to the King. Voices ring out from the Senate chambers in heated arguments over pointless matters. Confused and frustrated freemen search for the correct offices among the mazes of halls and rooms, marked by written placards citizens are not allowed to know how to read, and barely differentiated by murals and statuary. Long queues form where fees are handed over loudly, while bribes are whispered into ears or surreptitiously disappear into robes.

NOTABLES

Shanto. The half-elven Clerk of Water Levies oversees the city's water distribution system and well titles. He is extremely concerned about the dangerously low water reservoirs deep under Tyr, but fears bringing up the issue as his prior raised a fuss about the situation immediately before Shanto found himself promoted. Shanto is terrible at the political games of the Templarite, but has managed to keep his prestigious position (and head) through dumb luck. (Organized, Mostly Harmless.)

Fiero Shaal. An ancient, balding half-elven woman of unkind character and worse vices leads the faction of the Senate currently in power. Even her supporters think she would have made a better Templar than a politician. House Shaal has no (living) heirs, but her plans ensure the House name will live on forever. (Smart, Wicked, Ambitious.)

Magisteria Kemta. A minor magistrate in the Templarite who has managed to turn her low standing into a source of wealth. For a larger bribe than usual, she will helpfully resolve a petitioner's issue rather than bother higher-ranking Templars with the matter. Though it is *technically* within her purview to make such resolutions, when her superiors discover this scheme it may prove a problem for her. (Creative, Educated.)

THE GOLDEN TOWER

A massive cylinder of golden stone rises from the greenery of the King's Gardens at its base and the ring of bureaucratic buildings clustered around them. The tower has been polished by ten-thousand years of wind and dust until it gleams in the light like a beacon in the desert. Inside are thousands of chambers, grand halls, and columned corridors, the vast majority forgotten and disused. At the peak of the tower is the great throne room, with windows and recessed balconies from where the god-king may look down and watch his citizens.

LANDMARKS

The King's Garden. This lush garden rises in a series of terraces towards the Golden Tower like a mirage of the mythical past. Every wall is covered in a jungle of thick green leaves peppered with barbed thorns, mixed with silver-blossomed climbing vines. The air is filled with the scents of pepper, sandalwood, cedar, and lily. Cobblestone walkways cross green, or blue, lawns. Gleaming grapevines grow wild along steps marked by knee-high brass statues – lifelike sculptures of a thousand different creatures. Garden paths are rolled with sand, and pass by small wading pools fed by underground springs, full of lilies and rushes, surrounded by exotic foliage such as lizard roses.

When the King defends the walls, portions of the gardens wither and wilt, and must be coaxed back to life. Rich soil from the jungles beyond the Ringing Mountains must be secured and imported to replace the dust that remains, which must be dug out and dumped beyond the walls, and the gardeners must be careful not to breathe in this dust, or else they risk the Gray Death. Much of Tyr's water supply is consumed by maintaining the gardens. Possibly the only thing in Tyr the King has not tapped in order to complete the construction of his immense ziggurat.

The Observation Tower. A high, thin needle of a tower rising from the wall surrounding the King's Garden is the only way to enter the Golden Tower. Only those bearing proper papers and the right titles are allowed within. The narrow Tower Bridge connects the two towers, leading to recessed doors where even more checks are performed before entry is allowed to the actual palace of Tyr's immortal king.

SCENE

Squads of elite guardsmen in silks, carrying iron weapons, and armor bearing blessings from the god-king stand at unmoving attention. High-ranking Templars stare smiling-daggers at one another across the wide court of the king as they work to gain his favor. Awestruck nobles bow in deference at the foot of the king's throne. Dark, dusty hallways hide relics from forgotten ages and shelf-filled rooms of symbol-scratched parchments it is heresy to understand. The god-king's pampered wives prepare his dinner and his bed. Things whisper and beckon from the shadows.

NOTABLES

The Grand Templar. A bald, albino dwarf in heavy, dark robes which hide a multitude of tattoos. Petitioners must work their way past every Templar in the city before they may talk to the affable Grand Templar. He can afford to be friendly as he has already thought of everything his murderous underlings could do and meticulously prepared for it – as a century holding his position has proved. (Friendly, Reasonable, Brilliant.)

Tala Rex. A halfling who has worked in the gardens since he was a child, and been well-rewarded for it. He is far more comfortable with plants and soil than people. He knows the secrets of all the plant-life in the immense garden, as well as every hidden path and grove and herb. He has also overheard many things he should not know. (Shy, Silent, Sneaky.)

Ia-tem. The High Observer oversees the guards in the tower and on the bridge that connects the city with the Golden Palace. A highly prestigious position...with no room for advancement. Ia-tem takes his duties seriously, and does them well, but spends the rest of his time in a drugged stupor to make the most of and avoid dwelling on his situation. (Bitter, Reliable.)

Enith. One of the King's many pampered concubines. The nobleman Rall Kera is smitten with her and carries on a dangerous, illicit affair. He has whispered to her of his (unlikely) plans to flee the city together. Their affair could destroy House Kera. (Bored, Ignorant, Self-centered.)

Wealth 4. Safety 4. Criminal Influence 1. Supernatural Influence 4.
Hahaha. Good luck.

FARMS & VILLAS

The patchwork of barren desert and sculpted, irrigated fields of carefully tended tubers, grains, and fruit trees that surround Tyr are the slave-farms of the nobility that keep the city fed. Each field surrounds an ancient, white-walled adobe estate, part of the land-grants given to the nobility long-ago by the King. These are the bread-baskets of the city: without them, the city would starve.

LANDMARKS

Asticles' Estates. A symbol of wealth and power, the Asticles' white villa is surrounded by lush fields and well-tended orchards that offer a serene retreat for House members and their guests. Owned by one of the oldest families in the city, it is also one of the city's major food suppliers, which gives House Asticles significant influence over the Senate and – before his obsession with the ziggurat – even the ear of the King. Few know that the House patriarch uses the villa to orchestrate smuggling, espionage, and delicate political plots far from the Templars' spying eyes, or that the prized slaves sold by the House are spies and double-agents collecting secrets for their master.

The Oasis Market. An inaptly named dusty, filthy tangle of temporary stalls, tents, and beggars that gathers daily just outside the city's gates, where freemen farmers, herders, and caravaneers gather to trade textiles, produce, and even exotic goods under the noses of the Templars who find it impossible to monitor the sometimes dubious transactions.

The Ruined Watch. Two King's Ages ago, a powerful Noble House instigated a rebellion against Kalak and the Templars, having secretly obtained loyalty of the commanders of the slave armies through decades of bribes and other seductions. The other Houses were slow to answer their call to arms (but equally slow to come to the defense of the King), and the god-king spared only the watchtower that still sits in the center of a vast field of gray barrens. A lesson left standing for the Noble Houses. The land is considered cursed – and there are those who say fey lights can be seen in the upper tower – which makes it a perfect meeting place for the Veiled Alliance.

SCENE

A patchwork of yellow grain and green vines, fields split by muddy irrigation ditches spreading from walled, white villas. Slaves laboring under the blazing sun, tending crops, hauling water, and reaping ripened harvest, near exhaustion. Overseers bearing whips atop erdlu mounts, yelling curses and commands. Templar patrols walking the roads and trails, watching for signs of raiders, attended by half-giants. Nobles in silk-covered palanquins being borne to-or-from their country estate.

NOTABLES

Nara the Shrewd. A half-giant woman with ties to both the Veiled Alliance and the Templarate visits the Oasis Market regularly, playing both sides off one another in dangerous games of loyalty and deceit. It is testament to the depth of her planning that neither side has yet suspected her double nature or had her killed. (Shrewd, Incautious, Lucky.)

Lord Varis Vorosh. Stonecrop Vineyard produces the best wines in the city. Lord Varis is obsessed with perfecting his wines and hosts lavish, if gauche, tasting events for new vintages. The vineyard employs a small private army to guard the precious grapes (an otherwise illegal fruit) and the rare ingredients used in fermentation. (Gregarious, Obsessed.)

Agis Asticles. The youngest heir and a charismatic, progressive rabble-rouser who champions unpopular ideas, unaware the causes he champions endanger the influence of his own House. His father has thus far been content to allow him leeway. (Charismatic, Noble, Naive.)

Sor'en. A dwarven hermit-priest who has been allowed to live in the fields of a minor House for near a King's Age, tending to an ancient, wind-worn obelisk the House believes watches over their crops. He claims the faded etchings on its surface which glow dimly each dusk are fire spirits, and offers cryptic guidance to visitors with riddles he claims are given to him by these spirits. (Odd, Cryptic, Committed.)

Wealth 3. Safety 3. Criminal Influence 2. Supernatural Influence 2. Smuggling and Transportation scores performed here have a +1d to the engagement roll, but attract attention; take an additional Entanglement.

UNDER-TYR

The city below the city. Over the centuries, Tyr has continually built on top of itself; now explorers can find tunnels and chambers that have preserved old plazas, buildings, and streets from the past – even ancient, heretical temples watched by undead guardians – as well as sewers, tombs, catacombs, fissures, and caves, all hidden underneath the streets and buildings above. While most of the entrances are sealed due to the danger, occasionally a street or floor will collapse and open a way into a known or unknown section. A few ceramics have the same effect.

However, there are ancient powers and artifacts here from the Green Age – a mythical time before the deserts – all best left undisturbed, as well as twisted creatures, and undead beings of both ancient and more recent provenance, plus traps, deadfalls, unstable earth, and other scoundrels.

Most of what is referred to as Under-Tyr is not linked, existing as independent pockets, so one cannot simply cross the city from beneath.

LANDMARKS

The Sorrows. The largest of the ancient centers of Tyr is found now beneath the Warrens and Shadow Square. At its center, passageways lead into a vast temple left mysteriously untouched by time. Few scoundrels would make their lair here as moving shadows and the hungry ghosts of ancient soldiers of the King (and their victims) are common.

The Poison Sting. In the distant past, the rubble here was part of a glorious gambling hall. The tunnels leading to and from it are filled with poison traps and secret passages to protect it from both the curious, and from monstrous creatures. The area is a meeting place for bards, cut-throats, and foolish guests with large purses, and no matter the time above, someone is always here doing business at one of the rough tables.

The Elven River. When the deserts swallowed the land and drove the water underground in the distant past, it carved a series of tunnels. These now dry tunnels run mainly beneath the Warrens, adjacent to the Elven Bridge. Many explorers have vanished into them seeking a secret source of free water, or a way into the city's deep wells.

Tembo's Teeth. A series of natural caverns underlying the western portions of the city that were used by smugglers to move contraband into and out of the city. Until the King discovered the last of the outside entrances and permanently sealed it off. Rumored to be inhabited by snake-monsters: some say these are the smugglers cursed by the King to guard the tunnels forever; others say the monsters came from the depths and the King sealed the tunnels to protect the citizens – or left them there to discourage anyone from re-opening the caverns.

The Crawl. A dangerous series of tight, partially collapsed passages no more than three-feet high. They are given to cave-ins, but rumored to hold undiscovered treasure chambers, drawing the foolhardy. With a little luck, sometimes you can use the Crawl to reach the Teeth.

Belly of the Noble. The labyrinth underlying the adjacent sections of the Merchant District and Noble's Quarter consists of tight passageways between forgotten, opulent homes of dusty marble that were built over during an expansion of the Noble Quarter in centuries past. Entries are regularly sealed off, and equally as regularly, scoundrels find new ways to gain access to the Belly and the rich businesses and estates above.

Merchant's Maze. A series of accessible, interconnected tunnels linking the Caravan and Merchant Districts. They are heavily patrolled by the Houses, and regularly utilized to move valuable (or unlawful) shipments. Some grumble that, as such, these are not "rightly" part of Under-Tyr.

Night-Trader's Way. An open honeycomb of passages underneath the Artisan District whose passages and chambers are sometimes used for (legitimate) businesses and entertainments at night. More often, it is used to do business and hold meetings best hidden from the watching eyes of the Templarate.

SCENE

A rubble-buried street, the shattered façade of an old residence. A broken fountain's basin pooled with fouled, unhealthy water. Bulging walls of strained brick pressing tight. The sickly glow of a phosphorescent fungus...or undead spirit. The scraping and grinding of shifting rock, or monstrous feet. Laughter and talk echoing down from the city above. A stairway leading nowhere. Broken statues, detritus. The skeletal remnants of an unlucky fool, picked clean. Thieves' marks and explorer signs. Alliance agents, disturbing what ought not be disturbed, seeking resources, buried history, and power to bolster their cause. A protected shop of dangerous goods. Concealed treasure caked with the dust and grime of the ages. A hidden garden. Teeth, claws, screams, and darkness.

NOTABLES

D'tor Rhythe. An insane "sage" who follows the old religion of the Dead-Eye God and occasionally attempts to preach on the steps of the Temple of the Elements. He has a small cult of followers, but is generally held in contempt by high society. Templars sent to quiet his heresy always seem to return empty-handed, telling tales of his impossible escape – with an ancient metal coin or two in their purse. (Crazy, Unhinged, Eccentric.)

Fates. A priestess who worships a forgotten goddess of fate, destiny, and the undead. She and her cultists perform disturbing rituals to rip out their own spirits and then send them against citizens to collect "debts." She and her cult have thus far slipped away from or killed those sent to capture or destroy them. (Sinister, Knowledgeable.)

Zak'chik'tilik. One of the mantis-folk. They claim to be a banished noble of their kind (nonsense, surely) seeking a relic from the mythical Green Age, and believe it to be buried deep under Tyr. Somewhere. Rumored to be one of the Order of Druids. (Strange, Protective, Fast.)

Faria. A tradesman and thief in life who discovered a small set of passageways underneath the Caravan District that gave her access to competitors' businesses. After she was caught and executed, the entrances to her passageways were sealed...since she kept crawling out of them to continue stealing. (Gluttonous, Hungry, Desperate.)

Unethas. A Veiled gang, rather than a singular person, who all use one street name to make investigation into its members even more difficult than made by the Alliance's usual methods. Also one of the most active Alliance cells in exploring and excavating Under-Tyr, and particularly vicious about the sanctity of their excavations. (Bold, Unforgiving.)

Wealth 1. Safety 1. Criminal Influence 4. Supernatural Influence 4.
There is no HEAT penalty for using magic in Under-Tyr. But certain beings that make the depths their home may find it either attractive or distasteful and seek out its user.

FACTION WRITE-UPS

Much is noted here, yet much else is hinted at for the careful reader, and much left unexplained, left for you and your group to discover through play. Not all factions in the city are detailed herein. Nor are these details truly sacrosanct. Change what you wish, keep what you like, add to them or take away from them to create your version of the city and its struggles. Do not rely on these entries, as they may be different in your game!

Factions have niches in which they exist that they will not look kindly on other factions for intruding upon, and exist in a complex web of alliances, rivalries, and enemies, though these relationships are not always a two-way street. The factions are set apart from each other by quirks particular to them within that niche, and special resources and assets. They have turf and a lair or headquarters, a couple of notable members, and most importantly, they have specific goals they are working towards. The general strength of a faction is denoted by its tier.

TEMPLARATE — TIER V

The right hand of the god-king: corrupt, cruel, and absolutely in charge.

Faction Moons: Seize House Vordon's Iron Monopoly (8)
Complete the Ziggurat (12)

Turf: Office-temples in the Golden City; patrols, checkpoints, and authority extending across every district.

Notables: High Templar Deyno (*ruthless, intelligent, authoritarian* – right-hand of the Grand Templar, plotting a coup his superior pretends not to know about). Templar Te'vah (*conflicted, poetic* – half-elf who would rather be on stage; Harp & Knife has been grooming her as an expendable asset).

Notable Assets: The legal and spiritual authority of the god-king; control of every gate and checkpoint; a network of spies and half-giant enforcers; prayers and proclamations that hold genuine power.

Quirks: Every bureau is at war with every other bureau: internal rivalry, corruption, and personal ambition are the operating conditions for Templar advancement with the bureaus.

Allies: City Watch, Deep Legion, loyal citizens.

Enemies: Veiled Alliance, Senate, Merchant Houses, Lion's Paw.

Situation: The Templatate is using "escort" services and armed auditors to bleed the Houses dry while the ziggurat devours the city's resources. New patrols flood the streets, sealing off Under-Tyr, stamping out the embers of rebellion, and enslaving citizens in work-gangs.

CITY WATCH — TIER III

The law and the Templars' blunt instrument, whether they like it or not.

Faction Moons: Take Down the Thieves' Guild (8)

Gain Independence from the Templatate (12)

Turf: Primary HQ is the Iron Tower near the Smithy District; barracks across the city and gate and market checkpoints.

Notables: Commandant Voris (*loyal, weary, principled* – despises Templar interference but his ethics have tied his hands). Watchman Hark (*greedy, unscrupulous* – corrupt patrol officer on the Thieves' Guild payroll; protects anyone who pays).

Notable Assets: Iron-tipped spears, crossbows, and iron-banded shields under guard at the Iron Tower; trained crodlu for mounted patrols; informants embedded in city gangs.

Quirks: Every patrol is accompanied by or reports to a Templar, making them, in practice, mob enforcers doing dirty work they didn't sign up for.

Allies: Templatate, Senate, House Vordon (for now)

Enemies: Veiled Alliance, Elven Market, Thieves' Guild

Situation: Commandant Voris is quietly building a case with the Senate for Watch independence, but Captain Loka is working against him to curry Templar favor in service of her own advancement.

SENATE — TIER IV

Hereditary nobles hold the city's purse strings and debate decorum and taxation while the city burns.

Faction Moons: Appoint a City Watch Prefect (8)
Secure Disputed Land Titles (8)

Turf: The Senate chambers and attendant government offices in the Golden City; noble family estates throughout the Noble Quarter.

Notables: Fiero Shaal (*smart, wicked, ambitious* – leads the dominant Senate faction; no heirs, schemes to make the Shaal name live forever). Senator Iram Maron (*eloquent, pragmatic, corruptible* – mediates between Houses and Templarite while pocketing bribes from both).

Notable Assets: Legislative authority over land claims, tax disputes, and slave allotments; the political leverage of the city's oldest noble families and their private armies.

Quirks: The god-king's word is absolute, but he finds Senate squabbles beneath him, leaving the senators to scheme with surprising latitude, as long as the farms stay productive and the iron flows.

Allies: Guilds, City Watch, School of Thought

Enemies: Templarite, Merchant Houses, Veiled Alliance

Situation: The Templarite is pushing hard to dissolve the ancient trade charters protecting House independence. The Senate is fractured — some senators are taking Templar bribes while others quietly fund resistance. Lord Asticles works to undercut the ziggurat's budget.

MERCHANT HOUSES — TIER IV

By ancient agreement, no one does trade in Tyr without the blessing of the Houses, and they always get their cut.

Faction Moons: House Vordon Establishes Exclusive Route to Urik (8)
Get House Shom Proxy on the Finance Committee (8)

Turf: High-walled compounds and emporiums in the Merchant District; caravans and influence stretching through the Caravan District. House compounds are legally sovereign territory.

Notables: Rolan Shom (*devoted, frustrated* – exiled scion trying to restore House Shom's glory; little real power, pays well for recovery of Shom relics). Selene Drakov (*resourceful, diplomatic, respectable* – independent caravan master who holds the trust of traders and Houses alike)

Notable Assets: Sole legal rights to import and export; extensive warehouses stocked with valuable goods; private guards and the leverage that comes from controlling resources the city needs.

Quirks: The Houses are not static, they rise and fall across decades, some centuries old and still powerful, others withered and desperate. As a group they are formidable; individually, they can be vulnerable.

Allies: Senate, Cartographers, Western Reach.

Enemies: Guilds, Templarite, Elven Market, Burning Candle.

Situation: The Templarite's armed auditors and escort "services" are bleeding House caravans dry. Some Houses are quietly funding Senate opposition; others are making dangerous side deals with the Elven Market or the Burning Candle to maintain their margins.

ELVEN MARKET — TIER III

If you want it and you shouldn't have it, you go to the Elven Market...as long as you know who to ask and have something they want.

Faction Moons: Re-open the Ghost Paths Through the Ringing Mountains (8), Deal with Bureau of Trade Auditors (6 - seasonal)

Turf: Semi-transient stalls and tents in the Warrens that appear and disappear overnight; forgotten bolt-holes in Under-Tyr for goods even Templars can't be bribed to ignore.

Notables: Miiri (*friendly, sharp-eyed, cautious* – oversees day-to-day trade for her tribe; unusual in that she sees long-term potential and is negotiating permanent Guild deals). Sharakea (*mysterious, ruthless, creepy* – ancient crone who never leaves the market; sells forbidden arcane and psionic artifacts to discerning buyers, source unknown).

Notable Assets: Secret desert routes through the Ringing Mountains along the Mekillot's Spine. The Whisper Vault. Their ability to supply the strange and the rare has won them powerful allies.

Quirks: The market is not unified — tribes only sell certain items and won't touch others, with taboos that shift by tribe and season. Dealing with them is an exercise in patience and diplomacy.

Allies: Scarabs, Veiled Alliance, Guilds.

Enemies: Merchant Houses, Thieves' Guild, Bureau of Trade.

Situation: The Bureau of Trade and the Merchant Houses are constantly angling to shut the market down for operating without licenses, and they may finally get what they want with the swell in Templar enforcement across the city. The Thieves' Guild has spent years trying to force protection fees, but the lack of any fixed membership means no deal ever sticks, and they're tired of it.

THIEVES' GUILD — TIER IV

Less a guild and more a protection racket aimed at criminals; the distinction rarely matters to those who pay their membership fees.

Faction Moons: "License" the Street Gangs (8)

Blackmail the Warrens' Watch Captain (6)

Turf: The Crystal Spider in Shadow Square, plus city-wider cover ops.

Notables: Rajan Blackhand (Krysta's right-hand, *persuasive, ruthless* — those who refuse the Guild face regrettable consequences). Tr'r'rk't'r'rkik "Bone-saw" (thri-kreen surgeon, *amoral, inscrutable* — runs a legitimate infirmary as cover).

Notable Assets: A city-wide network of safe houses, fences, and bribed officials available to any dues-paying member.

Quirks: The Guild maintains an elaborate system of dues and protection fees, and a strict code of loyalty is enforced through genuine benefit.

Allies: Harp & Knife, Spiders, Warren Rats.

Enemies: City Watch, Burning Candle, Beggars Cults.

Situation: Independent crews are refusing to pay tribute. Harp & Knife sent Krysta her former enforcer's head to make clear they operate outside Guild authority, but still pay the fees. The uneasy peace is fraying.

HARP & KNIFE — TIER III

A secret society of bards and entertainers who control the clandestine market for murder in Tyr.

Faction Moons: Pressure Smaller Gangs to Pay Tribute (8)

Seize Shadow Square from the Thieves' Guild (12)

Turf: Rez'z'aqa Open Air Theater in the Artisan District.

Notables: Lyra Whisperwind, the Enchantress (leader, *alluring, intellectual*). Silas Nightshade, the Blade Bard (virtuoso knife-thrower, *quick, easy-going* — a Watch captain wants him dead).

Notable Assets: Rare poisons and weapons disguised as instruments or props; a network of spies across the city's entertainment venues.

Quirks: Every assassination is marked by a unique musical token left at the scene; members communicate through coded lyrics and performances.

Allies: Elven Market, Thieves' Guild, Scarabs.

Enemies: City Watch, Eye/Ear/Hand, Dancing Coin.

Situation: The Harp & Knife are tightening their grip on the underworld, pressuring smaller gangs into tribute, and secretly plan to make the yearly Thieves' Guild banquet end in scandal — or silence.

VEILED ALLIANCE — TIER II

Rebel cells led by wizards who claim to practice magic without defiling the land, a distinction no one honors.

Faction Moons: Sabotage the Ziggurat's Construction (8)

Acquire the Bureau of Heresy's Suspect Roster (6)

Turf: Hidden meeting places in Under-Tyr; secret entrances scattered through the Warrens and Artisan District.

Notables: Leader Kadera (*charismatic, strategic, deceptive* – former Templar; may secretly be using the Alliance for her own ends). Unethas (*bold, unforgiving, ephemeral* – a cell who only use one name, or perhaps a single individual with many faces who has survived every execution).

Notable Assets: Hidden caches of potion fruits and magical scrolls; a network of sympathizers who provide shelter without knowing they shelter wizards and not mere revolutionaries.

Quirks: Cells operate in complete isolation from one another since captured members cannot betray what they don't know.

Allies: Beggar Cults, Elemental Cults.

Enemies: Templarate, Order, Black Peace.

Situation: Sabotage of the ziggurat to create delays are cover for a deeper operation: tunneling into the Golden Tower scriptorium to retrieve an artifact associated with the Dragon itself.

LION'S PAW — TIER II

The Lion of Urik's hand moves through the city, sowing discord, courting dissidents, and preparing the way for an invasion to seize the iron mines.

Faction Moons: Gain the Support of Senator Asticles (6)
Promote a Sympathizer to Overseer of the Iron Mines (8)

Turf: Hidden safehouses in the Merchant District; the hearts of all those disillusioned by the King's rule.

Notables: Ushana (*covert, diplomatic, determined, mutant* – Hammanu's ambassador to Tyr; psychic intrusions reveal only what she wishes; sports a row of eyes on her abdomen). Meher (*jaded, worldly, calculating* – half-elf mercenary who smuggles weapons and sabotages iron shipments; not a true believer and always looking for a better angle).

Notable Assets: Hammanu's intelligence network and resources; a growing roster of sympathizers among disillusioned nobles, merchants, freemen, and even Templars.

Quirks: Some cults have begun worshipping Hammanu as a saviour figure opposed to the evil Kalak, which serves as a useful cover for the Paw's actual operations, though they are increasingly difficult to control.

Allies: Tenth, Disgraced, Beggar Cults, Veiled Alliance.

Enemies: Templarate, City Watch, Deep Legion.

Situation: Jar-Haak, a former city Templar turned fanatical convert, risks exposing the whole operation with his covert preaching, but his knowledge of the city's bureaucracy is too valuable to lose. Meher's loyalty is uncertain – the Paw knows it and he knows they know.

THE DISGRACED — TIER I

Vengeance-seeking former Templars out-played in the political game.

Faction Moons: Publicly Expose Templar Corruption to the Senate (6)
Infiltrate the Bureau of Slaves to Steal Secret Records (4)

Turf: A safehouse in Under-Tyr that once held a hidden Templar arsenal; the walls still bear defaced insignias of their old offices.

Notables: Ammos Verr (*vengeful, manipulative, desperate* – ex-Bureau of Slaves supervisor orchestrating elaborate vendettas against the specific Templars he blames for his fall). Serra (*ruthless, brash, proud* – former enforcer who still commands the loyalty of her half-giant guardian Itaol; uses intimidation to fill the void of lost authority).

Notable Assets: Templar garb, badges of office, and intimate knowledge of the Templarate's internal structure, secrets, and personnel. Former gladiators, spies, and defilers inducted into their network of revenge.

Quirks: They mimic their former protocols and regalia. Few among them trust each other fully, and personal grudges simmer just under the surface.

Allies: Beggar Cults, Dust Peddlers.

Enemies: Templarate, Black Peace.

Situation: Ammos believes he can be re-instated if only he can expose a former colleague – the others believe he's a fool. The Templarate is determined to put an end to their scheming in any way possible.

THE ORDER — TIER III

A secret society within the School of Thought that moves people like pieces on a board, seeking “balance” – which is not the same as peace.

Faction Moons: Secure the Null-Chord Relic from Cartographer (8)
Plant a Mind-Worm in the Grand Templar (10)

Turf: Secret rooms within the School of Thought and hidden vaults in Under-Tyr; pervasive influence in the psychic realm.

Notables: Master Keldar (*aloof, brilliant, unyielding* – elderly temple monk and Order leader who views emotional attachment as a dangerous liability in the powerful). Zephyr (*silent, focused, artistic* – shadowy enforcer who leaves a subtle psychic ‘signature’ in their work, discoverable only to those strong in the Way).

Notable Assets: A stable of psychically-conditioned “Watchers” at all levels of society, unaware of their double lives. The Spiral Gallery.

Quirks: The Order targets powerful Way users for membership or elimination – there is no third option. They insist on psychic mastery free from mental and physical attachment, viewing both as suffering.

Allies: School of Thought, Accursed.

Enemies: School of Thought, Templarate, Veiled Alliance.

Situation: A convergence is approaching around the Null-Chord Relic, which the Order believes could permanently alter the psychic landscape of the city. Through the sacrifice of many Watchers, the true nature of the Ziggurat has become known; they seek to move against the god-king without being noticed (even the Order fears the might of the god-king).

THE ACCURSED — TIER II

Those abandoned in the wastes who died but refused to stay so and now hide in the city among the living.

Faction Moons: Destroy the Lineage of House Kera (6)
Find and Enact the Rituals of Infusion (8)

Turf: Under-Tyr, the Warrens, shadowy corners of noble estates – anywhere they can exist unnoticed. A few of the bolder have assumed seats of minor authority within the city.

Notables: Masora the Unliving Heir (cold, ambitious, patient – presents as the long-lost daughter of House Kera; in truth, perished decades ago and is slowly manipulating living relatives to seize the House’s resources). Thurr-Va (tormented, insightful, secretive – withered dwarf husk who guides explorers away from Under-Tyr traps, then quietly harvests their stray life energy).

Notable Assets: Each lone Accursed has significant resources to evade, influence, or infiltrate the other factions of the city. Some have lived in the city for generations and know what the god-king has buried and hidden.

Quirks: Undeath does not make for mental stability; past, present, and hunger become confused. Not a faction in the normal sense, instead, singular individuals with no allegiance to nor knowledge of one another.

Allies: Cult of the Black Sun, Veiled Alliance, Beggar Cults.

Enemies: Black Peace, Deep Legion, Order, Lion’s Paw.

Situation: The Templarate publicly dismisses the urban myths of ghosts in the Warrens and demons beneath the city. Black Peace does not. They have long suspected one or more Accursed have infiltrated the Senate or a Merchant House, but the ziggurat has split their attention.

PERSONS OF INTEREST

Akaor of the Forge: A dwarven ironsmith and renowned ex-gladiator, he leads the Fire Cult's faithful and oversees the city's forges by command of the King. Poised to become the next High Priest of the Temple of the Four Elements, he sees forging as an act of devotion and preaches that strength requires culling the weak. (*Passionate, Temperamental.*)

Alek'karin: An ancient aarakocra whose mastery of the Way is such that he appears to the Templars as just another sun-addled street-seer offering "wisdom" for ceramics along the Caravan Way. He acts as a spiritual guide for many in the Veiled Alliance. (*Wise, Compassionate, Measured.*)

Grandfather Asha: The spiritual head and founder of the Brotherhood of the Empty Hand, known for his harsh discipline and skill in psychic strikes. He obligates those he frees to serve the Brotherhood, regardless of their own wishes. (*Devout, Hard-Eyed, Fanatical.*)

High Templar Avanos : Leader of an extremist death cult hidden within the Templarate, he plans to initiate a violent purge of the mutants and non-humans, starting with those in his own bureau. (*Careful, Cruel.*)

Aven Sall: If you're in trouble, Sall can probably sort it; he loves helping people out...since it puts them in his debt. He's been sitting on sensitive information about Krysta, the head of the Thieves' Guild and she pretends not to know or worry. (*Persuasive, Calculating.*)

Cheliss "the Rose of Shadow Square": The madame of an upscale brothel in Shadow Square, with a keen eye for extracting secrets from clientele. She is sitting on knowledge of the dangerous love affair between a certain noble's son and one of the King's concubines and has promised to help the two lovers escape together. (*Seductive, Dangerously Ambitious.*)

Coya the Rafter: A half-giant crane operator for the Masons who acts the part of a cheerful idiot, but also collects gossip to keep his Guild, and his friends, in the loop and out of trouble. (*Jovial, Insightful, Socially Astute.*)

"The Crimson": A withered, undead spirit that resides in the forgotten temple in Under-Tyr where the Cult of the Black Sun perform their dark rites. It communicates to the cultists through visions and whispers. (*Mysterious, Ancient, Powerful.*)

Templar-Lieutenant Eltan: Reassigned to the Deep Legion after a failed coup in another bureau, he despises his position and is busy "exposing" the Legion's weaknesses so that it can be subsumed into the Templarate, with him as Templar-Commander. (*Calculating, Vengeful.*)

Freya Jin: An adept elven message-runner and city guide with a talent for bypassing Templar checkpoints thanks to an encyclopedic recall of alleyways, guard post schedules, and City Watch patrol patterns. The go-to for sensitive psychic deliveries where entanglements would prove fatal. (*Witty, Observant, No Nonsense.*)

Garen the Mortician: One of the few in the Bonesmithy allowed to handle noble remains, which are normally interred in family crypts. He leverages trustworthy funeral arrangements as the bones of certain families sometimes hide...secrets. (*Secretive, Driven, Necromancer.*)

Count Halas Mur: A once-genuine wasteland explorer who turned to unscrupulous ventures after losing a fortune on failed caravans. He lures would-be adventurers into black market schemes with tales of fame and big payouts. (*Jovial, Worldly, Greedy.*)

I'toc & Nesa: An older human man and his mul wife run the Shining Sands, a popular dry sands laundry near the Nobles' Quarter. A discreet lounge in back is often used by clients to discuss sensitive or even criminal matters. They have started keeping records of what they overhear, but have no idea what to do with it. (*Charismatic, Serene, Scared.*)

Harlok: A mul warrior-slave famed in the Arena for fighting captured wizards and spirits summoned from the bloody sand. Experience has given him the insight and knowledge to be one of the most dangerous opponents such beings could ever face – which is why the Bureau will never free him. He has begun to wonder if those he destroys truly deserve their fate. (*Ruthless, Restless, Trapped.*)

k'Hmmt : A thri-kreen Cartographer who recently discovered the Null Chord Relic, a strange psychic device of unknown provenance and purpose. He seeks to activate it to "see what it does." Other forces in the city seek to gain ownership or prevent its activation. (*Curious, Eager.*)

Krikikik: The black-shelled leader of a thri-kreen pack from beyond the Ringing Mountains is making off-the-books deals with the Guilds to provide them with raw materials, allowing the Guilds to avoid the fees and strictures of the Merchant Houses. (*Inscrutable, Weird.*)

Karos Tente: A half-elf hunter specializing in capturing desert wanderers and outlaws to replenish the slave pens. He has brokered a series of questionable deals with mercenaries and certain tribal bands to sell him captives. (*Amoral, Opportunistic, Cunning.*)

Litaz of the Three Flames: A half-giant arsonist and part-time enforcer for Burning Candle. Fascinated by fire and stories of pyromancy. He uses special candles as a personal signature in every job. (*Mercurial, Eccentric.*)

Oloro Drywind: An elven outrider-for-hire who weaves illusions with music to pacify monstrous desert threats. She's rumored to have a treasure map tattooed across her body, but almost every tattooist who has worked on her eventually ends up missing. (*Sly, Enthralling, Tattooed.*)

Orvel the Ear: A heavy-set half-elf news-crier stationed by the Caravan Gate most days. During a recent shouting match, he let slip he possesses damaging evidence linking a high-ranking Templar to heretical activity and he's been dodging the Templars ever since. (*Jovial, Shrewd, Greedy.*)

Ralo: A slippery half-elf hustler who tries to sniff out the best paying underground fights. He's convinced the Iron Laurels that Pug's gang of drunks are legitimate and ready for a big bout, but who knows how long the shine will last. (*Sly, Untrustworthy, Quick.*)

Saff Rae: A halfling outsider, priestess of Air and Master of the Way, she preaches from the rooftops that the air spirits have whispered warnings of a dark storm that will consume the city, and urges the citizens to flee and trust in the wind's freedom. Heretic. (*Visionary, Flighty.*)

Shalariik the Tembo-son. A pale, sallow-cheeked mul of advanced age who runs the Bureau of Waste Removal. His peers joke that the Bonesmiths keep accidentally taking him away to be processed. He plays the near-sighted, forgetful old man, but pays well for any interesting finds in the city's garbage and the occasional "lost" corpse to be delivered to him – what he does with them is anyone's guess. (*Sly, Convincing, Frail.*)

Shen: A pale human mutant who covers her lower face. Well-known as a tinker with a near-supernatural ability to repair broken things, including the body – proficient with herbal restoratives as well as enchanted wards and talismans. Her shop sells mostly superstitious junk, but a select few trinkets are indeed of sorcerous provenance. (*Mysterious, Helpful.*)

The Sullen One: Set-up and sentenced to death in the Arena in a suicide match, they survived and were instead stripped of their name and identity. Now a fan-favorite gladiator whose entire existence is devoted to preparing for the next fight because they have nothing else. (*Precise, Purposeless.*)

Magistrate Syral: He quietly arranges for city slaves to "escape" into the hands of the Scarabs for use as test subjects; they pay him with potion-fruit and untraceable poisons for use on his enemies in the Senate. (*Soft-Spoken, Sympathetic, Sinister.*)

Scribe Tarrelna of Dosk: An elven clerk, and financial genius, who restructured the tax code for the Senate to favor the Noble Houses at the expense of the Guilds and Merchant Houses, and now uses her access to forge and sell expensive "licenses" to unscrupulous smugglers – all part of her plan to buy her brother out of slavery. (*Brilliant, Ruthless, Pragmatic.*)

Veso the Mad: A skinny dwarf (or mutant bearded-halfling) who leads expeditions into the Ringing Mountains. Veso claims to have glimpsed a green city hidden in a mirage in a valley beyond mountains and is trying to convince patrons to fund his return expedition. Veso "sees" a lot of things, though. (*Obsessive, Inquisitive, Daring.*)

Zara Drakk: One of the god-king's secret wizard agents. She sees no point in hiding the "magnificence" of defiling magic while in public, and yet the King keeps his leash loosest upon her even as she summons ever darker magics, to the growing unease of her masters in the Black Peace. (*Brash, Ambitious, Defiant.*)

High Adept Zular-zek: A middle-ranking Templar with a saviour complex and a crippling fear of drought stemming from a childhood tragedy. He has been performing secret water-blessing ceremonies on the city's wells in service to the spirits of elemental water, certain that he can save the city if he proves his devotion. (*Harried, Zealous.*)

VICE PURVEYORS

These are, of course, not the only providers of vice in the city, there are many more; these are simply the most well-known.

FAITH

- ❖ Maasin, the Temple of the Elements, Noble Quarter.
- ❖ Brother Kal't, the Crimson Shrine, Under-Tyr.
- ❖ Master Uryaes, the School of the Way, The Golden City.
- ❖ Shinta, the Shrine of Water, Artisan District.
- ❖ Letergis, Moon Sacrifices, Kalak's Ziggurat.

GAMBLING

- ❖ Penar the Kank, a bookie, Arena.
- ❖ The Gentlemen, the crodlu races, Arena.
- ❖ Red Phrag, boxing, Smithy District.
- ❖ Krysta, the Crystal Spider, Warrens.
- ❖ Mistress La-lai, the fighting pits, Caravan District.
- ❖ Temu Merik's card game, Merchant District.
- ❖ Septris, the Serpent-Handled Basket, Artisan District.

OBLIGATION

- ❖ Family members (heritage) or former co-workers (background).
- ❖ The Veiled Alliance, a secret society.
- ❖ Thaxos Vordon, a revolutionary, Merchant District.
- ❖ Three-finger Crafters, a Guild house, Artisan District.
- ❖ The Order, a secret society, [redacted].

LUXURY/PLEASURE

- ❖ The Burning Hand, bath house, Noble Quarter.
- ❖ Shining Sands, laundry and tailoring, Caravan District.
- ❖ Zch'tck's, bakery and pastries, Artisan District.
- ❖ The open-air theater, Artisan District.
- ❖ Mila, Golden Inix Inn, Caravan District.
- ❖ Grana, a dealer in rare oddities, Artisan District.

PLEASURE/STUPOR

- ❖ Don GraI, King's Way bar, Artisan District.
- ❖ Mallus, the Addled Inix tavern, Caravan District.
- ❖ Sa'rea, meat-roasting pit, Smithy.
- ❖ Yessa Ira, the Kind Lady brothel, Caravan District.
- ❖ Etheros, a Master of the Way, Noble Quarter.
- ❖ Esta Phren, an Elven Market druggist, Warrens.
- ❖ Administrator Kapaan, House Shom gala, Merchant District.
- ❖ Scripps, boxing ring, Smithy District.
- ❖ Hessa Morn, the Scarlet Den honey-den, Shadow Square.

WEIRD

- ❖ The Black Queen, a strange, lonely spirit wandering Tyr's walls.
- ❖ Kraah, a defiler always looking for people to experiment on.
- ❖ Shen, a mutant alchemist, a hidden shop in Under-Tyr.
- ❖ Tek-tek, an undead vendor of strange items, Merchant District.
- ❖ Veso, a mad dwarven Cartographer, Caravan District.
- ❖ Caelum-re, priestess of a dead-god's cult, Under-Tyr.
- ❖ Shraa, the House of Nails, Warrens.

THE TEMPLARATE BUREAUS

Many of the bureaus seem to overlap; this is both deliberate on the Templarate's part and the unintentional result of thousands of years of self-serving scheming and bureaucracy: the Senate is constantly fighting the "restructuring" the Templarate engages in to get around Senate laws or regulations they find inconvenient, but the Templar bureaus themselves are often the most resistant to restructuring, as it means a loss of prestige and control for one group and a gain for another.

Bureau of Public Roads : someone has to keep the ground even and the roadways straight. A quick look around Tyr leaves no doubt that these aren't those people. Endless planning meetings and doling out small payments to trash-pickers to keep Caravan Way "looking nice" are their main duties. A lowly posting of little prestige; Public Roads is where a Templar's career goes to die.

Bureau of Public Walls : the walls surrounding the city need constant oversight and maintenance, and someone needs to keep an eye on the masons' guild, telling them what to fix, who to bury inside the walls, and then charge them exorbitant fees for the proper permits to do everything they've been told to do.

Bureau of Waste Removal : oversees the efficiency of garbage and refuse removal from the city to approved dumping sites, as well as the disposal of bodies to the Bonesmithy. Though vitally important to the city, those given this posting dream of being reassigned to the more prestigious Public Roads.

Bureau of Grain : oversight of Tyr's food stores and granaries; in charge of the public ovens that bake the morning bread citizens can buy for one of their two daily ceramic bits. An important posting and (quietly) one of the least corrupt bureaus in the city's government.

Bureau of Construction : if you want to build new constructions or tear down old constructions inside the city, you need to submit your plans to and have them approved by this bureau. At constant odds with Roads & Walls over jurisdictional matters.

Bureau of Gardens : overseeing the care and cultivation of the King's Gardens and the acquisition of new botanical specimens. The only Templars who have access to the grounds. A small bureau, but a highly prestigious posting.

Bureau of Taxes & Accounting : even though the city's treasuries have been drained by Kalak's construction project and the city teeters on economic collapse, frank discussion of the city's economic situation leads to beheadings – this bureau's sole purpose now is to ensure by-any-means that the ziggurat has the materials and manpower to be completed, but their power to enforce collection against the Houses has recently been hamstrung by the Senate.

Bureau of Slavery : brand and keep an account of all the city's slaves, and of the activities of non-House slave traders (whom they license and tax mercilessly). Even House slave auctions must be approved by this bureau, and the Templarate has recently declared a "traditional" right to take their pick of the offerings, and are capitalizing on it. The unaffiliated slavers have asked the Senate to intervene.

Bureau of Rations & Distribution : in charge of handing out the daily two bits to citizens. One of the least hated among the bureaus – the god-king levies brutal punishment on any Templar caught skimming from his social program, so they perform their job by the book – anyone who tries to cheat more ceramic than they're owed out of the bureau is treated without mercy by both the Templars and fellow citizens.

Bureau of Water : responsible for maintaining and protecting the city's wells, distributing water to the citizens, and maintaining records of water usage and claims by the nobility. They oversee the city's deep reservoir, and call on the King to replenish it as needed...though he has absented from this duty of late, to the bureau's growing (unspoken) concern.

Bureau of Permits : you need a permit for everything; occasionally you need a permit to get a permit from another bureau. The language in existing permits must be reviewed and updated regularly “to account for the needs of the changing legal landscape”. The main need being money in the fists of the bureau’s Templars. There may not be much prestige in being a paper-pusher, but there’s a lot of graft and ceramic.

Bureau of Gates & Guards : the main group of Templars the citizens interact with daily, whose forces stand at the gates and patrol the streets. Not prestigious, but the income from protection money and gate fees is good and there is a high chance of advancement.

Bureau of Control : a militant bureau trained to put down riots and slave-uprisings. They usually have very little to do, and are paid well to do it; the posting is considered prestigious, and is staffed by those who prove themselves physically adept at enforcing the King’s Law. Many of their members are promoted from Gates & Guards.

Bureau of the King's Law : judge, jury, & executioner; a fair trial costs ceramic – the one with the most ceramic gets the most justice. A highly prestigious position reserved for experienced, intelligent Templars. The Grand Templar has asserted his right to hand pick its members, ensuring only those loyal to him are posted – no one has dared point out no such right legally exists in Tyrian law (or at least no one still alive).

Bureau of the Treasury : created with a power-play by the bureau of taxes & accounting so that the Templatate could act free of the Senate’s recent decrees limiting that bureau, they act as (crooked) tax accountants and are tasked with the maintenance of the treasury building – rather than targeting the Houses, they have turned to collecting more tithe from the tradesmen and guilds of the city.

Bureau of Farms : oversees the slaves assigned to the city’s farms, protects the city’s fields from raiders and crop-blight, and ensures the land remains fertile enough to continue providing bounty. They often take it upon themselves to track down and execute wizards, though this is not part of their established duties. The most zealous of these are either executed for disobedience, or “demoted” to Letters (which in reality is a promotion to the Black Peace).

Bureau of Mines : oversight of the slaves assigned to Tyr’s mines, protection of the mines and their contents from raiders and monsters, and ensuring the iron quotas are met and the iron delivered safely in full amount. Missing ingots can lead to execution. Prestigious and dangerous.

Bureau of Collections : tasked with protecting, maintaining, and expanding, the King’s collection of artifacts and acquisitions. A highly prestigious post, though its members rarely leave the Golden Tower. When they do, it is on the god-king’s own orders, often through the mouth of the Grand Templar.

Bureau of Internal Intelligence : anonymous inspectors and spies among the citizens and other bureaus – for when the King actually *wants* the truth. When the King isn’t looking for a *particular* truth they’ve uncovered, they use it to manipulate and extort for their own gain. *Everyone* hates them. They do not get along with nor trust External Intelligence.

Bureau of Heresy : assigned to investigate incidents of heresy and deal with any large outbreaks of heretical behavior. They carefully watch and act to correct heretical ideas that might “accidentally” come out of the elemental temples and school of the Way, and proscribe various forbidden activities (the list changes frequently). They take great glee in torturing suspects and offer generous bounties to citizen-informants.

Bureau of Trade : a powerful bureau that oversees the ancient charters and trade contracts, who have chosen to work with the Merchant Houses rather than against them, advancing their own interests using lucrative deals. For now. Their long-term goal is the dissolution of the ancient trade charters that protect the Houses from law and tax, and the establishment of new charters far more favorable to the bureau.

Bureau of Fire & Flood : oversees disaster response in the wake of sandstorms, earthquakes, fires, and so on; the “flood” portion of the title is traditional and poorly understood. When disaster strikes, hope you have enough to pay them for the privilege of having the fire (actual or literal) put out. A posting of little prestige, but compensation from the desperate can make up for it.

Bureau of Senatorial Authority : traditionally staffed by Senate loyalists from Noble families, they actually have very little authority over anything other than ceremonial activities within the Senate (such as the opening and closing of sessions), breaking tie votes, and reporting Senate decisions to the King. They are empowered to deal with the members of other bureaus who ignore Senatorial laws, however, and turning a blind eye to such could be lucrative...but risks the wrath of their families.

Bureau of Foreign Affairs : the city’s ambassadors, and those who see to the needs of foreign ambassadors. A moderately prestigious posting, though long trips away from the city, necessitating travel through the deadly wasteland, are common.

Bureau of Authorizations : if you need something authorized, such as a permit, you probably have to visit this bureau. The other bureaus hate them because of the traditional power they have over plans, permits, and schemes. The citizens hate them because they represent just one more fee. At one point they held power over approving Senate decrees, but no longer – the Templarate still chafes at this loss of authority.

Bureau of Planning : once constantly at odds with Construction and Permits over urban planning, they have been tasked instead with overseeing and ensuring the construction of the ziggurat and revel in their new authority to raze sections of the city for raw materials or space without approval from the other bureaus.

Bureau of External Intelligence : oversight of extra-provincial resources; ie: spies in foreign cities. A dangerous posting for low-pay and little prestige, though successful completion of assignments may warrant advancement.

Bureau of Maintenance : tasked with the upkeep of the Golden City and especially of the Golden Tower, this prestigious position is only conferred upon the most loyal and devoted Templars as they are given secret knowledge of the Tower, its inhabitants’ comings-and-goings, forgotten passageways, and locked rooms. The only release from this posting is death (sometimes not even that).

Bureau of Public Health : disease, plagues, and general malaise are common when thousands of people are packed into a small area, and this bureau ensures such issues do not become a public threat. Many in this bureau are dutiful healers (for a small fee), while some others practice a simple method of cure: culling the sick.

Bureau of Rituals & Public Worship : the other bureau that interacts most with citizens on a daily basis; its members lead public rituals and prayers to the god-king at his temples and shrines, and collect tithes from the faithful (and their own tithes from that). A prestigious position.

Bureau of Spiritual Affairs : undead are a problem, even inside Tyr, and when the King recognizes such a problem, he calls upon these experts on undeath, the gray, and necromancy to solve the problem for him. It is whispered their members aren’t simply exterminators of the undead. A few members are known to have maintained their position decades after they should have retired, or are still listed as active despite the lack of their presence at any forum for many years.

Bureau of Letters : ostensibly librarians and scribes overseeing and maintaining the King's collection of tablets, tomes, and scrolls, this is actually the bureau in which Kalak hides his Black Peace – the King's iron-masked defilers and demonologists. A few low-ranking Templars given unimportant duties unwittingly serve as a cover for the rest of the bureau.

Bureau of Procreation : tracks and oversees the city's breeding programs for its Mul slaves...and other bizarre breeding experiments. Its members are well-known for their brutality and lack of empathy. The Senate is once again agitating for a stop to these practices and the shuttering of this bureau, citing the number of mouths the city already has in the slave pens, but the King himself is opposed to such plans and has encouraged the bureau to expand their efforts.

Bureau of Obedience : someone needs to raise and train the half-giants who serve the Templarate, to instill a sense of purpose and unwavering loyalty in them. Vitally important to the Templars, its members are paid well to ensure a Templar's guardians have not been planted by rivals seeking to assassinate them.

Bureau of Military Accounting : despite its name, it has nothing to do with expenditures and coin. This bureau exists to ensure the armies are always fully manned and well-trained, and ensure the absolute loyalty of military forces to the King – especially the forces of the Noble Houses. Adjuncts are often assigned to help oversee the city's slave-armies and "correct" disloyalty. This often leads to scouring the slums or raids on wasteland villages to conscript more personnel.

BEYOND THE CITY

Those who have never travelled beyond the walls of the city often imagine a landscape of endless sand dunes, but this is not the truth. Outside the walls, beyond the farms, is more than just dunes. There is sand, rock, dust, salt flats and scrub barrens baked by the heat of the dark sun and scoured by sandstorms, fire wind, shard storms, and the gray death. All of it is scorching hot, waterless, barren, and deadly – and at night, freezing cold, waterless, and deadly.

To the west-and-north are the Ringing Mountains of the cannibal halfling tribes. To the south-and-west are the city's iron mines. To the south runs the caravan route to distant cities full of strange, murderous people and false gods, struggling to eke out a pitiful survival in dust and filth. To the east and everywhere else are trackless wastes roamed by unfriendly elf-tribes, devouring thri-kreen hives, terrible giant beasts, raiders driven mad by the sun, and ancient ruins haunted by the dead and worse.

The sometimes-visible road leads to the occasional fortified and well-defended oasis that caravans must pay well to access. Often-as-not these forts are found over-run and their military complement slaughtered – but, assuming the threat has moved on (and only a fool would think so), at least the water is free.

More than this most citizens of the city do not know and are content not knowing, for most (wisely) would not dare brave the wasteland and its monsters that lie in wait beyond the walls simply to chase rumors, because to do so means death. Only madmen would travel into this endless, lifeless emptiness

But on occasion there is something a well-prepared group might find too tempting to pass up: a rich caravan foundering in the sands, a slave-gang hauling a few iron ingots, rumors of a lost treasure uncovered by the blowing wind, or just a solid payment from one of the Houses to do some dirty work off-their-books.

FARMS & VILLAS

Going to places just outside Tyr, such as the fields, pastures, and various estates, don't require engaging Travel. Such locations are still within the sphere of the god-king's influence, populated and patrolled – though bandits, storms, and wandering terrors are not unheard of and may create obstacles or complications.

It is the extended ventures into the barrens beyond this that are not easy – if crossing the deserts were safe, the King wouldn't need to outfit his Templars with weeks of water and food, iron weapons, mobile fortresses, or send his precious few military battalions; nor would the Merchant Houses spend fortunes to protect their caravans.

But safe and smart aren't words scoundrels live by or else they would never get anywhere, and they wouldn't be scoundrels.

CARAVANS

Caravans are the only safe (as it were) way for merchants and freemen to travel outside the city-state, following long-established roadways paved in some forgotten age, or packed into hard earth through centuries of use. Unfortunately, dust storms and sandstorms sometimes cover over these roadways, and more than one caravan has been lost when they attempt to navigate the wind-hidden roads and fail to guess the path correctly, or are driven from it by raiders or phantasms.

Whether these caravans died from lack of water or were set upon by desert monsters is debatable, but merchant houses sometimes hire fools and cartographers to seek out lost caravans of particularly valuable goods – whether their own or those of rivals. Survivors complicate matters of ownership, and thus are rarely discovered.

EXPEDITIONS

Sometimes the city needs raw materials that just can't be obtained in the city, or in amounts that can't be harvested nearby. The Templars in charge of expeditions to retrieve these materials and dangerous creatures command heavily outfitted, military caravans (IV). These groups are protected in mobile fortresses either built on the backs of or pulled by teams of mekillots and are often supplemented by mercenary outriders; and complemented by hunters and skilled laborers.

At other times, the King may seek out well-supplied groups of daring sell-swords to investigate rumors, ruins, and unusual occurrences; many of these do not return. But woe to those who do return and, in the course or completion of such tasks, would lie to the King or rob him of his rightful treasure – such contingencies are planned and accounted for.

RUINS

Ancient structures appear and disappear among the desert dunes, exposed by a season of strong winds, then buried once more: the ancient bones of cities and keeps, temples and tombs from a time before defilers razed the world to ash and sand. The strange, dark magic of the wasteland makes them like mirages that never seem to hold the same location, or maybe it is the desert that shifts and changes. Some loom in the hazy distance, strange towers scored into the face of a cliff, or look down from atop the height of a butte. Many bear a script no living scholar can read. Many hold ancient doors sealed by sorcery, and bear script that no living sage can translate. The deeper a fool travels into the Wastes, the older and stranger the ruins become, and the more likely that something powerful, dangerous, and ancient lurks within them.

Though not exhausted of treasure, danger, or secrets, ruins near the city tend to be picked over. The Cartographers know where some of these are, so do the slave tribes, and other things. Traps, mechanical and mystical, still guard the halls and chambers alongside monsters and feral undead – sleeping bones and mummified corpses that hunger for life. The truly old ruins hold arcane or psychic artifacts of significant power, which the god-king covets. The Templars watch for such discoveries, as do the Order and the Veiled Alliance.

OASES

Water is power, and every known oasis of any size – from the aptly named Durg's Puddle to the Silver Springs – is ruled by a controlling interest, though these change with the seasons: an elf tribe, a mercenary band, a Merchant House, raiders, all occasionally ousted by monstrous beasts.

Access requires a non-negotiable fee, and prices are not necessarily fair; travelers who cannot pay may drink from the public trough, if there is one, and may sleep outside the walls, if there are walls, and hope the night is quiet – but they never are: the creatures of the wasteland know there is water here, too. Most known oases support a small, permanent settlement with a floating population: traders, wanderers, escaped slaves and others who don't want to be found. Some hide secrets in nearby ruins, or contain dying spirits or strange animals.

Druids and spirits of the land jealously protect the location of other oases from the eyes and lips of those who would exploit these last specks of green and life in the wasteland.

SLAVE TRIBES

The Templars refer to small villages and groups who live outside the city by the derogatory term “slave tribe” – though many of those living in these small groups are escaped slaves, the term is used more to indicate the value the Templars see in them. The slave tribes are cohesive, independent groups that lives outside the city's reach, scattered across the wastes and in the foothills of the Ringing Mountains – small communities built from nothing. They range in size and type from organized settlements of hundreds to a those of a dozen or so nomadic raiders and herdsmen. The tribes exist where nothing else can, often taking up residence in ancient ruins or caves. A few have carved out something resembling permanence -- rough fields, kank herds, theater and law -- but most are one bad hunt, one failed raid, one contagion or Templar slave-hunter from dissolution and death – or actual slavery. Those approaching a slave tribe should be wary: it takes a certain hardness and madness to survive for even a short time in the wastelands, and outsiders are seen as burdens or dangers.

SCORES IN THE WASTELAND

All scoundrels know they are living in a corrupt, dying city run by a mad god, while also *knowing* that *even worse* awaits outside the walls. Still, rarely, one may need to go into the deserts to achieve some end. When your crew finds itself in these desperate straits, the set-up is handled slightly differently than scores undertaken inside (or underneath) the city.

Normally the lead-up to a score is covered by a few narrative lines: we cut to the action rather than play out every detail of the opening. However, the dangers of travel through the desert should not be understated: going outside the city is rare and troublesome – everything is poisonous and wants to kill you/eat you/steal your soul/wear you like a meat-suit – so people wisely stay inside the walls; yet as dangerous as such a journey is, the journey should not be the adventure, the adventure is the score.

To reflect this, once outside the city the game moves between free-play and **Travel**, a phase used to show the strain on the crew's existing resources. This creates a disincentive for would-be explorers while not making the journey itself the centerpiece for those who may find such dangers worth the risk.

TRAVEL

The effect on the crew's resources or situation is determined during this phase. The dangerous or deadly events of the journey are discussed or recounted with short player narrations, then your arrival at the location of the score is described, and we roll **engagement**, ending the Travel phase.

- ❖ Once the Travel phase has ended, make your engagement roll with a minimum -2d penalty due to the influence of the Wasteland.

PREPARATION

Just as with scores, there's no need to make careful plans for Travel. Your scoundrels are better equipped to understand the dangers of the desert than you are and take what precautions and preparations they can, thus the exact amount and nature of the supplies your crew brings with and the specific preparations you make aren't important until the fiction needs.

The resources for travel (and their quality) are measured by your crew's tier – the higher your tier, the better prepared for surviving the desert you are; the lower your tier, the deadlier the excursion into the deserts.

Be warned, no matter how hard you might try to mitigate the dangers of Travel, ever must even the most prepared crew contend with:

- ❖ **Lethal Environments** : sunstroke, hypothermia, dehydration, and plagues carried on the air or foulness hiding in the ground, must be managed every day; and dust-traps, sand slides, salt barrens, and mirages present constant, even instantly lethal, dangers.
- ❖ **Dwindling Supplies** : water and food are quickly depleted, lost, stolen, or spoiled, and it is difficult to find enough to eat or drink in the wasteland: much of the wasteland's strange flora and fauna is deadly (even after you kill it), so if you don't bring sustenance with, you won't find a way to replenish it.
- ❖ **Finding Directions** : there are no easy ways to ascertain direction. Only trained, experienced explorers know how to quickly find their way before the desert has its way, avoiding the hidden dangers of the landscape (in the waste, a straight line is not always quickest or safest). Those lost in the desert are rarely seen again. Alive.
- ❖ **Deadly Monsters** : raiders and escaped slaves will kill you for anything you own; elf-tribes will rob you and leave you to die; thri-kreen will at least show you the mercy of devouring you (alive); the hungry dead will lead you astray and drain your soul, leaving your husk to wander the dunes; agony beetles will swarm you and strip you of your psychic energy; giant spiders will forge images of oasis that lead you into their webs; the Dragon itself will devour you.

Rather than setting aside a specific amount of CERAMIC before the journey, we find out in play what our scoundrels planned for, and what they didn't, and what set-backs the unpredictable deserts have caused. Preparations and losses (or rarely, gains) are handled by adjustments to the crew's existing CERAMIC and SUPPLY. If you end up with negative values, you owe somebody. Decide who and what you paying them back looks like.

DISTANCE & TIME

The more time it takes to reach your destination, the greater the chance of a serious situation arising. Decide how long it will take to reach the destination of the score: it might be **nearby** (a location just outside Tyr, such as the mines – generally somewhere a half-day to a few days away), **distant** (a caravan oasis along the trade route – somewhere more than handful of days to weeks of travel away), or **far** (somewhere arrival would require perhaps as much as a season). Distance increases the severity of the Encounters your crew faces.

Distance	Magnitude	Time to reach
❖ Nearby	1-2	A half-day's march; a few days.
❖ Distant	3-4	A handful of days; a few weeks.
❖ Far	5+	A season, or more.

Places even further afield than the far distance, rumored and fantastical places that most in Tyr are certain are merely the babble of sun-mad travelers – and are for the most part correct in this assessment, as no more real than the children's stories about endless water and green forests – should be considered journeys of certain fatality. Certainly no one has ever returned from such journeys.

ENCOUNTERS

No journey in the Wastelands is ever truly safe. Once your dice pool is created, make a roll to see how many encounters the crew experiences.

Crit: One encounter; you may narrate a positive resolution but must then take a Dragon's Deal, otherwise resolve the encounter normally. **6:** One encounter. **4-5:** Two encounters. **1-3:** Three encounters.

When rolling for encounters, make the first roll on the table for the distance matching your journey, then any other rolls on the next progressively lower distances. When a choice of Encounters is presented, the GM is free to choose which to use or may discuss it with the players to see which interests them the most. If you have **zero dice**, you must roll on the Far table to begin with, regardless of actual distance.

We build a dice pool and then make a couple rolls to see what happens during the journey. Start with **1d**. Your tier, **SUPPLY**, and other factors can modify this. Then roll on the Encounter table based on the results.

Take +1d:

- ❖ if your crew's tier is higher than the distance magnitude.
- ❖ for each **SUPPLY** spent up to the distance magnitude.
- ❖ for each relevant crew Turf (Ancient Gate, Caravan, etc.)
- ❖ if some other positive or beneficial element applies.

Take -1d if:

- ❖ the location is Distant.
- ❖ the location is Far (cumulative with Distant).
- ❖ the journey passes through deadly or dangerous terrain.
- ❖ the crew is at War with another faction or being hunted.
- ❖ the crew's Wanted level is 3+.
- ❖ some other negative or malign element applies.

Nearby	1-3	So Thirsty or Belly Up
	4-5	Unquiet Dead or Lost
	6	Bad Weather
Distant	1-3	So Thirsty or Lost
	4-5	Bad Weather or Moved Against
	6	Oasis
Far	1-3	Ambush or Not Minding the Store
	4-5	Hunted or Supernatural Notice
	6	Raiders!

If desired, you may play out one or more scenes involving the encounter in detail, or simply resolve it as indicated, describing what happens, and move forward to the next Encounter or engagement roll and the score.

Raiders! : Elven bandits, slavers, or raiders suddenly set upon you (treat as a gang at least equal in scale to your tier +1). You may: *lose CERAMIC equal to your tier +3 – give up one or more members of the crew to slavery – try to evade capture or stand and fight.*

Hunted : One of the terrors of the desert – anything from a swarm of agony beetles, to a thri-kreen pack, to a silt drake – was stalking you and has caught a member of the crew, cohort, or ally. You can: *leave it to its meal and remove its prey from play – rescue them and hide until the monster loses interest, forfeit 3 REP – deal with it another way.*

Unquiet Dead : A rogue spirit or undead creature is drawn to you and you must: *attempt to destroy or banish it (and risk angering it), make a Fortune roll using your tier – deal with it some other way.*

So Thirsty : Some of your supplies have gone missing; lose 1 SUPPLY or 2 CERAMIC and decide if: *one of the crew took it for themselves; how do you deal with them? – someone, or something, made off with it; do you chase it down to get it back? – you were caught up in some danger and left the supplies behind or lost them; what happened?*

Lost : You've lost your way in the trackless wasteland, perhaps through simple bad luck or being deliberately driven from your planned route, led astray by a mirage, or became lost in a storm. While finding your bearings, you can either: *use up more supplies than planned; everyone has one less load for the score – make another engagement roll on the next higher distance on the Travel Entanglements table (you can become more lost).*

Belly-up : You've eaten or drunk something you shouldn't have – fruits or tubers or flesh of things from the wasteland, or perhaps your own supplies spoiled or were tainted. You can either: *pick someone to take a Level 2 harm (poisoned) – lose 1 SUPPLY for medicines and spices.* If one of your teammates has the Survivor ability, ignore this result.

Note : Encounters cannot be resisted, but their consequences can be. In the case of multiple consequences, each may be resisted separately.

Not Minding the Store : During your sojourn, another faction takes the opportunity to make a move on your territory; your crew either *loses 1 turf to another faction – loses 1 hold.*

Bad Weather : You are caught in one of the many perilous phenomena (storms, landslides, diseases, etc.) that plague the wasteland. *What phenomenon was it and what are its lingering effects?* Everyone takes a Level 1 harm and you also: *become lost, as above – lose 1 SUPPLY or 2 CERAMIC – become separated – choose someone to take 1 additional harm.*

Oasis : You discover a filthy pool of water with some greenery along its edges, but it is watched over by a spirit of the land that demands obeisance if you wish to partake of its bounty. You may: *refuse and leave – agree to perform a task for it so you may replenish supplies (gain 1 SUPPLY) – ignore its demand and take what you want (gain 1 SUPPLY but roll another Encounter).*

Supernatural Notice : An elemental spirit or other powerful supernatural being (like an ancient undead or master of the Way) is drawn to you and you must: *accept a dark bargain it makes with you – ignore it and forfeit 3 REP (risks angering it; make a Fortune roll) – deal with it some other way.*

Ambush : One of your rivals or an unfriendly faction has strong-armed or paid off one of your contacts, patrons, clients, or a group of customers and used that information to arrange an ambush. You can: *fight them off (each character makes a resistance roll) – attempt to escape (make a Fortune roll (1-3: someone takes a level 2 harm, and you lose 1 CERAMIC +1 CERAMIC per tier; 4/5: someone takes a level 2 harm; 6: you get away with naught but injured pride, forfeit 1 REP per tier (minimum 1))).*

Moved Against : Another faction or individual shakes down people in the crew's turf, finds the crew's lair or grabs someone on the crew's periphery with the intent to ransom them later; either: *lose 3 CERAMIC +1 per tier to the other faction – someone goes missing; pay 3 CERAMIC +1 per tier to get them back.*

STRANGE PLAYBOOKS

Death is not the end beneath the Dark Sun. Spirits wander the wasteland, trapped in between half-life and dissolution. Hungry ghosts and feral corpses animated by the dark magic of the desert sands seek living flesh and blood to sustain themselves. Guardians and warriors live on in their tombs, refusing rest or to end their vigils. Sorcerers seek dark pacts that allow them to defy death, and the wronged of centuries past rise from the grave to revenge themselves.

There are also beings of elemental power who have drunk too deeply of the foundations of the world, or become possessed by spirits hungry for mortal form and actions denied to them as the incorporeal, or even forced into forms constructed of obsidian or crystal gemstone, minds psychically lashed to corporeal matter to serve as guardians, wardens, even companions and little of what they once were remaining.

But even stranger and more terrible things exist under the dark sun : beings steeped in the powers of the Way and of ancient sorceries undreamt by the hedge magicians that dare call themselves wizards today. Beings who have sold their humanity for the knowledge and power to ascend beyond mortal flesh, and dare test themselves against the spirit of the Dragon itself, becoming things of wretched deformation or terrible beauty.

When you die, your essence may return as a Spirit, or you may rise again as an Undead, or be forced into a Construct. When you take one of these playbooks, you automatically have the first ability in the list.

SPIRIT

An incorporeal spirit comprised of necrotic gray energies, shadow-stuff, or dark elemental forces.

You died – or perhaps refused to. Your body has been consumed by the desert, but your rage, your loss, or your unfinished purpose anchors you to the world. You are sustained only by the life energy of others and use them to achieve your aims, regardless of its effects upon them.

Start with 1 • **Hunt**, 1 • **Prowl**, and 1 • **Attune**.

You earn xp when you exact vengeance upon those whom you deem deserving, and when you express outrage or anger, or settle scores from your heritage or background.

- ❖ RAAIG : Command +1, Prowl +2, Attune +1, Manifest.
- ❖ BANSHEE : Wreck +1, Craft +2, Intuit +1, Possess.
- ❖ SPECTRE : Hunt +1, Sway +2, Intuit +1, Poltergeist.

Enemies & Rivals : You do not have Friends. Choose two.

Playbook Items : Four personal items that exist with you in spirit form.

Instead of WATER, you have **drain**. Instead of taking trauma, you take **gloom**: *Chaotic, Destructive, Furious, Obsessive, Territorial, Savage*.

You have an intense need: **life essence**. To satisfy this need, you must possess and consume the life energy of a victim (this may be done as a downtime action). When you do, clear half your DRAIN (round down).

SPECIAL ABILITIES

SPIRIT FORM : You are a concentration of ethereal vapors that resemble your former living body. You may weakly interact with the physical world (and vice versa). You're vulnerable to supernatural powers. You move about by floating and may fly swiftly without tiring. You may slowly flow through small openings as a vapor. You chill the area around you and are terrifying for the living to behold. You are affected by various charms (take 2 DRAIN to overcome repulsion). Whenever you would use WATER, take DRAIN instead. When you would take trauma, take gloom instead.

DISSIPATE : You can disperse the vapors of your spirit form in order to pass through solid objects for a moment. Take 1 DRAIN when you dissipate, plus 1 DRAIN for each feature: *It lasts longer (a minute—an hour—a day)—you also become invisible—anything that passes through your form becomes dangerously burned, electrified, frozen, or decayed.*

MANIFEST : Take 1 DRAIN to flow through the Gray in order to instantly travel to any place you knew intimately in life, or to answer the summoning call of a compel.

POLTERGEIST : Take 1 DRAIN to strongly interact with the physical world for a few moments (as if you had a normal body). Extend the reach and magnitude of your interaction to include telekinetic force and psychic discharges by taking 2-6 DRAIN.

POSSESS : You may Attune in order to take control of a living body. When your control is challenged, you must re-Attune (risking psychic harm) or leave the body. Your control is challenged when: *you consume life energy from the host—when arcane powers act against you—when the host's will is driven to desperation*. You may choose to indefinitely possess a hollow – a once-living shell emptied of its spirit – which has been ritually prepared for you (change your playbook to Undead).

UNDEAD

A spirit possessing a body that is no longer living.

You died but something brought you back – a dark pact, a defiler's ritual, the corrupting energies of the wastelands – your essence lodged in desiccated flesh. The body is yours, but not really you: you remember warmth, hunger, sleep, and sleep. These are no longer yours. You have purpose and the terrible patience of something that cannot be killed, frightened off, or outlasted.

Start with 1 • **Hunt**, 1 • **Prowl**, and 1 • **Attune**.

You earn xp when you display your dominance or slay without mercy.

- ❖ **KAISHARGA** : Command +1, Sway +2, Skirmish +1, Dark Talent.
- ❖ **TOMB GUARDIAN** : Prowl +1, Skirmish +2, Intuit +1, Terrible...
- ❖ **LICH** : Study +1, Attune +2, Craft +1, Sinister Guile.

Dark Servants : You have two.

Playbook Items : Fine Clothes and Accoutrements, Fine Personal Weapon, Fine Shadow Cloak, Mystic Charm, Arcane Device.

SPECIAL ABILITIES

UNDEAD : You are a spirit which animates an undead body. Choose four trauma conditions which reflect your undead nature. Arcane attacks are potent against you. If you suffer fatal harm or trauma, your undead spirit is overwhelmed and you take level 3 harm: "Incapacitated" until you feed enough to recover. If you suffer arcane harm while in this state, you are destroyed utterly. Your xp tracks are longer (you now advance more slowly). You have **ESSENCE** boxes instead of **WATER**.

TERRIBLE POWER : Lose 1 **ESSENCE** to perform a feat of superhuman strength or speed (run faster than a crodlu, break stone with bare hands, leap onto the roof of a building, etc.), this factors into effect.

A VOID IN THE ECHO : You are invisible to spirits and may not be harmed by them. Lose 2 **ESSENCE** to cause living things to avert their gaze and fail to observe you for a few moments.

DARK TALENT : Choose Insight, Prowess, or Resolve. Your max rating for actions under that attribute becomes 5. When you take this ability, add +1 dot to the resistance rating of the attribute you've chosen.

SINISTER GUILLE : During downtime, choose one: *get a free additional downtime activity—take +1d to all downtime activity rolls.*

VETERAN : Rather than 3 maximum veteran special abilities, you may have up to 6 veteran special abilities. Note that Mutant and Master of the Way are not general abilities for this playbook, but could be taken as veteran advances.

CONSTRUCT

A crafted being imbued with the psychic echo of a living being.

You were a mind – a living person, a fragment of a powerful user of the Way, a preserved memory – but have been merged into a body of obsidian, bone and chitin, or strange organic matter. Your directives were encoded at the moment of your creation. Your former self remains, somewhere, surfacing at inconvenient moments.

Start with 1 • **Wreck**, 1 • **Hunt**, and 1 • **Study**.

You earn xp when you fulfill your function despite difficulty or danger, and when you ignore your former humanity.

- ❖ ORB : Attune +1, Study +2, Prowl +1, *Recursive Mirror*.
- ❖ GUARDIAN : Skirmish +1, Command +2, Wreck +1, *Shell*.
- ❖ SHAPED : Finesse +1, Intuit +2, Craft +1, *Unceasing*.

Choose a **frame** and one **feature**. Small : an obsidian orb, a strange spider, a carved-bone scarab; *Levitation – Reflexes*. Medium : an enruned stone statue, an obsidian mummy; *Life-like Appearance – Spider Climb*. Heavy : a hulk of chitin-and-bone, a war beetle; *Interior Chamber – Plating*.

Instead of WATER marks you have eight **resonance**. Whenever you would use WATER, spend RESONANCE instead. To restore your RESONANCE a Way-user must spend 1 WATER and make physical contact with your frame, or you must spend a downtime action and remain in proximity to a psychic nexus. Instead of trauma, you take **wear**. When you would take trauma, take a wear condition: *Fragmented Memory, Sluggish, Echo Bleed, Inert*. Start with the *Construct* and *Encoded Directive* abilities.

SPECIAL ABILITIES

CONSTRUCT : You are a psychic echo animating a crafted body. You do not eat, drink, sleep, or breathe, nor do poison, disease, supernatural charms or emotional appeal affect you. You live to fulfill a function given to you by your master. Your former self's memories surface unpredictably and may complicate situations. Choose a Frame Size. Whenever you would expend WATER spend RESONANCE instead. Whenever you would take trauma take wear instead.

ENCODED DIRECTIVE : Take this ability when you become a Construct. At creation, choose your directive: *to guard...* – *to destroy...* – *to discover...* – *to serve...* and create a detail. Once per score, when undertaking any action that helps fulfill your directive, you may push yourself without spending RESONANCE. Your directive may also complicate situations.

CONSTRUCT FRAME : Your carrying capacity exceeds that of a living body. You have up to two non-consumable, standard items built into your frame at creation which do not count toward load. These may be a part of your exterior, exist inside your frame behind compartments, or be manifestations of psychic will.

UNCEASING : You are more motivated than the usual construct, and as you need no sleep, food, or WATER, you gain one additional downtime activity during the downtime phase that may be used to pursue long-term projects (your own or others').

SHELL : Your physical form is singularly difficult to destroy. When you take harm, you may spend your Special Armor to completely negate the damage, or may spend 1 RESONANCE to reduce the harm by one level. A crew member with Craft (and the right materials) can help remove your harm during downtime as a long-term project as if it were a recovery roll.

RECURSIVE MIRROR : When you would take harm or a consequence from a psionic or arcane attack directed at you, you may redirect the energies back at its source as part of your resistance roll, causing the source to suffer the intended consequence instead.

IMPROVED FRAME : Gain an additional feature (you may take this up to four times) from your frame or among the following, *Psychic Projection* (replay impressions, voices, and visual memories) – *Resonant Sense* (detect living beings and use of the Way) – *Enhanced Movement* (move faster and higher) – *Shroud* (disguise your presence or cloud an area).

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