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ERA: Epic Storytelling Game

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# NOTES FROM THE AUTHOR

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Greetings Legend!

To call this a ‘difficult second game’ would be an understatement of gargantuan proportions! ERA has had three name changes, two complete mechanics overhauls and at least two conceptual earthquakes to get it this far.

The inspiration for the game came from an article I read many many years ago regarding the origins of Magic the Gathering. I recall it was designed to be played between games at conventions and this got me thinking about designing a game that could be played, by a couple of people, between sessions or when people don’t turn up to your scheduled gaming sessions.

The design is totally different from Duty & Honour and Beat to Quarters, and satisfies a completely different itch for me in terms of gaming. However, it does share one trope with those games - its another one where the players and the storyteller have to really be on their toes and think quickly at the table about the story. No pre-planned adventures here I’m afraid - it’s just the way I roll nowadays!

This version of the game combines all of the published material that has been produced for the game since it was first released. I’d like to thank everyone who has given me feedback and allowed for the development of the game.

I hope you enjoy ERA and that your legends grow and grow. As always, if you have any questions or comments, direct them to the Omnihedron outlets on twitter, facebook , G+ or throw them onto the ukroleplayers.com forum and one of the Omnininjas will answer!

Cheers  
Neil

*This book is dedicated to the person who challenged me, at my moment of lowest ebb, to dare greatly.*

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# INTRODUCTION

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## WHAT IS ERA?

ERA is designed to deliver classic epic heroic tale where a hero battles against formidable foes and against terrible odds. As a game where one player plays with one Storyteller, think about the tales of Hercules, Perseus, Judge Dredd, Highlander, Conan and countless others. Where two players play with one Storyteller, think of Han Solo and Chewbacca, Elric and Moonglum, Fafhrd and the Grey Mouser, Dr Who and [insert companion of your choice], Batman and Robin - the list goes on and on...

This version of the game focuses on legendary heroes of a mountainous fantasy wilderness with a distinctly Nordic feel, but your game could take place anywhere or anywhen. As long as your setting has heroes, villains and classic themes to exploit, ERA can tell your stories.

## WHAT SORT OF A GAME IS ERA?

ERA uses a 'traditional' set-up with players, who take on the roles of the Legends within the game, and a Storyteller, who helps to guide the story, interpret the rules and present conflict to the players' Legends. However, at times, the direction of the story is directed by the players themselves, balancing out some of this responsibility to create a shared gaming and storytelling experience.

## HOW MANY PEOPLE PLAY ERA?

It is a game specifically designed to be played with two or three people – one hero and a storyteller, or two players and a storyteller.

## WHAT DO YOU NEED TO PLAY ERA?

To play ERA you will need:

- One story sheet (included in this booklet)
- One character sheet (included in this booklet)
- A number of polyhedral dice (d4s, d6s, d8s, d10s and d12s)
- Pencil and Paper

## HOW LONG DOES A GAME OF ERA TAKE?

You can expect the creation of your Legends to take ten to fifteen minutes - including time to revel in how awesome your Legend is! Playing through a full seven scene cycle of the game should take around an hour.



# CREATING YOUR LEGEND

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Each character in ERA is defined by three facets; Elements, Trappings and Lore. Each of these is formed by three things:

Dice: The dice that is attached to that facet.

Element: The element that it represents.

Description: A one line expansion, giving detail to the Element, Trapping or Lore.

*Example: The Executioner's Sword of Chun (d8 Fire) - The description is 'The Executioner's Sword of Chun', the element is Fire and the dice is d8.*

## ELEMENTS

There are five Elements with which you forge your Legend. They represent the staples of iconic heroic stories

**Fire** – Fire represents the strength and fury of the Legend. Mighty warriors and ferocious barbarians will have a high Fire. Weak-willed mages and lithe thieves will have low Fire.

**Craft** – Craft represents magic and the unknown forces that shape the world. Strong-minded mages and pious shaman will have a high Craft. Ignorant gladiators and corrupt charlatans will have a low Craft.

**Song** – Song represents the presence and charisma of your Legend. A silver-tongued thief and a charming temptress will have a high Song. A repugnant warrior and a vile witch will have a low Song.

**Granite** – Granite represents the wisdom and knowledge of the Legend. A learned Lorespeaker and a wizened crone will have a high Granite. A feckless thug or a ill-mannered sailor will have a low Granite.

**Ice** – Ice represents the speed and the agility of your Legend. A nimble archer and a shadowy rogue will have a high Ice. A slow moving Jugernaut and a crippled Seer will have a low Ice.

Each Element is allocated a dice value – either d4, d6, d8, d10 or no dice (o). Each dice value can only be allocated once. Each Element should also be given a short description, to show what particular quality of the element the character exemplifies

*Example: We decide to create a new Legend – called Ragnar, a rugged abrasive warrior who travels the frozen plains and hunts down the monsters that prey upon the weak. A mighty warrior needs a strong Fire, so we allocate d10 to that Element and give it the description ‘Brutal Fighter’. He does not have any truck with magic or such dark arts, so we allocate 0 to Craft and give it the description ‘Has no truck with magic.’ Likewise, he does not win his battles by charming the monsters to death, so we allocate d4 to Song, describing him as ‘gruff and blunt’. Our warrior is more of a brutal force than a deft stiletto, so d6 is allocated to Ice, described as ‘Battlefield awareness’, leaving d8 for Granite. We decide that the warrior is learned – he studies the monsters he hunts - and describe it as ‘Student of monsters’*

Fire	d10	Brutal fighter
Craft	d0	Has no truck with magic
Granite	d8	Student of monsters
Song	d4	Gruff and blunt
Ice	d6	Battlefield awareness

## TRAPPINGS

Of course, a Legend is not just about the elements in their soul – they are draped with the trappings of a hero. These trappings can be weapons, armour, spells, charms, spirits, mounts, ghosts – whatever things you think that your Legend would carry with them.

Each Trapping is allocated an Element and a dice value. The Element that is allocated to the trapping is important as it denotes how the Trapping is used. A greatsword allocated Fire will be a weapon of war, whereas a Greatsword allocated Song will be a status symbol which can sway crowds when it is drawn.

The Trappings should also say something about the setting as well. In the example above ‘a Greatsword’ is dull, boring and non-descript. The Executioner’s Sword from the City State of Chun however, is dripping with potential. Who is the Executioner? Where is Chun? Why does it execute people? How did Ragnar get the sword?

Each Legend chooses **THREE** trappings, allocating d4, d6 and d8 to them.

*Example: ‘The Executioner’s Hammer of Chun’ sounds like a great place to start, so that will be Ragnar’s main Trapping, allocating it D8 Fire. We decide that Ragnar has been a slave-gladiator in his past and has been blood-tattooed by vile sorcerers ... probably from Chun! We allocate ‘Blood Tattoos of the Gladiator’ with d6 Craft. Finally, Ragnar wears a neck-chain*



*with the teeth of the monsters he has hunted hung on it. Each tooth is carved intricately with the tale of the hunt. ‘Monster Tooth Chain’ could be allocated Granite – as it stands as a testimony to his experience – or it could be something used to intimidate foes with evidence of the monsters that have fallen and thus be Song. We decide that the carved record of past foes sounds better, so allocate it d4 Granite. Ragnar is shaping up now:*

<i>Fire</i>	<i>d10</i>	<i>Brutal fighter</i>
<i>Craft</i>	<i>d0</i>	<i>Has no truck with magic</i>
<i>Granite</i>	<i>d8</i>	<i>Student of monsters</i>
<i>Song</i>	<i>d4</i>	<i>Gruff and blunt</i>
<i>Ice</i>	<i>d6</i>	<i>Battlefield awareness</i>

<i>Fire</i>	<i>d8</i>	<i>The Executioner’s Hammer of Chun</i>
<i>Craft</i>	<i>d8</i>	<i>Blood Tattoos of the Gladiator</i>
<i>Granite</i>	<i>d4</i>	<i>Monster Tooth Chain</i>

## **MULTIPLE ELEMENTS IN ONE TRAPPING**

You may, if you wish, attach more than one element to a particular Trapping, so that it can be used in multiple scenes. For example, you could have the ‘Executioner’s Hammer of Chun’ as Fire d8 and Song d6, to underline its martial prowess and ceremonial position. This would expend two of your three Trappings during character creation.

## **LORE**

What Legend would be complete without tales of their previous exploits? Their place within the dangerous world they live in? The awe with which they are held by the the people, the Kings and the Gods themselves? This is the Legend’s Lore and like Trappings, each point of Lore has a Element and a dice value, and should also expand the background of the game.

Each Legend chooses FIVE pieces of Lore, allocating d4, d6, d6, d8 and d10 to them.

*Example: We have established that Ragnar is a hunter of monsters, but why? Maybe he hunts monsters because his betrothed is held by a crazed God and he does these tasks for him? ‘Chosen Hunter of Nar-Rehn, God of Death’ with d10 Fire attached to it is not only thematic, but it also gives Ragnar d10, d10, d8 for Fire which confirms him as a great warrior. If we add in his estranged princess as well, ‘Betrothed of Freya, Princess of Chun’ with Song d6 we now see where Chun comes into the story! We don’t think Ragnar is from Chun ... he was snatched as a slave*

*by those Sorcerers after all. So he can be a full blooded native of the blizzard swept Dragon Tooth Mountains. Leaping from icy rock to slippery ledge sounds like Ice, so we allocate d8 Ice to this. We still have d6 and d4 to allocate. Ragnar was a gladiator so lets add 'Undeclared in the Floating Arena' as Song d4. Finally, we give Ragnar some history, making him the 'First Son of the White Bear Tribe' as Granite d6*

## **SPECIALISATION**

Specialising in a particular Element is possible, garnering you a maximum of 2d10 and 3d8 in that element. However, that will leave you woefully vulnerable in scenes using other Elements. Take that into consideration when you allocate your Elements.



## RAGNAR

### Elements

Fire	d10	Brutal fighter
Craft	d0	Has no truck with magic
Granite	d8	Student of monsters
Song	d4	Gruff and blunt
Ice	d6	Battlefield awareness

### Trappings

Fire	d8	The Executioner's Hammer of Chun
Craft	d8	Blood Tattoos of the Gladiator
Granite	d4	Monster Tooth Chain

### Lore

Fire	d10	Chosen Hunter of Nar-Rehn, God of Death
Song	d6	Betrothed of Freya, Princess of Chun
Ice	d8	Native of the Dragon Tooth Mountains
Granite	d6	First Son of the White Bear Tribe
Song	d4	Undefeated in the Floating Arena

*“The godspeakers tell of the great warrior Ragnar and his mantle of Hunter for the God of Death, Nar-Rehn. The eldest son of the most scarred warrior of the White Bear Tribe, Ragnar was destined to become King of the Mountain until the mark of Nah-Rehn appeared on his skin and his future was set in stone.*

*To become Death's Own Hunter, Ragnar needed to prove himself as a great warrior and sacrifice many souls to Nar-Rehn's legions. He travelled from the snow-covered mountains to the volcanic city of Chun and voluntarily entered the gladiatorial hell that is the Floating Arena, where he fought, undefeated, as their champion, earning the Blood Tattoos of a freed gladiator. To honour his achievement, he was presented to the Lord of Chun and was even betrothed to his beautiful daughter.*

*However the Lord of Chun is a suspicious man and upon learning that Ragnar was pledged to Nar-Rehn, he decided that the warrior wished to sacrifice all of Chun to Nar-Rehn and ordered his execution. Ragnar escaped, killing the executioner and stealing his ritual hammer.*

*Returning to the Dragon Tooth Mountains, he roams the highest peaks, hunting the monsters that plague the human villages and adding their teeth to his chain. He knows that one day, Nar-Rehn will give him his great quarry and he must be ready...”*

# TALES OF LEGEND

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Legends live in a chaotic world of rampaging monsters, armies of dead-ly zombies and foul, despicable Gods. There are, however, many aspects of that world that are constant – violence, lost information, impossible love and the pathways of Fate itself. Each game of ERA tells a tale of your Legend and is formed from scenes focusing on these constant themes. Your Legend will celebrate amazing successes and grieve after terrible losses but their own story will march on.

## SCENES

A game of ERA has a structure of **SEVEN** scenes, called a **CYCLE**. A cycle includes an **INITIAL GATEWAY** scene, five **PATHWAY** scenes and a **FINAL GATEWAY** scene.

Each scene is defined by a combination of two Elements. These are added to the scene as follows:

**Initial Gateway:** Storyteller chooses first, player chooses second.

**Pathway scenes:** The loser of the previous scene chooses first, the winner chooses second.

**Final Gateway:** Player chooses first, storyteller chooses second.

**FIRE** scenes are scenes of physical conflict – massed battles, raging gladiatorial combats and death-or-glory duels. They may also be feats of physical prowess, strength and endurance.

**CRAFT** scenes deal with dark magics, summoning spirits and dealing with demons. They may also involve speaking with Gods, matching magical wits with a mage or casting down a possessing Fae.

**GRANITE** scenes are involved with the discovery or revelation of knowledge or the use of intelligence to win the day. They might involve a flashback to reveal information, solve a puzzle, a debate at a King's table or a drug-addled sage speaking in tongues in a smoky mountain cave.

**SONG** scenes involve persuasion, seduction and manipulation. When your Legend sweeps a Princess off her feet, makes a fool of the arrogant Prince or matches wits with the Gods themselves, it is a SONG scene.

**ICE** scenes are quick moving scenes of evasion and escape, stealth and pursuit. A chariot race, an infiltration of a dark tomb, fleeing from a



Mage's summoned skeletons and losing a pursuing ship at sea – these are all ICE scenes.

*Example: A scene combining FIRE and ICE would combine themes of combat, violence and strength alongside speed, agility and stealth. So maybe a battle scene amidst falling rocks and crumbling pathways? A scene combining FIRE and SONG however, would take the same themes of combat and strength and add in some social aspects - maybe the fight is partially martial and partly a bragging contest?*

Remember these additional rules for choosing the Elements within a scene:

You can only have a PATHWAY scene for a particular element once in each story – i.e. there will always be a FIRE pathway scene, an ICE pathway scene, a GRANITE pathway scene, a SONG pathway scene and a CRAFT pathway scene, although what order they come in will be determined by the player and the storyteller.

The scene cannot share an element with the preceding scene

## **GATEWAY SCENES**

The first scene is always the INITIAL GATEWAY scene. This is the scene that throws down the gauntlet to the Legend and presents their first challenge. GATEWAY scenes are special. The first Element attached to the Initial Gateway scene is determined by the Storyteller.

Whoever loses the conflict in this Initial Gateway scene gets to choose and frame the first Pathway scene. Remember, you cannot frame the first Pathway scene with either element that were included in the Initial Gateway scene.

The last scene of the story is the FINAL GATEWAY scene which acts as a climax to the adventure ... and possibly a signpost to the next. The first Element attached to the Final Gateway scene is determined by the Player and can be ANY Element, regardless of what was used in the previous scene. Similarly, the Storyteller can attach any of the remaining four elements to the scene, regardless of what has come before.

This scene should bring the tale to a close in some way, although it is perfectly acceptable to leave the story open ended and lead into a new story, with a new set of Gateway and element-driven scenes.

## PATHWAY SCENES

The five scenes that follow this Gateway scene are PATHWAY scenes. These scenes form the bulk of the story - answering the challenge laid down in the Initial Gateway scene and building towards the Final Gateway scene.

## CHOICES

Your choices of Element guide the story and the way that your scenes play out inform what will come next. Sometimes, you might want to fight in the next scene, but you have already used your Fire pathway scene - don't bend the rules. Be creative and find a way to work with what you have. In ERA, the nature of the scenes is a resource. If the fight scene is your ace in a hole ... save it until it is just right for you.

## ILLEGAL SCENE CHOICES

You may not choose an element for a scene that would make the next scene 'illegal'. This can happen, in particular, when you choose the second Element for the fourth Pathway scene. To avoid this, you may not choose the remaining Pathway scene element for the last scene, as the second element for the penultimate Pathway scene.

*Example: A game has been played where the first three Pathway scenes have used Ice and Granite, Fire and Craft and Song and Ice. The two remaining mandatory elements are Craft and Granite. If Craft is chosen as the Pathway scene first element, Granite cannot be chosen as the second - you would have to choose Fire. Song and Ice have been used in the previous scene and choosing Granite would stop it from being used in the final Pathway scene.*

## SCENE EXAMPLE

*Example: The Storyteller has kicked off the game with the Initial Gateway scene: a ferocious attack upon a wounded maiden by a pack of wolves, a fortunate escapee from the hands of the Serpent. This is a FIRE and ICE scene, as Ragnar wades into the fray to save the maiden and hears the horror befalling the village. Ragnar wins the day (how? See later...). The Storyteller now gets to choose and frame the first Pathway scene as he 'lost' the previous scene. He decides that he is going to shake things up by having the maiden be the beloved of the village's chieftain, a former White Bear Tribe mercenary and names the GRANITE scene. The Storyteller could not make this scene a FIRE or ICE scene, as the Initial Gateway scene was a FIRE and ICE scene. Ragnar's player can now choose between SONG and CRAFT as the second element. He cannot choose FIRE or ICE as they were chosen in the previous scene. He chooses SONG.*

*Note that this means there cannot be another GRANITE scene until the final GATEWAY scene, but there can be another FIRE scene, as the previous FIRE scene was a GATEWAY*



*“The masstyf is the chosen guardian of the princelings of Chun. The massive dogs, who roam wild in the lower reaches of the Dragon Tooth Mountains are tamed and bonded to the young princes during their naming ceremony. They then serve as the protectors, playmates and mounts for the princes until they grow to adulthood. Loyal unto death, a masstyf will fight any foe that threatens his master and legend has it that if a prince dies, the masstyf will venture into the underworld to stand vigil over the boy until the end of time. That is, of course, just a legend...”*



# CREATING CHALLENGES

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All Legends have adversaries that try to stand in their path as they complete their quests. Some of these will be living, breathing (or shambling ...) active opponents, whereas others will be inanimate obstacles such as unclimbable cliffs, unfathomable mazes or impenetrable blizzards. There are four levels of adversarial challenges

**Minion:** These are trivial challenges, totally within the basic capabilities of any hero. Only a disaster or complete ineptitude would result in a loss here. These provide an easy challenge to a single hero and a trivial challenge to a pair of heroes or a hero with a companion.

**Standard:** These are challenges on par with the capabilities of any single hero. If they have a companion they should be able to handle these regularly

**Elite:** These are challenges which will stretch the capabilities of a hero and offer a decent challenge to a hero and a companion.

**Legendary:** These challenges will daunt even the strongest hero and challenge strongly a hero and their companion.

Don't be afraid of Elite or Legendary adversaries for your Legends. They are meant to be challenged within the game and failing in a scene merely hands narration of the story over to the players. Anyway, how can a hero truly underpin their legend if they never battle true gods and monsters?

Rather than being represented by dice for each of their elements, trappings and lores, challenges have a static number that forms their opposition to the hero. These static numbers are derived from their equivalent dice level and the level of the challenge.

Dice	Minion	Standard	Elite	Legendary
d4	1	2	3	4
d6	1	3	5	6
d8	2	4	6	8
d10	2	5	8	10
d12	3	6	9	12
d20	5	10	15	20

*Example: The storyteller needs to put together the stats for a pack of hungry wolves chasing down the Legend. She decides upon the following:*

*Fire d8 Snarling Pack Fighters*

*Craft 0*

*Granite 0*

*Song d4 Bonded by the pack*

*Ice d8 Swift predator*

*Fire d6 Tooth and Claw*

*Fire d6 Matted Fur and Bone*

*Song d8 Soul Piercing Howl*

*Granite d6 Pack Borne Instincts*

*Craft d10 Shadow Stalkers of the Night*

*Craft d6 Bound to the Forest Spirits*

*By cross-referencing the dice associated with each Element, Trapping or Lore, she can now create a minion, standard, elite or legendary foe for this encounter.*

## **‘Animal’ Adversaries**

As you can see in the example above, animals will have a number of Elements rated at 0 – animals rarely have GRANITE or CRAFT and only a few will have SONG

## **Packs and Groups of Lesser Monsters**

Another option for adversaries are packs of monsters. No self-respecting Legend is going to be troubled by a single Goblin ... but what about a pack of Goblins? Packs should be designed just as an ordinary creature, but you only need to defeat the ‘pack’ rather than each individual one. Note that this pack-mechanic can be used for non-combat groups as well – say, impressing a royal court?

## **‘Inanimate’ Adversaries**

An inanimate adversary will always have THREE scores of the same type, to represent the nature of the threat that it poses.

*Example: A heavily blocked standard door might be 4,4,4 FIRE, a paltry magical trap would be 1,1,1 CRAFT whilst a fiendish labyrinth might be 8,8,8 GRANITE. Note that even the pointless magical trap could cast someone out if they do not have three dice of Craft! Sometimes, that companion is very helpful!*

## Example Adversary Levels

You can use the different challenge levels to create a number of different challenges from the same core creature. Here is a wolf-pack with their core dice scores noted, and then two quick variants.

### Pack of Wolves (Average)

Fire	4	Snarling pack fighters
Craft	0	
Granite	0	
Song	2	Bonded by the pack
Ice	4	Swift predator
Fire	3	Tooth and Claw
Fire	3	Matted Fur and Bone
Song	4	Soul Piercing Howl
Granite	3	Pack Borne Instincts
Craft	5	Shadow Stalkers of the Night
Craft	3	Bound to the Forest Spirits

### Trained Hunting Wolves (Elite)

Fire	6	Snarling pack fighters
Craft	0	
Granite	0	
Song	3	Bonded by the pack
Ice	6	Swift predator
Fire	5	Tooth and Claw
Fire	5	Matted Fur and Bone
Song	6	Soul Piercing Howl
Granite	5	Pack Borne Instincts
Craft	8	Shadow Stalkers of the Night
Craft	5	Bound to the Forest Spirits

### Wolf-Spirit Lord (Legendary)

Fire	8	Snarling pack fighters
Craft	0	
Granite	0	
Song	4	Bonded by the pack
Ice	8	Swift predator
Fire	6	Tooth and Claw
Fire	6	Matted Fur and Bone
Song	8	Soul Piercing Howl
Granite	6	Pack Borne Instincts
Craft	10	Shadow Stalkers of the Night
Craft	6	Bound to the Forest Spirits



# RESOLVING CONFLICTS

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Legends are forged in conflict, moments of critical importance where fate can take you in a number of undetermined directions. Conflicts are not always based on physical violence - a Legend's fate can depend upon decoding an ancient transcript or solving the riddle of the fallen goddess. Conflicts are completed in four steps

## STEP ONE: DETERMINE ELEMENTS and INTENT

Each conflict is determined by the combination of the two ELEMENTS chosen when the scene was framed. Remember:

The Elements must not be the same – so no FIRE/FIRE conflicts. If this is a PATHWAY scene, it cannot involve either of the elements from the previous scene, be that the first GATEWAY scene or a PATHWAY scene.

The participants must also state what they want from the conflict – the INTENT. This should be specific rather than vague.

*Example: The Storyteller frames the scene of Ragnar arriving in the terrified village with the injured maiden, only to be confronted with the raging Mercenary that acts as their headman. This has already been determined as a GRANITE scene – a battle of lore, precedence and authority. Ragnar's player ponders whether to make this a violent scene – adding FIRE – or a matter of personality – adding SONG – or even using his mythic quest as leverage – adding CRAFT. He decides that the fact that he is questing for the Death God could be interesting, so he chooses CRAFT. This scene will resolve using GRANITE and CRAFT.*

*As an intent, Ragnar wants the Mercenary to recognise his authority and status and concede that he has the right to destroy the Serpent. The Mercenary wants to run Ragnar out of his village, into the frozen wilderness again. The Mercenary is a STANDARD opponent*

## STEP TWO: DETERMINE YOUR DICE POOL

To create your dice pool, you may include the following:

The dice associated with **ONE** of the Elements involved in the conflict.

The dice associated with the Elements of up to **TWO** Trappings involved in the conflict.

The dice associated with the Elements of up to **TWO** pieces of Lore involved in the conflict.



As you are playing out the scene, you should state exactly how these Trappings and Lore are being used to influence the conflict. If a reasonable reason for them to be involved cannot be found, they cannot be used.

*Example: Ragnar needs to assert his superiority over his rival if he is to progress and he is the First Son of his tribe, the son of the Chieftain. Rather than chastising him for some supposed slight on his maiden, the Mercenary should open his halls to him. He chooses Granite d8 as his Element. He states that he wants to show that he is an expert monster hunter – adding his Monster Tooth Chain (Granite d4) – and wants to add his Blood tattoos but he concedes that he would be reaching to try to bring them into this particular conflict. Looking at his Lore, he obviously includes ‘First Son of the White Bear Tribe’ (d6 Granite). He has no other Lore that he can bring into the conflict. His resulting dice pool is d8, d6, d4.*

The Mercenary includes 3 Granite, Ursa’s Transformation 3 Craft (he is a shapeshifter) and Gnarled Chieftain’s Staff 3 Granite. He has no more Lore or Trappings which he can apply. His opposition is only 3,3 and 3

### **WHAT IS REASONABLE?**

The object of the game is not to create barriers of pedantry by demanding that everything has a cast iron established reason for inclusion. If the players can legitimately find a reason to include their dice, allow it.

### **STEP THREE: MATCH YOUR DICE AND SCORES**

There are three phases in each conflict. The Storyteller allocates their scores to each of the three phases of the conflict. At least one score, if possible, must be allocated to each phase.

The player then allocates his dice against these scores. At least one dice, if possible, must be allocated to each phase. The player then rolls these allocated dice and notes whether they have exceeded the opponent’s total in that phase. If they have, they have won. If they have not, they have lost. If both are equal, it is a draw and neither side has won that phase.

*Example: The mercenary allocates his scores equally to each phase; 3,3 and 3. Ragnar allocates a d8 to one phase, a d6 to another and a d4 to the final phase.*

*Ragnar rolls his d8 (rolling 5, which beats the 3) and narrates his storming entrance into the village catching the Mercenary unawares and with his arms wrapped around another woman!*

*Enraged by this intrusion, the Mercenary demands that Ragnar leaves the village. Ragnar chuckles and picks up the d6 allocated to his second phase, rolling 6 (beating the 3). Ragnar quotes his lineage, back through the*

*Chieftains of the White Bear Tribe, demanding that the Mercenary backs down. Ragnar demands that the Mercenary gives him aid and courtesy whilst he hunts the Serpent. The Mercenary has 3 once again in the final phase of the conflict. Ragnar only has his d4 to roll and only rolls a 2 (losing to the 3). The Mercenary states that he can have his courtesy ... after he has defeated the Serpent!*

## **STEP FOUR: THE EFFECT OF THE CONFLICT**

After all three phases of the conflict have been won or lost, the results of the conflict are determined.

Each side is allowed to make one 'declaration' for each phase of the conflict they won.

Starting with the winner of the conflict (i.e. the person who won the most phases. If there is a tie, the player that stated the initial element for the scene goes first), a declaration is made. If you still wish to achieve your intent, one of your declarations must address that issue. Example declarations could include:

*The guards let me pass through the gateway without harassment  
We discover the secret password for the gate of the Gods  
My sword carves a deep gash across the barbarian's face  
I dash through the castle, hiding in the shadows.  
My rune magic overcomes the molten barrier and we pass*

If the loser agrees with this declaration, the declaration becomes part of the story. However, if they disagree with this statement, they can alter it but it costs them one of their declarations. An alteration to a declaration cannot totally reverse that declaration, but it can change or reduce its effect upon the target.

Each side takes turns with any remaining declarations until they have all been used.

## **Wounds**

If you wish to create a lasting effect on something with a declaration, you can do so by wounding them. These wounds do not have to be physical – they can be emotional, social or organisational 'wounds' instead.

To create a wound, you must make a declaration – which cannot be altered. You now roll your highest dice associated with the Element of the scene which was chosen first. If a Storyteller character is delivering the wound, they do not roll and simply match their score against the table below.

The character affected receives a descriptive Wound equal to the nearest highest dice to the roll. A Player Character is allocated a static number for their wound, a NPC is allocated a dice.

Roll	Wound ( on a PC)	Wound (on a NPC)
0-3	2	d4
4-6	3	d6
7-8	4	d8
9-10	5	d10
11-12	6	d12

The wound should be given a description, like a Trapping or Lore, and has the same Element as the scene in which it was given.

*Example: If Ragnar wants to inflict an injury on the mercenary, it would be a GRANITE wound – almost certainly a social wound that would impact upon the mercenary's respected. He would roll his highest GRANITE dice, d8. If the mercenary wanted to inflict a wound on Ragnar, he would use his GRANITE element of 3.*

## Using Wounds

Wounds can be included in an enemy's score when the associated Element is involved in a future conflict.

*Example: In the above example, if Y'dar decides to injure Ragnar instead of scarring him. He spends his declaration and using his 3 GRANITE gives Ragnar a 2 point wound. He calls it 'Shamed in front of Y'dar's Village – 2 Granite'.*

*If, in the future, Ragnar is faced with a GRANITE scene, his confidence in his own knowledge has been damaged and his opponent will start with an extra 2 GRANITE from this wound.*

## Healing

Similarly, you can HEAL a wound by making a suitable declaration, which cannot be altered. This removes the wound.

## Additional Declaration Rules

You may not make the same declaration twice, after it has been altered. Any second declaration should address a totally different issue. If

someone has made a declaration and you have chosen not to alter it, you cannot negate it with your own subsequent declaration.

## **Dealing with Death**

Obviously, there is one declaration that can be made that could have a radical impact on the game - 'I kill him'

There are three ways to deal with this sort of statement.

1. Play the game with this as a possibility and word your declarations and intent accordingly.
2. Only allow 'death' to be effective in the final gateway scene.
3. Disallow death-related declarations within the game as a whole

This is something that should be discussed and agreed between the players and the storyteller to ensure that the rules are clear for everyone.

*Example: Ragnar has two declarations and the Mercenary has one. Ragnar, in line with his intent states that the Mercenary opens his doors to him and gives him the hospitality his status demands. The Mercenary considers the implications of this and accepts, begrudgingly, that Ragnar does have the right to be given hospitality. This uses one of Ragnar's declarations, leaving him with one.*

*The Mercenary considers his position. Ragnar can alter anything he suggests, or accept it and then have free reign to make whatever declaration he desires. He needs to force Ragnar to alter the result. His intent was that Ragnar would leave his village as he fears the warrior could wrestle control from him. He declares that Ragnar can have hospitality, but as he is a quester for the Death God Nar-Rehn, he will have just two nights to hunt the Serpent or the villagers will sacrifice the wounded maiden to the Dark God themselves.*

*Ragnar's player scowls at the Storyteller. Ragnar would not want to have the death of the young maiden on his conscience but he was planning to leverage some extra aid with his final declaration. He shakes his head and alters the declaration extending the time of the hunt until the next moon, three weeks hence.*

*Ragnar has his shelter but the Storyteller has the choice of the next scene...*

# ADVANCEMENT

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Legends grow.

Whether through fame and splendour, or infamy and horror, the tales of a Legend spread and their power increases as they progress through their journey. In ERA, this is represented by the passing of cycles.

At the end of a cycle, you can choose one of the following

Increase the size of the dice allocated to one of your Elements, Trappings or Lore by one size, to a maximum of d12.

Introduce a new Trapping or Lore at d4

Add a new element to a Trapping at d4

Heal all Wounds that the character is currently suffering.

Whilst it is by no means essential, some storytellers may rule that you should have a good reason to apply the increase to a particular area.

*Example: Ragnar has completed a cycle. Before the next one starts he can choose one of the following:*

*Increase a dice by one size i.e. increase Brutal Fighter (Fire, d10) to (Fire, d12) or increase Monster Tooth Chain (Granite, d4) to (Granite, d6)*

*Introduce a new Trapping of Lore i.e. add Vanquisher of the Ice Serpent (Song, d4)*

*Add an element to a trapping i.e. add Craft d4 to the Executioner's Hammer of Chun (Fire, d8) turning it to (Fire, d8/Craft d4)*

*Heal all wounds he is currently suffering.*

# COMPANIONS & PARTNERS

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## PARTNERS - A SECOND PLAYER

ERA can be played with two players and a storyteller, telling the epic tale of a fantastic pair of heroes. When the game is played with two main characters, in any given challenge one character takes the role of the hero, and another takes the role of the companion. However, when heroes are partners there is no room for any other help and neither can have a companion character!

## GAINING A COMPANION

During an adventure a hero may acquire a companion character, who assists in their adventures. You may only have one current companion. A companion character has their own set of Elements, Trappings and Lore. The dice allocated to these are:

<b>ELEMENTS:</b>	d8, d6, d4, d4, o
<b>TRAPPINGS:</b>	d4, d6
<b>LORE:</b>	d8, d6, d4

## FORMER STORYTELLER CHARACTER?

If a companion has its origin as an existing character under the control of the Storyteller, their statistics are reduced to be in line with these characteristics; the companion is after all, an assistant to the hero and should aid rather than overshadow.

## COMPANIONS OR PARTNERS IN CHALLENGES

When you face a challenge, your companion may aid you by adding dice from their elements, trappings or lore to your dice pool. You may include one dice deriving from an Element and one dice deriving from either a Trapping or Lore.

*Example: Ragnar is taking part in a vicious battle of sword and sorcery against a dark warrior daemon. This is a FIRE and CRAFT scene. He is aided in his battle by Tyk the Godspeaker. Tyk chooses one Element (his d8 in Craft) and one Trapping or Lore (his d6 in Craft as a Talented Godspeaker) and adds them to Ragnar's available dice.*

## SAMPLE COMPANIONS

*Example: Ragnar travels into Chun and picks up a young God-speaker heretic as a companion. The Godspeaker is called Tyk.*

### Tyk the Godspeaker

#### Elements

Fire	0	A man of words not action
Craft	d8	A servant of the Gods
Granite	d6	A keeper of legends
Song	d4	Practiced orator
Ice	d4	Slim and slippery

#### Trappings

Song	d6	Facial Scars of the Godspeaker
Granite	d4	Law Staff of Chun

#### Lore

Song	d8	Heretic Worshipper of La-Ri, Lord of Light
Craft	d6	Talented Godspeaker
Ice	d4	Guttersnipe of the depths of Chun

*Example: Ragnar is granted a spirit of death to accompany him on a quest for Nar-Rehn*

### The Shadow of Your Passing

#### Elements

Fire	d4	The shadow knows ... your death
Craft	d4	The shadow knows ... death magic
Granite	0	The shadow knows ... nothing except death
Song	d8	The shadow knows ... the words of death
Ice	d6	The shadow knows ... the paths of death

#### Trappings

Ice	d6	Cloak of Chilling Shadow
Fire	d4	Touch of Death

#### Lore

Song	d8	To see him is to know your own end
Craft	d6	A creature of the Darkest Dark
Fire	d4	Walk away or die, this is your future

# STORYTELLER ADVICE

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## PREPARING THE GAME

As the Storyteller, it is your responsibility to prepare the game, even if you have decided to use ERA as a quick 'pick-up' game. So what do you do?

The first thing to do is gather the materials needed for a game. These include the rules, either some printed character sheets for the Legends, a cycle sheet or some paper that can be used to scribble these on, and a handful of polyhedral dice (d4, d6, d8, d10, d12 and in extreme cases of truly Legendary foes, a d20). Clearly, your players may bring these as well.

You also need a playing space that is conducive to a game that requires people to talk, a lot.

You then need to decide which setting pack you are going to use. Each setting pack should have a list of quick-start cycle ideas that you can use to prime an impromptu game - otherwise read through the setting pack and note down any themes that you think would make a great game. When you are introducing the game to your players, this is the place to start so that they understand where you are coming from.

The final thing to do is read through the adversaries that are presented in the setting pack and highlight a few that you want to showcase in the game. These too, will allow you to frame the game with a little more certainty.

Introduce these elements to the players and let their rabid imaginations loose on character generation. It is time to awaken their Legends!

## GATHERING PLAYER INPUT

Whether you are using your own setting or one of the ERA setting packs, the Legends that the players create will define the setting that actually hits the table. Each Trapping, each piece of Lore and each description will add details and nuance to the setting. Use these nuggets of information to the best of your ability. Look at them and ask the players what aspects of them are the most important to the Legends? What to they, as players, want to see explored within the game? Not only does this increase the ownership and commitment within the game, but it also gives the players the idea that they are part of the story creation as well - a very real thing within an ERA game.



This input from the players also serves to set the tone for the game and the direction for the story. Settings can offer a massive swathe of game that you can sample, and the ideas of the players will focus down onto one or two themes that can be explored during a cycle.

## **SHARED CREATIVITY**

ERA is a game where the responsibility to be creative is shared equally around the table. This means that as a storyteller, you have to encourage your players to contribute as much as possible, especially when it is their turn to frame the next scene. It is important to remember that this is their story to form, as well as the storyteller's.

ERA is also a game that cannot work with a pre-planned story arc. As the narrative authority within the game can quickly pass back and forth between the players and the storyteller, nothing is set in stone. Don't remain precious about your favourite ideas or themes - they almost certainly won't survive through a cycle.

Taking both of these things into consideration, talk to each other around the table. What sounds like it would be a cool direction for the story to take? Which awesome character that has appeared previously might be great at this point? What devastating fallout from a failure might make for a really interesting twist? This dialogue is crucial to an excellent game.

## **MAKE LEGENDS ... LEGENDARY**

Your players' characters are called Legends for a reason. These are larger than life, epic scale characters who are destined to walk a pathway of danger and majesty and live on in memory forever. Bear that in mind whilst playing the game - nothing should be small, intimate or subtle. ERA is a game of Legends clashing with monsters, treasures ripped from the hands of the Gods themselves, wars that will tear planets apart and plagues that will destroy life as we know it. If you can think of a larger, more impressive way to take the story, don't hesitate to grab that option!

That said, the pathway to greatness is never an easy one and these Legends should be challenged in the extreme during the story. As the game plays out there will naturally be scenes where the Legends have an advantage in the Elements that can be brought into play and others where they are out of their ... well, element. This is all part of the trials of a great Legend. Don't be afraid to sorely test your Legends - throw elite and legendary challenges at them. If they win, they have earned their title and if they lose, narration passes over to them and allows them the chance to rebuild their Legend after their failure.

## **PACING THE GAME**

One part of ERA that needs to be watched very carefully, is the pace and structure of the story. Each Cycle should form a fully contained story, even if it is part of a greater multi-Cycle epic. This means that as the game moves towards the final pathway scenes and the last gateway scene everyone should have an eye on the climax of the cycle and moving the story towards that climactic challenge. However, what if this doesn't happen and by hook or by crook the cycle looks like it will end without a conclusion? End in a cliffhanger, with a definite hook into the next cycle!

Another pacing and structure issue that Storytellers should be aware of is the purpose of each pathway scene. There is a danger that the game becomes a series of fights, rather than an epic story. Remember that not everything has to be a martial challenge - there can be epic storytelling contests, feats of athletic prowess, debates with Kings and riddles with monsters. All of these are challenges but they do not involve swords.

# DRAGON TOOTH MOUNTAINS

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*Dragon Tooth Mountains is the default setting pack presented in this book. It presents an example of how the Lore and Trappings from a few characters can come together to bring flavour and detail quickly to your game.*

The Dragon Tooth Mountains are a snowbound, wind-swept, isolated range that houses an ancient conflict between men, daemons and immortals. The mountains, so-named after the numerous jagged peaks that form the spine of the range, have housed civilisation for millenia, and in the caves and under the snow, inhuman carvings and ancient artifacts can be found pointing back into history. Giants were once said to roam the Mountains, battling with ancient spirits and deadly dragons. Legend says that the caves and crevasses of the mountains were carved in these great conflicts. However, today the Mountains are the battle ground of more mortal factions.

The first is humanity, led and protected by the White Bear Tribe, whose is the major human settlement on the mountains. These rugged people live off the caves and crevasses of the mountain, hunting what they can and trading the ores of the mountains to the merchants of the distant city-state of Chun. They are a ferocious and violent people, trained from birth to deal with the threats on, in and above the mountains. The White Bear Tribe are not the only humans on the Mountains though - there are other, smaller settlements across the peaks. The White Bears offer these settlements protection and it is not unknown for a White Bear warrior to pledge the 'eternal vigil' of protection for a settlement. Another defence presented by the tribe are their tamed white-furred bears. These animals, clad in golden runed armour, protect the temples of the spirits and act as companions for the greatest fighters

The second is the Crone Queen Morna and her goblin hordes. High in the mountain, the Crone Queen lives, served by hellspawn familiars and twisted packs of daemons. She is descended from a long line of Godspeakers and has been driven mad by the voices of the Gods. Combine this insanity with her formidable magical powers and she regularly calls down chaos upon the mountain at the whims of her daemonic masters. She is aided by the Goblins, surging forth from their ancient burrows and tunnels long forgotten the people who created them. These twisted abominations and their tamed wolves, spill from the mountains to pillage the settlements on the command of Morna and bring back sacrifices for their ancestor spirits ... whoever and whatever they are.

The third is the Court of the Mountain, a gathering of the animal spirits said to represent the Gods themselves. The Court lies high above the Mountains' highest peak and act as the guardians of the Spirit of the Mountain itself. Amongst their number are counted Nar-Rehn - the winter wolf spirit of death, Ursa - the mother spirit of the bear, Talyn the Eagle Spirit, and Kel-Sha-Resh - the dead spirit of the sabretooth.

The humans of the Mountains are a pious people, linked to these spirits by the Godspeakers - people possessed of the spirits of the immortals. Some pledge themselves to these gods, drawing power from them and becoming their living heralds. Others are blessed (or cursed) at birth to act as their mouthpieces on the Mountain. Godspeakers can share greater power with the Court spirits, even to the point of being able to change shape into their totem spirit form.

And then there are the great beasts - the Dragons. These massive, powerful Wyrms live on the highest peaks of the mountains, swooping down to feed and terrorise everyone on their home. To kill a dragon is the mark of a great warrior and thus, many warriors forge weapons and armour from their skin, bones and hide. To carry a dragon item that you have not killed and forged yourself is considered a sign of cowardice and in some cases, heresy!

The Dragon Tooth Mountains offer the chance for Legends to stand against multiple epic threats, an exceptionally hostile environment and battle with, or alongside the gods themselves.



# LEGENDS OF THE MOUNTAIN

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## Ragnar, Monster Hunter

Ragnar will one day lead the White Bear tribe, but now he is proving himself as a great warrior by hunting monsters on the Winter Mountain. He has pledged himself to Nar-Rehn and carries the great hammer of Chun, a nearby kingdom of slavers and scum, home of the floating arena. He scours the villages of the Dragon Tooth Mountains, hearing tales of great beasts that he can pursue and glory he can gather.

### Element

Fire	d10	Brutal fighter
Craft	0	Has no truck with magic
Granite	d8	Student of monsters
Song	d4	Gruff and blunt
Ice	d6	Battlefield awareness

### Trappings

Fire	d8	The Executioner's Hammer of Chun
Craft	d6	Blood Tattoos of the Gladiator
Granite	d4	Monster Tooth Chain

### Lore

Fire	d10	Chosen Hunter of Nar-Rehn, God of Death
Ice	d8	Native of the Dragon Tooth Mountains
Song	d6	Betrothed of Freya, Princess of Chun
Granite	d6	First Son of the White Bear Tribe
Song	d4	Undefeated in the Floating Arena

*“Mark my words, Bear Lord, the one known as Ragnar will come for your throne. He will crush you with that hammer and use your skull as a crucible to drink your blood.”*

*“Hush Mongoth, your words are twisted as always. Ragnar serves Nar-Rehn and through him, death is brought to our enemies. He is my ally, not my rival.”*

*“As you wish, King of the Mountain. As you wish...”*

## Mysha the Ghostwalker

Her pale skin, and white blonde hair marked her as destined to become Godspeaker from an early age, but when she had not spoken a word by the age of ten when most young warriors had made their first solo kill, there was fear the voices had taken her mind. She was shunned and left to wander, so no one notice when she entered the haunted and burned ruin of the temple to Kel-sha-res, the slain goddess. She returned with a carved and blackened oak staff, and a prophecy that Ursa's temple would fall, before the next chief saw springs thaw.

### Element

Fire	o	Weak and feeble
Craft	d10	Speaker of the Gods
Ice	d6	Swift and nimble
Granite	d8	Lived amongst Godspeakers
Song	d4	Voice of authority

### Trappings

Granite	d4	Charred Staff of the Fallen Temple
Song	d6	Silver braided hair
Fire	d8	Spirit-ridden by Kel-sha-res

### Lore

Craft	d10	Reader of the Forgotten Runes
Song	d4	Disowned child of Yale the Godspeaker
Ice	d6	Native to the Dragon Tooth Mountains
Fire	d8	Feasted on the flesh of Morna's daemons
Craft	d6	Walked among the spirits of the Gorle Plains

## Janek

Beyond the boundaries of the White Bear Tribe village, the people of the Mountains live in small, hidden settlements, carving out a living in the snow-covered wilderness. Janek is a young hunter and scout, tasked with the protection of his village and a constant set of eyes against Goblin raiding gangs. Janek is a follower of Talyn, the Eagle Spirit and swears that his eagle claw necklace was gifted by the Spirit herself during a fasting pilgrimage on the highest Mountain peaks.

### Element

Fire	d6	Protector of the Wilderness
Craft	d8	Bonded to Talyn
Granite	o	No time for learning
Song	d4	Handsome and Brave
Ice	d10	Leaves no snowprint!

## Trappings

Ice	d8	Heartwood Hunting Spear
Craft	d6	Eagle Claw Necklace
Fire	d4	Chun-forged Chainmail

## Lore

Ice	d10	Sure footed snow scout
Craft	d8	Human eyes of the Eagle Spirit
Fire	d6	I will stand between the innocent and the dark
Granite	d6	Every stone on the mountain is known to me
Song	d4	Friend to the traders of Chun

*“Janek, Beloved of the Eagle, a scout of some renown yes, but are you sure that he is suitable? The White Bear Tribe hate weakness and the lad is hardly our greatest warrior?”*

*“Weakness comes not in the sword arm, but in the instinct.  
Janek is the strongest we have, mark my words...”*



# THE WHITE BEAR TRIBE

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## The King on the Mountain, The Bear Lord (Legendary Threat)

Since the song of the mountain began, there has been a King on the Mountain - a lord of the White Bear Tribe. The King must prove his worth through some great show of bravery and ferocity and then loses the name which he is given at birth and takes on the title of Bear Lord.

The current King was once a great warrior - beaten in combat only once, before he took up his weapons as a man. He proved his worth to be selected as King by hunting and slaying Ulgar, the last true blooded giant on the mountain. He is known as a man of a quick and devastating temper and yet he is also a great and learned student of lore and tradition.

His constant companion is Great Red Claw, one of the tribes' war bears. The bear is old now, and will one day pass away into the arms of Ursa. When that day happens, the Godspeakers say the Bear King will fall...

### Element

Fire	10	Greatest Warrior on the Mountain
Craft	0	The King has no truck with demons
Ice	4	Fights on snow and ice
Granite	6	Born to rule, taught to rule
Song	8	One man, one voice, one rule

### Trappings

Fire	10	Bear Skin Cowl of Dread
Ice	8	Golden Hunting Spear
Fire	8	Guarded by the Eternal Vigil, warrior elite

### Lore

Song	8	I am the King on the Mountain!
Craft	8	Chosen Champion of Ursa
Fire	6	Slayer of Ulgar, the Last Giant
Granite	4	Blood of a Dozen Kings in my Veins
Song	6	Anger that Shakes the Mountains

*"He is a formidable warrior, I will grant him that, but he is also a man of immense arrogance and self-belief. He truly imagines he is immortal and chosen of the Gods. The fool" -  
Morna, Crone Queen*



## Great Red Claw, War Bear (Companion to The King of the Mountain)

### Element

Fire	6	Rugged War Bear
Craft	5	Blessed by Ursa
Ice	3	Surefooted
Granite	0	
Song	0	

### Trappings

Fire	4	Claw and Maw
Craft	6	Golden Bear Armour

### Lore

Fire	5	Fated Guardian of the Lord of the Mountain
Craft	5	Chosen Daughter of Ursa
Ice	5	Two hearts with one RAGE!

## Mongoth, Twisted Shamen of Ursa (Standard Threat)

Mongoth is old for a White Bear, having lived over sixty winters, many as a warrior, a member of the Eternal Vigil and finally rising to the most exalted position in the Cult of Ursa. His battles have left him scarred and rendered his left arm weakened and impotent, but despite his age he still has the look of a killer born. As the legends demand, he has never removed his hair since taking his position, allowing the growth of a truly impressive beard, plaited with bear teeth.

### Element

Fire	2	Only one good fighting arm
Craft	3	Shamen of the White Bear Tribe
Ice	0	Crippled and slow
Granite	5	Learned elder
Song	4	My voice is heard...

### Trappings

Fire	3	Razor-edged Bear Bone Knife
Craft	4	Bear Tooth Beard
Song	2	A Body of Battle Scars

### Lore

Fire	2	Grizzled Veteran Warrior
Craft	5	High Shaman of the White Bear Tribe
Granite	4	The Power Behind the Bear King
Song	3	Blood of the Great Bear in his Veins
Song	3	My Arm for the Tribe

## **Y'Dar, White Bear Tribe Mercenary (Elite Threat)**

A loyal member of the White Bear tribe, Y'Dar has taken the oath of the Eternal Vigil - the warrior's pledge to watch over a brethren-clan and protect them from the wilderness. He is a formidable fighter, geared with the best arms and armour his tribe can muster and possessed of his Shamen's magic with the power of the bear god Ursa. Only a fool would cross Y'Dar!

### **Element**

Fire	8	Expert spear fighter
Craft	0	Pledged to the Eternal Vigil
Ice	6	Fast as the charging bear
Granite	3	Veteran warrior
Song	5	Blessed of Ursa

### **Trappings**

Fire	6	Dragon Scale Armour
Ice	5	Tempered Steel Spear
Granite	5	Gnarled Chieftain's Staff

### **Lore**

Song	6	White Bear Tribe Mercenary
Fire	8	Keeper of the Eternal Vigil
Song	3	Betrothed of the Priest's daughter
Craft	5	Ursa's Transformation
Fire	5	Mountain Born Toughness

## **Armoured Mountain Bear (Elite Threat)**

The White Bear tribe present formidable defences in their mountain strongholds. Their pact with the bear god Ursa has forged bonds between these warriors and the bears of the mountain, who now wear the golden armour of the temple and fight alongside the tribe

### **Element**

Fire	9	Rugged War Bear
Craft	0	
Ice	5	Sure footed
Granite	0	
Song	0	

### **Trappings**

Fire	5	Claw and Maw
Craft	6	Golden Bear Armour

### **Lore**

Song	5	Crazed Guardian of the Temple
Ice	6	Relentless Charge



# THE HORDE OF THE CRONE QUEEN

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## **Morna, the Crone Queen (Legendary Threat)**

Morna lives in a deep mountain crevass, lurking in the shadows plotting the destruction of the mountain tribes. She is a descendant of the ancient Godspeakers - those possessed of the voice of the Gods - but her caste was thrown from the mountain for heresy, leading to her generations-long feud with the tribesmen. She has forged pacts with dark hellspawn to further her aims, selling her own soul for arcane power...

### **Element**

Fire	0	Wizened old arms and legs
Craft	10	Pacted with dark hellspawn
Ice	4	Quicker than she looks
Granite	8	The Witch of the Mountain
Song	6	Voice like poisoned honey

### **Trappings**

Fire	6	Tempered Dragon Claw Dagger
Craft	8	Staff of the Elder Crone
Song	4	Mark of the Godspeakers

### **Lore**

Song	8	Crone Queen of the Black Spire
Craft	10	Soul of Ebon Ice
Ice	4	Nimble like Death
Granite	6	Immortal Knowledge
Craft	6	Hellspawn Familiar

*“You speak no longer for the Gods or their Spirits, Morna of the Mountain. Our blood runs in your veins now and you speak only for the Daemons and the Hellspawn and the Lords of the Dark Beyond. Your soul has been replaced with black ice, your heart has been frozen. You are one of us.*

*You will sit beneath the Mountain and you will gather your allies. The twisted ones, the ragged and the monstrous. We will send you minions and bullies; creatures of nightmare -and when the time is right you will drive the humans from the Mountain, cast down the Court of the Mountain itself and sacrifice it's Great Spirit.*

*This is our pact, that you readily accepted. You are ours Morna  
For eternity”*

## Pack of Goblins (Standard Threat)

Another threat on the mountain are goblins. Crazy packs of deformed humanoids from the depths of the warren-like caves which penetrate the rock, the goblins surge from their lairs when they need food or sacrifices for their demonic ancestors. Individually, the goblins and their lupine allies are easy to defeat, but as a pack they offer a greater challenge.

### Element

Fire	3	Scrabbling mob of pointy things
Craft	0	No demons! No demons!
Ice	5	Quicker than an avalanche
Granite	2	Everyone knows everyone's business
Song	2	Nervous babbling

### Trappings

Fire	3	Short and rusty, sword and dagger
Fire	2	Lizard hide armour
Ice	3	Pet Wolf Companions

### Lore

Ice	4	Born amongst the icy peaks
Craft	3	Ancestor Worshipping Fanatics
Song	2	Heckle and Jeer

## Pack of Wolves (Standard Threat)

Everyday on the mountain, wolves are a constant threat. Packs of mangy, desperate animals will track and slaughter anything they think of as weak and vulnerable. Some wolves are bound to the ephemeral forest spirits as guardians, whilst others are ridden by the goblins.

### Element

Fire	4	Snarling pack fighters
Craft	0	
Granite	0	
Song	2	Bonded by the pack
Ice	4	Swift predator

### Trappings

Fire	3	Tooth and Claw
Fire	3	Matted Fur and Bone
Song	4	Soul Piercing Howl

### Lore

Granite	3	Pack Borne Instincts
Ice	5	Shadow Stalkers of the Night
Craft	3	Bound to the Forest Spirits

## Hellspawn Servitors (Elite Threat)

Dragged from the depths of darkness and despair by the magical power of the Crone Queen, the hellspawn are a constantly changing and chattering pack of daemons, afflicted spirits and elementals of pain and anguish. The Crone Queen keeps them near to her as courtiers and sycophants but when she needs to remove a threat, she unleashes them to do her will.

### Element

Fire	8	Gouts of burning death
Craft	6	Spawned in the pits of Hell
Ice	5	Quick as a flashfire
Granite	3	Learned of forgotten tradition
Song	0	No mortal trusts a Hellspawn

### Trappings

Fire	8	Jet Black Claws and Teeth
Ice	6	Chittering and Leaping Shadows
Craft	5	Flesh carved with evil runes

### Lore

Song	8	Voices like the screams of dead children
Granite	6	Knowledge beyond the ken of man
Craft	5	Pledged to the Lords of the Deep
Ice	5	Quicker than a dead man's breath

## Hellspawn Minions (Standard Threat)

Lesser than the servitors are the minions, packs of screaming imps.

### Element

Fire	5	Bred to eat flesh. All flesh
Craft	3	Spawned in the pits of Hell
Ice	4	Spinning mob of claws and teeth
Granite	2	Learned in the lore of the dark
Song	0	No mouths, no voice

### Trappings

Fire	4	Millions of tiny razor sharp teeth
Ice	3	Never at rest; always moving
Craft	3	Shifting souls beneath their skin

### Lore

Granite	4	Many bodies, many eyes, one mind
Fire	3	Consume Kings and Beggars
Craft	2	Curse-throwers

# DENIZENS OF THE MOUNTAINS

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## The Spirit of the Mountain (Legendary Challenge)

Before the dragons, before the White Bear Tribe and before Morna, the Spirit lay within the mountain, awaiting the Dawn – the day when the snow will melt and the mountain will blossom and thrive. The Shaman of the White Bear Tribe tell of a day when the Court of the Mountain will call upon the Spirit to cleanse the mountain of those that would harm it. Tales of this cleansing has been used for centuries to strike fear into the hearts of warriors and children alike!

The Spirit has never been seen, but it chooses to manifest gnarled and twisted creatures of wood and stone who speak with it's voice and enact it's wishes. When the Spirit of the Mountain manifests, the ground quakes, the snows shift and all creatures on the Mountain hold their breath...

### Elements

Fire	8	Fists like giant boulders
Craft	12	Magic older than the Mountain's heart
Ice	0	Slow and ponderous
Granite	12	The Mountain knows all...
Song	8	A voice from beyond time.

### Trappings

Craft	8	Roots to the Heart of the Mountain
Fire	8	Bark from the Tree that holds the World
Granite	8	Every stone tells me their story

### Lore

Song	8	One soul, as strong as the mountain
Craft	6	The snow will melt, the dawn will come
Granite	4	The Court of the Mountain is mine to rule
Fire	6	Daemons tear at my heart, in darkness
Song	12	You are all my subjects, hear my voice







## The Child of Kel-Sha-Resh (Elite Challenge)

On the far side of the mountain, three deep, jagged crevasses are cut into the rock, legend has it carved by the dying throes of the dead sabretooth god, Kel-Sha-Resh. Deep within these crevasses is the lair of the last of the dead god's children. This giant sabretooth prowls the night, dragging whatever prey ventures into its abode deep into the mountain. Some say it does not need to feed - being made immortal as the last wish of the god ... and yet it still hunts and forever will.

### Element

Fire	8	Vicious Primordial Animal
Craft	6	Blood of the Sabretoothed God
Ice	8	Faster than fear
Granite	0	
Song	0	

### Trappings

Ice	8	Sight of the Old World
Fire	6	Razor Sharp Sabre Teeth
Craft	5	Blood of Kel-Sha-Resh

### Lore

Fire	8	Blood Frenzy
Ice	6	The Hunter in the Night
Craft	5	Walker twist Shadows and Dark
Granite	6	Immortal Child of a Dead God

## Winged Ice Serpent (Legendary Threat)

The most destructive monster on the mountain is the dread Winged Ice Serpent. Said to have been the mount for the King of the Giants himself, the serpent is a deadly foe to even the hardest warrior.

### Element

Fire	12	Crush, smash, swallow, ROAR!
Craft	8	Rune carved hide
Ice	10	Lashed by wings and tail
Granite	8	Older than the Giants
Song	0	

### Trappings

Fire	8	Hide of Glacier Ice
Ice	6	Wings of the Ice Wind
Fire	10	Rending Talons of the Winter Lord

### Lore

Ice	8	The Wind That Freezes Souls
Granite	8	Ancient Beast of Lore
Craft	6	I Have Ate the Hearts of Gods
Fire	10	Wing and Claw, Tail and Maw

## Old Olaf, Mountain Giant (Standard Threat)

Standing over eight feet tall, Olaf is an outcast from the White Bear tribe and a legend on the mountain. He lives by himself, apparently untouched by every monster, animal and goblin. Olaf knows the mountain and he knows the ways of the beasts that roam there ... and he has his secret. Olaf knows how to call down the Winged Ice Serpent, the beast that can fly to the gods themselves!

### Elements

Fire	3	Blood of the Giants in his veins
Craft	5	Keeper of the Secret Places
Ice	0	Big and slow
Granite	4	Only I know the secret ways
Song	2	Speaks with dragons

### Trappings

Fire	4	Maul of God-Runed Iron
Song	3	Fur Wrap of the Mountain Beasts
Granite	5	Calling Staff of the Serpent

### Lore

Granite	4	The Stone of the Mountain in my heart
Song	2	Voice of rolling thunder
Craft	4	The Song of Snow, Ice and Wind
Fire	3	Hands that can crush granite

## Hor, the Cannibal Lord - (Standard Threat)

The madman of the mountains, Hor is a bent and broken old man now - not the promising young warrior who fought the brash firebrand who would become the Bear King. Hor fought and defeated the Man Who Would Be King - the last time he lost in battle - and was exiled when the King claimed his throne. Bitter and twisted he descended into in the mountain's crevasses and lived out his days preying upon unwary travellers ... seeking their flesh

### Element

Fire	5	Human form with tooth and claw
Craft	0	Abandoned by the Gods
Ice	3	Crevass jumper
Granite	2	Long ago exiled into solitude
Song	4	Rantings of a mad man

### Trappings

Ice	4	White Sabretooth Cloak
Fire	5	Massive Icebladed Axe
Song	3	Frame of the Ancient Mountain Lords

### Lore

Craft	3	Lord of the Bear Claw Crevass
Fire	4	Vanquished the Bear King .... once
Song	3	Eater of Blessed Flesh
Granite	3	Friend to the Dead God's Child
Fire	2	Blood of the Giants in his veins

## **The Dread Skord (Legendary Threat)**

The Dread Skord is a legend on a mountain filled with legends. Some say it is the predator that hunted the dragons into near extinction. Others say that it is death itself, the wolf-child of Nah-Rehn. Others claim it is a creature summoned from beyond and trapped on the mountain by a pact of blood lasting generations. The only thing that can be agreed is that it strikes without being seen, kills everyone it meets and has never been killed. Many say it can never be killed - how can you kill death?

### **Elements**

Fire	10	Death walks in it's shadow
Craft	8	Shrouded in magic
Ice	10	Moves without sound or sight
Granite	0	
Song	0	

### **Trappings**

Ice	10	Faster than Death's Last Breath
Fire	6	Claws of Ice, Pierce your Soul
Song	5	The Last Words You Will Ever Hear

### **Lore**

Fire	8	Hunter of the Great Serpents
Ice	8	No snow shifts in it's passing
Craft	4	Dined on the finest serpent essence
Song	4	Chained to the mountain...until when?

# ADVENTURE SEEDS

## THE DRAGONS AWAKEN

The Winged Ice Serpent sits alone atop the highest mountain and screams. Villagers cower in their homes and the White Bear tribe arm their finest. The great beast is calling for a mate and it is only a matter of time before they arrive. This time has been foretold and it is the end of days for the humans on the mountain. The serpents will devour all in their path in their mating frenzy. Only an exodus from the mountain or the actions of a true legend can save them - which will it be?

## THE CRONE QUEEN RISES

Deep beneath the mountain, Morna has been gathering her warriors; hordes of twisted goblins, packs of rabid wolves and every type of hellspawn her masters will spare. Now she unleashes them on the mountain in an avalanche of carnage and death. Why? Morna seeks to bend the Court of the Mountain to her will by killing every single Godspeaker and silencing their voice. She alone will be left, the sole voice of the Gods and all-powerful. Stand fast Legends, lest you lose the Gods forever.

## THE KING IS DEAD, LONG LIVE...

The Bear Lord, King of the Mountain, is dead - murdered in his bed. Without a leader, the White Bear Clan is at the whim of Mongoth and his machinations and unable to protect the mountain. Who killed the Bear Lord? Will someone be able to renew the pact with the Mountain Bears? Who will be the new King and what plot does all of this mask?

## DEATH AT COURT

The sun is eaten during midday. The skies darken and hot hail falls. Birds fall from the skies and plants wither and die. This can mean only one thing - one of the Spirits of the Court of the Mountain is dying. The Godspeakers flail and rock as their voices scream for a Legend to travel beyond the highest peak and bring peace to the Court - healing the Spirit and returning the world to balance. When Kel-Sha-Resh died, her children tore holes in the mountain and killed thousands. This cannot happen again.

## DRINKING WITH RAGNAR

It started as a wager during a celebration in the Bear Lord's lodge. Now Ragnar stands beside a Legend as they prepare to undertake the Final Hunt - a life or death challenge between two great hunters. Mongoth has named the Dread Skord as your quarry; a beast that no man has ever defeated. One Legend will rise and one will surely die...

# CALIPHPORT

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Caliphport is an alternate 'Arabian' setting for ERA, using the same format as the base game. It is based in the Golden City, ruled by the Great Caliph. Within the city you may encounter the Eyeless Mages of the Obsidian Tower, swarthy thieves and brigands, beautiful harem girls, slavers and gladiators, dark-skinned assassins, Emissaries from the Djinn Court and more!

The five elements used in the Caliphport setting are:

**Fire** – Fire represents the strength and fury of the Legend. Mighty warriors and desert barbarians will have a high Fire. Weak-willed mages and lithe thieves will have low Fire.

**Craft** – Craft represents magic and the unknown forces that shape the world. Strong-minded mages and pious shamans will have a high Craft. Ignorant gladiators and corrupt charlatans will have a low Craft.

**Sand** – Sand represents the wisdom and knowledge of the Legend. A learned magister and a wizened crone will have a high Sand. A feckless thug or an ill-mannered sailor will have a low Sand.

**Song** – Song represents the presence and charisma of your Legend. A silver-tongued thief and a charming temptress will have a high Song. A repugnant warrior and a vile sorceress will have a low Song.

**Wind** – Wind represents the speed and the agility of your Legend. A nimble archer and a shadowy rogue will have a high Wind. A slow moving Juggernaut and a crippled Seer will have a low Wind.

A golden towered city by a sparkling harbour, Caliphport is at the same time the greatest, most affluent city ever to be built and the most corrupt and desolate place for a person to live and grow. For every courtier in the service of the Great Caliph, there are a dozen beggars, cutthroats, pirates and body slaves scraping out an existence within the shadows. In the bazaars and markets, traders from every race and nation come to peddle their wares whilst outside, children die in the gutter for the want of a scrap of bread and a mouthful of fresh water. This is a city of adventure, of unlimited potential and of cruel and arbitrary death. Welcome, indeed, to Caliphport and may your every moment be blessed by the Caliph.

# INSIDE CALIPHPORT

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## **The Caliph's Palace**

One of the greatest buildings ever created by mankind is the Great Caliph's Palace of Caliphport. Regents from around the world travel with their architects to view just the outer precincts of the palace and inevitably consider their own palace insignificant and destitute. Indeed, more than one King has had their own builder executed upon seeing only the Caliph's stable house! It is said that no-one, except of course the Caliph himself has seen every corner of the palace. Within the palace grounds are such wondrous buildings as the Vizier's Court - a place where the Vizier entertains his advisors and runs the business of the city - and the Caliph's own Harem, where one thousand and one women await the Caliph's pleasure. On the other hand, the maze of monsters, a labyrinth the size of a small city built on an island in the bay, filled with fantastical monsters and linked to the palace by a magical floating bridge is a wonder that no-one wishes to see too closely.

## **The Library of the Dead Gods**

Near the centre of the city stands the Library of the Dead Gods, an edifice that has towered over the city throughout its various guises. The original use of the building was as a mausoleum for the mortal remains of the most powerful beings, usually killed by great and powerful Legends. There are dozens of corpses entombed in the Library, including the Alabaster King, the Five Faced Tiger and the Lady of Flaming Desire. Each was served by their own 'Court of the Dead', families of servants who maintained their tomb. These families have become the librarians, who have created a vast library above the tombs. Nowadays, this place of death is also a place of knowledge. There is another side to the Library - traditionally, it is considered a place of sanctuary and not even the Caliph's edict can remove someone from within its walls.

## **The Gladiator Pits**

Second only to the great Floating Arena of Chun, the gladiator pits of Caliphport offer blood sports and other forms of 'physical entertainment' for those that can afford its prices. Situated beneath the main bazaar in the centre of the city, the gladiators battle in a vast auditorium carved from the rock itself by bound Dao spirits who now serve to maintain the strength and stability of the dome during even the most raucous of battles. Whilst Caliphport is a slaving city, it prides itself that the men who fight in the Gladiator Pits are never slaves and they all enter voluntarily; some for the glory, some chasing the immense prizes and some for revenge, but all of their own accord.

## **The Slave Market**

With a harbour that crawls with ships like a termite mound crawls with insects, Caliphport was bound to become a hub for the slavers of the Golden Sea. Whether they are crimson marked tribesmen of Chun, the squat tree-dwellers of the Ruins of Thrain or a shackled warrior from the Dragon Tooth Mountains, the slaves are all brought to the same place to be sold - the harbour-side slave market. This is a true hive of scum and villainy, filled with the most wretched souls the city has to offer - and no service is unavailable for a price. It is said that even the Gods come to barter in the Slave Market of Caliphport ... but surely that is just a myth?

## **The Golden Harbour**

If the regal majesty and importance of the city is a reflection of the Great Caliph's benevolence, then the richness and luxury that many of his subjects enjoy is a reflection of the Golden Sea itself. Caliphport was built on a natural harbour with excellent tides and currents and overlooking cliffs offering a safe place for harbour lights and defences. It was a natural choice for traders to settle and meet and has grown as such over the years until no other city can challenge its dominance. The harbour is a chaotic mix of traders, adventurers, warships and fishing vessels, all jostling for the limited jetty space. Some say that the Harbour Master is the second most powerful man in the city. The Vizier ensures that those who utter those words live to regret them for the rest of their interesting, albeit short, lives.





STORM

# LEGENDS OF CALIPHPORT

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## Kalam; Mage, Thief, Prince

Kalam is a rogue who lives and works within the twisting streets of Caliphport. Trained by the Eyeless Mages of the Obsidian Tower, he controls magicks beyond the control of normal mages and his contacts in both the palace and the Thieves' Guild make him irrepressible. The son of the Caliph can do anything he wants when he wants an adventure!

### Elements

Fire	d6	Quick with a blade
Craft	d8	A master of obfuscation
Sand	0	Never listened to his teachers
Song	d4	Filled with confidence and swagger
Wind	d10	Faster than the desert winds

### Trappings

Craft	d8	The Tattooed Magic of the Obsidian Tower
Wind	d6	The High Air Spirit's Winged Slippers
Fire	d4	Shimmering Scimitar of Flame

### Lore

Song	d10	Youngest Son of the Great Caliph
Craft	d8	Initiate of the Seventh Circle
Wind	d8	Caliphport Thieves Guild Rebel
Fire	d6	Whirlwind Sword Style
Song	d4	A Voice of softest silk

*'Kalam! Kalam! Do not speak to me of damned Kalam! Every time a man comes to me to speak of stolen gems - it is Kalam! The merchants cry of a Djinn loose in the market - Kalam! The day my loins spawned that boy was the day a demon was thrust upon this land. However, he is my boy, Ambassador, and if he stole your Princess on the back of a Roc, then he does that with my bidding. Now begone, before I have you beheaded!'*

*The Great Caliph shows his parenting skills to the Ambassador of Chun*



## Arrela; Feisty Escaped Slave Girl

Arrela was born and bred to be a concubine in the Caliph's harem, with golden swirls and images embedded into her skin to mark her as such. She has a rebel spirit and would never be beholden to the Caliph, finding her freedom in an audacious escape - the so-called Race of Blades. Now she hides in the Library of the Dead Gods, a hunted woman.

### Elements

Fire	0	Never trained for fighting
Craft	d4	Pleasure ... or pain, beyond belief
Sand	d6	Filled with tales and lore
Song	d10	A priceless face and voice
Wind	d8	Agile and Nimble

### Trappings

Song	d8	Signet Ring of the Caliph's Harem
Wind	d6	Shifting Sand Cloak
Fire	d4	Razor Edged Stiletto

### Lore

Song	d10	Inlaid Golden Dragons of the Harem
Sand	d8	Trapped in the Library of the Dead Gods
Song	d6	The Race of Blades has One Winner
Craft	d4	Possessed of the speech of the Fates

*"Your house is my house, Arrela"*

*"I thank you for it, Great Librarian. My path has been long but it has found me here. The Fates drive me and I know my higher purpose. I will never be a plaything of men again."*

*"In my house, no. I foresee a future though where you will have a choice, Arrela the Free, and you will choose slavery once more."*

*"Never. I would rather die"*

*"Death may not be an option, my friend..."*



## Syllabym the Serendipitous

One of the Scariffi, a race of serpent-people who live deep within the desert, Syllabym is a merchant prince who travels the trade routes of Caliphport seeking fame and fortune. However, a quiet life on the road is not written into his fate, and somehow trouble is never too far away from his forked tongue...

### Elements

Fire	o	Why fight when you can talk?
Craft	d6	The magic of the serpents
Sand	d8	A long travelled Scariffi
Song	d10	A golden (albeit forked) tongue
Wind	d4	Slithering walk

### Trappings

Craft	d8	The Scrolls of Scariffi
Fire	d6	A cedarwood casket of arcane oils and elixirs
Ice	d4	The Floating Rug of the Unknown Vizier

### Lore

Craft	d10	Master serpent mage
Song	d8	Viziers's highly influential advisor
Sand	d6	Feared and respected in the merchant court
Fire	d6	Poisonous bite
Sand	d4	A proud Scariffi, seldom ignored

*"The Scariffi are a strange people. They are serpents who walk as men, or at least they appear as such to the common man. I can sense the touch of the Gods on them. That is why I keep Syllabym close to my counsel.*

*Of course I don't trust him. Would you? He is nothing more than a common merchant after all, but he has his uses, especially when I need to remind the Obsidian Tower that they are not the only ones with recourse to magic in this city. Not the only ones by a long measure..."*

*The Vizier shares his views on the Scariffi*







# THE VIZIER'S COURT

## Garsh, Half-Ogre Slave Master (Standard Threat)

Garsh was always marked to be his tribe's shaman, even though his half-blooded nature made him different from other Ogres. However, he was torn from his home and forced into the Caliph's gladiator pits at an early age. He won his freedom, only by being made the Golden City's head slaver - a position of power he now abuses regularly.

### Elements

Fire	5	Ogre Strong
Craft	2	Tied to the Spirits of the Tribe
Sand	4	Raised in the Shaman's Hut
Song	3	Known throughout the Golden City
Wind	0	Lumbering Frame

### Trappings

Fire	4	Chains and Manacles of Blooded Iron
Wind	3	Shadowhide Whip
Song	2	Scars of the Vizier's Cabal

### Lore

Song	5	Master of the Slave Pits of the Vizier
Fire	4	Scion of the Iron Mountains
Fire	4	Champion Gladiator, freed and captured
Sand	3	A City in his debt, debts lead to power
Craft	4	Son of a Shaman, Son of a Witch

*"Some people think this is the end of their lives. They are fools - this is the beginning. You have come to re- side in the greatest city in all of history and your eyes - curse them for their soulless dullness - will see things that your friends and families can never imagine. And when you die - and you will - your last sight will be the glorious sun shining over the Caliph's palace and you will know Heaven. Now kneel and be branded, scum!"*

*Garsh explains life as a slave*

## **Gang of Garsh's Slavers (Standard Threat)**

Garsh the slave master sends his ragged bands of slavers out into the city and the surrounding dunes to bring the weak, the lost and the desperate to his slave pits. Relentless, ruthless and deadly, the slavers are feared by everyone in Caliphport.

### **Elements**

Fire	4	Brutal thugs
Craft	0	No magic whatsoever
Sand	2	The Streets are their home
Song	2	Intimidating voices
Wind	4	Used to chasing fugitives

### **Trappings**

Fire	3	Whips, chains and fiery brands
Song	2	Scars of the Vizier's Cabal
Craft	3	Lens of True Seeing

### **Lore**

Song	4	Ruthless Band of Heartless Rogues
Fire	3	Masters of Pain and Anguish
Sand	2	Caliphport, like the back of my hand

## **Bound Gladiator Bodyguards (Standard Threat)**

The arena entertains and thrills the people of Caliphport with a blood-sport that many cities no longer practice. The gladiators also act as bound bodyguards for Caliphport's richest denizens and frequently tackle the rogues that ply their trade on the packed streets of the city

### **Elements**

Fire	5	Trained in Gladiatorial Prowess
Craft	0	Untrained in the dark arts
Sand	2	Tales shared in the dark
Song	3	Proven performers
Wind	4	Quick to dodge a thrust

### **Trappings**

Craft	3	Magical Bindings of the Arena
Fire	5	The best weapons money can buy

### **Lore**

Sand	3	Dragged from the four corners...
Song	2	Songs are written of their exploits
Wind	4	Escape the blade or die!

## Rammus, Champion Gladiator (Elite Threat)

From the slave pits to the arena and from the arena to grandeur and riches - Rammus' journey has been nothing less than spectacular. He started life as a slave from the mountains beyond the sands and was soon recognised for his love of battle and death. Winning every battle he has faced in the arena, Rammus is now a superstar of Caliphport. Some say that he is a demigod - immortal and unbeatable. Some say he will one day lead the slaves in rebellion against the Grand Caliph...

### Elements

Fire	8	Ruthless aggression
Craft	0	No truck with magic
Sand	4	Older than he looks
Song	6	The Caliph's favourite
Wind	6	Fast, but not as fast as he used to be

### Trappings

Fire	6	Blood soaked iron spear
Wind	5	Sand panther-skin armour
Song	3	Vestments of the Champion Gladiator

### Lore

Fire	6	The greatest gladiator ... ever!
Wind	5	Always three moves ahead of his foe
Song	5	1000 souls sent to the sand
Song	3	Rumoured to be cursed never to die.
Fire	3	Fights unlike any man of the sands...

“There is nothing I have not killed, except death itself. I have danced in the arena with men and monsters, peasants and kings. I have killed dragons and djinn, manticores and medusae. Whatever you have in your cages, Garsh, it causes me no fear.”

## The Grand Vizier of Caliphport (Elite Threat)

Ruler of the Golden Sea, master of the 7th fleet of the Infinite Horizon, Lord benefactor of the Obsidian Tower, Most illustrious child of the heavens, son of the Grand Vizier - may his remains never age - Har'en, his most magnificent, incandescent and glorious Vizier of All.

Har'en is the public face of the Great Caliph and is, essentially, the true ruler of Caliphport. He operates his Guard as a not-so-secret police force, ensuring that the Caliph's wishes are met ... and if his wishes are represented as the Caliph's, he is only saving his Eminence from the annoying need to think.

### Elements

Fire	3	The Vizier knows how not to die
Craft	5	Spirits owe him for their freedom
Sand	6	Everything is known to the Vizier
Song	9	The most charismatic man in Caliphport
Wind	0	The old man cannot run

### Trappings

Song	6	Diamond Seal of Caliphport
Fire	3	Corpulent body, wrapped in silk
Sand	5	Web of Informers and Spies

### Lore

Song	8	Ruler of the Golden Sea etc..
Sand	6	Schooled by 1000 Sages
Craft	5	Warded by the Obsidian Tower
Song	3	Voice like melted gold

*“Somewhere in this city, this grand and complex city, there is a golden orb. That orb, when drenched in the blood of a virgin daemonesse, will summon forth the hordes of the underworld, desperate to touch its purity and embrace it. They will tear down the towers, break the ports and destroy the Caliph's palace.*

*Bring me this orb ... I will keep it here, with me, for safe keeping, you understand. For this service, I will make you richer than even I can possibly imagine.*

*Should you survive...”*

## Vizier's Guard (Standard Threat)

The Grand Vizier is almost immobile, as befits his status. To project him, he has a cadre of lethal armed guards, who ride the streets of Caliphport on their devil-lizard mounts. Feared is not the word...

### Elements

Fire	5	Trained warriors
Craft	0	Little use for magic
Sand	3	Secrets are their business
Song	2	Make innocent people uneasy
Wind	4	Street fighters.

### Trappings

Fire	5	Combat trained fire lizard
Fire	4	Serrated swords, golden armour

### Lore

Wind	3	Trained to fight fast and tight
Song	3	Blessed by the Grand Vizier
Fire	3	Strongest of the Strong, Swiftest of the Swift
Sand	2	Within earshot of every secret of the 'port





# SERVANTS OF THE NIGHT

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## Eyeless Mage of the Obsidian Tower (Elite Threat)

To become an eyeless mage, you must stare into the flames of the Gods, filling your mind with knowledge beyond the ken of man ... and burning your own eyes out. These insane mages, trapped in their Obsidian Tower, offer their mystical services for insane prices - in money, in magic and in mortal (and immortal) souls.

The Eyeless Mages will offer their services to anyone who can meet their price, and their patronage to those of significant power - such as the Vizier. Their main tactic is to summon spirits and creatures from the depths of the desert to do their bidding, but they are not beyond throwing a few fireballs when needed.

The Obsidian Tower lies deep within the desert and has a complex series of traps and magical constructs protecting it. It also has no door - the only people who know how to enter it are the Eyeless Mages. Within the Tower there is access to a pocket dimension, making it far more expansive than its exterior brickwork suggests. It is filled with the strange and the mystical ... but its greatest defence is the Mages themselves.

### Elements

Fire	0	No need to use weapons
Craft	9	With their will, they can bend reality
Sand	8	All is known to those without eyes
Song	6	If we can treat with Djinn, we can treat with you
Wind	3	Dancing through shadows

### Trappings

Song	5	Staff of the Obsidian Tower
Fire	6	Twisting Demonic Familiar
Craft	5	Dead Eyes, burned by the Gods.

### Lore

Song	5	Bargaining with demons is easy...
Craft	8	Magic beyond this mortal plane
Sand	5	Student of the Obsidian Tower
Craft	5	The Word of Death on their lips



## **El-Nadir; Ebon Skinned Master Assassin (Elite Threat)**

They move in the night, the shadow skinned assassins of Zahar, the weapon master. For the right price, any life can be offered to the Gods. The best of these shadows is El-Nadir, scarred 100 times by the Gods he raises sacrifice for. Favoured by the Eyeless Mages, he has the best arms and armour in the clan and carries the All-Seeing Eye, a magic of immense knowledge.

Zahar, the Weapons Master, brings orphans into his cabal and trains them in the darkest of dark killing arts. No way of relieving a man of the burden of his life is untouched. By the time they reach adulthood, the shadow-skinned assassins - their skins are blanched to match the colour of a dark moon - are ready to kill for hire, revenge or pleasure.

### **Elements**

Fire	6	Every strike meant to kill
Craft	0	Magic is unnecessary flamboyance
Sand	5	Knowledge can kill as true as poison
Song	3	Reputation for death comes before him
Wind	8	Nothing but a shadow

### **Trappings**

Wind	6	Dragonfang Poisoned Dagger
Fire	5	Dragonhide Blackened Armour
Sand	3	The All-Seeing Eye of the Golden City

### **Lore**

Wind	8	Master Assassin of the Zahar Clan
Fire	6	Trained by the Weapon Master Zahar
Song	6	100 scars, 100 deaths
Sand	5	Standing in the Shadows of the Palace
Craft	3	Protection of the Obsidian Tower

*“My name is El-Nadir. I will give you that knowledge as a courtesy so that when you pass into the afterlife you do so without questions. I will not kill you with a blade or an arrow. I will not kill you with magic. I killed you three days ago when you ate those delightful dates from the bazaar. The poison, from the red bellied rose spider, is slow working but quite... oh, you seem to be dead now. Not quite that slow working...”*



# SPIRITS OF THE SAND

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## The Djinni of the Crystal (Legendary Threat)

A member of the Djinn Court, the Djinni - for that is his only name - was trapped in his crystal prison for 1000 years by the mages of the Obsidian Tower. Now he has been freed from his prison and hides within the Golden City of Caliphport, trapped by its runed walls. He lives swapping rumours and minor wishes, only occasionally showing his true nature and immense, if neutered, power.

### Elements

Fire	0	No need for physical violence
Craft	10	A creature of pure magic
Sand	8	One of many, all seeing eyes
Song	6	Naturally charismatic
Wind	4	A creature of the air

### Trappings

Song	8	Vestments of the Djinn Court
Wind	6	A Cloud Plucked from the Heavens
Craft	4	An entourage of zephyr spirits

### Lore

Craft	10	'I will grant you three wishes...'
Song	8	The Awe of the Djinn Court Surrounds
Sand	8	Ancient Eyes in a Child's Mind
Fire	6	Embraced lightning, swallow thunder
Sand	4	Trapped for 1000 years, listening

*"Welcome, welcome newly found friends. I am the Djinni and I will grant you three wishes. No really, I will, for I have the power to do anything. Well, any- thing except escape from this damned city - so find a way for me to escape, my friends, and I will grant you your every wish. After we have talked and smoked and talked some more. I love talking. Do you love talking?"*

## Spirits of the Sand (Elite Threat)

The sands around Caliphport are ground from the towers, walls and arches of ancient empires long forgotten even by the Eyeless Mages of the Obsidian Tower. Conjured from these sands are the soldiers of the Djinn Court - the Spirits of the Sand. Empowered by the blood of ancient warriors, memories of vengeance and Djinn magic, these dusty fighters erupt from the sand and swamp their foes with wave after wave of death ... and when they are defeated, they sink back into the sand, waiting to rise again for their masters.

### Elements

Fire	8	Once a fighting elite
Craft	5	Warded by blood older than life
Sand	6	Memories of ancient armies
Song	0	Speechless and without thought
Wind	3	An unstoppable tide

### Trappings

Fire	8	Arms of the Golden Sands
Wind	6	A body of sand flows swifter than water
Craft	4	Sand runes of the Djinn Court

### Lore

Wind	8	Travel through the sand like zephyrs
Fire	6	Scorpion tainted poisoned blades
Sand	6	Memories of a thousand empires
Craft	5	You cannot charm that without soul
Fire	3	A dance of death in the sand.

*“I saw the horde march upon the Djinn Court - their warlocks breaking open the veil that shrouds them from our eyes. Thousands of men, from dozens of countries, hell bent on destruction.*

*They lasted no more than the time it takes for a child to knock down their carved warriors*

*The Spirits of the Sand rose and took them, flayed the flesh from their bones until only milky white skeletons remained. And then they sank again, sated.”*

## The Burning Leviathan (Legendary+ Threat)

The Djinn Court can call upon myriad creatures in its defence but the most fearful is the dread nightmare of the Efreet - the Burning Leviathan. This colossal spirit looks like a cross between an iron bull and a living volcano, towering over armies and cities. It's breath is poison, its skin burns with unnatural fire and its heart - if it has one - is buried inside a core of molten lava. When the Burning Leviathan is summoned, only death and destruction will follow.

Using the Burning Leviathan in a story is a dangerous prospect as it almost certainly will defeat any pairing of Legends if they are foolish enough to fight it. Running away - a Wind scene - may be possible but even tricking it with wits - a Sand scene - is still a tough call.

### Elements

Fire	20	Elemental force of disaster
Craft	12	Forged at the dawn of time
Sand	4	Slow to turn
Song	10	The mountains quake before the Leviathan
Wind	4	Ponderous and deadly

### Trappings

Fire	12	Horns and hooves, crushing the Earth
Craft	8	Poison breath that melts magic
Fire	6	Blood of fire, skin of iron

### Lore

Fire	12	Unstoppable force of destruction
Song	10	Only fools stand before Leviathan
Sand	10	Legendary destroyer of empires
Fire	8	Mercy is beyond the Efreet
Craft	6	No mortal blade can breach this hide

## **Khan Sargon the One Handed, Ruler of the Nomads of Heaven (Elite Threat)**

Khan Sargon, vanquisher of 1000 foes, lord of the unnumbered horde. It is against men such as the Khan that the city of Caliphport has built such great walls and paid so many ransoms over the years. The Nomads of Heaven possess extraordinary magics allowing the whole horde to travel vast distances through the violet heavens. It is said that the violet sky covers more than one world.

Khan Sargon's left hand is missing, cut off by one of the defenders of the doomed city of Thrain; what became of that warrior, or the Khan's emerald ring is not known. In its place he wears a silver hand, to which a bow can be fastened.

### **Elements**

Fire	6	The Great Khan knows no fear
Craft	0	The Great Khan knows no need of spells
Sand	3	The Great Khan knows all of history
Song	8	The Great Khan knows only victory
Wind	5	The Great Khan knows no bonds

### **Trappings**

Wind	6	8 legged horse of wonder
Craft	5	Compass of the violet heavens
Fire	5	Lance of the Khans

### **Lore**

Song	8	Lord of the unnumbered horde
Sand	6	Wisdom of the worshipful functionary
Craft	5	Rider in the violet sky
Fire	5	Wielder of the one handed bow
Wind	3	Master of Griffins

## The Horde of Sargon the One Handed, Great Khan of the Nomads (Legendary Threat)

First, you see the flags of 1000 different cities, fluttering in the breeze. Then, beneath each flag you see a mounted warrior, with bow and lance. Then above them the flying carpets on which archers stand. And whirling high above can be seen the Griffins of Khan Sargon, each one dressed with silver mail. The horde is endless, and as you look upon it you realize that a mile on either side of you are outriders - already ahead of you. Soon you will be caught within their net as have been so many others.

### Elements

Fire	10	Eternal Warriors
Craft	4	Borne through magic
Sand	0	Memory lost in the violet sky
Song	6	1000 voices, raised in victory
Wind	8	Flying on the violet winds

### Trappings

Fire	8	Armoured griffins of the Khan
Wind	6	Archers on flying carpets
Wind	6	Steeds from the endless plains

### Lore

Fire	10	Conquerors of 1000 foes
Craft	8	Pathway of the violet heaven
Sand	6	Wisdom of the conquered lands
Song	6	Terror of the Khan
Song	4	Banners of 1000 fallen cities

# ADVENTURE SEEDS

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## **STEALING FROM THE CALIPH**

The treasures of the Great Caliph are legendary - both in their value and the protection afforded them. There are, however, those that would hire desperate souls to try to steal from the Caliph. One such man is the Lord Protector of Chun, the caldera home of the Godspeakers. The Lord Protector knows that in the Caliph's possession is the Great Ark of Blood, an artefact of Chun that is said to be able to renew the connection between the rock blood of Chun and the Gods themselves. This would see Chun reborn and the Lord Protector will pay anything for its retrieval. Anything.

## **BENEATH THE LIBRARY OF THE DEAD GODS...**

...lies the tomb of the The Alabaster King, the long-dead god who resided in the city that stood before the city that was ground by the winds to form the great white desert. White wisps of ghosts have been seen around the precincts of the Library and the Librarian has warned that the Alabaster King may be stirring. If he rises, and searches for his city, who knows what disaster may await. Dare a hero journey into the tomb of the dead Gods themselves to calm the rising King?

## **INTRIGUE AT THE VIZIER'S COURT**

Ha'ren the Vizier likes to know everything about the Golden City and those that can provide him with the most valuable information are rewarded with treasure and position in his court. Maintaining that position is a constant battle between his advisors and sycophants. Those close to the Vizier would, for example, know the movements of the 7th Fleet of the Infinite Horizon ... information that invaders and pirates would pay vast coin to obtain. All you have to do is prove your worth to the Vizier ... how hard can it be?

## **CAST INTO THE ARENA**

The last thing you remembered were the batons of the slavers on your skull. Now you awaken, blinking with the brightness of the sun and retching at the stench of the Half-Ogre before you - and then you realise that you are a slave and destined to fight in the arena. Can you prove yourself as a warrior? Can you plot your escape? Can you become a champion and win your freedom? Or will your blood join the thousands who have died before you? Only your sword, your wits and the whims of Garsh will tell.



## **RAID THE OBSIDIAN TOWER**

It is said that the Eyeless Mages killed the architect of the Obsidian Tower and then captured his soul in a gem so that none could summon it from the afterlife. It is said that this gem has appeared in a treasure trove revealed by the shifting sands. It is said that the soul holds the key to opening the Obsidian Tower. It is said that there is no man who calls himself a man who has not felt the power of the Mages. It is said that revenge is a profitable business. Many things are said ... but how many of them are true?

## **THE DJINN COURT SUMMONS YOU**

The Djinn, spirits of the air, hold their court beyond a veil of magic in the desert. When these strange beings summon a mortal, they rarely refuse. Why would the Djinn need you to speak for them with their fiery cousins, the Efreet. Why are they concerned about the fate of the watery Marids and why do these refuse to discuss the earthen Dao? If the Djinn are unable to intervene, then the source of their fears must be mortal ... but what mortal threat could scare these elementals?

## **THE KHAN COMES CALLING**

Someone has besmirched the Great Khan of the Nomads and his heaven-striding horde! The violet heaven opens and the Horde descends upon the Golden City. Panic spreads and the Caliph calls for heroes to stand against the Immortal Army or find out what has turned the Khan to war and deal with it. The destruction of Caliphport would surely be the result of a clash with the Khan - a fate that must be averted.

## **VENTURE DEEP INTO THE DESERT**

A caravan into the desert is always a daunting task - do you head north, towards the colder mountains that lead into the snowy tundra and finally the Dragon Tooth Mountains? Do you head east, into the intense heat and attempt to cross the badlands to the Holy City of Chun? Do you head south, where the desert meets the grasslands and the dense and deadly jungles of Thrain? Will you stumble across the Djinn Court? Or the underground city of the Scariffi serpent people? Will you succeed or will you die amidst the swirling sand?



# ADVANCED ERA

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So far, ERA has presented itself as a fantasy game, but what if you want to turn it into something different? Or design your own settings and your own monsters? These rules explain what happens ‘under the hood’ of ERA and allow you to craft better and more varied stories.

## **Hacking ERA**

Taking the generic ERA system and bending it to the setting of your choice is exceptionally simple as it only requires a couple of semantic changes to the game.

## **Populating a Cycle**

How many monsters and challenges should come in each cycle? What level of threat should you present? How many Epic challenges is too much? Five different methods for populating your cycles are presented here.

## **Creating Monsters**

Turning the system to your own purposes requires you to be able to make your own threats rather than re-skinning established ones from setting packs. This section follows a step-by-step guide to creating challenges for your Legends and making them flexible enough to cause chaos from Minion to Legendary level.

## **Monster Powers**

Rather than simply describing a cool monster power in terms of an element, a die and a description, these optional rules build in rule-altering powers for monsters and as always, offers up a method to create your own.

## **The Bestiary**

Seven classic fantasy monsters are presented for your use and re-skinning. Stats are included from Minion to Legendary level, with special monster powers also included. Monsters include: The Minotaur, The Zombie, The Hydra, The Fae, The Werewolf, The Giant Spider and The Giant.

# HACKING ERA

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## Generic Elements

This addition to the ERA rules addresses the information needed to ‘hack’ ERA to another setting. As such, it serves little purpose to stick with the standard fantasy Elements that are baked into the core rules (Fire, Ice, Granite, Song and Craft). Rather, I will use a more generic set of Elements that can be changed to whatever set you chose to use for your game. These are:

Element	Previous Usage in Setting Books
Fight	Fire
Speed	Ice, Wind
Knowledge	Granite, Sand
Charm	Song
Unknown	Craft

Whilst the first four may well be obvious, a little more needs to be said about ‘Unknown’. This is the x-factor for each setting book; the special Element that allows the Legends to do things that ordinary humans cannot do. Some examples:

In the two published fantasy setting packs **‘Dragon Toothed Mountains’** and **‘Caliphport’**, the unknown is magic, known as ‘Craft’.

In the **‘Cthulhu’s Company’** setting pack, the unknown is your knowledge of the hidden mysteries that ‘man should not know’, and is called ‘Mythos’

In **‘SOLO’**, a setting pack about revolving around spy thrillers, the unknown is the advanced gadgets and information available to the agents, and is known as Tech.

In **‘On Her Majesty’s Secret Service’**, the superhero setting pack, the unknown is your access to your superpowers and is, unsurprisingly, known as Power.

## **Choosing your setting**

When you are planning your hack of ERA, bear in mind the specific purpose behind the game; to provide a venue for one or two player role-playing games. There should be some support for this sort of behaviour within your setting.

Example: If you are considering adapting a popular epic fantasy novel you might want to avoid the adventures of the larger fellowship of characters and instead use that as a backdrop to the trials of the ... shorter pair of adventurers. Similarly, if you want to create a game focussing on professional sport you might have to look very closely for a setting that has some single or duo formats and not, say, a team of eleven players.

Luckily, popular culture has a vast array of suitable settings that you can gain inspiration from:

### **Fantasy**

Elric and Moonglum, Fafhrd and Grey Mouser

### **Horror/Investigation**

Sherlock and Watson, Sapphire and Steel

### **Modern**

Mulder and Scully, Bones and Booth,

### **Science Fiction**

Flash Gordon and Dale Arden, Han Solo and Chewbacca, Judge Dredd and Judge Anderson

### **Superpowers**

Batman and Robin, Captain America and Bucky, Luke Cage and Iron Fist, Superman and Batman, Spiderman/Superman/The Thing and their guest star in various team-up titles.

## **Structure your Cycles**

Another part of hacking the game is considering the structure of your cycles. One of the ways that I recommend this is to watch or read some of the inspirational source material and try to imagine that story as a game of ERA. This should give you an idea of what sort of activities might fall under certain elements and will make creating adventure seeds easier.

**Example:** *Star Wars: A New Hope* could have been three cycles in a row using a solo Legend, Luke Skywalker and his companion, Obi Wan Kenobi.

### **Cycle One: Fleeing from Tatooine**

Gateway: Charm+Knowledge (Bartering for the Droids)

Scene One: Knowledge+Unknown ('Help me Obi Wan....')

Scene Two: Fighting+Speed (Clash with Tusken Raiders)

Scene Three: Unknown+Charm (Revelation about Jedi)

Scene Four: Speed+Unknown ('These are not the droids...')

Scene Five: Charm+Fighting (The entire cantina scene)

Gateway: Speed+Knowledge (Making the jump to hyperspace)

Cycle Two is the infiltration of the Death Star and the rescue of Leia,  
Cycle Three is the attack on the Death Star.

### **Consider Your Iconic Challenges**

By its very nature, ERA does require the Storyteller to think on their feet and come up with challenges on the fly. However, you can mitigate this by having some pre-generated bad guys who you are pretty certain should pop up in the setting.

**Example:** *Continuing our Star Wars example above, you would probably have generated Stormtroopers, Darth Vader and TIE Fighter Pilots prior to the start of the game. You probably wouldn't have predicted the Tusken Raiders or the Jawas. When you think about the Death Star, it could be an entire cycle in and of itself with the shield generator, the trash compactor, the prison rescue, the clash with Darth Vader and the skirmish with the TIE fighters being challenges (Knowledge, Fighting, Charm, Unknown and Speed respectively)*

### **Bring it all together**

Now you are in a position to bring your thoughts together into a setting pack and a hack! The simple checklist would be:

1. What's the hook? What is the essence of the setting that sells it to your players?
2. Who are the Legends? What examples can you give?
3. What changes are you going to make to the default elements?
4. What, if any, additional rules for characters will you introduce?
5. Who are the iconic challenges?
6. What does a 'typical' adventure feel like in this setting?

# POPULATING A CYCLE

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There are a number of possible methods to populate a given cycle with adversaries in ERA. Below are the outlines for five; pick and choose which one suits your gaming style best!

## **Method One: The Organic World Method**

In this method, you view the world as a fixed entity and the threats within it as 'real'. Therefore, when a Legend confronts one of these threats, they confront it in its natural state. If you have a dragon in your setting and it is a Legendary monster, then it is always a Legendary monster and regardless of the circumstances, the Legend will face the same dragon; be that in the first scene of her first cycle or the final climax of many cycles of play.

## **Method Two: The Stepped Method**

In this method, the Legends are faced with an increasingly tough series of challenges. Starting with a Minion challenge to ease them into the game and understand the dice mechanic and building across the seven scenes to a truly devastating Legendary challenge in the final scene. The steps could build as follows

First Gateway Scene:	Minion Challenge
First Pathway Scene:	Standard Challenge
Second Pathway Scene:	Standard Challenge
Third Pathway Scene:	Standard Challenge
Fourth Pathway Scene:	Elite Challenge
Fifth Pathway Scene:	Elite Challenge
Final Gateway Scene:	Legendary Challenge

## **Method Three: The Group Method**

In this method, the Legends face the same challenges as the Stepped Method (a Minion, three Standards, two Elites and a Legendary) but they are not held to a rigid scene-by-scene structure. This allows the Storyteller to pace the cycle as she sees fit, giving the Legend a chance to recover from their battles with an easier challenge (and thus, almost certainly regaining scene framing for the Storyteller, if the Legend is having a tough time of it.)

## Method Four: The Flat Method

This is probably the simplest of all the methods presented. Simply choose a challenge level and that is the same for all encounters. So, for example, you could decide that the cycle is a 'Standard' challenge cycle and therefore, all threats will be Standard challenges.

## Method Five: The Points Method

In this method, the Storyteller has a pool of points to allocate throughout the cycle, allowing a controlled level of challenge but without the structure of the previous methods. Each level of challenge is allocated a certain number of Challenge Points

Level of Challenge	Challenge Points
Minion	1
Standard	2
Elite	3
Legendary	5

Therefore, a cycle using the Stepped Method would be an 18pt cycle and a cycle created using the Flat Method rated 'Standard' would be a 14pt cycle.

If you decide to present an 18pt cycle, you would then need to budget your 18 points across the seven scenes. You could, for example, have a Legendary (5pts), three Epics (9pts) and a Standard (2pts) and two Minions (2pts). Alternatively, you could have five Epics (15pts), one Standard (2pts) and one Minion (1pt)

## Which Method To Use?

In the first instance, the method that you choose to engage with will be dictated by your own personal play style and the way that you create your cycles. Some Storytellers are happy with the 'on the fly' nature of some of the methods, whilst others prefer the more structured approach of the points buy and stepped methods. Many of the methods will require you to be able to scale your challenges as you play, changing one from a Standard to an Epic as required. This may also be a consideration.

My personal preference? I'm a big fan of the 'Organic World Method' and letting the Legends walk themselves into a world of pain. After all, how else are they to truly prove they are Legends?



# MONSTER CREATION

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Creating a monster in ERA is done in a similar way to creating a Legend

1. Allocate o, d4, d6, d8 and d10 to each of the Elements
2. Allocate d4, d6 and d8 to three Trappings, noting their Elements and Description
3. Allocate d4, d6, d6, d8, d10 for five Lore, noting their Elements and Description
4. Decide upon the Challenge Level of the Monster
5. Convert the dice to their corresponding number from the following table - (And yes, there is a d20 line there ... you have to have something to scare people with, right?)

Dice	Minion	Standard	Elite	Legendary
d4	1	2	3	4
d6	1	3	5	6
d8	2	4	6	8
d10	2	5	8	10
d12	3	6	9	12
d20	5	10	15	20

This will create a monster at a certain Challenge level. To allow for more flexibility within your game and to give you more options, you might want to record the monster at a number of different Challenge levels. Many times, the descriptions of the monster will be the same, but you might alter them for a little more flavour.

## Example: The Genesis of the Orc

Shall we create that more maligned of fantasy creatures, the Orc? From the very beginnings of roleplaying, the Orc has been an omnipresent threat for your neophyte adventurers. However, in recent years, they have gained some status as potentially dangerous epic foes thanks to the efforts of Peter Jackson.

To start, we need to have an idea of our default Orc. If we look to Jackson's take on Tolkien, we can build a profile of the Orcs we might use. The Uruk Hai would form a Standard challenge for any reasonably

competent Legend and the scrambling mobs that attack Helm's Deep would almost certainly count as a Minion challenge. Lurtz, the leader of the Uruk Hai who meets a messy end at the sharp bit of Aragorn's sword in Fellowship would be an Epic challenge and Azog from the Hobbit would be a great Legendary Orc. So, our orcs have jagged black armour, rusty chopping weapons and we know they have near unending endurance to run and fight. That is a great start for designing them. We also know that they have not been seen using magic, which makes the issue with 'The Unknown' ... a non-issue!

### Step One: Allocate the Elements

Orcs are strong, violent and fast with no magic. This means that Fight and Speed should be their strongest Elements and Unknown should be their weakest. The Orcs strike as more intimidating than they are intelligent, so the Elements fall as follows:

Fight	d10	Bred for violence
Speed	d8	Relentless in pursuit
Knowledge	d4	Instinctive
Charm	d6	Intimidating
Unknown	0	Swords not Spells

### Step Two: Allocate Trappings

This is probably the easiest part of the creation as the Orcs have very visual equipment that we can translate into the game.

Fight	d8	Massive cleaving sword
Speed	d6	Jagged iron armour
Charm	d4	Bloody trophies

### Step Three: Allocate Lore

Again, we can look to the films for our lead here. We have already identified that the Orcs are expert trackers and whilst they are not mages themselves, they are birthed in a rather strange way that might give them some traction with the Unknown. They have a bloodlust and a raging hatred for ... well, everything. They also have a history with the Dwarfs that proves their battle prowess. Translating these into Lore...

Knowledge	d6	Follow prey ... anywhere
Unknown	d4	Birthed from mud
Fight	d6	Ancient foes of the dwarfs
Charm	d8	Seething hatred for life
Fight	d10	Bloodlust in battle

## Step Four: Determine the Challenge Level of the Monster

We started this as an Uruk Hai, a Standard challenge level monster.

### Step Five: Convert the Dice to the Corresponding Numbers

We now change the dice into the static numbers used by monsters. Remember, this is a standard challenge level monster.

#### Uruk Hai, Warrior Orcs

Fight	5	Bred for violence
Speed	4	Relentless in pursuit
Knowledge	2	Instinctive
Charm	3	Intimidating
Unknown	0	Swords not Spells

#### Trappings

Fight	4	Massive cleaving sword
Speed	3	Jagged iron armour
Charm	2	Bloody trophies

#### Lore

Knowledge	3	Follow prey ... anywhere
Unknown	2	Birthered from mud
Fight	3	Ancient foes of the dwarfs
Charm	4	Seething hatred for life
Fight	5	Bloodlust in battle

This is a pretty robust combat character - in a Fight/Speed scene it brings 5, 4, 3, 5 and 3; in a Fire/Charm scene it brings 5, 4, 2, 5, 4! However, in a scene of mystical knowledge - Unknown/Knowledge - it brings a paltry 2, 3, 2. A lot less potent.

## Scaling

You can also note your monster creation at different Challenge levels, as mentioned previously

# ORCS

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Minion: Snarling Pack Orcs

Standard: Uruk Hai, Warrior Orc

Elite: Lurtz, Orc Champion

Legendary: Azog, the White Orc

	M	S	E	L	
Fight	2	5	8	10	Bred for violence
Speed	2	4	6	8	Relentless in pursuit
Knowledge	1	2	3	4	Instinctive
Charm	1	3	5	6	Intimidating
Unknown	0	0	0	0	Swords not Spells

## Trappings

Fight	2	4	6	8	Massive cleaving sword
Speed	1	3	5	6	Jagged iron armour
Charm	1	2	3	4	Bloody trophies

## Lore

Knowledge	1	3	5	6	Follow prey ... anywhere
Unknown	1	2	3	4	Birtherd from mud
Fight	1	3	5	6	Ancient foes of the dwarfs
Charm	2	4	6	8	Seething hatred for life
Fight	2	5	8	10	Bloodlust in battle

# BREAKING THE RULES

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Of course, one of the fun things you can do when you are creating your own monsters is break these rules! This is especially important when it comes to Legendary monsters; after all, you need to keep your Legends on their toes. So, how can you break the rules?

## 1. More (or less) Trappings and Lore

Giving monsters more Trappings/Lore is going to make them more flexible and will provide more areas where they can bring all five components of a challenge. This reduces the possibility that a player can use their wits to circumvent the monster by targeting their weak Elements. On the other hand, reducing the number of Trappings/Lore makes the monsters more one-dimensional and far easier to defeat.

## 2. Step Up the Dice

You remember that d12 and d20 in the table earlier? This is where you can really go wild and throw a couple of larger dice into the mix. Even if it is only one single dice and its corresponding number for challenges, it can make a massive difference. Truly massive, Leviathan-level monsters are possible and present a challenge that is simply improbable for a Legend and their Companion to overcome directly (Imagine a Legendary World Serpent bringing three 20s for Fight to the challenge? Time to seek out an alternative method of overcoming it!)

## 3. Introduce Monster Powers

The next section of this booklet introduced the concept of Monster Powers; a whole new way to cause pain and anguish for your Legends. That's why you are reading this, right?

### Monster Powers (Optional)

If you want to give your monsters a little more bite, you can introduce Monster Powers to their Arsenal. These are special modifiers to Element dice, dice pools or the results of each phase.

### Neutralising Monster Powers

Monster Powers can be exceptionally potent and in some cases may make a monster seem almost unbeatable. Remember, when Perseus discovered that Medusa could turn him to stone, he didn't whine at the Gods that things were unfair ... he went out and found a polished

shield! In the same way, whilst a Legend might be defeated because of a Monster Power, it is legitimate to use a scene, or an entire cycle, as a method of finding a way to neutralise those powers.

Finding a method to neutralise a monster power costs one declaration at the end of a scene.

## Examples of Monster Powers

### Immunity (Total)

Your opponent cannot use a certain Element against you. When they build their dice pool, they cannot include dice from that Element.

*Example: A ghost may be 'Immune to Fight' - in a Fight/Speed challenge, the Legend will only be able to place Speed dice into her dice pool.*

### Immunity (Partial)

Your opponent has reduced effectiveness when using a certain Element against you. When they build their dice pool, step down each dice from that element by one step (i.e. d10 becomes d8, d8 becomes d6, d6 becomes d4, d4 becomes 0)

*Example: The Armadillotaur is known for its impenetrable hide, granting Partial Immunity to Fight. A warrior attacks with d10, d10 and d8 Fight dice that are reduced to d8, d8 and d6.*

### Wickedly Experienced

You have seen it all before, and little is left that shocks you. When your opponent has rolled all dice for all phases, you can ask them to reroll one die. You must accept the second roll.

*Example: The Baron is debating the wisdom of military action with a Legend in a Charm/Knowledge challenge. He has phases set as {4}{5} and {3+3}. The Legend has d6, d6, d8 and d4. He allocates {d8}, (d6+d4) and {d6} and rolls {5}, {3+3} and {4}, winning the challenge 2 to 1. However, the Baron is more experienced than he looks and he asks him to reroll the d4 and he rolls {1}, and is now losing 1 to 2!*

### Evasive

You are exceptionally quick - either fast, quick-witted or attuned to the unknown. When all dice have been rolled for all phases, you may swap two dice, without re-rolling, between two phases.

*Example: The Baron is debating the wisdom of military action with a Legend in a Charm/Knowledge challenge. He has phases set as {4}{5} and {3+3}. The Legend has d6, d6, d8 and d4. He allocates {d8},*

*(d6+d4} and {d6} and rolls {5},{3+3} and {4}, winning the challenge 2 to 1. However, the Baron is exceptionally evasive in his wordplay. He swaps on of the 3s with the 5, leaving the phases as {3},{5+3} and {4}. The Legend is now losing 1 to 2.*

### **Tactical Genius**

You have thought about the outcome of this challenge one million times, and you know all of the permutations. Your guard is strong. When your opponent has rolled all dice for all phases, you can remove one dice from a phase. There must be at least one die in each phase.

*Example: The Baron is debating the wisdom of military action with a Legend in a Charm/Knowledge challenge. He has phases set as {4}{5} and {3+3}. The Legend has d6, d6, d8 and d4. He allocates {d8}, (d6+d4} and {d6} and rolls {5},{3+3} and {4}, winning the challenge 2 to 1. However, the Baron is exceptionally resilient and he removes one of the 3s, leaving the Legend losing 1-2.*

### **Filled with Rage**

Certain confrontations bring out the best in you. Choose an Element. When a challenge includes that element and that element was NOT chosen by you, you may adjust your score in that element as if you were one dice higher.

*Example: The Standard Berserker has 'Filled with Rage: Fight' and Fight 5 (based on a d10). In a challenge, the storyteller chooses Speed as the primary Element for a scene and the player chooses Fight. The Berserker can now increase their Fight to 6 (based on a d12). If the Berserker were Legendary, the score would increase from 10 to 12.*

# GIANT

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Minion: Rumbling Hill Dweller

Standard: Lumbering Stone Carver

Elite: Two Headed Ettin Warrior

Legendary: The Watcher in the Clouds

	<b>M</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>L</b>	
Fight	2	5	8	10	Brutal Strength
Speed	1	3	5	6	Lumbering Stride
Knowledge	2	4	6	8	Memory of the Ages
Charm	1	2	3	4	Slow and Steady Speech
Unknown	0	0	0	0	

## Trappings

Fight	2	4	6	8	Muscles of Iron and Stone
Knowledge	1	3	5	6	Voice of the Stone
Charm	1	2	3	4	Ancient Wisdom

## Lore

Unknown	1	3	5	6	Hewn from the First Stone
Charm	2	5	8	10	Eaters of Children
Fight	1	2	3	4	Bottomless stomachs
Charm	1	3	5	6	The Giants Serve No Lord
Knowledge	2	4	6	8	Our Promises are as Stone

## Special Rules

### Incredible Strength

In instances where the Giant is involved in a challenge involving a feat of great strength (not combat), they may count one Element as one step higher. This will usually, but is not always, Fight.



# MINOTAUR

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Minion: Horned Beast of Burden

Standard: Rampaging Bull Warrior

Elite: Labyrinthine Horned Killer

Legendary: The Bronze Fleshed Bull God

	<b>M</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>L</b>	
Fight	2	5	8	10	Bestial Fury
Speed	1	3	5	6	Unrelenting Pursuit
Knowledge	2	4	6	8	Ancient Watchers
Charm	0	0	0	0	
Unknown	1	2	3	4	Touched by Chaos

## Trappings

Fight	2	4	6	8	Penetrating Horns
Charm	1	3	5	6	Bellowing Rage
Unknown	1	2	3	4	Meld of man and beast

## Lore

Knowledge	1	3	5	6	Masters of the Labyrinth
Unknown	1	2	3	4	Transformed Hero
Fight	2	5	8	10	Eaters of flesh
Fight	2	4	6	8	Muscles like Oak
Speed	1	3	5	6	Charging, head down

## Special Rules

### Filled with Rage

You are filled with fury and when driven to fight, you will show no mercy. In a challenge where your opponent chooses Fight as their element, whether primary or secondary, your Fire score counts as one step higher (Use the d12 numbers instead of d10)

### Master of the Maze

It is almost impossible for you to become lost, or be evaded, in a maze. In a challenge that involves moving through a maze, you may count your Fight score instead of one of the chosen Elements.

# HYDRA

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Minion: Fledgling Two Headed Serpent  
 Standard: Three-Headed Guardian Wyrn  
 Elite: Five-Headed Guardian of the Depths  
 Legendary: Seven-Headed Killer of Gods

	<b>M</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>L</b>	
Fight	2	4	6	8	Evasive Fighter
Speed	2	5	8	10	Many Mouths Snapping
Knowledge	1	2	3	4	Animal Instinct
Charm	0	0	0	0	
Unknown	1	3	5	6	Spawn of the Gods

## Trappings

Fight	2	4	6	8	Snapping Jaws
Speed	1	3	5	6	Slithering Tail
Knowledge	1	2	3	4	Many heads

## Lore

Unknown	1	3	5	6	Ancient Guardian Beast
Fight	2	4	6	8	Scales that best iron
Speed	1	2	3	4	At home in land or water
Charm	2	5	8	10	The Eater of Heroes
Charm	1	3	5	6	Howl Shakes the Heavens

## Special Rules

### Cut Off One Head, More Appear!

Traditionally, the Hydra is a very difficult beast to defeat. To truly defeat a Hydra in combat, you must commit three statements to this aim. Therefore you must win all three phases of the challenges. If you do not, you can still narrate a positive challenge outcome, but the Hydra cannot be killed, maimed or otherwise destroyed by your statements.

# ZOMBIE

Minion: Shambling Pack of Walkers

Standard: Animated Monster

Elite: Raging Reanimated Savage

Legendary: The Monster, Possessed by Love

	<b>M</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>L</b>	
Fight	2	5	8	10	Unspeakable Hunger
Speed	1	2	3	4	Shambling...
Knowledge	2	4	6	8	Always aware of food
Charm	1	3	5	6	Horrific visage
Unknown	0	0	0	0	

## Trappings

Fight	2	4	6	8	Tooth and Claw
Charm	1	3	5	6	Fearsome Visage
Unknown	1	2	3	4	Animated Corpse

## Lore

Speed	1	2	3	4	They move without sound
Fight	1	3	5	6	Relentless
Unknown	1	3	5	6	The Infection
Charm	2	4	6	8	Look into the face of Death
Fight	2	5	8	10	Thousands of them...

## Special Rules

### Relentless

You must commit two declarations to achieving an intent of defeating zombies, rather than one. Evading, delaying or otherwise hampering the zombies still only requires one declaration.

### Infection (Optional)

If a Zombie inflicts a wound on you and it is not altered, you are considered to have a second wound effect: Infected. The exact consequences of this is up to the Storyteller but it may result in your transformation into a zombie, a loss of Charm dice, a susceptibility to control by necromancers or an increasing desire to eat your companion!

# THE FAE

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Minion: Impish Pixie

Standard: Exalted Elven Noble

Elite: Sidhe Lord of Gossamer

Legendary: Oberon, Lord of the Twilight

	<b>M</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>L</b>	
Fight	0	0	0	0	
Speed	1	3	5	6	Flighty agility
Knowledge	1	2	3	4	Wistful memory
Charm	2	4	6	8	Winning Smile
Unknown	2	5	8	10	Magic in their Bones

## Trappings

Speed	2	4	6	8	Sylph-like-Wings
Charm	1	3	5	6	Otherworldly Beauty
Knowledge	1	2	3	4	Lived for Centuries

## Lore

Charm	2	4	6	8	Smiling, laughing, deadly
Song	1	3	5	6	Never lie to the Fae
Knowledge	1	3	5	6	Never forget anything
Fight	1	2	3	4	Needle sharp weapons
Unknown	2	5	8	10	Couriters of Gossamer

## Special Rules

### Vulnerable to Iron

Any wound inflicted by an iron weapon counts as one step higher.

### Nothing Is What It Seems

What you do and what you REALLY do are masked in illusions and lies.

When all dice have been rolled for all phases, you may swap two dice, without re-rolling, between two phases.

# WEREWOLF

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Minion: Beastman

Standard: Snarling Wolfman

Elite: Pack Alpha, Wolf Chieftain

Legendary: He Who Rules the Moon, Wolf Incarnate

	<b>M</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>L</b>	
Fight	2	4	6	8	Animal Fury
Speed	2	5	8	10	Unnatural Musculature
Knowledge	1	3	5	6	Pack Memory
Charm	1	2	3	4	Snarls and Growls
Unknown	0	0	0	0	

## Trappings

Fight	2	4	6	8	Razor Sharp Claws
Speed	1	3	5	6	Speed of the Wolf
Unknown	1	2	3	4	Moon Charm

## Lore

Knowledge	2	4	6	8	Sings with nature's Rage
Unknown	1	3	5	6	Bane of the Dark Ones
Fight	2	5	8	10	Believe in the Pack!
Fight	1	3	5	6	Wounds never heal ... fully
Knowledge	1	2	3	4	We speak for the Moon

## Special Rules

### Multiple Forms

You have a number of different forms and your Elements change as you pass through them. Your standard form is shown above

Fight	0	0	0	0
Speed	1	2	3	4
Charm	2	4	6	8.

In your Raging Beast form, your Elements are:

Fight	2	5	8	10
Speed	3	6	9	12
Charm	0	0	0	0

Vulnerable to Silver

Any wound inflicted by a silver weapon counts as one step higher.

# GIANT SPIDER

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Minion: Skittering in the Darkness

Standard: Silent Hunter

Elite: Lord of the Web

Legendary: Blackest Widow, Spider Goddess

	<b>M</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>L</b>	
Fight	1	3	5	6	Driven By Hunger
Speed	2	5	8	10	Skittering
Knowledge	2	4	6	8	Long Lived Memory
Charm	1	2	3	4	Spine Chilling
Unknown	0	0	0	0	

## Trappings

Speed	2	4	6	8	Many Legs
Knowledge	1	3	5	6	Hive Mind
Unknown	1	2	3	4	Weaver of Fate

## Lore

Knowledge	1	2	3	4	The Oldest of the Old
Unknown	2	4	6	8	Their webs conjure fate
Speed	1	3	5	6	Faster than a stallion
Fight	2	5	8	10	Legendary poison
Charm	1	3	5	6	Beings without mercy

## Special Rules

### Poison

If a giant spider wins a phase in a conflict including Fight or Speed, it may make a FREE declaration called 'Poisoned Wound'. If this is not altered, it inflicts a 4 point 'Poisoned' wound attached to an Element of the Storyteller's choice. This is in addition to any other wound that the Storyteller wishes to attempt to inflict using declarations.



## DECLARATIONS

The winner of the scene makes the first declaration, linked to the intent of the conflict

This declaration can be altered bby the loser, at the cost of one of their own possible declarations

The loser now makes a declaration, if they have any left. This statement cannot be altered by the wnnner at the cost of their remaining declaration.

The winner can make a final declaration if they have any left. It cannot be the same as, or even a rewording of, the first declaration made.

## FIRST GATEWAY



Can contain any two elements. The primary element is chosen by the storyteller, the secondary element is chosen by a player

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## PATHWAY SCENES



Within Pathway scenes, each element can only be chosen once as a primary element, and no scene can include the same element as primary and secondary



The loser of the previous scene frames the next scene and chooses which element is the primary element



The winner of the previous scene chooses the secondary element

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## FINAL GATEWAY



Can contain any two elements. The primary element is chosen by the player, regardless of the outcome of the final pathway scene



**LEGEND NAME**  
Concept



Element:



Element:



Element:



Element:



Element:



Element:



Element:



Element:



Element:



Element:



Element:



Element:



Element:



Element:



Element:

**FIRE**

Strength and Fury

**CRAFT**

Magic and the Unknown

**GRANITE**

Wisdom and Knowledge

**SONG**

Presence and Charisma

**ICE**

Speed and Agility

**TRAPPING**

**TRAPPING**

**TRAPPING**

**LORE**

**LORE**

**LORE**

**LORE**

**LORE**

**WOUND**

**WOUND**