

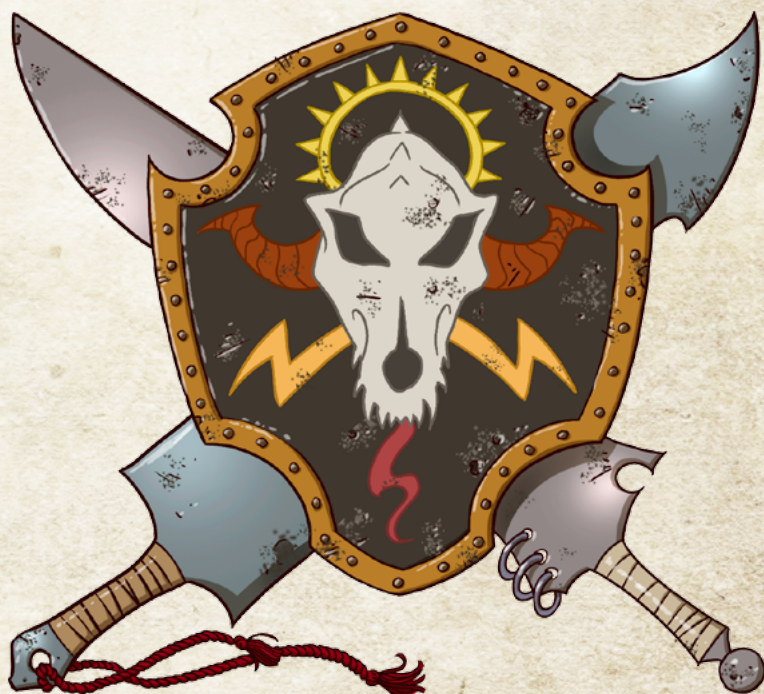
# NO COUNTRY FOR OLD KOBOLDS



Steve Wallace

ART

# NO COUNTRY FOR OLD KOBOLDS



**By Steve Wallace**

# NO COUNTRY FOR OLD KOBOLDS

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THANKS



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# Introduction

*For thousands of years, the more adventurous youth of our Country have gone forth to slay the filthy kobold race. These violent, diseased, and rabid vermin deserve to be wiped out. Our Country cannot stand, our gods cannot bless us, our children cannot rest safely until we wipe this blight from our lands. This is why we cheer our returning youth as heroes! Each drop of kobold blood spilled is another ring in our armor, another blessing from our gods, another safe home for our Country.*

*– Thaddeus Blamtoun, Scholar,  
The Great Library of Kingdom in the Clouds.*

Kobolds don't understand why everyone hates them; all they know is that everyone does. And since they only live to be about 2 years old—due to the constant, fatal pressures of kobold life—they hardly have time to find out.

**NO COUNTRY FOR OLD KOBOLDS** is a game built to explore the lives of kobolds who live in normal fantasy games. Why are they so hated? What effect do constant genocide attempts by first level adventurers have on them as a people? How do they survive in a world out to get them at every turn?

The game can be depressing, it can be funny, and it can be dark. It's usually a bit of each. It's black comedy that goes for the jugular, a game in which you're always the underdog and your strategies span generations. There's no winning in **NO COUNTRY FOR OLD KOBOLDS**; there is only survival. And for kobolds, the only way to survive is to work together.



# Overview

**NO COUNTRY FOR OLD KOBOLDS** is a game for three to six players who want to explore the world of kobolds—small lizard or dog-like humanoids that are almost always relegated to the lowest rung of society. This is a *ROLEPLAYING GAME*, a collaborative story-telling system that allows you and your friends to take on the roles of characters that inhabit a world you create together.

Most of the players portray kobolds; throughout this text, these characters will be referred to as *PCs* or *PLAYER CHARACTERS*. One of the players plays the *GM* or *GAMEMASTER*. The GM is a special player who gets to control everything in the world that is not one of the PCs (see **Running the Game**, pp. 46). The rules in this book help you create the setting for the story you're going to tell, and give you tools to mediate the drama and pace.

Kobolds are weak and plentiful in typical fantasy roleplaying games, the kind of monsters that traditional player characters—young adventurers out to secure their fortunes—fight in their first few encounters of a campaign. Kobolds are





usually far weaker than any of the PCs, and they almost always get wiped out in combat. This game is built to flip the camera around, allowing you to explore this situation from the perspective of the kobolds instead of the typical adventurers.

**NO COUNTRY FOR OLD KOBOLDS** is meant to be a challenging game, one that you can get better at the more you play. In order to do well, you need to figure out when to take chances and when to play it safe, how to manage your village and how to deal with all the other creatures in the world. You might emerge as a kobold hero...or you might screw things up badly enough to lose your whole village to the murderhobo adventurers. That's the life of a kobold! If your story ends early just start a new village, and give your kobold society another go!

## How To Use This Book

**NO COUNTRY FOR OLD KOBOLDS** is a *HACK* of Sage LaTorra and Adam Koebel's **DUNGEON WORLD** and John Harper's **WORLD OF DUNGEONS**, a specialized version of those games designed to explore the lives of kobolds.

If you've played one of these games you're most of the way there in understanding how to play **NO COUNTRY FOR OLD KOBOLDS**. If you haven't, don't worry—it's not a steep learning curve, and you'll learn everything you need to know in this short book.

Players should read everything up to the **Running the Game** (pp. 46) section to get acquainted with the rules. If you're the GM, read the whole book before trying to run the game. You can check out the starter module **The Trials of Red Gulch** (pp. 86) for a step-by-step process on running your first session.

## Object of the Game

In **NO COUNTRY FOR OLD KOBOLDS**, the players try to keep their kobold village thriving at all costs, exploring their kobold's place in the world your group has created together. Kobolds might go on missions to fill some village need, adventure to discover powerful magical items that will allow them to finally defeat a neighboring region, attempt to pit two powerful countries against each other in order to start a war, or really anything else they can think of that will help their village!





## No Country for Old Kobolds

The GM portrays a world filled with exciting danger, mounting wants, and constant pressures that the kobolds need to address. The GM creates monsters that attack the kobolds, details the environments the kobolds explore, provides the outcomes of missed rolls to the players, and helps drive the narration of the overall game. In the end, both the players and the GM are all working together to tell a great story, enjoy each other's company, and—above all—have fun!

## PREPARING TO PLAY

When preparing to sit down and play **NO COUNTRY FOR OLD KOBOLDS**, have at least one copy of this book on hand. It can even help to have multiple copies, so that players can reference the kobold abilities section (pp. 40) and village moves section (pp. 21) during the game. Feel free to share the PDF with the folks you're playing with so you all have copies. If they enjoy the game, I would be very grateful if they pick up a PDF or book! You can find purchase information at [nocountryforoldkobolds.com](http://nocountryforoldkobolds.com).

Since the majority of play in **NO COUNTRY FOR OLD KOBOLDS** takes place in the player's imagination, you can play pretty much anywhere, so long as everyone can communicate easily and roll a few dice. Kitchen tables, quiet restaurants, and casual cafes are all great choices! (You won't need minatures or hexmaps to play the game, even though those things are often important to traditional dungeon crawls.)

To start the game, all players will need the following items:

## HANDOUTS

You'll want to print out a *KOBOLD FAMILY SHEET*, *ABILITY SHEET*, *BASIC MOVES SHEET* and *COUNTRY CARD* for each player. Print a *VILLAGE SHEET* to be shared between the players and a set of the *GM HELPER MATERIALS* for the Gamemaster as well.



## OVERVIEW





## DICE

You need at least two *STANDARD SIX-SIDED DICE* (2d6), though it helps to have a set of dice for every player. You also need a few specialty dice; at least one four-sided die (d4), one eight-sided die (d8), one ten-sided die (d10), and one twelve-sided die (d12). It helps to have multiple sets of these dice as well. You can purchase them at most game stores or online.

## EXTRAS

It can help to have a dry erase map or a large piece of paper to draw your world map—and to sketch situations that come up during play—and index cards or *UNIT CARDS*, reusable dry erase cards available at [necountryforoldkobolds.com](http://necountryforoldkobolds.com), to keep track of *UNITS* and *EXTERNAL PRESSURES* (pp. 19). You'll also want a bunch of tokens; glass beads, coins or poker chips are all good choices. It's helpful to have a few different types or colors but not strictly necessary.

## CHECKLIST

Here is a full checklist of what you need:

- ☐ a village character sheet
- ☐ a copy of the kobold family sheet for each player.
- ☐ a copy of the basic moves sheet for each player.
- ☐ lots of index cards or dry erase unit cards.
- ☐ tokens to use as population counters
- ☐ tokens to use as death tokens
- ☐ tokens to use as xp counters
- ☐ one set of 2d6, per person if possible
- ☐ at least one set of 1d4,1d6,1d8,1d10,1d12
- ☐ a Gamemaster
- ☐ two to five (2-5) other players



# Game Play and Moves

The core tale of **NO COUNTRY OF OLD KOBOLDS** is the story of your village. Everything in this book is built to serve that story and help you tell it. Throughout the game the village should be your central focus; the only reason your kobolds exist is to serve the kobold village. But how does that story work? How do we decide what happens to the village? Or to your individual kobolds?

## THE CONVERSATION

---

Ultimately, this game is just a conversation between the players. The GM will describe what's happening in the world and the players will describe how their kobolds react and move through it. The world that the players and GM create is referred to throughout this book as *THE FICTION*. You will also see the term *FICTIONAL POSITIONING* that simply means the fictional locations of characters within the fiction. The sections that follow in the book provide you with the tools that help facilitate this conversation.

## TRIGGERS AND MOVES

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When the kobolds take actions with uncertain outcomes, like fighting an orc invading their village, figuring out their surroundings when they are lost, or recalling some piece of useful lore, they trigger a special type of rule called a *MOVE*. Moves help the players and GM resolve uncertainty by providing definite outcomes. When a move is made there is no going back: what happened has happened. Deal with the outcome and move on!



## No Country for Old Kobolds



Most moves require you to roll 2d6 and add a modifier of some kind, usually one of your kobold's *ATTRIBUTES* such as Strength (STR) or Dexterity (DEX). Moves consist of two parts, the trigger—which describes what actions initiate the move—and a set of outcomes. Whenever a kobold tries to do something described in a move's trigger, the kobold's player rolls the dice and consults the move to determine the outcome.

Moves have three possible outcomes: success, success with consequences, and a miss. Success happens when the total of your dice roll and any additional modifiers is equal to 10+; success with consequences happens when your total is equal to 7-9; and misses happen when your total is 6 or less.

*Chandler describes his kobold, Yigg Yagg, jumping from one pillar to another across a lava pit. The GM smiles and says "So...that sounds hard. I'm not certain that Yigg Yigg can make it. I'm pretty sure that's going to be a Duck, Cover, and Squirm with DEX to see if you can actually make it across."*

*Chandler rolls two six-sided dice and adds his DEX score, a +1.*

*He rolls a six: a total of 7 with his DEX, a success with consequences. The GM says*

*"Awesome, in mid jump you look down to see a huge fire worm climbing the pillar you're about to land on. As you land, your gear clatters against the rock, attracting the fire worm's attention. What do you do?"*



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# The Building Blocks of Play

Below you'll find the basics of what makes **NO COUNTRY FOR OLD KOBOLDS** work. Each section outlines a different facet of gameplay, focusing on the player experience through each part of the game. More details on how to run combat, how to create missions, and how to create and control units are available in the GM section (pp. 46).

## LEVELS OF PLAY: VILLAGE, UNIT, AND CHARACTER

**NO COUNTRY FOR OLD KOBOLDS** works on three different levels of play: the *VILLAGE LEVEL*, *UNIT LEVEL*, and *CHARACTER LEVEL*. As you tell your kobolds' stories, you'll zoom in and out of these levels, choosing the level that makes sense for the story.

Village level specifically deals with issues of the village—stats, moves, population, etc. All the players manage this level together, making decisions as a group. The village is their central, binding character.

Unit level is where a lot of combat happens. Units are other creatures in the game—a pack of owlbears, a single troll, or an army of humans—which drive home just how much bigger and badder everything else is compared to kobolds. A single adventurer can be a unit, a dragon might be a unit, or a group of ten kobolds might be a unit. By simplifying the number of stats and the abilities of other creatures the unit level allows for quicker resolution of larger scale combats, and lets the kobolds make use of swarm tactics, a critical kobold strategy.

At the character level, you have each player's individual kobolds and their progeny. This is where each player makes decisions for their kobolds and family. It's the part of the game that most





resembles traditional roleplaying games. During the game, you spend a lot of time playing at the character level, shifting into unit or village play when appropriate.

## MISSIONS

Missions are the meat of the game: your kobolds set off into the harsh world to fulfill a *WANT* or alleviate a *PRESSURE* for a time. If you need sacrifices to appease the dead fertility god that your village worships, then you might travel deep into the frogmen's swamp to retrieve the toads your god requires, delaying your god raining fire down on your village! If the dirty elves keep raiding your village for the silk spiders that live in a symbiotic relationship with your people, then you might go on a mission to destroy their elven outpost so they stop the raids.

Missions are generally relatively short, lasting about an hour of game play. In a single four-hour session, you should expect to go through 2-3 separate missions. The players normally initiate missions in order to fulfill wants, but missions may also be given to the PCs by the elder kobolds in the village or forced upon the PCs by some intrigue with the Countries surrounding the village.

## COMBAT

Combat can be both physical and mental. While a lot of combat will be physical combat with units an argument or debate can also be considered combat. In all circumstances, combat is divided into a number of rounds to help structure the narrative when things get messy.

## ROUNDS

Rounds are discrete segments of time within combat. The first round begins at the start of combat and ends as soon as all players have had a chance to act, rounds continue in this manner until the end of combat. The amount of time a round takes inside the fiction is variable; the GM and players decide in the moment what fits the situation. In general, it's probably about 10-20 seconds.

Combat takes place on both unit and character level of play: sometimes you're leading an army of kobolds (units!) against an invading force, and sometimes you're just trying to run away all on your own to avoid being eaten.





# UNIT TO UNIT COMBAT

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In unit level combat, all engaged units exchange damage each round. If you're using unit cards then any opposing units who are touching are considered to be engaged. If you're not using Unit cards then keep track of who is engaged with whom on some scrap paper. Either way, the GM should make any unit information available to the players if they ask—it's not worth trying to keep hit points and damage details secret. We discuss units more on pp. 65.

## KOBOLDS IN COMBAT

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Kobolds can generally do one complete action per round. This doesn't mean only one move; it means one complete action within the fiction.

If Bleck Weaselpaw wants to jump off a cliff and land sword first on an unsuspecting farmer, she'll probably need to roll two moves: first a **Duck, Cover and Squirm** to safely jump off the cliff, and then, if successful, an **Attack** to stick the farmer with her sword.

It's totally fine to take multiple actions per round! As long as the action the player wants to take can reasonably be considered a single continuous action, then it's okay to include multiple moves in one round. If what a player wants to do doesn't seem like it will make sense in a round then just split the actions up between multiple rounds and allow the other players time to make their moves.

Think of it like a film, if the camera wouldn't cut away during a set of moves then you shouldn't either.

## END OF COMBAT

---

The end of combat comes when the fiction dictates. If all the units on one side of the combat have died or been routed, then combat is likely over. If everyone comes to terms and puts down their weapons, the combat is likely over.

If all the kobolds are currently tied to a stump being guarded by a very annoyed and slightly singed paladin, then combat is likely over. Or just beginning. Sometimes it's hard to tell.





# THE VILLAGE

If your village is destroyed, all is lost. This is the *central tenant* in kobold society. Kobold mothers sing their children to sleep with songs of death and destruction at the hands of the murderhobos, reminders that everyone must fight for the village or perish alone.

Thus, your village is the central character of **NO COUNTRY FOR OLD KOBOLDS**. The task of all kobolds is to make sure the village survives and prospers in the face of horrible external pressures and never-ending want.

As your village grows, your kobolds will inherit new abilities and tactics passed down from their parents in the form of shared moves. These moves allow for new units on the battlefield, the alleviation of wants, the cessation—for a time—of external pressures, and overall improvements to your kobold's health and abilities.

As you play, you'll need to keep tabs on how much pressure is being applied by the surrounding Countries and how dire your village's wants have gotten. Only smart planning and courageous heroics can keep your village intact. Luckily, your kobolds and their progeny are the leaders and warriors of the village—the epitome of kobold kind—even though the other races don't seem to think much of you at all.

## STATS

Each kobold village has the following *stats*: Hardiness, Ingenuity, Secrecy, Teamwork, and Warfare. Each stat represents a different facet of your village, reflecting your village's capabilities and constraints.

- **Hardiness** - How healthy your village is and how many kobolds live within it.
- **Ingenuity** - How clever and industrious your village is in the face of danger.
- **Teamwork** - How well your village works together toward common goals.
- **Secrecy** - How well your village keeps itself hidden using camouflage or trickery—or both!
- **Warfare** - How well your village can go on the offensive in order to protect itself.





## No Country for Old Kobolds



Most advanced village moves will require you to roll with one of these stats, just as you would roll for your character moves: if a move calls for you to roll + Hardiness, for example, roll 2d6, add your village's Hardiness stat, and consult the move to find out what happens. These stats are assigned when you create your village (pp. 82).

## WANTS

*WANTS* are anything that your kobold village might need; food, water, gold for your pet dragon's hoard, or even sacrifices to stave off the wrath of your furious god. Wants can only be satisfied by a resource located outside the village, something that requires kobolds to complete a successful mission to reset the want and keep the village functioning.

Every want has a clock that looks like this.

Throughout the game the GM advances these clocks whenever you roll a miss... or when your kobolds do something stupid like set fire to the food stores.

<input type="checkbox"/>	1:00	<input type="checkbox"/>	3:00	<input type="checkbox"/>	6:00
<input type="checkbox"/>	9:00	<input type="checkbox"/>	11:00	<input type="checkbox"/>	12:00

If a clock reaches 9:00, your village loses one point of population (roughly 10 kobolds); if the clock reaches 11:00, your village loses an additional population point; if the clock hits 12:00, your village loses 1d6 population!

Things get even worse when your want clocks get stuck at 12:00. If a clock is already filled when any other want clock advances, you lose an additional point of population on top of any loss accrued from the clock that was advanced. Mind your wants!

Fulfilling missions that relate to that want resets the want clock completely, but note that the want is only fulfilled if at least one of the kobolds who set out on the mission actually returns to the village alive! You can't satisfy the villages need for tasty grubworms if you all die on the mission and the grubworms spoil on your corpses!

*The kobolds of Red Cliff have just returned from up river with pails of fresh water after destroying a massive dwarven dam! This resets the villages Clean Water want clock.*





## EXTERNAL PRESSURES

Wants are the things your villages needs to survive; External Pressures are all the horrible things that can come crashing down on your heads at any moment. The majority of these are generated during Country creation (pp. 59) by the players, but others will be created as a result of a move or a change in the fiction.

When introducing an External Pressure, the GM will create a three segment clock on an index card or a dry erase **EXTERNAL PRESSURE CARD**—available at [nocountryforoldkobolds.com](http://nocountryforoldkobolds.com). Every time your village resets a want, the GM will tick one of these clocks. The GM may also tick these in response to some of your failures or when a move specifically calls for it.

When a pressure has all three segments ticked, it immediately comes to bear, and your village has to figure out some way to deal with it!

*The Village of Red Cliff has just reset its Clean Water want clock. This reset triggers a tick on an external pressure; the GM decides to put a final tick on 'Minotaur Marauders'. The threat comes immediately to bear as the kobolds hear the unmistakable hoof beats of a horde of Minotaur!*



## LOSING THE GAME

You lose if your kobold village is ever reduced to zero population. Death is the unfortunate constant of kobold existence, and it is often quick and grim. But don't fret, there are always other kobold villages and families. Your people might one day rise to greatness... just not here in this village.





# VILLAGE MOVES

The village gets the following moves at the start of the game.

## RECRUIT

When you **recruit additional kobolds to help with a task**, give an inspiring speech and roll +Teamwork. On a 10+, you get two units of kobolds. On a 7-9, you get one unit of kobolds. On a miss the villagers lack of faith in you is demoralizing. All players take -2 to their next move in combat.

When you take units from the village, reduce your population respectively—one unit equals one population—until you bring those units back to the village. Starting Kobold Units deal 1d6 +Warfare damage and have ten (10) hit points.

## BREED

When at least one kobold **returns from a mission and shares the vital resources obtained**, your village enters a breeding period; reset an appropriate want clock and roll +Hardiness. On a 10+, add 1d6 to your population. On a 7-9, add 1d6 to your population, but add a new want. On a miss, the distraction of the breeding season has opened you up to disaster! The GM immediately brings an external pressure to bear on the village.

## RUNAWAY!!

When your village is **raided by murderous**



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## No Country for Old Kobolds

**outsiders**, roll +Secrecy. On a 10+, the raiders weren't able to locate any of your villagers; no population is lost! On a 7-9, the raiders found some of your villagers, but didn't find your main village! Subtract 1d6 from your village population. On a miss, the murderhobos find your village and slaughter your people; lose 2d6 population.

### STOCKPILES!

---

When at least one kobold **returns from a mission and hoards vital resources instead of sharing them**, roll +Ingenuity. On a 10+, the village gains three stockpile hold. On a 7-9, the village gains two stockpile hold. On a miss, the hoarding causes a backlash among the villagers, tick a single want clock twice, player's choice. No matter what, no want clocks are reset and the village does not **Breed**.

### STOCKPILE HOLD

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Stockpile hold represents additional supplies your village has stored in case of emergency. Stockpile hold can be spent to remove a tick from any want clock at any time. This hold is normally gained through **Stockpiles!**, but the GM may also award one or two stockpile hold to kobolds who collect additional resources during missions.

*The kobolds return to the village after collecting grub worms; along the way they were also able to steal a cart of supplies from the human farmers! The GM decides to award the kobolds two stockpile hold for the wagon. The kobolds decide to use one of them immediately to take their Clean Water want clock from 6 to 3, and then hold on to the other hold for later use.*

## VILLAGE EXPERIENCE

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**EXPERIENCE**, or **XP**, is gained by the village anytime a PC misses a roll on any move, including basic moves, village moves, etc. All the xp players collect during missions is pooled together for the village to buy village moves in-between missions. Advanced moves cost either 7xp or 14xp. Village moves can be bought anytime player characters are not currently on a mission, and there is no limit to the number of moves a village can purchase with xp.





## 7XP ADVANCED MOVES

Your village can purchase any of the following moves for 7xp. These moves are weaker than the 14xp moves, but they are usually available after the first session or two.

### A BIT OF THE ULTRA-VIOLENCE

Your kobolds have grown up extra violent! They deal an additional 1d4 damage when attacking from melee.

### BAND TOGETHER

When you huddle together for defense during combat, roll +Warfare. On a 10+, all kobolds involved gain +1 armor for the rest of combat. On a 7-9, all kobolds involved gain +1 armor until a kobold champion falls. On a miss, your cowardice wastes precious time, allowing enemy reinforcements to arrive!



### BOUNTY OF THE WILD

By working together, your village is able to alleviate some want. For every two want clocks you reset, roll +Teamwork. On a 10+, you may reduce a single additional want clock by three segments. On a 7-9, you may reduce a single additional want clock by two segments. On a miss, your utter mismanagement of the natural resources surrounding the village puts you in a bind. Choose a want clock and increase it by one segment.





### FUCK YOU, WE HAVE A...

---

Your village gains a mighty protector! Of course, they want something in return...

This move can be taken multiple times, but only in the order listed below. These sorts of creatures aren't known for sharing; each time a new creature moves into your territory they run off the previous protector (and you no longer have to fulfill the previous protector's wants). Thus, you can only have one protector at a time.

You may spend additional xp to skip protector levels, e.g. 14xp to go straight to Troll, 21xp to go straight to Necromancer.

#### ...WIZARD!

A wizard of some variety has taken up residence in your village! What sort of wizard is it? Gain four 1d6 damage, 10 hit point homunculi units for future raids. Add a new want to the village. Describe what it is and where it can be acquired.

#### ...TROLL!

A mighty troll has taken up residence in the village! What's its name? Gain one 1d12 damage, 20 hit point troll unit that regenerates three hit points per round. Add a new want to the village. Describe what it is and where it can be acquired.

#### ...NECROMANCER!

A terrible necromancer has taken up residence in your village! Gain five 1d6 damage, 8 hit point skeleton units. Gain 2 additional units each time your village breeds. Add a new want to the village. Describe what it is and where it can be acquired.

#### ...DRAGON!

A mighty dragon has taken up residence in your village! What sort of dragon is it? Gain one 2d8 damage, 40 hit point dragon unit. Add a new want to the village. Describe what it is and where it can be acquired. If any unit gained by this move dies, the unit is gone forever. You may, however, still buy the next level protector. If a protector leaves the village for any reason, their want goes with them. You don't have to find rotten fish to feed to your troll protector if he's been killed by a murderhobo.





## HARDY KOBOLDS

Your kobold champions are hardier than other kobolds. They roll 2d6 (instead of 1d6) and keep the highest d6 for their hit points! At that point you're basically a tank! All active kobold champions may re-roll their hit points when this move is initially taken.

## KOBOLD HEALERS!

Somehow you've passed down a few medicinal remedies from generation to generation! There are now healers in your village.

When you return to your village after a mission and seek relief, roll +Ingenuity. On a 10+, your healers make workable salves and ointments for your wounds; all player characters may set their hit points to max. On a 7-9, your healers have a few odds and ends that might offer relief; all player characters may set their hit points to max-2. On a miss, your healers have very little in the way of supplies; all PCs may set their hit points to max-3. If you don't have this move, see **Healing** (pp. 30) for more on recovering hit points when you return to your village.

## KOBOLD RIDERS

Your Kobolds are now mounted warriors! Describe what your kobolds ride and how they domesticated these beasts. Your kobold

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## No Country for Old Kobolds

champions always succeed when you try to escape combat. Add a pressure to describe the beasts that prey on your domesticated animals.

### SAPPER UNITS

---

You now have the ability to **recruit** sapper unit kobolds as well as regular kobold units. When you roll **recruit**, determine how many units you want to be sappers and how many you want to be normal units (up to the total allowed by the **recruit** move). These suicidal units deal 1d6 damage and have 8 hit points as well as the move **EXPLOSIVES!** Any champion kobold can trigger the **EXPLOSIVES!** move: the sapper unit deals 1d10 damage to all near units, including allies and player characters. This unit perishes immediately after using **EXPLOSIVES!**

### STRONGER TOGETHER

---

Once per combat any number of PCs may join together as a unit for up to three rounds. The players now attack as one unit dealing  $1d12 + \text{number PCs involved}$  in damage. Any damage taken by the unit is spread evenly amongst the PCs in the unit. The unit is dissolved after three rounds or as soon as one of the PCs dies.

### VILLAGE FORTIFICATIONS

---

Your village has erected fortifications that minimize population damage when the village is raided. Whenever your village is attacked you may roll your population loss twice and take the lower result.

### VILLAGE IMPROVEMENTS

---

You may increase a single village stat by +1 (max +2). This move may only be taken once. Tell the GM what your kobolds do to improve their village.

### WELLSPRING

---

You've uncovered a magical totem in your village. What is it? All kobold champions immediately gain +1 to any single stat. This move can only be taken once.





# 14XP MOVES

The moves below require 14XP to buy. Moves marked with ★ become **BASIC MOVES** for all kobolds. Misses for these moves work in the same manner as other **BASIC MOVES** (pp. 33).

## HIGHER EDUCATION

All kobolds immediately gain +1 ability. Each subsequent generation now gains 2+WIS abilities in addition to their one inherited ability. More information on leveling and abilities can be found in the **Kobolds** section (pp. 32).

## HIVE MIND

The kobolds are now able to share simple thoughts and feelings. Whenever a kobold is in the company of other kobolds and would roll +INT, they may now roll +Ingenuity instead. This ability has a distinct visual affect, explain what it is and how others react to it.

## KOBOLD RAGE ★

When you unleash your kobold rage and charge an enemy unit, roll +Warfare. On a 10+, your rage is ferocious and true...but you also become reckless; gain +2 to STR and -2 to CON for five rounds. On a 7-9, it seems like you're pretty upset and very reckless! Gain





## No Country for Old Kobolds

+1 to STR and -2 to CON for five rounds. You cannot unleash your rage again until the next mission.

### SOME WORDS HAVE POWER ✱

---

Some thoughts have a certain sound, that being the equivalent to a form. Through sound and motion, you are able to paralyze nerves, shatter bones, set fires, suffocate an enemy, burst his organs...or something. Probably just the paralyze thing. Speak the words and roll +Hardiness! On a 10+, you speak a power word and add the *paralyzed* tag to target unit. On a 7-9, you speak a power word and add the *paralyzed* tag to target unit and choose 2:

- You draw unwanted attention.
- You take 1d4 damage from the strain of the word.
- You are knocked back and fall prone.

### SPOT ME, BRO

---

The kobolds have learned to work well together when attempting feats of strength thanks to excellent coaching by the elder kobolds. Whenever a kobold is in the company of other kobolds and would roll +STR, they may now roll +Warfare instead.

### TEN MOUTHS ARE BETTER THAN ONE

---

The kobolds of your village have learned to play off each other's lies and pleas, making you all more convincing as a group. Whenever a kobold is in the company of other kobolds and would normally roll +CHR, they may now roll +Teamwork instead. All PCs should explain how they're helping the current player's kobold. What form does your help take and what complications might it add if this whole thing fails?

### WONDERKOBOLD POWERS COMBINE ✱

---

When you enlist a friendly unit to aid you in your efforts, roll +Teamwork. On a 10+, take +3 to your next roll as they come to your aid. On a 7-9, take +1 to your roll, but the unit is exposed to danger and suffers 1d6 damage from a nearby enemy unit.





# Kobolds

In **NO COUNTRY FOR OLD KOBOLDS**, all the players' characters are kobolds, or more accurately...each of the players portrays a family of kobolds. As your kobolds die—and they will die—you create their children who carry on their family name and mission as kobold champions. This section outlines how to create these brave (and doomed) kobold characters.

## ALL THAT MAKES A KOBOLD

Even though you're going to play a family of kobolds, you only play one kobold at a time. This section explains how the game mechanics around each kobold work, including their stats, hit points, and what happens when (not if!) they die.

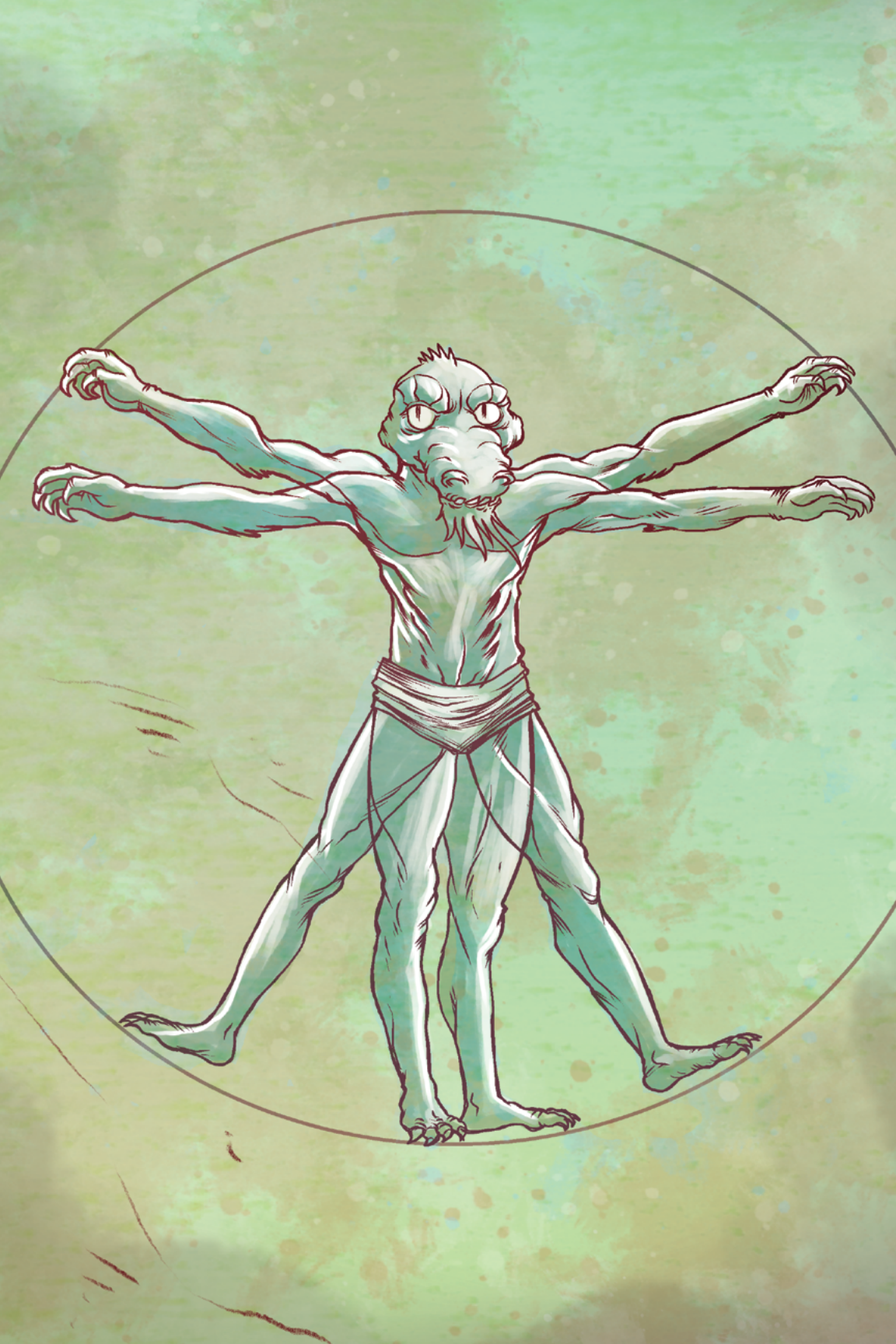
## STATS

Kobolds have six stats; **STRENGTH (STR)**, **CONSTITUTION (CON)**, **DEXTERITY (DEX)**, **INTELLIGENCE (INT)**, **WISDOM (WIS)**, and **CHARISMA (CHA)**. Throughout the game you'll see moves that ask you to add one or more of these stats to your roll to determine the outcome.

Kobold stats range from a minimum of -2 to a max of +2. Whenever you make a move, the move tells you which stat to roll: roll 2d6 and then add the appropriate stat. Remember that a 10+ is generally a success, 7-9 is usually a success with costs or complications, and a 6- is a miss.

*Kamala describes how her kobold, Nu Su, swings her club at the Great Yub, champion of the Mole People. She rolls 2d6 for Attack*





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*and gets a three and a four for a total of 7. Since Nu has a -1 STR, her total comes out to a 6—a miss. The GM ticks a want clock (she rolled a miss!) and says “Yeah, you definitely miss. In fact, your club swings wide and you slam into the wall of the tunnel. To your surprise, the whole chamber echos with a loud booming: you’ve hit drum sand! After the booming subsides, you hear a faint clicking coming from the walls. What do you do?”*

### STRENGTH (STR)

---

Strength is, well, how strong you are. This stat has the most to do with melee combat. It’s how hard you can bash a kneecap with your club or how easily you can drag your loot back to the village. If you want to be the closest thing kobolds have to a warrior, Strength should be your highest stat.

### CONSTITUTION (CON)

---

Constitution is basically how much punishment you can take. The more Constitution you have the more hit points you have—easy peasy. If you want to take more damage than any other kobold, Constitution should be your highest stat.

### DEXTERITY (DEX)

---

Dexterity is how nimble and quick you are, Jack. It determines the outcome of most attempts to get away quickly. It’s also measures how good you are at ranged combat. If you want to lob rocks at your enemies or try to dive out of the way of oncoming attacks, Dexterity should be your highest stat.

### INTELLIGENCE (INT)

---

Intelligence is how smart you are, book learnin’ wise anyway. High intelligence kobolds figure things out quicker and probably more completely than



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others. This is the stat you want if you're going to be blowing stuff up with magic—and trust me, you will. If you want to sling fireballs or smarten up the place, Intelligence should be your highest stat.

### WISDOM (WIS)

---

Wisdom is how well you use what you know. It's kobold common sense. It's also what you want to have if you're going to be summoning spirits or curing others wounds. So if you want to be a healer or summon some spirits, Wisdom should be your highest stat.

### CHARISMA (CHR)

---

Charisma is how you present yourself. It's how you endear others to you and it's how you convince them to help you. It governs how others react to you as well. If you want to inspire other kobolds or talk your way out of a jam, Charisma should be your highest stat.

## HIT POINTS

---

Kobolds measure their lives in hit points, often very few! Hit points represent the amount of damage your kobold can take before death. Once your hit points reach 0, you are dead, kaput, vamoosed, auf Wiedersehen.

All Kobolds get 1d6+CON, minimum 1, for their hit points. That isn't a lot; make them count.

## DAMAGE

---

As Kobolds, you deal 1d6 damage on a successful **Attack** (10+) and 1d6 divided by two (rounded down) on a success with consequence (7-9). You do not halve modifiers you may have gained from village moves or abilities.

## HEALING

---

Upon returning to the village, you may re-roll your hit dice if you want, the result of this roll is your new hit point total, even if it's lower than what you had before you rolled. If a healer attends you—using, for instance, the advanced move **Kobold Healers** (pp. 24)—you can roll that move instead.





## DYING

When you die, you gain two *DEATH TOKENS*. Death tokens can be spent, 1 for 1, to bump another kobold's roll (after rolling) up one level of success: a miss becomes a 7-9 or a 7-9 becomes a 10+. If you have not spent these tokens by the end of the mission, they are converted 2 for 1 into village xp.

## RETURN TO THE FIGHT

You may spend two death tokens to immediately bring a new generation of your family into the fight. Explain how your new kobold shows up, describe their abilities and looks, and then enter the fray!

## IMPROVING YOUR KOBOLD

Improvement? Leveling? Advancement? Oh, you.

Kobolds don't advance; they breed. As a kobold, you only expect to live a year or two. The best thing you can do to protect your lineage is to have dozens of children and teach them your abilities.

Kobolds don't gain xp, instead anytime you miss, your village gains +1 xp which goes into a shared pool that the players can draw from to improve the village (pp. 21).

When your kobold dies, one of their children steps up to take their place. This child inherits its parent's stat block, but increases a single stat by 1 (max +2). Stats may not be re-arranged generation to generation, only slightly improved.

In addition, the new kobold takes 1 ability from its parent and 1+WIS additional abilities from the ability list (pp. 40).





# BASIC MOVES

All characters start with the basic moves below. Basic moves always activate if a player character completes an action described by the trigger. On a hit, whatever the player wanted to accomplish mostly happens; on a miss the GM will get to make one of their moves and tick a want clock (See **Running the Game**, pp. 63)

Under each move you'll find an example scenario that outlines the three types of outcomes. These are just examples; the GM always interprets your results in the context of the story you're telling, using the details in the story. If you're kobolds are hopping from pillar to pillar above a pit of lava then the result of a **Duck, Cover and Squirm** roll is going to be dramatically different from when your kobolds are running through a frozen tundra trying to avoid the Sasquatch's lobbed boulders.

When you make a move, always describe what it looks like in the story. You can never just say "I **Duck, Cover and Squirm**" without also explaining what it looks like when your kobold takes the action that triggers the move.

## ATTACK

When you try to injure someone, describe how you attack them:

- If you do it up close with clubs, knives or swords, roll +STR.
- If you do it at a distance with spears or stones, roll +DEX.

On a 10+, your attack connects and you deal your damage. On a 7-9, your attack connects, but you are off-balance and exposed; deal  $\frac{1}{2}$  your damage rounded down and the GM will tell you who takes advantage of your position.



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*Maria describes how her kobold Gooley Splat throws a pointed stick at a nearby goblin. The GM nods “OK, roll **Attack** and add your DEX.” Maria rolls 2d6 and adds Gooley’s DEX of +1.*

If the sum of her roll plus her DEX is 6 or less:

*Maria has rolled a miss. The GM ticks a want clock—grub-worms—and makes a move. “OK, you lob your pointed stick with all your might, but it skitters to the ground a few feet away from the goblin. As the stick finally comes to a rest you feel a sharp pain in your ribs! Another goblin has snuck up behind you and stabbed you with dagger! Take 1d6 damage! What do you do?”*

If the sum of her roll plus her DEX is 7-9:

*Maria gets a success with consequences. The GM says “Cool, the stick cuts through the goblins thigh! Deal 1d6 damage divided by 2, round down. As you celebrate your hit you hear a twig crunch behind you! A Goblin has popped up behind you and swings his club down on your head! Take 1d6 damage! What do you do?”*

If the sum of her roll plus her DEX is 10+:

*Maria has a success. The GM says “Awesome, you bury the stick deep in the goblins thigh! Deal 1d6 damage. You see another goblin sneaking up on you, but you’ve got the jump on him...” What do you do?”*

## DUCK, COVER, AND SQUIRM

When you avoid immediate danger, describe how you do so.

- If you do so through a surprising burst of strength, roll+STR.
- If you do so by moving quickly to duck out of the way, roll+DEX.
- If you do so by taking it on the chin, roll+CON.

On a 10+, you do what you set out to do, and the threat doesn’t come to bear. On a 7-9, you’ve screwed up something good; the GM will give you a hard bargain, worse outcome or ugly choice.

*The Kobolds are trying to out pace a raging pack of velociraptors. Kamala describes how Mun Mun thinks she can slow*





## No Country for Old Kobolds

*the raptors pace by pulling down some shrubbery to block their path. The GM nods in agreement “Awesome, roll Duck, Cover, and Squirm using Strength!” Kamala rolls 2d6 and adds Mun Mun’s STR of +2.*

If the sum of her roll plus her STR is 6 or less:

*Kamala has rolled a miss. The GM ticks a want clock and decides to deal damage. “A Velociraptor catches up with you Mun Mun! It pounces on you with its razor sharp talons! Take 1d8 damage! What do you do?”*

If the sum of her dice roll plus her STR is 7-9:

*Kamala has a success with consequence. The GM decides to give her an ugly choice. “OK, you can pull down the shrubbery and block the path, but you’ll be trapped on the wrong side. The rest of your kobold friends will get away, but...you’ll probably get eaten. What do you do?”*

If the sum of her dice roll plus her STR is 10+:

*Kamala has succeeded. The GM nods and says “Awesome, you totally do it. The velociraptors will definitely be slowed down. What happens?” Kamala smiles “Mun Mun looks around quickly and sees a few small saplings growing from the cliff wall to her right. She grabs one and pulls! The cliff wall collapses onto the path! Mun Mun stands there dumbfounded!” The GM laughs: “Perfect. The velociraptors are stuck on the other side of the wall now, but they will figure out a way over it soon. What do you do?”*

## WIT AND VERVE

When you try to lie or fast talk yourself out of a situation without offering anything in return roll +INT. On a hit, you are able to pass off your lie or calm the situation. On a 7-9, you have to give something up or expose yourself to danger to put the lie over.

*The Kobolds are being held captive by the people of Uplandia. Joe describes how Stupid Nobody tries to convince the people that the kobolds are actually the children of the Uplandian god of lizards, TuTu, and they must immediately be set free! The GM nods and says “Alright, you’re obviously lying to get yourself free, so that’s a Wit and Verve..”*



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If the sum of his roll plus his INT is 6 or less:

*Joe has rolled a miss. The GM ticks a want clock and decides to involve the other Countries in this bad situation. "None of the Uplandians seem convinced. As you struggle to explain your godly lineage, the door opens and one of the Heavy Metal Horseman from Metallia walks in. He screams 'These curs are the ones who killed our king!' Everyone looks at you. What do you do?"*

If the sum of his roll plus his INT is 7-9:

*Joe has a success with consequence. The GM says "They believe you! So much so that the minister asks you to use your god-given powers to heal their dying prince! What do you do?"*

If the sum of his roll plus his INT is 10+:

*Joe has succeeded. The GM says, "Wow, they bought it hook, line, and sinker and look upon you with reverence as they open your cages. What do you do?"*



## FIGURE THINGS OUT

When you try to figure out just what the hell is going on here, roll +WIS. On a 10+, ask the GM 2 questions from the list below. On a 7-9, ask 1. Either way, take +1 forward when acting on the answers.

- What happened here recently?
- What is about to try and kill us, besides everything?
- What can we see that others would miss?
- How can I escape?
- Where is the shiny?

*Chandler describes how his kobold, Snigg Yagg, is trying to figure out what some runes on a dungeon wall mean. The GM says "Cool, that sounds like you're trying to **Figure Things Out**, so roll and add your WIS." Chandler rolls 2d6 and adds Snigg's WIS of +0.*





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If the sum of his roll plus his WIS is 6 or less:

*Chandler has rolled a miss. The GM ticks a want clock and says "OK, you are tracing the symbols with your finger. As you touch one of the symbols, it starts to glow red. A fireball bursts from the symbol! Everyone will have to make a **Duck Cover and Squirrm** to avoid taking 1d12 damage! What do you do?"*

If the sum of his roll plus his WIS is 7-9:

*Chandler has rolled a success with consequence. The GM says "You've managed to interpret the runes. Ask your question." Chandler looks at the list. "OK, where's the shiny?" The GM thinks for a moment: "Oh, it's behind this wall. You are pretty sure if you press the right rune it will open. Unfortunately you aren't sure which rune it is. What do you do?"*

If the sum of his roll plus his WIS is 10+:

*Chandler has rolled a success. The GM says "You've managed to interpret the runes. Ask your two questions." Chandler looks at the list. "OK, What is about to try and kill us, besides everything?" The GM smiles. "For starters, that fireball trap you're about to trip if you keep touching these runes." Chandler nods "OK, where's the shiny?" The GM thinks for a moment "Oh, it's behind this wall. You are pretty sure if you press the right rune it will open. Unfortunately you aren't sure which rune it is." What do you do?"*

## PLEAD YOUR CASE

When you attempt to plead your case to non-kobolds, roll +CHA. On a 10+, they listen long enough for you to offer them a deal; you might not get everything you want, but you'll get some of what you need. On a 7-9, they're openly aggressive, and you'll need to sweeten the pot for them to even consider what you're offering.

*Joe describes how his kobold, Stupid Nobody, tries to negotiate the release of himself and the other kobolds from the prisons of the Minotaurs by offering information about another Country. The GM nods "Alright, that sounds like you're trying to **Plead Your Case**. Roll plus your CHA." Joe rolls 2d6 and adds Stupid's CHA of +1.*



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If the sum of his roll plus his CHA is 6 or less:

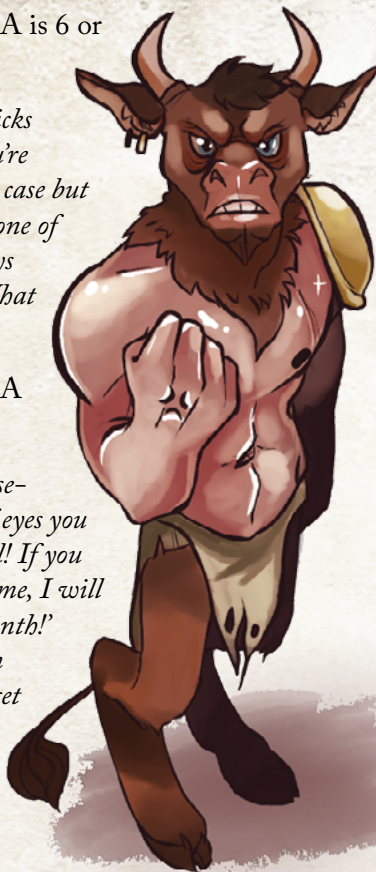
*Joe has rolled a miss. The GM ticks a want clock and says, "OK, you're desperately trying to plead your case but the Minotaur chief is having none of it. He snorts in derision and says 'Take them to the labyrinth!' What do you do?"*

If the sum of his roll plus his CHA is 7-9:

*Joe has rolled a success with consequence. The GM says "The chief eyes you suspiciously and says, 'Is that all! If you have no better information for me, I will send the lot of you to the Labyrinth!' You're going to need to offer him something pretty darn good to get out of this one! What do you do?"*

If the sum of his roll plus his CHA is 10+:

*Joe has rolled a success. The GM says "Alright, the chief hears you out and says 'Hmm, that is useful information. If you can tell me where my troops should attack, perhaps I could look the other way when you try to escape...'"*



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## AID OR INTERFERE

When you help or hinder another player character, roll +Teamwork. On a hit, they take +1 or -2 to their roll, your choice. On a 7-9, you also expose yourself to danger, retribution, or cost.

*Maria wants to help Chandler's kobold, Snigg, as he tries to Attack the Dropbear that just dropped from the trees. Maria is trying to Aid or Interfere. She rolls 2d6 and adds the village's Teamwork of +3.*

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If the sum of her roll plus the village's Teamwork is 6 or less:

*Maria has rolled a miss. The GM ticks a want clock and says "Alright, you try desperately to help Snigg, but another Dropbear drops directly on top of you! Take 1d8 damage! What do you do?"*

If the sum of her dice plus the village's Teamwork is 7-9:

*Maria has rolled a success with consequence. The GM says "Cool, Greasy Splat can help Snigg. Snigg, you'll take a +1 to your roll. Unfortunately for Greasy, the time it took to help Snigg was just enough time for another Dropbear to get in position! Greasy, what do you do?"*

If the sum of her dice plus the village's Teamwork is 10+:

*Maria has rolled a success. The GM says "Awesome! You jump into the fray with Snig, giving him a +1. What's that look like?"*

## TRIBAL KNOWLEDGE

When you explain the unknown by retelling the stories of your village, roll +Ingenuity. On a 10+ There is a detailed story that explains exactly this situation, tell it. Take +1 forward when acting on this information. On a 7-9, there are a few hints or legends, what are they?

*The kobolds are deep in the tunnels of the Gelatinous Cube Collective and they've stumbled upon a glowing crystal. Kamala describes how her kobold Bun Mun holds his finger in the air ready to expound on the stories told about these crystals. She rolls 2d6, and adds the village's Ingenuity of +1.*

If the sum of her roll plus the village's Ingenuity is 6 or less:

*Kamala has rolled a miss. The GM ticks a want clock and says "Right, you are in the midst of your first in a long, boring string of words when the ground beneath you starts to rumble! What do you do?"*

If the sum of her roll plus the village's Ingenuity is 7-9:



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*Kamala has rolled a success with consequence. The GM says “Well you’ve certainly heard some rumors, something about a gateway? Tell us what the rumors are.”*

If the sum of her roll plus the village’s Ingenuity is 10+:

*Kamala has rolled a success. The GM says “There is an ancient tale in your village about something called the Stones of Summoning. Tell us that tale.” Kamala smiles and says, “Bun Mun goes on for several minutes about how this is a Stone of Summoning. If we can find two more of these, we could summon a creature to defend the village!”*

## KOBOLD ABILITIES

Abilities give kobolds different bonuses or specialized moves. As your kobolds reproduce, their children will continually evolve their skill sets, depending on the needs of the village. First-generation kobolds start with 2+WIS abilities; subsequent generations inherit one ability from their parent and gain 1+WIS additional abilities. All kobolds will have at least 1 ability, even with a -2 WIS.

## PREREQUISITES

Some abilities will have a listed prerequisite. In order to take one of these moves your parent must have had one of the listed prerequisites.



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*Tizz Yizz wants to take Born to be a Ninja, in order to do so his parent Sizz Yizz would need to have had either 'Ninja, sort of' or 'Born to be a Ninja'. Since Sizz had 'Born to be a Ninja,' Tizz is able to take the ability as well.*

### THE ABILITIES

Abilities do not stack unless specified in the ability's text. If you have two abilities that state they replace or augment the same thing, then you must choose which ability takes precedence.

**BACKSTAB:** When you attack from concealment, deal +2 damage.

**BIG ASS SWORD:** You have learned to fight with an enormous sword! You deal 1d8+STR damage on a successful attack, thanks to your big ass sword.

**BLESS:** You can bless yourself, another kobold, or a friendly unit, increasing the chances that they survive a skirmish. When you call upon your gods to bless someone, roll +WIS. On a hit, the gods smile upon you; your target takes +1 ongoing to *Attack* for the rest of the battle. On a 7-9, your target takes +1 forward, but the glow surrounding them has makes them a target for unwanted attention! On a miss, your god laughs at your feeble attempt to curry favor and punishes you with a curse for your insolence!

**BORN TO BE A NINJA:** Your parents have taught you the way of the ninja: you always do your full damage. When you make a successful *Attack*, roll your damage die twice and take the highest total. Do not divide by two on a 7-9. *Prerequisite:* **Ninjas....Sort Of** or **Born to be a Ninja**

**CANTRIPS:** You have the following magical abilities: Light, Unseen Servant, and Prestidigitation (**DUNGEON WORLD, PP. 152**). These can manifest in whatever way you and the GM agree seems appropriate.

**CHANNEL MAGIC:** Kobold magic is a bit...odd. Because of their short lifespans, kobolds have never mastered true control over magical forces. Instead they rely on a sort of wild elemental magic that can have some...unintended consequences.

When you channel kobold magic, describe the element you are channeling and the desired effect; roll +INT. On a hit, the channeling works as intended, dealing 2d6+INT damage if appropriate.



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On a 7-9 the channeling works, but choose 1:

- You draw unwanted attention.
- The channeling is taxing; take 1d4 damage.
- The channeling works but has unintended consequences, the GM will tell you what.

On a miss, take 1d6 damage as the channeling backfires and magic pulses through your body!

**COMMAND:** Once per combat, you may summon a demon or spirit unit to do your bidding. Perform the ritual necessary and roll +CHR. On a hit, you summon a creature from another plane or realm. On a 10+, take 3 hold. On a 7-9, take 1 hold.

The summoned unit is only partially in this world and therefore has no damage score, but it does have 12 hit points. Spend a hold, 1 for 1, to do any of the following.

- The summoned unit aids in an **Attack**, adding +2 to your roll and damage.
- The summoned unit absorbs the damage from a single attack.
- The summoned unit scouts ahead as if it has the **Scout** ability.
- The summoned unit enchants and distracts another unit. That unit will focus solely on the spirit.

On a miss, your summoning works...but the summoned creature is beyond your control and furious that you have tried to enslave it!

**CONFOUNDING PERFORMANCE:** You play an instrument...and get real weird with it. When you play a song of kobold battle to intimidate a target unit, roll +CHA. On a 10+, you or your allies take +2 forward to the next **Attack** on the target unit. On a 7-9, you or your allies take +1 forward to the next Attack on the target unit.

## KOBOLDS





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On a miss, your performance is so unsettling that nearby enemies immediately converge on you, desperately trying to stop your performance.

**CURE:** You can heal another by laying on your hands. Roll +WIS. On a hit, you heal 1d6+WIS. On a 7-9, you absorb some of the wounds yourself, taking 1/2 the amount of damage healed, rounded up. On a miss, something has gone terribly wrong; did you read that incantation right? You feel searing pain in your hands, and take 1d4 damage from the failed attempt!

**EVEN BIGGER ASS SWORD:** Your parents have taught you how to wield a really big ass sword! You deal 1d10 damage on a successful attack, thanks to your really big ass sword. *Prerequisite:* **Big Ass Sword** or **Even Bigger Ass Sword**

**HARDY:** Take +3 HP. Good luck!

**IF I CAN'T SEE THEM...:** When you stay perfectly still to avoid detection, roll +CHA. On a 10+, you become effectively invisible through the use of clever camouflage and showmanship. You stay invisible until you do something to draw attention to yourself. On a 7-9, you become invisible, but you must remain completely still to avoid detection. On a miss, your efforts at camouflage make you stick out like a sore thumb. You immediately draw the attention of nearby enemies.

**LUCKY:** Once per mission, you may count a miss as a 7-9.

**NINJAS...SORT OF:** You've mastered the kobold martial arts, allowing you to make multiple attacks at once and increasing your effectiveness...sort of. When you make a successful *Attack*, roll your damage die twice and use the higher result.





**PET:** You have a loyal and effective animal companion. When you fight with your animal companion, take +1 ongoing to Attack.

**REFLEXES:** At the start of combat, roll +DEX. On a 10+, you hold 3. On a 7-9, hold 1. Spend 1 hold during the combat to negate damage from a single attack directed toward you (after rolling the damage). On a miss, you've overplayed your hand and your reflexes have gotten the better of you. Your sweet moves have put you out in front of your friends, leaving you exposed and vulnerable.

**SCOUT:** When you scout ahead, you always spot the target before they spot you.

**SHARPSHOOTER:** You have excellent aim and always hit the most vulnerable parts of

your enemies. You gain +2 damage when using a ranged weapon.

**SLAY:** You inflict an additional +2 melee damage on a successful Attack.

**TOUGH:** You gain +1 armor.

**THIEVES FINGERS:** You've picked up a few tricks that allow you to pick pockets and get those hard to reach items. When you go for a score, roll +DEX. On a 10+ you succeed in your theft and acquire the item you were going for. On a 7-9, you are successful, but you've garnered unwanted attention from someone other than your mark. On a 6 or less, your mark is aware of your theft!

**TINKER:** When you try to tinker with a trap or lock, roll +INT. On a hit, you disarm the trap or open the lock. On a 7-9, your tinkering garners unwanted attention. On a miss, you've done such





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a hamfisted job that you've exposed yourself, activating the trap or breaking the lock to a point that no one can pick it now.

**TRIP:** You are trained at ankle-biting. When you try to trip an enemy unit, roll +STR. On a hit, you trip the target unit, and it gains the *prone* tag. On a 7-9, choose two of the following:

- You attract unwanted attention.
- You also fall prone as well.
- You take 1d4 damage from the trip.

On a miss, your efforts place you directly in the path of the largest foe in the area; you have to scramble to avoid getting trampled!

**TURN:** You can attempt to hold undead at bay with your holy symbol. When you try to turn back the dead, roll +WIS. On a 10+, 1d6 undead are turned and cower in fear or run. On a 7-9, a single undead minion cowers or flees. On a miss, you've done nothing but enrage the undead; their angry moaning summons more of their kind to the area.

**VISION:** When you petition your gods for divine guidance, roll +WIS. On a 10+, your god gives you actionable details on what is to come; take 3 hold. On a 7-9, you get a vague notion of what is to come, but lack specifics; take 1 hold. You may spend your hold to add +1 to any roll; your god guides your hand to success. On miss, your god laughs at your request and your mind grows cloudy, take -1 ongoing to WIS rolls until you perform a sacrifice on their behalf.

**VOICE OF THE WILD:** You can communicate with and attempt to command animals. When you issue a command to a beast, roll +CHR. On a 10+, the beast does as you want. On a 7-9, the beast will do as you want but requires something in return first. On a miss, you've enraged the beast, with a yelp or howl it calls another of its kind! They both look awfully mad!



# Running the Game

When you GM **NO COUNTRY FOR OLD KOBOLDS**, you control everything in the world...except the PCs and their units. Think of yourself as the conductor of an orchestra; your decisions set the pace of the game and give the players events and pressures that complicate their lives. You'll control this pacing by making moves, deciding which want clocks to tick and when to bring external pressures to bear. The players, in turn, tell you how they respond to the obstacles and problems you describe.

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To help you understand what to do when you're the GM, I've developed a couple of resources. First, your ***AGENDAS***, the overarching goals you have as a GM, help you determine the feel and emotion of your game. Second, your ***PRINCIPLES***, a set of rules for your contributions that help drive your Agendas, tell you when to pull certain levers in the game to help drive home the story and fill the kobolds' lives with excitement and peril. Finally, your ***GM MOVES*** give you concrete things to do when you need to push the story forward.

## AGENDAS

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You should do the following at all times while running **NO COUNTRY FOR OLD KOBOLDS**:

- Portray a world filled with peril.
- Fill the kobolds' lives with equal parts misery and success.
- Play to find out what happens.





## PORTRAY A WORLD FILLED WITH PERIL

The world is a brutal and frightening place for kobolds. All the other races hate them, and they don't know why. The Countries send droves of heroes to murder the kobolds and their kin. Nearly everything is larger than kobolds and longer lived. The core idea of **NO COUNTRY FOR OLD KOBOLDS** is to give personhood to kobolds, giving your players something to think about when their next first level adventuring party goes out to slay a kobold or fifty. Think back to all those first-level adventures you've played and how many times you've invaded, murdered, and looted the realms of kobolds. Now switch the camera around and give your players that same experience from a new perspective.

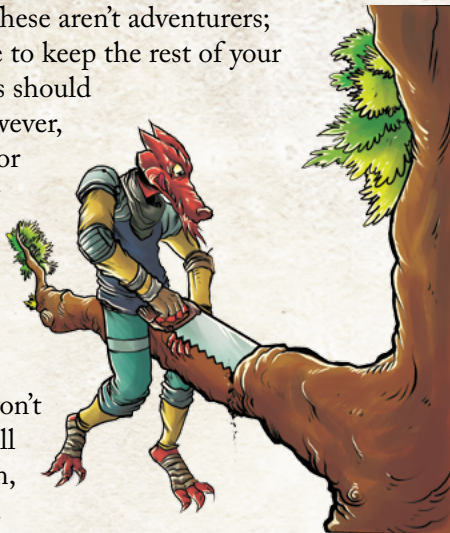
## FILL THE KOBOLDS' LIVES WITH EQUAL PARTS MISERY AND SUCCESS.

The characters world should be miserable—a kobold's life is tough—and it should be apparent that the struggles of a village





are constant and unending. These aren't adventurers; they're prey. Life is a struggle to keep the rest of your village alive, and the missions should reflect that harsh reality. However, sometimes things work out for the kobolds. Sometimes they warn off some adventurers, kill some others, and trick a few as well. Maybe they reset a want clock or luck out when breeding. Let them have their wins; they won't last long. Soon the misery will come crashing down on them, and the cycle will start again. Your job is to keep the wheel turning.



### PLAY TO FIND OUT WHAT HAPPENS.

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This is, at its heart, a game of collaboration. Don't plan everything out; let the fiction travel where it may. Overplanning will lead to a poor experience for you and your players. Let wants and pressures and their associated moves inform the fiction. The system is robust enough to continually provide avenues for exploration without the need to plan ahead. Instead of building rails, put down guideposts, using your moves, external pressures, and wants to create problems that lead to drama. If you feel uncomfortable or can't figure out what should happen next, fall back on the player-created content and core mechanics. Countries are always going to raid the village, external pressures are always just off camera, and wants are always needing to be fulfilled.

## PRINCIPLES

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- Draw maps, leave blanks.
- Address your characters and their clans, not the players.
- Make moves that follow the fiction.
- Never speak the name of your moves.
- Use wants to drive the story.
- Use external pressures to fill gaps in the world.
- Give the kobolds personhood.
- Keep the game fast and light.





## DRAW MAPS, LEAVE BLANKS

Start each game by drawing a map; it orients and gives everyone a simple way to express the world around them. Use the blanks in the map to create the fictional adventures the kobolds find themselves pursuing. What's in that swamp? How high do those mountains tower? How do you get past the great wall?

## ADDRESS YOUR CHARACTERS AND THEIR CLANS, NOT THE PLAYERS

Use their family names to address their clan. Always refer to players by their current kobolds name or family name. This is a simple way to draw players into the fiction and really get them living in the skin of a kobold.

## MAKE MOVES THAT FOLLOW THE FICTION

Moves are one of the main ways you as the GM will interact with the players. Each move is a simple statement that prompts you to add, delete, or modify something in the fiction. Whenever the fiction calls for it, make a move that makes sense to you. If the players look to you to know what happens, make a move that seems appropriate. See pp. 51 for more on moves.





## NEVER SPEAK THE NAME OF YOUR MOVES

When you're making moves, never say what you're doing—say what happens in the fiction instead. If you're putting the kobolds in a spot explain how that happens within the fiction; you know it's a move, but they need to feel like it's real:

*'You fail to decipher the runes in time, the door has slammed shut and all four walls are now closing in on you. What do you do?'*

## USE WANTS TO DRIVE THE STORY

Wants are central to the game; constantly remind the kobolds of their fragile existence. If they're considering taking a circuitous route around an Elven stronghold, remind them that their fellow villagers—their families—are quickly falling to the scale rot or starving for lack of grubworms. And when the PCs fail, tick the want clocks that drive the story in a direction that interests you.

## USE EXTERNAL PRESSURES TO FILL GAPS IN THE WORLD

When the kobolds aren't sure what to do or where to go, bring an external pressure to bear to fill the gap. When the kobolds miss during an encounter, you'll be ticking want clocks, naturally driving the kobolds to fulfill one of these wants in order to keep the village whole. But external pressures can be used whenever you need to keep things moving. They're the special little toys the players have created for you. Remember that by creating them the players have expressed interest in seeing them in the fiction.



## GIVE THE KOBOLDS PERSONHOOD

The players will run through a number of kobolds during their adventures. This constant cycle of death can make the player characters feel like they're throwaway leading to a suicide-hobo mentality. Help them resist this cynicism. When a kobold dies,





## No Country for Old Kobolds

make it grand. Make their death a pertinent detail in the fiction. Mourn them and remember their kobold life.

### KEEP THE GAME FAST AND LIGHT

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Kobolds lives are hectic and fast, and you should reflect that in game play. For the most part, missions should only last about an hour. Kobolds don't go on multiday dungeon crawls—if they did none of them would ever get back to the village. Include a few combats and a few things to overcome in each mission, then move on. Keep the game moving at all costs.

## GM MOVES

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As a GM, you make moves whenever the kobolds miss, when they hand you a golden opportunity, or whenever the players look to you to see what's happening. These moves will help you move the fiction along and add tension, prompting you to say interesting things to keep the game moving.

When you make a move, describe what happens and how it affects the kobolds and overall story. You always want to choose a move that makes sense to you in the moment. If the kobolds aren't in combat and are just lounging around in the village, then it's probably not the right time to deal damage to a kobold. Instead it probably makes more sense to add ticks to an external pressure clock so that a pressure comes to bear immediately.

Every time you make a move, always ask the players “What do you do?”

- Attack the village directly.
- Add ticks to an external pressure clock.
- Announce signs of an approaching doom.
- Deal damage to a kobold.
- Reveal the abilities of other forces.
- Show a downside to a kobold's abilities.
- Offer an opportunity, with a cost.
- Put the kobolds in a spot.
- Tell the kobolds the requirements or consequences and ask.
- Involve other Countries units in the current situation.
- Display the might of one of the Countries.
- Remind them how little others care for kobolds.
- Use a Country or unit move.



## RUNNING THE GAME





## ATTACK THE VILLAGE DIRECTLY



Village population is the most critical resource in the game and also the most difficult for the players to manage. By inflicting harm upon the village, you will ratchet up tension and create an immediate threat that the kobolds must deal

with before they can take any other actions.

## ADD TICKS TO AN EXTERNAL PRESSURE CLOCK

This move helps you ratchet up tension or immediately bring a pressure to bear. Use this move when the kobolds lives are going a little too well or when they seem directionless. Feel free to mark more than one tick at a time—as many as three!—across different clocks.

## ANNOUNCE SIGNS OF AN APPROACHING DOOM

Use this when you want to light a fire under the kobolds but don't want to bring a pressure or unit to bear immediately. This move is all about foreshadowing the hell that's coming!

## DEAL DAMAGE TO A KOBOLD

If all else fails, deal some damage. Remember the kobolds will only advance if they die, so don't hold back! You can tell a kobold that they suffer four points of damage or have them roll dice to determine how much damage is done. As always, make sure the damage you assign follows the fiction.

While this move is specifically about dealing damage, other moves may also deal damage. If you *Use a Country or unit Move* to activate a ballista unit, then that is likely going to cause some damage—if it's reasonable that another move would harm a kobold, it causes damage. It's your call.





## REVEAL THE ABILITIES OF OTHER FORCES

The kobolds aren't the only creatures in the world that gain abilities; this move can help you prove that to them. When the kobolds are always sneaking around with stealth, it's likely that another unit will be as well! They are going to run into units that use stealth or that volley from range. Anything the kobolds can do others can as well.

## SHOW A DOWNSIDE TO A KOBOLD'S ABILITIES

Throughout the game, the kobolds are going to gain new and more powerful moves. They'll start to think they are invincible—well... as invincible as kobolds can get. Don't forget to use their own strengths against them. If some kobold is constantly using ***Bigger Ass Sword*** to cut through problems, throw them into some deep tunnels where that big ass sword becomes more of a hindrance than a boon. Perhaps they even take -1 to all attacks because they can't swing their sword very well in such tight quarters.

## OFFER AN OPPORTUNITY, WITH A COST

Nothing comes for free. Show the kobolds an opportunity—additional stockpiles or perhaps some fancy weapons—and then tell them what it will cost to get it. Maybe they will need to sacrifice a unit of village kobolds to spring all the





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traps between them and the riches or maybe they will have to give up something they already have in order to gain a greater boon.

## PUT THE KOBOLDS IN A SPOT

Kobold life is harsh; carelessness and ignorance constantly land them in tight jams. Always be willing to make it a little worse. Maybe the floor is trapped, or the river is fat with flood waters making the crossing dangerous, or there is a bugbear nearby they overlooked earlier.

## TELL THEM THE REQUIREMENTS OR CONSEQUENCES AND ASK

If the kobolds want something, don't just say no. Tell them what will be required and see if they want to go through with it. Sure, you might be able to make a temporary peace with the Minotaur, but only if you leave half your party behind to be made into slaves! Is it worth it? Maybe they can fight their way out instead? It's up to them: set up the situation and let kobolds decide.





## No Country for Old Kobolds

### INVOLVE OTHER COUNTRIES' UNITS IN THE CURRENT SITUATION

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Just because the kobolds are in Burnwardia doesn't mean that the Great Eagles they pissed off over in High Roost aren't still out to get them. Maybe they've been tracking them ever since they raided the roosts and stole those eggs. No better time to get some sweet vengeance than when the kobolds are already involved in another fight!

### DISPLAY THE MIGHT OF ONE OF THE COUNTRIES

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The Countries that surround the village are always going to be more powerful than the kobolds. Maybe they block the river upstream creating drought conditions in the village. Maybe a country decides it wants the land the village keeps its grub worm farms on and torches the whole thing, forcing a shortage of scale rot medicine. These are things the kobolds probably can't do much to stop; they'll just have to deal with the fallout.

### REMIND THEM HOW LITTLE OTHERS CARE FOR KOBOLDS

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The other denizens of the world don't hold the kobolds in high regard and would rather work with just about anyone else. If someone has made a deal with the kobolds, they won't think twice about breaking that deal if it helps them. If a Country can solve a problem by exterminating a kobold village, no one will demand that the kobolds be preserved.



### USE A COUNTRY OR UNIT MOVE

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Countries and units all have moves that you can use throughout the game. If a unit has a healing ability, you can bet your bottom dollar it will be healing its compatriots to make the fight a lot tougher on the kobolds. Use these abilities whenever possible to make the kobolds' lives just a little rougher.



## RUNNING THE GAME





# GOLDEN OPPORTUNITIES

A **GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY** Is a moment in the fiction when the kobolds attempt something obviously outside of their abilities or so foolhardy that they would have no hope of success. When you are presented with such a moment by the players, you get to make a GM move, as hard as you like.

If they run headlong through a door in the Keep of the Leech Men without first checking to see what is on the other side, then their carelessness has given you a golden opportunity! **Put the kobolds in a spot** by springing a pit trap and forcing each PC to make a **Duck, Cover and Squirm** in order to avoid falling in!

If they try to fight a Great Red Dragon in melee, then their stupidity has given you a golden opportunity! **Deal damage to a kobold** with the dragon's fiery breath and massive claws! Hint: it's more than one point of damage.

Golden opportunities keep the kobolds honest; they will be on their toes if they know that they're not going to get a chance to react if they do something truly stupid or shortsighted.

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## USING EXTERNAL PRESSURES

An external pressure is a player-created enemy or situation that will come to bear as the players progress through the game. External pressures are constructed during the first session or whenever a move specifies. Each external pressure has three parts: a description, a set of inputs, and a countdown clock. The players describe the pressure, but the GM manages the other components.

## THE DESCRIPTION

Players always generate the initial description of an external pressure, a brief sentence or two that describes the primary attributes of the pressure. You may find that the description calls for a new unit to be introduced. See the **Using Combat and Units** section (pp. 65) to learn how to create them.

Examples:

*Goblin miners who won't stop dynamiting under the village.*





*Rabid Owlbeards who roam the forest, looking for prey.*

*The forest children who use magic to push the forest into the village. We don't have enough machetes for this!*

## THE CLOCK

The second part of an external pressure is the clock. External pressure clocks have three segments; when all three segments are ticked the external pressure will come to bear. In that moment, the rabid owlbeards strike or the goblin miners set off their latest controlled demolition.

It's important to allow the external pressure to immediately resolve no matter what else is happening in the game, these are the random storms that are constantly raining on the kobold parade. The GM can decide rather to use one of the inputs they've already designed to show the external pressure coming to bear or come up with something new—whatever makes sense for the fiction.





If you want the pressure to directly effect the Village just have the players roll the Runaway!! move (pp. 20) External pressure clocks are generally out of the control of the kobolds, but it's fun to let them see the oncoming doom: go ahead and keep your clocks in view of all the players! Each time a want clock is reset, tick an external pressure clock and let the players know how their kobolds sense their approaching doom.

*You've reset your 'Smoking Crystals' want. That will tick up the Tornadoes pressure! Your elder calls you all to the center of town, pointing to the sky as he recites the prayers of wind!*

## THE INPUTS

Inputs are ways for external pressures to come to bear in play after the clock has ticked to three. You can create these on the fly or come up with a list so you can randomly roll to see what happens. If you're playing a one shot, it's easiest just to make them up on the fly; in campaign play, it's worth spending a bit of time between sessions to flesh out inputs.

Here are four Inputs for the Goblin Miners we created earlier.

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*The Goblin Miners discover gold beneath your village and begin to undermine it with dynamite, roll the Runaway!! move.*

*The miners have been dynamiting the hills near your water source. The water is tainted, poisoning some of your people! Lose 1 population.*

*A neighboring Country has hired the Goblins to mine on your borders. What are they looking for, why must you have it?*

*The miners have destroyed a great deal of your territory with strip mines causing famine that saps your resources. Add two ticks to any one clock, players' choice.*

It's not necessary to threaten population directly every time an external pressure comes to bear. You should vary the impact of external pressures: some may have social impacts, some may impact the supply of a want, while others may change the standings between two Countries. External pressures can come to bear in any manner you see fit, they're not limited to just the inputs you've already created.

External pressures are not the only things you can throw at the players—far from it—but they are the only threats with clocks. You





## No Country for Old Kobolds

might add other threats to the story as the result of your moves, but external pressures will always march forward, coming to bear on the kobolds at the worst possible moments.

## USING COUNTRIES

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Countries are the player-created building blocks of the kobold's world. The questions that are asked about each Country during the first session (pp. 62) are meant to illuminate different story facets for you to use throughout the game. These aren't the only things you'll find out about the Countries though! You should ask a ton of questions about them as the players start to explore. There is a list of questions at the end of this section to get you started (pp. 62).

Remember that every want must be collected from one of these Countries, and the nature of these wants will inform you about the Country. If the want 'Grub Berries' is located in the Kingdom of the Lizard Men, start asking questions of the players to figure out what else might be in the same Country.

*'What are the grubs that the berries are named after? Are they giant moth grubs? Do the Lizard Men ride those giant moths? What sort of land do these berries grow on?'*

## PIECES OF A COUNTRY

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Countries are made up of the following parts, each providing plot hooks and other fictional elements for you to use throughout the game.

### COUNTRY NAME

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Country names will usually provide you with lots of story fodder. Why was the name chosen? Is it a person's name, if so what is their significance?

### INHABITANTS

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The inhabitants of a Country will determine what sort of units you'll create for them and provide great story fodder! What sort of fighters do Yaun-ti have? How do the Goblins feel about the Dwarves in the neighboring Country? What sort of homes would Eagle-men build?



## RUNNING THE GAME





## STRUCTURE

Structure can help you figure out how the Country works internally and subsequently what that means to the people who live there. Are they paranoid of their overbearing Fascist government? Are they hyper-local and libertarian? What does that mean for the kobolds?

## GREATEST CHAMPION

You'll use the Greatest Champion as the primary foe in the Country. They'll do their best to stop the Kobold advance and take the fight to their Village! The Champion will be the most powerful unit produced by the Country and determines the kind of units that are common in the Country. If the Greatest Champion of the People of the Golden Sea is a mighty paladin named Ingrid, then you might consider creating knights that serve her or fighter priests that fight in her honor.

## WHAT DO THEY WANT FROM YOUR PEOPLE?

This question creates one of the external pressures, and it directly informs how the people of the Country view kobolds. If the Centaur Pirates want the skins of kobolds to make sails, it tells you a great deal about how they will treat the kobolds. They'll likely capture droves of kobolds at one time and treat them like a trapper might treat a rabbit, fox, or beaver! If they instead take kobolds as slaves they would be more likely to have roving bands of slavers routinely entering kobold territory. When you convert

the player's answers to pressures choose a quick sentence to describe them. If the Minotaurs eat kobolds then describe the pressure as something like 'Minotaur Snack Day!'

## COUNTRY MOVES

Country moves are created by the GM and should speak to some



# NO COUNTRY FOR OLD KOBOLDS

**Country Name:**

**No Country For Old Kobolds**

**Inhabitants:**

Examples: Those fucking elves!; Those ground grubbin' dwarves!; Humans, they're everywhere; Gnolls, savage assholes! Centaurs, human or horse - they're both assholes!; Gnomes, like humans but smaller... and more annoying.

**Structure?**

Examples: Democracy, Theocracy, Monarchy, anarcho-syndicalist commune

**Greatest Champion?**

**What do they want?**

**Adds 1 Pressure to village**

Examples: Gold, A rare plant: what is it, why?, A rare animal: what is it, why?, Water, Spell Ingredients: what and why?



basic nature of the Country. It will usually define some unique feature of the Country and attach it to some lever in the game.

*Chandler created the Country Burnwundia: it's inhabited by Fire Elementals and they use Kobold as kindling! The GM decides to create a move called **Burning Embers**: Whenever you fall prone while in the borders of Burnwandia, roll+DEX. On a 10+, you avoid being burned by any fissures in the ground. On a 7-9, you take 1d4 damage from venting steam and flame! On a 6 or less something precious to you catches fire!*

The fiction informs the creation of the move; the move acts as a lever that creates more fiction. Each of these moves allows you to add distinct hazards and complications in each Country. Don't limit yourself to just one type of impact from your moves; consider social impacts, health impacts, basic move impacts, population impacts, or anything else you can think of.

## SAMPLE QUESTIONS TO ASK ABOUT COUNTRIES

- What sort of lands surround the capital?
- What do the people of this Country eat?
- What holiday is happening in this Country?
- Where is this Country's holy relic stored?
- What is the national sport?
- Where do the people of this Country dispose of their garbage?
- What happens at night here?
- What notorious creature roams the forests of this Country?
- How do the people here prepare for the winter?
- How are the children raised in this Country?
- What weather events do the people of this Country fear the most?
- What happened on the shores of the nearby sea?
- What civilization came before?
- How do the people here mourn death?





# USING VILLAGE WANTS

Wants are constant throughout the story. Use a clock for each want in the village, and use player failures and your moves to advance the clocks.

When a clock reaches 9:00, the village loses one population; when it reaches 11:00, they lose another. When the clock reaches midnight, the want has become so critical that 1d6 population are lost.

Inform the fiction with these clocks! Has the village been remiss in providing their dragon guardian with gold and gems for its hoard? Then talk about how it gets upset, storms through the village eating and burning those 1d6 kobolds!

Be true to the wants; don't pull punches here. These are the player's clocks to manage! If they choose to ignore a clock, you are obligated by your principles to bring that want to bear.

Want clocks should be visible to all players, write them on index cards and tick off each segment when appropriate and in full view of the players or track them on the village sheet. Wants should drive their play!

## THE TICKING OF A CLOCK

Ticking a want clock is one of your most important collaboration points for the game. The flow of want clocks helps drive the overall storyline by defining the priorities of the kobolds. Ticking a want clock is the same as asking the players a question.

*The GM is curious about how the inhabitants of the Country that Kamala created during setup farm the giant sky squid for ink, so he decides to focus his ticks on the 'Ink' want clock. This immediately makes answering his question a priority for the kobolds!*

When ticking want clocks, you'll find yourself falling into a rhythm: you might tick their want clocks evenly, you might focus

<input type="checkbox"/>	1:00	<input type="checkbox"/>	3:00	<input type="checkbox"/>	6:00
<input type="checkbox"/>	9:00	<input type="checkbox"/>	11:00	<input type="checkbox"/>	12:00





on one or two specific want clocks, or you might be somewhere in between. Be aware of your rhythms; they're a critical pacing mechanism for the story.

Focusing on a single want clock will ratchet up the tension as the loss of population becomes a real threat. Evenly distributing ticks across all want clocks lowers the overall tension and allows the players more freedom to play around in the story. You'll want to mix these strategies up to keep the game interesting.

## MANIPULATING WANTS

Wants and want clocks are major levers in **NO COUNTRY FOR OLD KOBOLDS**, making them great source material for custom moves. Wants are constantly reset throughout the game, so using the reset as a trigger allows you to be fairly certain the move will get rolled multiple times per session.

For instance, I might theme a campaign around disease and prevention. To model this I want to implement a **Cure Disease** move which gives the kobolds a chance to cure diseases, but might aggravate another want clock when a success with consequence or miss are rolled.

### CURE DISEASE

When a want is fulfilled and the old gods honored, roll  $2d6 + \text{Ingenuity}$ . On a 10+, you've successfully cured the disease; remove it from play. On a 7-9, you've minimized the impact of this disease, but another want has been aggravated; remove the disease and add two ticks to any other single want. On a miss, you've





minimized the impact of this disease, but another want is cascading out of control; remove the disease and add 3 ticks to any other single want.

# USING COMBAT AND UNITS

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This section covers the use and creation of units and advice on how to run combat in **NO COUNTRY FOR OLD KOBOLDS**.

## UNITS

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In **NO COUNTRY FOR OLD KOBOLDS**, every character that isn't a single player character is represented by a unit; monsters, village kobolds, and Country Champions are all units. Units can be a single monster or a group; individuals and groups work the same way, making kobold swarm tactics or hordes of soldiers a lot easier to deal with mechanically. Units are also very simple which makes creating them on the fly a lot easier.

Units have two stats; *HIT POINTS* and *DAMAGE*. Hit points tell you how much damage the unit can take; damage is the die the unit rolls when dealing damage.

For units recruited with the ***Recruit*** move, add +Warfare to the unit's damage and +Hardiness to its hit points. Note these stats get added even if they are a negative. So if warfare is -2 and the players recruit a unit of kobolds from the village using the Teamwork move it will receive a -2 penalty to its dice rolls when rolling for damage.

## UNIT RANGE

---

You'll see *TAGS* like +near and +far on some units to declare the range of a unit: +near is approximately 10-15 meters and +far is up to about 300 meters. Obviously, units can only attack other units or characters within their range. The positioning of unit cards or index cards on a map can help track who is in range of whom or you can just wing it and simply look to the fiction to tell you where everyone is positioned.

If you're using unit cards you don't need to consider them to scale, just place them in a close approximation to where they would be on the battlefield. Feel free to use miniatures if you enjoy them, just assume most kobolds can move about three squares, medium





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creatures can move about five squares, and large creatures can move seven or more squares.

## USING UNITS TO AID

In order for a unit to aid PCs, the village must have the ***Wonderko-***  
***bold Powers Combine*** advanced move. Otherwise, the unit just isn't coordinated enough to help the PCs out.

## CREATING UNITS

The players in **NO COUNTRY FOR OLD KOBOLDS** often create the enemies they'll be facing when they answer questions about the Countries, so it isn't practical to stat all your monsters out before a game. You often need to create units on the fly, assigning stats as they come up in the fiction. Luckily, unit creation is easy!

- **Step 1:** Decide how hardy you want the unit to be and assign hit points accordingly. For a normal human somewhere around 10-12 hit points is probably about right, but for a full size dragon it might be more like 40-50.





## No Country for Old Kobolds

- ❑ **Step 2:** Assign damage. The table to the right shows the standard progression of damage dice and the average damage for each step. Move up or down this ladder as you see fit to best suit the unit you're creating. Smaller weaker units are going to be on the upper part of the ladder; harder, more threatening units will be further down. Anything at or above 3d6 will likely kill kobolds with every attack.

- ❑ **Step 3:** There is no step three!

DICE	AVERAGE DAMAGE
1d6	3.5
1d8	4.5
1d10	5.5
2d6	7
2d8	9
3d6	10.5
3d8	13.5
3d10	16.5
4d8	18
4d10	22
4d12	26
5d10	27.5
5d12	32.5

### UNIT MOVES

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While most Units will only have hit points and damage, sometimes you'll want to add a bit of flavor to the attacks or abilities of your units. In these cases, you can create a move specific to that unit, a simple sentence evocative of the unit's base nature or frequent actions.

Here are a few examples:

*A minotaur unit might have the move **Gore Everything in Sight!***

*A dwarven unit might have the move **Fists of Stone!***

*An elven unit might have the move **Rain of Arrows!***

These moves work like other GM moves (pp. 51). Interpreting what the move does relies mostly on what's happening in the fiction at the time you invoke it. If the battlefield is strewn with dead minotaurs—and you're presented with a golden opportunity—you might use **Gore Everything in Sight!** to have the last surviving minotaur ram multiple Kobolds at once, inflicting 1d6 damage on every kobold.

### CONVERTING UNITS FROM DUNGEON WORLD

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Converting from **DUNGEON WORLD** is fairly easy: simply take any monster from **DUNGEON WORLD** and pull out the moves, hit points, and damage. You shouldn't have to make any changes to these stats in order for them to be compatible.





You might not want to use all the moves from **DUNGEON WORLD**, though. Just pick and choose which ones to use and drop the rest. And don't be beholden to the stats in the **DUNGEON WORLD** text. If you feel like the orcs your kobolds fear would be more powerful than those in **DUNGEON WORLD**, then create wholly new stats.

## RUNNING COMBAT

The phrase I repeat the most while running combat in **NO COUNTRY FOR OLD KOBOLDS** is "Yeah, you are!":

*PC: "I guess I'm swinging across the ravine to try to land on the orc's face?"*

*Me: "Yeah, you are!"*



When running combat, you want to help the players do whatever actions they think up. The more outrageous the action, the more exciting the repercussions of those actions, and the more memorable and fun experience the action will be for your players. To facilitate that experience, you need to keep a few things in mind.

- Only keep your focus on a single player long enough for them to complete one cohesive action and then move on to the next player. Don't allow a single player to dominate the conversation. Keep it moving.
- Take advantage of your golden opportunities as they present themselves so that the opposition feels like living, breathing





## No Country for Old Kobolds

creatures. If the players aren't engaging a unit, that unit should be doing things to keep itself alive (like killing kobolds!). That cleric unit is probably healing someone; that rogue is probably trying to hide. Keep the units active.

- Use unit cards and keep them visible to the players so they can see who is wounded, who is dangerous, where everyone is on the battlefield. Hiding this information doesn't add anything to the experience.

Keeping everything visible to the players makes things run faster and helps build trust. Keep it open.

- Let the players make their own decisions and make sure they don't feel pressured to do things they don't want to. The game is meant to be fun, if a player looks like they aren't having fun, engage with them and see if you can make it better. Do they not agree with the group? Does their kobold want to use different tactics? Let them. Keep the players involved.
- Always ask 'What's that look like?' when a player makes a move. To make combat as interesting and effective as possible, you need the players to help you create a vivid world. One of the best way to facilitate player engagement and get them involved is by asking this sort of question. You'll often find that new players aren't completely comfortable with adding their own fiction, so you might need to help them along by asking additional questions like "So are you jumping through the air to chop down the minotaur?" or "How does the lucha-dwarf block your swing?" Keep asking questions.



## No Country for Old Kobolds



As a reminder:

- Keep it moving.
- Keep the units active.
- Keep it open.
- Keep the players involved.
- Keep asking questions.

### MOMENTUM

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While running combat another element to keep an eye on is *MOMENTUM*. In sports, momentum is the idea that your play can dictate the pace and tenor of the game, giving you advantage over the opponent.

In **NO COUNTRY FOR OLD KOBOLDS** your players are your teammates and the opponent is boring, rote combat.

As the GM you're able to control the momentum of combat by keeping things moving. Don't sit and ponder an outcome for every scenario; if there isn't a move or series of moves that would cover the situation, then side with the players and move along. Failures on the part of the players and liberal use of golden opportunities on your part will provide more than enough adversity for the players to overcome. Don't bog yourself down by constantly trying to be adversarial whenever they try anything.

You also need to be aware of when you're zooming in to combat. Not everything needs to be a full combat with rounds and structure. Sometimes you can just have the players roll a couple of moves to completely resolve the situation and move along—not everything is combat. A combat round dilates time in a game, immediately slowing the pacing to a crawl. You need to use combat as a seasoning, not a sauce—sprinkle it carefully instead of pouring it on.

When you use combat, try for short bursts throughout the story instead of a constant slog. Speed is critical in this game: things need to get resolved in the village and extremely long combats will quickly become untenable from a player perspective if they aren't able to get back and reset a want clock before their failures stack up.

This isn't to say you shouldn't have a grand epic battle on occasion! Just use these big set piece battles sparingly.

### RUNNING THE GAME





# TAG REFERENCE

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Tags are fictional descriptors or properties of units, items, PCs, or pretty much anything else. Tags like **near**, **far**, and **knock back** all describe different properties of the thing to which they are attached. Here are a few examples of tags used in this book.

- **near**: approximately 10-15 meters
- **far**: up to about 300 meters.
- **knockback**: targets hit with this move or item are knocked back 5-10 feet.
- **slow**: A unit with the slow tag can't take as many actions in a round as other units. They probably only get to complete part of whatever they're trying to do.
- **prone**: The target is no longer upright and will need to spend a round getting back up.
- **paralyzed**: A target who is paralyzed can no longer move and will remain so for a number of rounds specified by the move or ability that created the tag.

If you want to create more tags, go for it! Just be clear with the players what **+bleeding** or **+frozen** means when you attach them to a character or item.

## ONE-SHOTS AND CAMPAIGNS

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This section outlines how to run one-shot adventures as well as longer term campaigns. It outlines the basics for gearing up to run each type of game and gives you some tools to help the game keep moving. I've also included a section on how to quickly put together missions, one of the core gameplay mechanics.

### ONE-SHOTS

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**NO COUNTRY FOR OLD KOBOLDS** excels at one-shots, three- or four-hour sessions that let you tell a complete story about a kobold village. Follow the introduction script provided in the **First Session** section (pp. 82); you'll spend about 45 minutes setting up the world and the rest of the time doing missions.





Because of time constraints involved in when running some one shots you may not be able to visit all the Countries. Use the elder kobold the players create at the start of the session to push the players toward their first mission or use an external pressure to force an encounter with a threat. The game will start to roll on its own once the players start making choices and rolling dice.

## EASY MISSION CREATION

While there are tons of different ways to structure a mission, a simple three act structure can help you keep the game focused: get the kobolds into the Country and dealing with the inhabitants, get them to the thing they need, and get them out. In a four-hour session, you should be able to run two or three of these missions (with breaks and instructions).

### ACT 1 EXPOSITION (15-20 MINUTES)

During the first act of the mission, ask questions about the Country the PCs are exploring. The answers to these questions allow you to establish the overall feel of the mission and Country. Instead of jumping to a combat, you might want to let the land provide the first encounter:

maybe they kobolds are forced to cross a lava pit by jumping from pylon to pylon or climb a mighty tree to gain access to the upper levels of the Elven kingdom. You'll want to introduce your first inhabitants of the Country during this act as well.

### ACT 2 RISING TENSION (20-30 MINUTES)

During the second act, start ratcheting up the encounters and difficult decisions. Don't be afraid to throw a lot of challenges at the players during this part of the mission. The players will likely be nearing the location of their want and will face the mid- and upper-tier inhabitants of the Country.

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## No Country for Old Kobolds

One or two other kobolds may die during this period. It's likely that at least one kobold uses *Return to the Fight* (pp. 32) as well.

### ACT 3 CLIMAX (15-20 MINUTES)

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At this point, the kobolds who are still alive have reached the location of their want and will likely face the Country Champion in order to gain access. It's not always necessary to use the Country Champion, but definitely use them if you aren't planning for a second session! If the mission hasn't been particularly deadly so far it is often fun to add in one last complication before the kobolds are able to reach the village. A particular favorite of mine is an encounter with an adventuring party! Here's a sample.

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#### THE FIGHTER

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**HP:** 25   **Damage:** 1d10

**Move: Dual Strike**—This unit is able to deal damage to multiple targets at once.

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#### THE CLERIC

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**HP:** 30   **Damage:** 1d8

**Move: Healing Wind**—This unit can heal their companions for 1d8 damage.

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#### THE ROGUE

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**HP:** 15   **Damage:** 1d6

**Move: Backstab**—This unit uses stealth to deal 1d10 damage when dealing damage from cover.

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#### THE RANGER

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**HP:** 20   **Damage:** 1d8

**Move: Bullseye!**—This unit has a range attack that deals 1d6 damage to an exposed unit.

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#### THE MONK

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**HP:** 20   **Damage:** 1d8

**Move: Multi Strike**—This unit's fists of fury deal 2d6 damage to a single target in close combat.

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## WRAP-UP (5-10 MINUTES)

Once the kobolds have returned to the village with crucial resources, they get to reset the applicable clock and roll ***Breed*** and any other moves that trigger upon their return to the village. Spend some time showing how the result of the mission (success or failure) impacts the village's development and resources.

At this point, it is likely the players already have a plan to reset their next clock. Let the players' decisions here guide the next mission. In a three- to four-hour game, the players will probably have time to reset two to three wants. They are also likely to go through a few generations of kobolds and earn a few advanced moves for the village.

## CAMPAIGN PLAY

In campaigns, you want to let the kobolds begin to work on eliminating, absorbing, or nullifying the other Countries. Let them weave the intricate webs that generations of kobolds can construct over months and years. Families can intermingle; you can allow prerequisites to come from either parent in this case. All the while want clocks keep ticking, missions have to be run, population ebbs and flows, and the world you've created together grows larger.

As the GM, use the time between sessions to flesh out new Country moves, champion moves, units, external pressures and new questions to ask about the world. Each session will change the world in some way; reflect this flux in the questions you ask the players at the start of each session. Here are a few to get you started:

- What natural disaster just hit Country X?
- What animal has migrated from one Country to another? What issues has this caused?
- Who ordered the assassination of a dignitary? Which Country did the dignitary belong to?
- What sickness is ravaging Country X?
- Why have the gods forsaken Country X?
- Where did the new inhabitants of Country X come from? Who are they?





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- Which two Countries just signed a nonaggression pact until the kobold threat has been wiped out?

In general Campaigns should do the following:

- Give the kobolds a way to affect the larger world with plans that span generations.
- Show how the world is evolving and how that evolution affects the kobolds.
- Force the kobolds to deal with the long-term consequences of their actions. If they make enemies their children, grandchildren, or great-grandchildren probably have to deal with them.



## ROTATING GMs

It's easy to switch GMs from session to session within a campaign, so don't feel the need to constantly rely on the same GM. If another player wants to GM a session, simply turn the reins over and create your own kobold family. Because the majority of the world and threats are already created, there is no need to do additional prep.

## MODULES

Modules place the PCs in a pre-generated world with specific challenges and themes. They allow you to play in new and interesting scenarios—post-apocalyptic kobolds, space opera kobolds, modern-day kobolds—anything you can think of where kobolds might show up.

The following is a list of the pieces you'll need to create your own module. Each piece will be explained in more detail later in this section.



## RUNNING THE GAME





- ☐ A theme or overall arc for your module.
- ☐ Three or more Countries—answer all the questions on the Country Cards.
- ☐ A paragraph or two of additional details about the Country.
- ☐ A series of questions for each country that the players will answer.
- ☐ Specific challenges in each Country.
- ☐ Units for each Country, usually three or more.
- ☐ Four or more inputs for each external pressure.
- ☐ Three+ wants—each with a name, location and complication.
- ☐ A village elder

Optional:

- ☐ Country moves
- ☐ A specific win condition

We'll go through a sample of each of these items using the beginner module **The Trials of Red Gulch**. A full copy of this module is available in the final chapter of this book.

## DECIDING ON A THEME

Modules can support nearly any theme you want; kobolds are remarkably easy to plop into the middle of all kinds of chaos! You could have a **MAD MAX** themed module, a sci-fi module, a city-based urban fantasy module, or anything else you can think of. The sky really is the limit here, so go wild. Once you've decided on what theme you want, it will inform the rest of the creation process. If you're basing your module in an urban fantasy setting then each Country might actually be a neighborhood that borders the kobolds, or perhaps they're actually factions within the larger city.

## A VILLAGE ELDER

Everyone needs someone to look up to! The village elder is a handy character for the GM to have. It gives them a character to use if they need to get the kobolds moving on one task or another. It also gives some additional flavor to the village. If you don't want to define the village elder simply call out the need for the GM to ask the following question before the game begins.

*Who is the oldest Kobold in your village? How old are they and how did they get so old?*





## STARTING COUNTRIES

Write a few paragraphs for each Country to give the GM and players a good grasp of the Country and its inhabitants. To construct a Country, simply answer each of the questions on the Country Card and extrapolate from there.

Modules are not meant to lay out every detail for the players and GM. Instead the purpose here is to set down guideposts that will help them navigate the world you've built. Write a couple of paragraphs to give some details on the Country you've created, and then give the GM some questions they can ask the players to help customize each Country to that particular group.

### UPLANDIA

*Humans who had crossed the great seas to escape the persecution of the old empire founded the Duchy of Uplandia well over a thousand years ago. Initially they stayed well to the north of the kobold villages that dotted the current southern border, but as their population grew—and their Country flourished—they expanded further and further south, driving out the kobolds who once called the land home. Now your village is the last of its kind on the southern border.*

*The people consider your kind no more than vermin and most Uplandians will try to kill a kobold on sight—though they are well aware of how dangerous a large group of kobolds can be and will often use traps and snares to thin out a group before approaching. In years past, there was good money in trapping kobolds thanks to the large bounty placed on kobold hides by the Duchy. These days, though, the Duchy no longer rewards*

Country Name:	No Country For Old Kobolds
Uplandia	
Inhabitants:	
Humans	
Examples: Those fucking elves! Those ground grubbin' dwarves! Humans, they're everywhere; Gnolls, savage assholes! Centaurs, human or horse - they're both assholes! Gnomes, like humans but smaller... and more annoying.	
Structure?	
Duchy	
Examples: Democracy, Theocracy, Monarchy, anarcho-syndicalist commune	
Greatest Champion?	
Dorath the great	
What do they want?	
Farm Land	
Adds 1 Pressure to village	
Examples: Gold, A rare plant: what is it, why?, A rare animal: what is it, why?, Water, Spell Ingredients: what and why?	





*hunters—kobold numbers have dwindled—and aggressive hunting has mostly stopped. You can be sure, though, if populations grow to too great a number, the Duchy will be willing to reinstitute the bounty to keep its people safe!*

## QUESTIONS ABOUT UPLANDIA

*What crops do the people of Uplandia grow?*

*What's the worst season in Uplandia? Why?*

*What does the land look like on the southern border?*

*What's the name of the capital city?*

*What was the name of the hunter's guild? Do they still exist?*

## UPLANDIAN CHALLENGES

Now we'll define some challenges, story seeds for the GM to use during the game. Instead of writing tons of flavor text and laying down rails, we'll just create some guideposts for the GM to work from. You should create at least three, but there is no upper limit. Some challenges may require the kobolds to have certain abilities to overcome them; others may simply initiate a scene that the players will have to negotiate.

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*The southern borders are dotted with old hunting lodges and there are still lots of traps and snares littered throughout the region.*

*The kobolds can get into the capital city through the sewers but in order to open the grates they'll have to work together, that will require **Stronger Together**.*

*There is at least one kobold village on the northern border of Uplandia. If the kobolds discover it, they can try to negotiate a peace and trade treaty with these kobolds. If they do so, they can permanently eliminate one want through this treaty, players' choice.*

## UPLANDIAN UNITS

The units for each country should make sense within the country you've created. You'll want to do at least three units—an easy unit, a medium unit and a hard unit. Feel free to create more! The more units you add the more varied encounters can be within the country.





# No Country for Old Kobolds

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## EASY UNIT: UPLANDIAN FARMER

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HIT POINTS: 10    DAMAGE: 1d6 pitchfork

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## MEDIUM UNIT: UPLANDIAN TRADER

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HIT POINTS: 15    DAMAGE: 1d8 rapier

---

## HARD UNIT: UPLANDIAN GUARD

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HIT POINTS: 25    DAMAGE: 1d10 long sword

MOVE: Rally the troops!

---

## EXTERNAL PRESSURES

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External pressures are also created using the Country Card. On the above Country card, you can see that the thing Uplandians want from the kobolds is their land:

**ENCROACHING FARMS:** *The farmers in the southern reaches are slowly cutting down the forests and planting crops. They will likely start to threaten the village.*

---

## INPUTS

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Inputs are meant to give the GM some quick ways to bring a pressure to bear when an external pressure clock fills. Generally you'll want to do at least 4 Inputs and if possible stay with 4, 6, 8, 10, 12 or 20, so it's easy to randomly select by rolling dice. GMs can use their own inputs, but these are quick ideas they can rely on when they are stuck!

1. *Farmers bring giant machines to cut the timber surrounding the village!*
2. *A group of human surveyors stumble upon the village and try to put it to the torch!*
3. *Farmers have blocked off the rivers in order to create irrigation works; the fresh water that was once available has now slowed to a trickle.*
4. *The Duchy has reinstated the bounty for kobold hides in an effort to rid themselves of the kobolds once and for all!*





## WANTS

It's up to you to decide how many wants you create for your story, but you'll need at least three for the system to function properly. Creating wants is pretty simple: you just need a name, location, and complication.

Each country should be the location for at least one want, creating the impetus for the kobolds to explore the countries you've created. In the case of Uplandia, we'll locate

the fresh water the kobolds need within the Country's borders.

The complication is another story seed for the GM that directly relates to the difficulty of retrieving the supplies needed to reset the want. In the case of fresh water, the kobolds have to trek through Uplandia with buckets to haul the water back.

**NAME:** *Fresh Water*

**LOCATION:** *Uplandia*

**COMPLICATION:** *In order to access the river the kobolds must venture miles into Uplandian territory and haul the water back.*

You'll repeat the above process for each country you design. Optionally you may also add in the following:

## COUNTRY MOVES

A Country Move is a move that gets triggered each time a certain circumstance happens inside a Country or concerning a country. For Uplandia, we'll create a custom move to reflect the Country's hatred of kobolds:

**KOBOLD BOUNTIES:** *Each time a 10 or better is rolled on the breed move after fulfilling a want connected to Uplandia, roll 2d6+Secrecy. On a 10+, the Duchy of Uplandia pays no attention to your growth. On a 7-9, the Duchy has taken notice of*





## No Country for Old Kobolds

*your growth and has implemented a bounty system for kobolds found within their borders. On a miss, the Duchy has decreed that all kobolds must be wiped out; hunters are moving in right now to destroy the village!*

Moves like this add to the flavor of the world and give the Countries some autonomy outside the player-created fiction, reinforcing the living world the kobolds inhabit.

### SPECIFIC WIN CONDITIONS

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You may also create a specific set of circumstances that must be met in order to win the game. In normal play there is no winning, just surviving. But it can be fun to give the players a chance to actually beat the module!

For this module let's assume there is at least one other kobold village in each of the countries.

**TRIALS OF RED GULCH WIN CONDITION:** *If the kobolds contact and make peace with each of the other three kobold villages, they can combine their populations to create a new Country just for kobolds. Explain how the new Country is structured, how your kobolds fit into it, and what the future holds for your newfound homeland.*

These are all the basics you'll need to create a compelling module. If you want to add additional countries, moves, or units feel free to do so. If you would like to adjust parts of the base system to work with your module that's also great! It really is up to you how far you want to go with your module.





# The First Session

The following section outlines what should happen the first time you sit down to play **NO COUNTRY FOR OLD KOBOLDS**. This chapter is structured so that the world is created first, then the village, and finally the kobolds.

**For the GM:** Start by giving each player a Country card and kobold family sheet. Provide the table with a copy of the village character sheet and then read the following.

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*"In NO COUNTRY FOR OLD KOBOLDS nearly everything is generated collaboratively. We'll start by creating the world, then we'll create the village, and finally you'll each create the first member of your family."*

*To begin, each of you will create one of the Countries that surround your village. You each have a Country Card in front of you; answer the questions on the card. Once everyone is finished, we'll go around the table and describe the Countries. Then using your village as the center point, you will draw a landmark to represent that Country on the map. It can be the capital city, a dungeon that exists in the Country's borders, a road, a forest, or anything else you can think up!"*

## CREATING YOUR VILLAGE

To create your village, you'll assign stats and answer some questions to fill in the background and wants of your village. Each of the sections below will guide you through these steps.

**For the GM:** Read the following.





*"Now it's time to create your village! This is the central character in NO COUNTRY FOR OLD KOBOLDS. To create the village, decide as a group where to assign stats and which advanced moves you want to take. Remember kobolds don't receive XP; instead, every time you miss, you mark one xp for your village. Advanced moves for the village cost either 7xp or 14xp.*

*Village stats detail what sort of village you have. They determine how much population you have, how well your village works together, how well it makes war, how well hidden it is from muderhobos, and how clever your village kobolds are in the face of obstacles.*

*As a group you should distribute the following numbers between your stats; 3,2,1,0,-1. How you distribute these will have a direct affect on how your village performs in the game.*

*Your population is  $4 + \text{Hardiness}$ . If your population reaches zero, your village is razed, and you've failed as kobolds. Oh, and you probably all died."*

## VILLAGE BACKGROUND

Each time a new village is created you'll ask all the following questions to help the players create a background for that village. Write down the answers on your GM sheet and add any wants to the village sheet.

- Who is the oldest Kobold in your village? How old are they and how did they get so old?



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- Birthrate is paramount to your people. What is it about this site that allows for such an accelerated birthrate? What want does this create for your village?
- What sickness ravages your village each fall? What must you leave your village to collect in order to stave off its effects? Add this as a want for your village.
- What critical resource is always in short supply? How do you acquire this resource? Add this as a want for your village.

## BUILDING YOUR KOBOLDS

**For the GM:** Read the following to guide players through creation of the first member of their kobold families.

*“Now we’ll build your family, and the first kobold in that family.*

*First, choose a family name. This is the name of your kobold’s family carried from generation to generation.*

*Next, choose how your family looks. These are just basic traits that most family members tend to have:*

*Eyes: Sad eyes, Weary Eyes, Mean Eyes, Milky Eyes, Feeble Eyes*

*Horns: Myriad Horns, Chipped Horns, Stubby Horns, No Horns*

*Frame: Short, Stocky, Thin, Gangly, Tall, Broken*

*Scales: Ruddy Scales, Gray Scales, Green Scales, Brown Scales*

*Finally, choose a first name for the first member of your family.”*

Once the players have all chosen their names and looks, move on to stats and abilities.

*“We’ll assign stats now. Stats are the numbers you’ll add to your rolls to determine the outcomes of events. Kobolds have 6 stats:*

*Strength – How much you can lift, how hard you can punch.*

*Dexterity – How nimble fingered you are, how well you can hide.*

*Constitution – How hardy you are, how much punishment you can take.*

*Intelligence – How smart you are, how quickly you learn.*





## No Country for Old Kobolds

*Wisdom* – How well you can apply what you know, ‘common sense’

*Charisma* – How well liked you are by other kobolds, you’re never liked by other races.

For your first generation Kobold you get to assign the following to your stats in any order you want. 1,1,0,0,-1,-2.

All future kobolds will inherit their parent’s stat block and some of their abilities, so think about what kind of family you want to build. Choices you make now will influence future generations!

If you look at the abilities sheet, you’ll notice that each one uses a particular stat or set of stats. Your first generation of kobolds will get 2+WIS abilities and future generations will inherit one ability from their parent and then get an additional 1+WIS. You should discuss with the group which abilities you think you would like to take so that you can keep your village balanced.

Now we’ll roll hit points. Hit points represent how much damage your kobold can take. Roll 1d6 and add CON to your roll. You’ll get to reroll hit points when you return to your village and each time you create a new generation of kobold.

Once everyone has had time to choose stats and abilities, we’ll be ready to play!”





# The Trials of Red Gulch

A Beginner Module for No Country for Old Kobolds

*The Trials of Redgulch* is a module for *No Country for Old Kobolds*. Modules replace the world building that normally happens in a first session. They are also a quick way to theme *No Country for Old Kobolds*—think cyber-punk kobolds, high fantasy kobolds, kobolds in the shire or really anything else you can think of.

*The Trials of Redgulch* is a weird-fantasy setting with three total countries. It can be run in 3-4 hours with the kobolds visiting each country and encountering each champion. If you would like to run the module over multiple sessions, simply increase the number and complexity of encounters in each country.

As the GM, you should read this entire module before playing. It will be your job to describe the world in which the kobolds find themselves and present the dangers of living in it.

While the module will take care of the majority of the world building, the players will still need to create their village and kobolds using the rules in the core rulebook.

Since the kobolds' wants are already defined, you can skip most of the village background step. You only need to ask the following question.

- *Who is the oldest Kobold in your village? How old are they and how did they get so old?*

## THE COUNTRIES

In this section, you'll find each of the countries that make up the world around your kobold village. At the start of the game, you should give the players a brief description of each country and ask





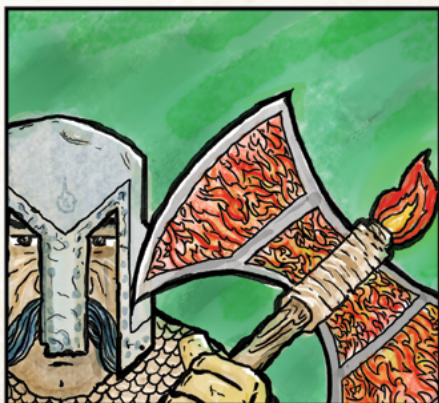
## No Country for Old Kobolds

that country's associated questions. Record the answers to these questions so that you can use them during the game. You should then explain the external pressure associated with the country and place its clock on the table.

You should also let the players know about any country moves. Don't tell them about the challenges, though; instead, expose these as the story progresses. If a challenge doesn't make sense within the context of the fiction you and the players have created, simply ignore it. Don't let the details get in the way of an entertaining narrative.

## UPLANDIA

Humans, who crossed the great seas to escape the persecution of the old empire, founded the Duchy of Uplandia well over a thousand years ago. Initially, they stayed well to the north of the kobold villages that dotted the current southern border, but as their population grew—and their Country flourished—they expanded further and further south, driving out the kobolds who once called the land home. Now, your village is the last of its kind on the southern border.



**Dolf, Champion of Uplandia**

The people of Uplandia consider your kind no more than vermin. Though most Uplandians will kill a kobold on sight, they are well aware of how dangerous a large group of kobolds can be, and will often use traps and snares to thin out a group before approaching. In years past, there was good money in trapping kobolds, thanks to the large bounty the Duchy placed on kobold hides. These days, though, the Duchy no longer rewards hunters—kobold numbers have dwindled—and aggressive hunting has mostly stopped. You can be sure that if populations grow to too great a number, the Duchy will be willing to reinstitute the bounty in order to keep its people safe!





## QUESTIONS TO ASK THE PLAYERS

*What crops do the people of Uplandia grow?*

*What's the worst season in Uplandia? Why?*

*What does the land look like on the southern border?*

*What's the name of the capital city?*

*What was the name of the hunter's guild? Do they still exist?*

## CHALLENGES

- The southern borders are dotted with old hunting lodges and there are still lots of traps and snares littered throughout the region.
- The kobolds can get into the capital city through the sewers but, in order to open the grates, they'll have to work together; that will require Stronger Together.
- There is at least one kobold village on the northern border of Uplandia. If the kobolds discover it, they can try to negotiate a peace and trade treaty with these kobolds. If they do so, they can permanently eliminate one want through this treaty (players' choice).

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## UNITS

### UPLANDIAN FARMER

**Hit Points: 10**   **Damage:** 1d6 *pitchfork*

### UPLANDIAN TRADER

**Hit Points: 15**   **Damage:** 1d8 *rapier*

### UPLANDIAN GUARD

**Hit Points: 25**   **Damage:** 1d10 *long sword*  
**Move:** Rally the troops!

## GREATEST CHAMPION

Uplandia's greatest champion is Dolf the Great. He reeved the kobold hordes at the Fork and cleansed the southern borders with his flame axe.





## DOLF THE GREAT

**Hit Points:** 50    **Damage:** 1d12 *Great Axe of Fire*  
**Moves:** Ring of Fire, Rally the troops!

## EXTERNAL PRESSURE

**Encroaching Farms:** *The farmers in the southern reaches are slowly cutting down the forests and planting crops. They will likely start to threaten the village.*

## INPUTS

1. *Farmers bring giant machines to cut the timber surrounding the village!*
2. *A group of human surveyors stumbles upon the village and tries to put it to the torch!*
3. *In order to create irrigation works, farmers have blocked off the rivers; the fresh water that was once available has now slowed to a trickle.*
4. *In order to rid themselves of the kobolds once and for all, the Duchy has reinstated the bounty for kobold hides!*

## COUNTRY MOVE

**Kobold Bounties:** Each time a 10 or better is rolled on the breed move after fulfilling a want connected to Uplandia, roll 2d6+Secrecy. On a 10+, the Duchy of Uplandia pays no attention to your growth. On a 7-9, the Duchy has taken notice of your growth and has implemented a bounty system for kobolds found within their borders. On a miss, the Duchy has decreed that all kobolds must be wiped out; hunters are moving in right now to destroy the village!

## THE GARDEN

The Elves have just always been. The most ancient myths of the other races mention the Elves and their advanced civilization. Still, few know much about them. They are insular with no love of the other races. Many scholars suggest they are actually a form of highly evolved plant, which makes it difficult for them to relate to





the other races. Considering their uncanny control over surrounding plant life, it seems likely.

In years past, elves have seen no need to trouble your village. You've been growing, though, and have started to threaten the plant life near the elves' borders. They've taken notice. In order to impede your expansion, they have started growing massive thorny walls on your shared border. This has made it quite difficult to collect the red berries that salve your people's scale rot.



**The Queen of Leaves,  
Champion of the Garden**

## QUESTIONS TO ASK THE PLAYERS

*How do the Elves settle their differences?*

*What do the Elves keep as pets?*

*What is the center of The Garden like? What lives there?*

*What patrols the thorn walls on your border?*

*How do the elves travel?*

## CHALLENGES

- The Molemen who live in the Garden have burrowed under and around the thorn walls. You'll need sapper units to dig out the tunnel entrances on your side of the wall.
- As the kobolds move further into the Garden, they'll encounter more and stranger plant life. These unusual plants will start to hinder the kobolds' way in more and more elaborate ways. Think clinging vines, giant Venus fly traps and drosera, and mobile plants.
- There is at least one kobold village on the far eastern border of The Garden. If the kobolds discover it, they can try to negotiate a peace and trade treaty with these kobolds. If they do so, they can permanently eliminate one want through this treaty (players' choice).





## No Country for Old Hobolds

### UNITS

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#### ELVEN SPROUT

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**Hit Points:** 14    **Damage:** 1d4 *whip vines*

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#### FOREST KEEPER

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**Hit Points:** 18    **Damage:** 1d6 *Iron Wood Staff*  
**Move:** Summon Ent

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#### ELVEN DRUID

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**Hit Points:** 20    **Damage:** 1d8 *Iron Wood sword*  
**Moves:** Summon Ent, Summon Sprout, Wall of thorns.

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#### ENT

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**Hit Points:** 30    **Damage:** 1d6 *fists*

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#### GREATEST CHAMPION

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The Garden's greatest champion is **The Queen of Leaves**. She is the oldest and most powerful of the elves. She can control plant life effortlessly and seems to know things long before they happen.

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#### THE QUEEN OF LEAVES

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**Hit Points:** 50    **Damage:** 1d10 *Great whip vines*  
**Moves:** Wild Growth, Summon Ents,  
Summon Sprout, Summon Druid

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#### EXTERNAL PRESSURE

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**Ranging Ents:** *Every thousand years, the Ents go ranging, looking for new lands to claim and returning developed lands to the forest. They don't take no for an answer.*

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#### INPUTS

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1. *A great Ent wanders into the village, intent on returning it to the forest.*
2. *Three smaller Ents—each with only 15 hit points—are ranging near the village.*



## THE TRIALS OF RED GULCH



## No Country for Old Kobolds



3. *A number of Ents have planted themselves near one of your Wants—which want? They are likely to attack anyone who comes near.*
4. *The Ent ranging has forced refugees from one of the surrounding countries to flood into your lands. Which country?*

## COUNTRY MOVE

**Walled Garden:** Anytime a one or more kobolds tries to enter or leave the Garden, roll+Ingenuity. On a 10+, the kobolds are able to bypass the wall of thorns. On a 7-9, the kobolds are able to bypass the wall of thorns, but are accosted by the creatures that patrol the thorn walls. On a 6 or less, the kobolds don't bypass the wall and are immediately attacked by patrolling creatures. After defeating these creatures, the kobolds may attempt to cross again.

## THE GREAT RING

The Luchadwarves of the Great Ring love the pagantry and athleticism of Lucha Libre. They've built their entire society around the squared circle. All commerce and personal conflict are resolved in the ring. Every Luchadwarf receives their mask at age 10, after which they will eat, sleep and bathe in their mask for the rest of their lives.

In general, the Luchadwarves are a peaceful race with very little concern outside of the advancement of their Lucha arts. Unfortunately, this deep civilization-wide focus has made them ignorant to the damages their lifestyle has wrought. The Luchadwarf civilization has dotted your western borders with landfills, cesspools, and detritus. It doesn't seem to be stopping either; the mess creeps ever further into your lands.



**The Silver Mask,  
Champion of the Great Ring**

## THE TRIALS OF RED GULCH





# No Country for Old Kobolds

## QUESTIONS TO ASK THE PLAYERS

*What exactly do the Luchadwarves eat?*

*What personal sacrifices do they make to their gods?*

*What's the name of their capital city?*

*What is the title belt of the Luchadwarves called?*

## CHALLENGES

- Because of their focus on Lucha, the Luchadwarves you encounter are almost always highly aggressive.
- The Uplandians love to take in a few matches at the Great Ring. If you've fought Uplandian units before, you are likely to encounter them in The Great Ring as well.
- There is at least one kobold village on the western border of The Great Ring. If the kobolds discover it, they can try to negotiate a peace and trade treaty with these kobolds. If they do so, they can permanently eliminate one want through this treaty (players' choice).

## UNITS

### LIGHTWEIGHT

**Hit Points:** 15    **Damage:** 1d4 *hand to hand*

### MIDDLEWEIGHT

**Hit Points:** 20    **Damage:** 1d6 *hand to hand*

### HEAVYWEIGHT

**Hit Points:** 30    **Damage:** 1d8 *hand to hand*  
**Move:** Guillotina!

## GREATEST CHAMPION

The Great Ring's greatest champion is **The Silver Mask**, the most astounding of Luchadwarves and the current holder of the championship belt.



# No Country for Old Kobolds



## THE SILVER MASK

**Hit Points:** 100    **Damage:** 1d10 *hand to hand*

**Moves:** Guillotina!, Centón, Plancha

## EXTERNAL PRESSURE

**The Creep:** *The refuse from the Luchadwarves is slowly pushing into your village and lands!*

## INPUTS

1. *A large green ooze, that seems to be sentient, has made its way into your village!*
2. *Now that the refuse is so close to your village, the large carnivorous birds that make their nests amongst the rot and filth have started raiding your village!*
3. *A group of Middle and Light weights have come adventuring! They seem extremely happy about finding your village. Also, they seem rather violent.*
4. *The mix of chemicals and gases produced by the refuse has started to undermine your village. You experience an earthquake! Roll 1d6 to determine how much population you lose.*

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## COUNTRY MOVE

**Title Bout:** During a battle, when the final luchadwarf reaches 0 hit points, roll+Teamwork. On a 10+, you pin them and they stay down! On a 7-9, they are able to wriggle out of the pin and regain 5 hit points! On a 6 or less, they throw you off and are rejuvenated; they gain back all their hit points.

## WANTS

Below are the three starting wants. Record each of these on the Village playsheet and describe them to the players. Tell the players what each want is, how to resolve it, and why it's more difficult to get resolve than they may think.

## THE TRIALS OF RED GULCH





## No Country for Old Kobolds

### FRESH WATER

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**Description:** Without any fresh water sources within your borders, you're forced to carry water back across the Uplandian border.

**Location:** Southern Uplandia

**Complication:** In order to access the river, the kobolds must venture miles into Uplandian territory and haul the water back.

### RED BERRIES

---

**Description:** Your people mush the berries into a jelly and smear it on your scales. This helps prevent scale rot, a rather heinous disease that plagues your people.

**Location:** Eastern portion of The Garden

**Complication:** The berries lose their potency very quickly. The Kobolds must hurriedly return to their village after collection. This is complicated by the high thorn walls surrounding the Garden.

### USED TRAMPOLINE

---

**Description:** Used trampoline material from the old wrestling rings has become all the rage in kobold fashion. Your people are practically rabid for it!

**Location:** Outskirts of The Great Ring

**Complication:** Normally, your people have found the needed fabric in the creep that surrounds the Great Ring, but it's becoming rarer. To get the needed fabric now, your people have to range much further into The Great Ring.

## WIN CONDITIONS

---

Because of the way **No Country for Old Kobolds** is structured, it's difficult to create a linear narrative for the players to 'run' through. Instead, we use **win conditions** to denote when the players have completed the module. If you have more stories to tell, you can always play past the completion of the win condition.

Any of the following can be considered a win. You and the players can decide which, if any, win condition you would like to use.



## No Country for Old Kobolds



- Your kobolds have alleviated three separate wants.
- Your kobolds have defeated the Greatest Champion of each Country.
- Your kobolds have signed treaties with each of the other three kobold villages.

## CHALLENGE RATING

---

Normally when the game begins there are no ticks on the village want clocks. If the players would like a more challenging game though, simply add some starting ticks to ratchet up the pressure. Add these ticks in groups of 2, the players should decide which clocks get the ticks. For every 2 ticks the players add they may take 1 7xp advanced village move. 14xp moves may not be taken in this fashion.

## STARTERS

---

Below are three scenarios you can use to begin the session. These are just suggestions so don't feel obligated to use them.

- It's a rather dreary day in Redgulch. The Kobolds toil at their daily tasks when suddenly carrion birds from the creep attack!
- The kobolds were sent to gather water in Uplandia. On their way back from the water source they were captured by a group of four hunters. The hunters currently have them tied to a tree. What do they do?
- It's nighttime in Redgulch. As most of the kobolds slumber a great thunderous roar shatters the night! The footfalls of some great beast thump against the ground and grow ever closer. Ask the kobolds what the beast is and how they plan to stop it from stampeding through their village.

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*The world is old, and its death approaches. The residents of the last great mortal city—Anglekite, located in the Crater Basin—don't know what form the end will take, but they know it is certain, and it draws nigh.*

*Will the end come as the Pyrewyrm, prophesied to burn everything to ashes in a final battle with the Angelbone Blade? Will it be the Scourge Karkis, the 200-foot tall giant that murders all life it finds? Will it be something worse, some Thing from beyond this world, scratching at the cracks, aching to get inside...and feed?*

*Or will the world, the Crater Basin, and Anglekite mount one final defense and stave off the end for a while longer?*

This new large-scale *Dungeon World* adventure contains everything your group needs to play the final days of the Crater Basin, including Dangers, Fronts, and additional obstacles. It also contains new monsters, new magical items, and new compendium classes to flesh out the world, as well as a set of basic rules for fights that pit large forces against titanic creatures.

*Towers extending up to the sky, made of alabaster, with gold filigree. Beautiful statues of gods and angels and heroes and kings. A people who found their deeds on a philosophy of hope. A civilization at the summit of its majesty.*

*All of it long gone.*

*The Cold Ruins are all that's left. Broken towers. Shattered statues. Creeping undead vines grown over beautiful edifices. And the people... ruined. Lastlife is populated only with the undead, husks of what came before clinging to a horrible half-life. Their memories lost and gone. Their past glory, vanished.*

In this *Chaos World* setting, written for the *Dungeon World* game system, you'll play undead adventurers trying to find something to fight for—the past or the future—in this cold and dreadful world. The book contains everything your group needs to play a game of *Dungeon World* in these haunting ruins, including new rules for playing the undead in Lastlife; adventure fronts and dangers for use in guiding your Lastlife campaign; a slew of monsters, magical items, and compendium classes for this terrible place; and more.



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A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, likely reading 'Steve Wallace'.

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Why do we all hate kobolds so much? It's just a matter of course that in every fantasy rpg you play your first level adventurers will go out and murder a couple dozen kobolds, collect their loot, a bit of experience and move on to bigger badder things. Ever wonder what the kobolds thought about all this? Ever think maybe all those kobolds aren't the bad guys we make them out to be? Well, *No Country For Old Kobolds* is built to explore the world through their eyes!

Sometimes this view of the world can be comedic, sometimes heartbreaking, sometimes heroic.

# NO COUNTRY FOR OLD KOBOLDS



POWERED BY THE  
APOCALYPSE

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