Forbidden Rules

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A Shadow of the Demon Lord Supplement

FORBIDDEN RULES

Poisoned Pages for *Shadow of the Demon Lord*

~CREDITS~

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INTRODUCTION

The game system powering *Shadow of the Demon Lord* reflects two key design goals. First, I wanted to make the game easy to learn; second, I wanted complexity to grow, such that each time players came to the table they'd get something new that built on what they had already mastered.

Keeping the basic game simple meant I had to make hard choices, rejecting the complex in favor of the straightforward. Reviewing the main rulebook now, I can see all the compromises I made in the design, places where I traveled down one mechanical path only to abandon it in favor of something else. In the end, I'm delighted with the final product, but some abandoned bits of design still haunt me and, as the game has grown, I've found other areas I might have explored.

And so here we have *Forbidden Rules*, a supplement that offers all kinds of ways to tweak the game to suit your tastes. If you want to try rolling 3d6 instead of a d20, using spell points to cast spells, playing characters beyond level 10, or a slew of other possibilities, this supplement is for you.

Not everything in these pages works together, so don't try to implement it all. Rather, choose the stuff you like and set aside the stuff you don't. Either way, enjoy perusing these pages to see what kind of game *Shadow of the Demon Lord* might have been.

DIE ROLLS

The game system uses die rolls to help GMs and players decide what happens in the game when the outcome of a particular activity is unclear. While the fundamental rules are simple to make the game easy to learn, there are a number of ways you can change how die rolls affect the game works, either to make it simpler or to make it more complex.

COOPERATION

When the characters work together on a task, the GM determines whether their effort succeeds, fails, or might succeed with a roll. Normally, a group can complete most mundane tasks given enough time and effort, but when neither is in sufficient supply, the GM can call for a roll. In such cases, each member of the group makes a challenge roll. If half or more get a success, the task results in a success. Otherwise, the task results in a failure. As with any task, the GM and the rules decide on the attribute or characteristic that best applies to the rolls.

Depending on the task, the GM might call for rolls using different attributes and characteristics. For example, a group building a raft from logs might include a couple of characters who make Strength challenge rolls to haul the wood, other characters who make Agility rolls to bind the logs together, and one character who makes an Intellect challenge roll to organize the effort.

STATIC BOONS AND BANES

Using dice for boons and banes provides some variation in their effect on attack rolls and challenge rolls, but a result cannot modify the d20 roll by more than 6, regardless of how many boons or banes you have on the roll. For a more reliable impact on the d20 roll, you can replace dice for boons and banes with static bonuses and penalties. Here's how it works:

Boons and banes cancel each other out as normal. One boon grants a +3 bonus to the roll. The bonus increases by 1 for each boon after the first to a maximum of +5. One bane imposes a –3 penalty to the roll. The penalty worsens by 1 for each bane after the first to a maximum of –5.

CONSISTENT DAMAGE

Random damage provides descriptive cues about the quality of the success, such that a low result might indicate a near miss while a high result would suggest a solid strike from sword or spell. Randomized damage does, however, add an extra step in resolving task rolls, which takes more time. Rather than rolling to determine damage, you can just take the average result of a given die roll and apply that amount consistently.

The following table shows how to convert the damage.

RANDOM TO CONSISTENT DAMAGE

Random Damage	Consistent Damage*
1d3	2
2d3	4
1d6	3
2d6	7
+1d6	+3
+2d6	+7

*Add any modifiers to the damage as normal.

Example 1: If an attack with a sword would deal 1d6 + 2 damage, the attack deals 5 damage instead.

Example 2: A magician casts *fireball*. The spell normally deals 5d6 damage, so, using the consistent damage rule, the spell deals 17 damage, since 2d6 + 2d6 + 1d6 converts to 7 + 7 + 3.

NO ATTACK ROLLS

The game uses two types of rolls for task resolution: attack rolls and challenge rolls. You make an attack roll when you pit yourself against another creature and a challenge roll when you would test your own

abilities. In terms of game mechanics, the two rolls are similar, except that the target number of an attack roll is always the score of the attribute or characteristic used to resist the attack, while the target number of a challenge roll is always 10. One way you can simplify the game is to drop attack rolls and just use challenge rolls for everything.

When the rules call for an attack roll, the attacker makes a challenge roll using the attribute or characteristic associated with the attack roll, while the target makes a challenge roll using the attribute or characteristic used to resist the attack. Attacks against Defense are an exception; in such cases, the target adds its Defense modifier (see below) to the roll. The results of both rolls determine what happens, as shown on the following table.

ATTACK OUTCOMES

Attacker Result	Defender Result	Outcome
Success	Failure	Success
Success	Success	Partial success: If the attack deals damage, the target takes half the damage. Otherwise, the attack has no effect.
Failure	Failure or success	Failure

Defense Modifier: In this variant, a creature has a Defense modifier in place of a Defense score. A creature's base Defense modifier equals its Agility modifier. Wearing armor can improve one's Defense modifier, as shown below. Any bonuses or penalties that apply to a target's Defense score instead apply to its Defense challenge rolls.

For the purpose of this variant, the Clothing and Armor table here replaces the one presented in the main rulebook.

CLOTHING AND ARMOR

Name	Defense Modifier	Price
Clothing	Agility modifier	Varies
Soft Leather	Agility modifier + 1	2 ss
Light Armor (Requires Strength 11 or higher)		
Hard Leather	Agility modifier + 2	5 ss
Brigandine	+3	5 ss
Medium Armor (Requires Strength 13 or higher)		
Mail	+5	1 gc
Scale	+6	2 gc
Heavy Armor (Requires Strength 15 or higher)		
Plate and Mail	+7	5 gc
Full Plate	+8	25 gc

Attribute Scores: Aside from Strength score determining starting Health and Will determining

the maximum amount of Insanity a character can accumulate, attribute scores serve no function using the "no attack rolls" variant. You can drop them from the game and use only modifiers during play.

PLAYERS MAKE THE ROLLS

Several tabletop roleplaying games feature systems in which only the players roll the dice. You can change this game so that players make all the rolls by using the following procedures.

Defense Roll: When a creature under the GM's control attacks a player character, the character's player makes a Defense roll, which is a roll of a d20 plus the character's Defense modifier (see above). The target number is equal to the attacking creature's attack modifier + 10. If the attack option indicates that the creature would make the attack with 1 or more boons, the creature imposes an equal number of banes on the player character's Defense roll. A success on the Defense roll avoids the attack, while a failure on the roll indicates the attack succeeds.

Damage Rolls: If a player character would take damage from an attack, the character's player rolls the damage and record the result.

Challenge Rolls: Creatures don't make challenge rolls unless the GM decides they need to based on the circumstances. If a challenge roll for a creature becomes necessary, one of the players can make the roll on the creature's behalf.

Player versus Player: If a player character makes an attack roll against another player character, the attack is resolved as normal, with the attacking character making the attack roll.

BELL CURVE ROLLS

The d20 is a fickle die, cruel in its randomness. Every roll is as likely to produce a 20 or a 1 as it is to come up a 10. For this reason, some games use multiple dice for task resolution, so the possible results form a bell curve rather than a flat line of even distribution. To use this variant, all d20 rolls for determining success or failure are replaced by 3d6 rolls.

Rolling 3d6 instead of a d20 produces more results near the average of the range. Each roll is more likely to be a 9–12 than it is to result in a 3 or an 18. Although this change does tone down the randomness inherent in the d20, using 3d6 does wreak havoc with the game system, making challenge rolls easier and attack rolls against high target numbers very difficult if not impossible. To implement this variant, make the following changes.

Challenge Rolls: Increase the target number for challenge rolls from 10 to 11.

Boons and Banes: Use a d3 in place of a d6 for boons and banes.

Attack Roll 20+: Drop the requirement of having to beat the target number by 5 for talent such as the

rogue's Exploit Opportunity, warrior's Forceful Strike, and for certain attack spells. Similarly, creatures with traits that modify attack options in similar circumstances also ignore the requirement.

POISONED VARIANTS

Other books in the *Poisoned Pages* series of supplements offer new adventures, ancestries, and rules expansions, but they also offer variant rules. To introduce lasting injuries and make the game a bit more lethal, check out *Battle Scars*. For nastier rules on disease, see *Fever Dreams*. Finally, *Unhinge the Mind* expands on the Insanity and Madness rules, making them a bigger part of the game.

CRITICAL SUCCESS AND FAILURE

Some games that use a d20 for task resolution attach special importance to high and low rolls, specifically when the die comes up as a 20 or a 1. For high numbers, *Shadow of the Demon Lord* already rewards critical success on the use of talents and spells by granting additional effects when the total of the attack roll is 20 or higher and beats the target number by 5 or more. But if both the GM and the players want the specific results of 20 and 1 to have meaning, the following variant rules can be applied on top of those used in the main rulebook. If you use the rules for critical success, you must also use critical failure.

CRITICAL SUCCESS

Whenever a die rolled for an attack roll or a challenge roll comes up a 20 and is a success, the result becomes a critical success. The effect of the critical success depends on the nature of the roll. The effect of a critical success is cumulative with any other effect gained from rolling 20 or higher and beating the target number by 5 or more.

Damaging Attack: A critical success on an attack that deals damage means that the attack deals 1d6 extra damage. Alternatively, the GM can have players roll on the Critical Hit table for a wider range of results.

CRITICAL HIT

3d6	Effect
3	The target falls prone and becomes unconscious for 1d3 rounds.
4–5	The target becomes dazed for 1d3 rounds.
6–8	The target falls prone.
9–12	The target takes 1d6 extra damage.
13–15	The target becomes impaired for 1d3 rounds.
16–17	The target becomes stunned for 1d3 rounds.
18	The target takes damage equal to its Health.

Non-damaging Attack: A critical success on an attack that does not deal damage indicates that the attack is more effective. An effect could have double the normal duration, for instance. If the effect imposes an affliction, the affliction might become permanent or impose 1d3 banes on rolls made to remove it. In social situations, the target might become overly helpful, perhaps going so far as to take great risks to help the character. Or, the GM might just let the player decide what happens, within reason of course.

Challenge Roll: A critical success on a challenge roll indicates that the creature accomplishes the task in half the time, gains a new insight into the problem at hand, or receives some additional benefit as the GM determines. For example, if a creature gets a critical success on a challenge roll to open a lock, the creature might open the lock in half the time or might make other challenge rolls to open locks with 1 boon until it completes a rest.

CRITICAL FAILURE

Whenever a die rolled for an attack roll or a challenge roll comes up a 1 and the roll results in a failure, the result of the roll is a critical failure. The specific effect is determined by rolling on the Critical Failure table.

CRITICAL FAILURE

3d6	Effect
3	The creature falls prone and becomes dazed for 1d3 rounds.
4–5	The creature falls prone.
6–8	An object the creature is holding, wearing, or carrying falls to the ground and moves 1d3 yards in a random direction.
9–12	An item the creature is wearing or carrying that is worth 1 gc takes damage equal to its Health.
13–15	The creature becomes impaired for 1d3 rounds.
16–17	The creature becomes stunned for 1d3 rounds.
18	The creature and each of its allies it can reach become impaired for 1d3 rounds.

CORRUPTION

As revealed in *Hunger in the Void,* acts of unredeemable evil cause the essential essence found in all living things to drift close to its demonic origins, becoming stained, sullied, darkened by shadow. The greater one's Corruption grows, the more it begins to contaminate the body and the mind, making the corrupted individual appear more and more demonic until it becomes consumed by the darkness flourishing inside it.

The rules and the GM decide when a character earns Corruption, but the GM can also bestow Corruption on characters who perform acts of great and harmful evil. Identifying such acts can be tricky,

d20	Mark of Darkness
5	Your flesh becomes more sensitive. Whenever you take damage, you take 1 extra damage.
6	One of your limbs becomes thick and painfully bloated.
7	Your anus seals shut. The only way for you to empty your gullet is by vomiting.
8	Your skin becomes transparent, which makes your muscles, bones, and organs visible. Your ghastly appearance imposes 1 bane on attack rolls made in social situations.
9	An extra face appears on your genitalia. It whispers unspeakable things to you. Each time you complete a rest, you gain 1 Insanity.
10	When you speak, your words come out in the Dark Speech.
11	Your eyes emerge from your head on stalks. Increase your Perception by 1, but you cannot avert your gaze.
12	One of your eyes migrates to a position on your body chosen by the GM.
13	When you use an action to rush, you must move on all fours. If you're holding something in your hands, you must drop it.
14	You see in black and white.
15	Your toes and fingers swap places.
16	Cockroaches nest in your lungs. You cough them up from time to time.
17	Other people appear old and rotting to you.
18	An eyeball forms at the end of your tongue.
19	You always speak in a loud, booming voice, audible from up to 1 mile away.
20	Your neck disappears, and your head slides down until it emerges from the center of your chest.

since the circumstances of a situation might justify an act that would otherwise be deemed evil. As a rule of thumb, if an act results in the direct or indirect harm of innocents or their property, it should result in the perpetrator gaining 1 Corruption.

MARKS OF DARKNESS

In addition to the options presented in the main rulebook, you can find an alternative Marks of Darkness table in *Exquisite Agony* and one for clockworks in *Ghosts in Machines*. The following table offers additional marks of darkness for corrupted characters.

MORE MARKS OF DARKNESS

d20	Mark of Darkness
1	Your mind breaks. Your maximum Insanity equals half your Will score.
2	Your facial features slough away, leaving nothing but a slit for a mouth and wide, unblinking eyes. Your ghastly appearance imposes 1 bane on attack rolls made in social situations.
3	You pass sharp, rusty nails in your bowel movements. Each time you complete a rest, after healing damage, you take 1d3 damage.
4	In darkness, your body sheds light in a 1-yard radius.

FORTUNE POINTS

With the odds stacked against them and danger looming on all sides, player characters often have a tough time surviving in *Shadow of the Demon Lord*. Lethality plays a big part in conveying the mood and tone of the setting. Although some players are comfortable facing such dire perils, some groups might want a more heroic game, one in which the characters are expected not only to survive, but to thrive in a dark and deadly world. The mechanic of fortune points can insulate player characters somewhat against the challenges they face in an adventure, though if they spend those points recklessly, they are without any additional insulation against harm.

In this variant, Fortune is replaced as a game concept by fortune points. Instead of receiving Fortune as a reward, the group begins with a pool of 1d3 + 3 fortune points at the start of each adventure. The GM rolls the die and keeps the number a secret from the players. Provided the group has fortune points remaining, a player can expend a fortune point to do any of the following:

- Take another turn during the round
- Heal damage equal to twice the character's

healing rate
- Turn any creature's failure into a success
- Turn any creature's success into a failure

Once a fortune point is spent, it is gone. However, whenever the GM would award Fortune, the pool of fortune points increases by 1. At the end of the adventure, the GM can turn unspent fortune points into treasure, exchanging each fortune point for 1 gc. The group might gain this additional wealth as a reward for accomplishing its mission, or receive the funds in the form of discounts on purchases made before the next adventure begins. When it's time to start a new adventure, the GM rolls the dice and notes the size of the new pool of fortune points.

DAMAGE-REDUCING ARMOR

Armor protects wearers from taking damage by making it harder for other creatures to get a success on their attack rolls. Having a high Defense doesn't mean that strikes don't land on the creature's body. Rather, it means that the armor is doing what it was meant to do: protect the wearer from harm.

Of course, there are other ways to simulate how armor works. One common method is for armor to reduce the amount of damage its wearer takes from attacks. While this approach can be seen as a better way of simulating how armor works, introducing these variant rules does make the game more complex.

DEFENSE

Defense represents a creature's ability to avoid attacks from weapons. It is a combination of reflexes, combat training, and instinct. A creature's Defense equals its Agility score.

CLOCKWORKS

Using these rules, a clockwork's Defense equals its Agility score. In addition, clockwork characters gain the following trait.

Armored Body When you would take damage from a weapon, you reduce that damage by 1d3 per die of damage. You count as if you were wearing medium armor.

ARMOR

Armor comes in three basic forms: light, medium, and heavy. Light armor is typically leather, medium armor is mail, and heavy armor is plate. In this variant, clothing offers no special protection. The rules for not meeting requirements for armor are unchanged from those presented in the main rulebook.

The following table reduces the varieties of armor

to three, one for each type. Treat brigandine armor as leather, scale as mail, and both plate and mail and full plate as plate.

Damage Protection: Under these rules, armor protects its wearer from a certain amount of damage. For the purpose of this variant, treat brigandine armor as leather, scale as mail, and both plate and mail and full plate as plate. Use the Armor table below in place of the Clothing and Armor table in the main rulebook.

ARMOR

| Variety | Damage | | |
	Defense	Protection	Price
Light (Requires Strength 10 or higher)			
Leather	Agility score	1	5 ss
Medium (Requires Strength 12 or higher)			
Mail	Agility score – 1	1d3	1 gc
Heavy (Requires Strength 14 or higher)			
Plate	Agility score – 2	1d6	10 gc

When the wearer takes damage from a weapon, the armor's damage protection indicates how much damage to subtract for each die of damage rolled. Thus, if you are wearing mail (medium armor) and take 2d6 damage from an attack, you would roll 2d3 and reduce the total damage by that amount.

BONUSES TO DEFENSE

Any talent or trait that grants a bonus to Defense continues to grant a bonus to Defense. The same applies to the defensive property granted by shields.

CONVERTING CREATURES

The hardest part about making use of this variant is applying it to creatures. There are a couple of ways to handle this. The GM can choose to change nothing about how attacks against creatures work. Leaving the rules as written keeps the game moving quickly, and you don't have to worry about reducing damage for each attack.

Or, the GM can just change the mechanics for creatures that wear manufactured armor. For instance, a boneguard wearing mail would have Defense 14 (Agility 15, minus 1 for medium armor) and reduce damage it takes by 1d3 per die.

WOUNDS

This variant simplifies damage to keep the numbers smaller and more manageable. Rather than use variable amounts of damage, each weapon and damage-dealing spell inflicts a certain number of wounds.

A creature's or object's Health score determines the
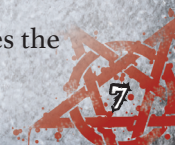
number of wounds a creature or object can sustain before becoming incapacitated or being destroyed. Convert Health from the main rulebook to wounds by simply dividing Health by 4. Contrary to the normal rules, you round up in this case.

HEALING RATE

Each creature has a healing rate, which is equal to one-quarter of its Health (minimum 1).

CONVERTING DAMAGE

Weapons, spells, and other damaging effects deal 1 or more wounds instead of amounts of damage. Convert amounts of damage to numbers of wounds using the following table.

DAMAGE CONVERSION

Damage Amount	Number of Wounds
1 or 1d3	1*
1d6	1
2d6	2
3d6	3
4d6	4
5d6	5
+1d6	+1
+modifier	+**

*Attacks that deal 1d3 damage or less impose 1 bane on their attack rolls or grant 1 boon on challenge rolls made to resist these attacks.

**For attacks that add or deal a fixed amount of damage, divide the amount of damage by 4 (round down) and add that number to the new damage.

Example 1: Troy plays a warrior in a level 2 group. Normally, his attacks with a sword deal 2d6 + 2 damage. After he converts the damage, 2d6 becomes 2 wounds and the additional +2, after dividing it by 4, rounds down to 0. So, when Troy gets a success on an attack using a sword, he inflicts 2 wounds.

Example 2: Dan's character casts the *destroy* spell from the Destruction tradition. As part of casting the spell, he normally takes 5 damage and his target takes 30 damage. After converting the damage, Dan's character takes 1 wound (dividing 5 by 4 and rounding down), and his target takes 7 wounds (dividing 30 by 4 and rounding down).

Example 3: A killing mist deals 6d6 + 5 damage to creatures in its space that get failures on their challenge rolls to resist its feed special attack. After converting the damage, such creatures would instead take 7 wounds. They take 6 from the 6d6 plus 1 more from the +5 (5 divided by 4 rounds down to 1).

HALVING DAMAGE

Damage expressed in wounds is halved as normal, rounding down to a minimum of 1.

HEALING WOUNDS

Creatures heal wounds in the same way that they would heal damage. If an effect specifies that a creature heals a variable amount of damage, convert the damage to wounds using the Damage Conversion table.

USING DAMAGE-REDUCING ARMOR

If you want to combine the damage-reducing armor variant with wounds, armor reduces wounds as follows.

Light Armor: Light armor reduces the number of wounds from the first weapon attack each round by 1 (minimum 0). All other attacks during the round ignore the armor.

Medium and Heavy Armor: Medium armor reduces the number of wounds from an attack by 1, while heavy armor reduces the number of wounds by 2 (minimum 0). Thus, a plate-armored character who takes 5 wounds would instead take 3 wounds.

SIMPLIFIED DYING AND DEATH

This variant system softens the rules concerning instant death and simplifies what happens when a creature becomes incapacitated.

INSTANT DEATH VARIANT

When a creature takes damage from a single source and that damage equals or exceeds the creature's Health, the creature must make a Strength challenge roll. On a success, the creature dies after 1d3 rounds unless healed before then; on a failure, the creature dies immediately.

INCAPACITATED

A creature becomes incapacitated when its damage total equals its Health score. If the creature is a player character, the player rolls a d6 and consults the Fate table below to determine what happens. Any other creature falls prone upon becoming incapacitated, and the GM decides whether the creature also becomes unconscious for 1d3 hours or the creature dies.

FATE

d6	Fate
1	The character dies immediately.
2	The character falls prone and becomes unconscious. The character dies after 1d3 rounds unless healed.
3	The character becomes unconscious and dies after 1d6 minutes unless healed.
4	The character becomes unconscious for 1d6 minutes and then heals 1 damage.
5	The character becomes unconscious for 1d3 rounds and then heals 1 damage.
6	The character becomes unconscious for 1 round and then heals 1 damage.

When an incapacitated character heals any damage, the character removes the unconscious affliction and becomes impaired for 1 minute. If an incapacitated creature other than a character takes any damage, it dies.

VARIANT HEALING

The following variant rules make healing easier or more difficult to accomplish, so different groups can easily adjust the game's difficulty to suit themselves.

REGROUP

In this variant, player characters can regroup. To benefit from doing so, a character must spend 10 minutes resting, cleaning and binding wounds, eating, drinking, or performing any other activity that requires minimal effort. At the end of this time, the character heals damage equal to his or her healing rate. Once a character regroups, the character cannot do so again until he or she completes a rest.

ENDURANCE

In this variant, a character's healing rate is redefined as his or her Endurance score, composed of a number of endurance points.

Spending Endurance Points: A character can use an action to spend 1 or more endurance points. For each point spent, the character heals 1d6 damage.

Healing Effects: Whenever an effect would cause a creature to heal damage equal to its healing rate or a multiple thereof, the character heals damage as if he or she had spent the equivalent number of endurance points. For example, casting *major healing* from the Life tradition allows the target to heal damage equal to three times its healing rate. Using this variant, the spell would instead allow the target to heal 3d6 damage.

Regaining Endurance Points: When a character completes a rest, he or she regains 1d3 endurance points, up to the limit of the character's Endurance score.

NEW SPELL

REINVIGORATE	LIFE UTILITY 4
Target One creature you can reach	

You touch the target and cause it to regain 1d3 endurance points.

SLOW HEALING

In this variant, healing damage is more difficult. Whenever a creature heals damage, it must make a Strength challenge roll. The creature heals the damage as normal on a success, or heals half the damage on a failure.

SOCIAL COMBAT

Social combat differs from the rules covering social conflict in that it recasts social situations as battlefields of a sort, with the characters squaring off against their opponents. Rather than try to slay or drive off their foes, however, the characters can attempt to change their opponents' behavior. Characters under the GM's control do not use these rules to influence the player characters because, short of magical influences, the players are always in control of their characters.

NEW CHARACTERISTICS

Social combat uses two new characteristics: Composure and Influence.

Composure: A creature's Composure score equals its Will minus its Insanity. The number represents the maximum amount of Influence a creature can take before its attitude is changed, as described under Resolution. Such a change could cause a target to become friendly or provoke one to violence.

Influence: As damage relates to Health, so does Influence relate to Composure. Influence represents how much a creature has been affected by another creature in a social situation. Creatures begin social combat with 0 Influence and gain Influence throughout the combat as they are affected by the actions of others. Influence from one social combat does not carry over to the next. Instead, Influence resets to 0.

ROUNDS

Like normal combat, social combat unfolds in rounds. A round in social combat has four phases: actions, roleplaying, exchange, and resolution. Once play proceeds through all four phases, the social combat either ends or continues for another round. Unlike in physical combat, rounds last for a variable length of time. The length of a round depends mostly on the roleplaying phase.

ACTIONS

Each player character participating in the social combat chooses a social attack or a social action, and each creature under the GM's control chooses an attitude. Choices are recorded and kept secret until the exchange phase.

SOCIAL ATTACKS

The five kinds of social attacks are described below. As part of choosing an attack, the character must also choose a target. A player character engaging in social combat against a group can choose the entire group as his or her target.

Befriend (Will against Will): You attempt to improve the target's attitude toward you.

Deceive (Intellect against Intellect): You attempt to make the target believe something that isn't true or isn't wholly true.

Intimidate (Will against Will): You attempt to frighten the target through threats.

Persuade (Will against Will): You attempt to convince the target to do as you say.

Taunt (Intellect against Will): You attempt to provoke the target through insults.

SOCIAL ACTIONS

Instead of making a social attack, a character can take a social action.

Discover Attitude (Perception against Intellect): On a success, you learn the target's attitude toward you. You resolve this action immediately when you take it. You can reveal this information to your fellow characters.

Support (No Roll): You support a companion's social attack and grant 1 boon on that character's social attack roll.

ATTITUDE

Each creature under the GM's control chooses one of the following attitudes, each of which describes how the creature sees the character or group of characters. The GM can assign an attitude to an entire group of creatures.

Helpful: The target wants to do what the opposition wants.

Friendly: The target is open to doing what the opposition wants.

Neutral: The target might or might not do as the opposition wants.

Unfriendly: The target is disinterested in doing what the opposition wants.

Hostile: The target refuses to do what the opposition wants.

MAGIC AND SOCIAL COMBAT

Telepathy spells (see *Demon Lord's Companion*) and similar powers can grant advantages in social combat. The *share thoughts* spell, for example, can reveal a character's social attack to other characters. Other spells might provide additional advantages. For example, causing a creature to become charmed forces that creature to become friendly to the charmer, and the creature cannot have an attitude other than friendly or helpful until the spell ends. Ultimately, It falls to the GM to interpret the effects spells have on social combat, though the effects ought to be apparent from the spell descriptions.

ROLEPLAYING

Everyone has a chance to roleplay during the next phase, with players taking on the roles of their characters and the GM acting on behalf of the opposition. The GM might grant boons or impose banes during the exchange based on what happens during roleplaying, rewarding exceptional roleplaying with 1 or more boons or imposing 1 or more banes for roleplaying in a manner contradictory to one's chosen social attack. Once the roleplaying phase is complete, each side reveals its attacks and attitudes. The GM then checks to see how much real time has passed and notes it, rounding down to the nearest 5-minute interval.

EXCHANGE

During the exchange phase, the players resolve their characters' actions in any order they choose.

SOCIAL ATTACK ROLLS

When you make a social attack roll, you use the indicated attribute or characteristic modifier and make the roll against the indicated attribute. The target's attitude might grant boons or banes on the roll, as shown on the Social Attack Rolls table.

SOCIAL ATTACK ROLLS

| | —Attitude— | | | | |
Attack	Helpful	Friendly	Neutral	Unfriendly	Hostile
Befriend	3 boons	1 boons	—	1 bane	3 banes
Deceive	2 boons	1 boon	—	1 bane	2 banes
Intimidate	1 bane	—	—	—	1 bane
Persuade	2 boons	1 boon	—	1 bane	2 banes
Taunt	2 banes	1 bane	—	1 boon	2 boons

On a successful attack roll, the target of the attack gains 1d6 Influence. On a failed attack roll, the character who made the attack gains 1d6 Influence. If a character's Influence reaches his or her Composure, the character is forced out of the social combat and cannot participate further.

RESOLUTION

When the Influence score of a target or a group of targets equals its Composure score, the social combat immediately ends for that target, and the results are applied during the resolution phase, depending on the social attack that was most recently used. Otherwise, the resolution phase is skipped and a new round begins.

BEFRIEND

The target's attitude improves by 1d3 steps (maximum helpful). The target's attitude remains at the new state until something happens to change it. For example, a target might be friendly to you, but if you burn down the target's house, the target would likely become hostile toward you. As well, gaining more information about you can shift the target's attitude. For instance, a helpful target might become unfriendly after learning you burned down someone else's house.

DECEIVE

You convince the target that something untrue or mostly untrue is the truth, and the target behaves accordingly. If the target later discovers the deception, its attitude toward you worsens by 1d3 steps (maximum hostile).

INTIMIDATE

The target becomes frightened while in your presence. While frightened in this way, the target's attitude becomes helpful. The target removes the affliction when it completes a rest. If the target takes damage, it can make a Will challenge roll and removes the affliction on a success. Once the target removes the affliction, its attitude toward you worsens by 1d6 steps (maximum hostile).

PERSUADE

You persuade the target to undertake an activity as you suggest. The target attempts the activity, provided that doing so would not be harmful to itself, its loved ones, or its property. If the task would be harmful, the target might attempt a different course of action to produce the same results, or simply refuse if no other course presents itself.

TAUNT

You change the target's attitude so that it becomes hostile to you. The target might attack you, seek to harm you, or run away, according to its nature.

COMBAT

This section contains variant rules that affect how combat works in the game.

ALTERNATIVE FALLING DAMAGE

The normal rules for determining falling damage require knowing exactly how far a creature falls before landing. Rather than worry about exact distances, this variant classifies falls as short, medium, long, and extreme.

Short Fall: After a fall of 5 yards or less, a creature must make an Agility challenge roll upon landing.

20 or higher: The creature lands on its feet unharmed.

Success: The creature falls prone.

Failure: The creature takes 1d6 damage and falls prone.

0 or lower: The creature takes 2d6 damage and falls prone.

Medium Fall: After a fall of more than 5 yards but no more than 20 yards, a creature must make an Agility challenge roll with 1 bane upon landing.

20 or higher: The creature takes 1d6 damage and falls prone.

Success: The creature takes 2d6 damage and falls prone

Failure: The creature takes 4d6 damage and falls prone.

0 or lower: The creature takes 8d6 damage and falls prone.

Long Fall: After a fall of more than 20 yards but no more than 100 yards, a creature must make an Agility challenge roll with 2 banes upon landing.

20 or higher: The creature takes 5d6 damage and falls prone.

Success: The creature takes 10d6 damage and falls prone.

Failure: The creature takes 15d6 damage and falls prone.

0 or lower: The creature takes 20d6 damage and falls prone.

Extreme Fall: After a fall of more than 100 yards, a creature must make an Agility challenge roll with 3 banes upon landing.

20 or higher: The creature takes 10d6 damage and falls prone.

Success: The creature takes 15d6 damage and falls prone

Failure: The creature takes 20d6 damage and falls prone.

0 or lower: The creature takes damage equal to its Health.

Landing on Liquid: A creature that lands on a liquid surface gains 1 boon on its challenge roll.

Becoming Injured: If damage from landing after a fall causes a creature to become injured, the creature breaks one or more bones. Until the creature heals all damage, it is impaired and slowed.

INITIATIVE

The fast turn/slow turn system described in the main rulebook allows players to decide when they act during the round. Some groups, however, might prefer a structured approach to determine turn sequence. Two variants follow.

TEAM INITIATIVE

Team initiative divides combatants into teams, such as the characters and their opponents. A combat might feature two, three, or even more teams.

ROLLING FOR INITIATIVE

At the end of each round, including just before the first round of combat, each team in the combat rolls a d6. On the characters' team, any player can make the roll. In the case of a tie, the tying teams reroll.

TAKING TURNS

The team with the highest initiative number goes first, followed by the next highest team, until all teams have had a chance to act. The creatures on a team can act in any order, though one must complete its turn before another can act, even though all turns taken by members of a team are assumed to happen simultaneously. A creature, on its turn, can use an action, move up to its Speed, and perform one or two minor activities, subject to the GM's discretion.

Once each creature on a team has taken a turn or has opted not to take a turn, the team with the next highest initiative number acts.

END OF THE ROUND

After all teams have acted, the round ends. Starting with the team that had the highest initiative number, creatures on each team resolve end-of-round effects in any order.

After the end-of-round effects have all been handled, each team rolls to determine the initiative order for the next round.

INDIVIDUAL INITIATIVE

Rather than divide combatants into teams, individual initiative has each combatant make initiative rolls and then act in order, from highest to lowest each round, until the combat ends.

ROLLING FOR INITIATIVE

Just prior to the beginning of combat, each combatant rolls a d20 and adds its Agility modifier to the number rolled. The GM can make a single roll once for groups of creatures that share the same statistics to keep the results manageable. In the case of a tie, the creature or

group of creatures with the highest Agility score acts ahead of the other one. If there's still a tie, each rolls a d6, and the one with the higher result acts first

TAKING TURNS

Each round, the creature or group of creatures with the highest initiative number takes a turn, followed by the next highest, and so on until all the combatants have taken a turn. For groups of creatures represented by a single initiative number, each member of the group must complete its turn before another member of the group can act. When a creature takes a turn, it can use an action, move up to its Speed, and perform one or two minor activities. Creatures can use triggered actions as normal.

Wait: On its turn, a creature can choose to wait, delaying its turn until a later time in the round. The creature can act at any point immediately after another combatant finishes its turn. Once the creature takes its turn, its position in the initiative sequence changes so that during all following rounds it takes its turn at that point in the sequence. If a creature does not take a turn after waiting, it retains its place in the initiative sequence and acts at that point during the next round.

New Combatants: Any creature that joins a combat already under way rolls initiative at the end of the round to determine its place in the sequence.

END OF THE ROUND

After each creature or group of creatures has taken a turn (or chosen not to), the round ends and all participants resolve any end-of-round effects, starting with the highest initiative number and proceeding through to the lowest.

SPECIAL RULES

Using either of these initiative systems requires making a few broad changes in the game.

ACTS ON FAST AND SLOW

Some spells and traits allow creatures to take both a fast turn and a slow turn in the same round. In such a case, use the rules below.

Team Initiative: The creature takes a turn when its team acts and takes another turn after all opposing teams have taken their turns. On each of its two turns, the creature can either use an action or move up to its Speed.

Individual Initiative: The creature has two initiative numbers, one equaling the total of its roll and the other equaling the total of its roll minus 10. On each of its two turns, the creature can either use an action or move up to its Speed.

EPIC ADVERSARY

Certain powerful creatures can take multiple turns each round.

Team Initiative: Replace the trait description with the following.

Epic Adversary This creature does not roll for initiative. Instead, the creature takes three turns per round. It takes its first turn before the opposing team acts. It takes its second turn after each creature on the opposing team has taken a turn. Finally, it can use an action or move up to its Speed at the end of the round.

Individual Initiative: Replace the trait description with the following.

Epic Adversary This creature does not roll for initiative. Instead, the creature acts as if it had rolled a 20 for initiative. At the end of each round, roll a d3 to determine how many additional turns it can take. It can take a second turn on initiative count 15, a third turn on count 10, and a fourth turn on count 5. In the case of a tie for initiative, this creature goes ahead of all other creatures or groups that were tied.

COMPELLED

A compelled creature acts on the turn of the creature that bestowed the affliction. A compelled creature can use an action or move up to its Speed, as the controlling creature chooses.

ACT ON FAST TURNS

Any effect that would force a creature to act on a fast turn limits what the creature can do on its turn. The creature can either use an action or move up to its Speed, unless the effect specifies what the creature must do.

CANNOT ACT ON FAST TURNS

A creature subject to an effect that would prevent it from acting on a fast turn takes its turn at the end of the round, before end-of-round effects are resolved.

TALENTS

Talents associated with two paths need adjustment to mesh with these initiative rules.

Acrobat: Replace the Mobility talent with the following.

Mobility Your movement never triggers free attacks.

Infiltrator: Ignore the last sentence of the Faceless talent.

HORRID JOINING SPELL (FORBIDDEN)

The target rolls for initiative twice. Each creature joined in this way can use an action on its turn. In addition, the target can move up to its Speed once per round, on either creature's turn.

OTHER MODIFICATIONS

You will likely encounter other instances where the game interacts with the fast turn/slow turn system. It falls to the GM to decide how those instances work with these initiative rules, using the special rules described above as guides.

ATTACKS WITH TWO WEAPONS

If you think the rules for making attacks with two weapons are too strict, you can reduce the number of banes for attacking two different targets to 1.

NEW ACTIONS

The following optional activities supplement those described under "Action" in chapter 2 of *Shadow of the Demon Lord*.

GOAD

If you can speak, you can use an action or a triggered action on your turn to goad one creature you can see. If the creature can understand what you say, make an Intellect attack roll against the target's Will. On a success, the target makes attack rolls against you with 1 boon and makes attack rolls against any other target with 1 bane until the end of the round. On a failure, the target is immune to your goading until it completes a rest.

ISOLATE

When you use an action to make an attack against a creature you can reach, you can use a triggered action to isolate the target, causing it to focus its attention on you. The target remains isolated until the end of the next round or until you can no longer reach it. While it is isolated, you impose 1 bane on attack rolls it makes against targets other than you.

OVERBEAR

You can use an action to move up to your Speed. During this movement, if you move into a space from which you can reach a creature, you can attempt to push past the creature by making a Strength attack roll against the target's Strength. If the target is larger than you, subtract your Size from the target's Size to determine the number of banes it imposes on your roll. If the target is smaller than you, subtract the target's Size from your Size, rounding down, to determine the number of boons you have on your roll.

On a success, you move the target 1 yard away from you, and you can continue moving. If the total of your roll is 20 or higher and exceeds the target number by 5 or more, the target falls prone after being moved. If there is no open space into which the target can move, the target falls prone in the space it occupies.

STEP

If your Speed is at least 3 and you are not climbing, flying, swimming, or prone, you can use an action, or a triggered action on your turn, to move 1 yard. This movement does not trigger free attacks.

TUMBLE

You can use an action to move up to your Speed. If your movement would trigger a free attack, you can make an Agility challenge roll. On a success, the movement does not trigger a free attack. For each additional time you would trigger a free attack during

the same movement, you make the Agility challenge roll with 1 additional bane.

WRESTLE

You can use an action to wrestle a creature you are grabbing. Make a Strength attack roll against the target's Strength or Agility (target's choice). If the target is larger than you, subtract your Size from the target's Size, rounding down, to determine the number of banes it imposes on your roll. If the target is smaller than you, subtract the target's Size from your Size, rounding down, to determine the number of boons you have on your roll. On a success, choose one of the following effects:

- The target falls prone.
- The target takes damage as if you had attacked it with an unarmed strike.
- If the target is prone, the target becomes defenseless for 1 round.

CLIMBING ON LARGER CREATURES

If you grab a creature whose Size is larger than yours, when the creature moves, you move with it. While you have such a creature grabbed, you can use your movement to climb across the creature's body. Doing so typically requires a success on a Strength challenge roll, possibly with 1 or more banes depending on the creature and how it moves. A failure indicates you make no progress and fall off the creature unless you use an action to grab the creature again. A roll of 0 or lower indicates you fall off the creature and land prone in a space of the GM's choice within 1 yard of the creature.

ABSTRACT COMBAT

The rules for moving are straightforward, designed to accommodate both those who use miniatures or other physical representations for their characters and those who don't. If your game is one in which the action unfolds in the players' imagination, exact distances or positions do not really matter, and the GM can resolve such matters with the following variant rules, which handle movement, distance, and other facets of combat abstractly.

ZONES

These rules divide the imaginary world into zones. Each zone is a specific area, such as "behind the inn" or "the shrine of the Betrayer," or a part of a larger area, such as a section of graveyard, a length of hallway or part of a courtyard. If necessary, the GM can determine how much area a zone covers, but usually precise distances do not matter.

A zone is considered adjacent to any zone it touches, as long as a means of access exists between the zones. Thus, if a bar has a door leading outside, the bar, which is a zone, is adjacent to the inn exterior, which is also a zone.

Finally, the GM decides how many creatures can fit in a zone. Combats involving several combatants or enormous creatures might restrict the number of creatures that can fit into a zone that covers a smaller area. A giant, for instance, would have a hard time fitting into a narrow passageway.

ESTABLISHING ZONES

When a combat begins, the GM creates zones based on the combatants' starting positions and all the adjacent zones. As the combat unfolds, the GM can create new zones as needed.

Example 1: The player characters are plundering the Vault of the Deviant when a muttering maw lurches down the passage leading to the vault. The GM decides that the vault is a zone, the adjacent passage is another zone, and the antechamber beyond the passage is a third zone. Creatures could move from the vault to the passage, from the passage to the vault or the antechamber, or from the antechamber to the passage or whatever other zones are adjacent to the antechamber.

Example 2: The player characters are traveling along a trail through a dark and menacing wood when a band of brigands spring an ambush. The GM divides the battlefield into four zones: the road, the area behind the fallen log from which the brigands sprang, the far woods behind the bandits, and the near woods on the opposite side of the road. The road is adjacent to the fallen log and the near woods, while the fallen log is adjacent to the road and the far woods. If the combat moves beyond these zones, the GM might create additional zones to represent deeper parts of the woods or special locations (such as a clearing or a campsite).

MOVEMENT

A creature can freely move inside the zone it occupies. Abstract combat does not care about exact locations within a zone, and it assumes that creatures move about inside the zone constantly, jockeying to get into the best positions. A creature can exit the zone it occupies and enter an adjacent zone by using movement or by using an action to charge or retreat, provided a clear path exists to that zone. A creature that uses an action to rush can move up to two zones, while a creature that rushes and uses movement can move up to three zones.

Free Attacks: A creature that moves from a zone without using an action to retreat triggers free attacks from 1d3 – 1 creatures inside the zone that the moving creature exited.

Slowed Creatures: A slowed creature can leave a zone only if it uses an action to rush and also uses its movement, in which case the creature moves into an adjacent zone.

Difficult Terrain: Ice, debris, slopes, stairs, and other terrain features can all hamper movement. Difficult terrain applies only if it covers most of a surface across which a creature would move. If so, a creature must use movement twice or use an action to rush in order to escape the zone.

MELEE ATTACKS

A creature can use a melee weapon or an attack spell with a range of touch against any target in the same zone. Abstract combat ignores reach.

RANGED ATTACKS

A creature can make a ranged attack against a target in the same zone or in a different zone, depending on the weapon's maximum range.

A creature using a ranged weapon or a spell attack that works out to short range or has a maximum range of 5 yards or less can choose the target from among those in the same zone only.

A creature using a ranged weapon or a spell attack that works out to medium range or has a maximum range of 20 yards can choose the target from among those in the same zone or an adjacent zone.

A creature using a ranged weapon or a spell attack that works out to long range or has a maximum range of 100 yards can choose the target from among those within three zones.

For an attack that works out to extreme range or has a maximum range of more than 100 yards, the attacking creature can choose a target in just about any zone to which it has an unobstructed path. The GM might rule that certain zones are too far away, based on the zones currently in play and the exact range of the effect.

AREA EFFECTS

An area effect, such as one created by a spell, originates from a point. The exact placement of the origin point is not important—all that matters is what zone the point is located in.

RANGE

As with ranged attacks, the zone in which an origin point is placed depends on the maximum range of the effect.

For an area effect that has a range of personal, touch, or short, or a maximum range of 5 yards or less, the origin point is in the same zone as the creature creating the effect.

For an area effect that has a range of medium, or a maximum range of 20 yards, the origin point can be within two zones.

For an area effect that has a range of long, or a maximum range of 100 yards, the origin point can be within three zones.

For an attack that works out to extreme range or has a maximum range of more than 100 yards, the creature creating the effect can place the origin point in just about any zone to which the creature has an unobstructed path. The GM might rule that certain zones are too far away, based on the zones currently in play and the exact range of the effect.

CREATURES AFFECTED

The size and shape of the area determine how many creatures can be subject to the effect. Generally, an area effect works on creatures and objects within just one zone. Particularly large areas, however, might occupy two zones or more. For example, the *fireball* spell affects a sphere with a 5-yard radius. If the origin point is within a square room roughly 10 yards on each side, the spell would affect just that one zone. However, if the spell was cast in a smaller zone, such as a closet, the spell's area is large enough to easily spill out into an adjacent zone or even farther, depending on the zones in play. In every case, the GM decides how many zones an area can potentially affect, based on approximately how large an area the zone covers.

In any event, an area effect can work against only a limited number of creatures, since abstract combat does not track each combatant's exact placement. The Affected Creatures table shows how many creatures in a zone can be affected, based on the area's size and shape. The GM can and should overrule the table when an area would affect a crowded and cramped zone.

AFFECTED CREATURES

Shape	Number of Creatures Affected per Zone
Cone	The cone's length in yards minus 1 (minimum one creature)
Cylinder	The cylinder's radius in yards
Line	The line's width in yards minus 1 (minimum one creature)
Sphere	The sphere's radius in yards

Example 1: Kara's Fire priest casts the *fire blast* spell. Since the spell originates from her character, the spell takes effect entirely in her zone. At 3 yards in length, the cone can affect up to two creatures in the same zone.

Example 2: Adam's wizard casts the *fireball* spell so that it takes effect in a hallway crowded with ten orcs. The spell's area is large enough to fill the hallway, so the GM rules that all the orcs in the zone are affected.

Choosing Affected Creatures

An area effect always works on its maximum number of possible affected creatures, assuming that a sufficient quantity of targets is available. If the number of creatures in the area exceeds the maximum, randomly determine which creatures are affected (or not affected). For example, if Adam's wizard loosed a *fireball* in a zone containing three enemies and three allies, the spell affects five of those six creatures, the lucky one to escape having been determined randomly.

Cover and Obscurement

Cover and obscured areas can affect the outcome of certain attacks just as in the normal combat rules, but whether such factors protect creatures in abstract combat is largely up to the GM.

Cover ought to benefit creatures in zones that have significant amounts of cover, whether from terrain, objects, or crowded conditions. For example, a character who shoots an arrow at a specific target inside a zone crowded with combatants might treat the target as being half covered or three-quarters covered.

Obscurement is easier to assess. An area of shadows or darkness ought to fill the zone it is located in. If a creature brings a light source into that zone, it would purge the entire zone of shadows and darkness. Obscurement caused by leaves, hangings, and other physical features would apply only if those features cover a substantial portion of the zone; in such a case, their effects on attack rolls apply as normal.

CHASES

A chase occurs when one or more creatures flee and one or more other creatures pursue. Normally, the creatures with the faster Speed scores win, such that a faster creature fleeing from a slower creature would eventually escape.

In some situations, though, escape and capture are not so certain, either because the creatures are not so evenly matched in of Speed or because the chase takes place in an environment filled with obstacles. Furthermore, what happens when a creature pushes hard to keep pace, moving faster than normal through great effort, or a faster creature stumbles and allows a slower pursuing creature to catch up? The following optional rules help to adjudicate chase sequences to find out who gets away and who doesn't.

The most basic chase involves one escaping creature (or group of creatures) and one pursuing creature (or group of creatures). A chase lasts until the fleeing creature escapes or the pursuing creature catches its quarry. A number of factors can produce either outcome, and the most common situations are detailed here.

DISTANCE

Chases measure distance in yards, just as in the rest of the game. When a chase begins, the GM decides the starting distance between the escaping creature and the pursuing creature based on the events that preceded the chase. For instance, a creature trying to flee from melee combat against another creature might begin the chase with a head start of only 5 or 10 yards. A creature that spots an enemy from a distance and starts trying to run away would begin the chase at a much greater distance.

ROUNDS AND TURNS

A chase unfolds over a series of rounds. During a round, the escaping creature and the pursuing creature each have a chance to act. Unlike combat rounds, chases do not feature fast turns and slow turns. Instead, the escaping creature acts first, followed by the pursuing creature. Each can use an action and move up to its Speed, just as if taking a slow turn. (Chases ignore any rules that limit creatures to taking only fast turns or slow turns.) A creature that has the Epic Adversary trait can take just one turn per round while involved in a chase. Other creatures with traits that enable them to take more than one turn a round can do so, but they take all their turns at once, can move only once per round, and can use an action to rush just once per round.

ACTIONS

A creature involved in a chase can use an action to perform any activity as normal, though using an action for any activity other than rush, charge, or sprint (see below) potentially allows the escaping creature to get farther away or the pursuing creature to close the distance. Whenever the escaping creature moves, it adds the distance moved to the total distance between it and its pursuer. Conversely, when the pursuing creature moves, it subtracts the distance moved from the total distance between it and its quarry.

In addition to the normal activities, the chase rules introduce the following new activities.

Impede

If an escaping creature's movement would carry it around and past a creature or an unsecured object or an obstacle, the creature can use an action or a triggered action to impede the pursuing creature. Examples of such activities include toppling a pile of crates across the pursuer's path or getting lost in the crowd at a marketplace. If the escaping creature gets a success on a Strength or Agility challenge roll (creature's choice), the creature creates an obstacle in the pursuing creature's path. When the pursuing

creature encounters the obstacle, it must get a success on an Agility challenge roll or stop moving. On a total result of 0 or lower, the pursuing creature also falls prone.

SPRINT

An escaping creature or a pursuing creature that isn't fatigued can use an action to sprint, enabling that creature to move farther than normal. The creature moves three times its Speed and then must make a Strength challenge roll. On a failure, the creature becomes fatigued for 1 minute and its Speed is halved until the end of the next round.

END OF THE ROUND

Participating in a chase can be exhausting. A creature can safely take part in a chase for a number of rounds equal to 4 + its Strength modifier (minimum 1 round). After this length of time, a creature must get a success on a Strength challenge roll at the end of the round or become fatigued. If the creature was already fatigued, it takes a –1 penalty to Health. Multiple failures impose a cumulative penalty. The penalty persists for as long as the creature remains fatigued. A creature can remove the fatigued affliction by resting for 1 minute.

MULTIPLE CREATURES

A chase might involve multiple escaping creatures, pursuing creatures, or both. Each pursuing creature must choose a quarry and then tracks its distance from that target as normal. If creatures in a group move at the same rate and in the same direction, treat the group as a single creature for the purpose of the chase rules. If faster and slower escaping creatures are moving in the same direction, track each one's distance from the escaping group separately.

If one or more creatures move in a different direction from the group, pursuing creatures can follow them, in which case a new chase begins, or let them go, in which case those escaping creatures leave the chase.

CHARACTER CREATION

Players have options aplenty when it comes to creating and advancing characters. The following variant rules provide even greater flexibility.

RANDOM ATTRIBUTES BY ANCESTRY

Offering players ways to randomize their ancestries' attributes began in *Only Human* and continued in other installments of the *Victims of the Demon Lord* series. Each of the attributes for an ancestry other than those covered in that series can be randomized by subtracting 2 from the given score and then rolling a d3 and adding the result to that number.

Example: The jotun ancestry has attribute scores of Strength 13, Agility 9, Intellect 8, and Will 10. After subtracting 2 from each score and adding 1d3 to it, a jotun with randomized attributes would have Strength 1d3 + 11, Agility 1d3 + 7, Intellect 1d3 + 6, and Will 1d3 + 8.

MODIFIED RANDOM ATTRIBUTES

The GM can allow players to generate random attribute scores and then modify them to account for ancestry. To use this method, a player rolls 3d6 four times. For each roll, the player references the Starting Scores table. The player can assign the four scores to the attributes in any order.

STARTING SCORES

3d6	Starting Score
3	7
4–5	8
6–8	9
9–12	10
13–15	11
16–17	12
18	13

Next, the player selects an ancestry and applies the ancestry's attribute modifier to each score as shown on the Ancestry Attribute Adjustments table. Modifiers for ancestries other than those shown on the table can be derived by subtracting 10 from the given starting score. So, if an ancestry normally starts with Strength 11, the ancestry using this variant would grant a +1 bonus to Strength.

ANCESTRY ATTRIBUTE ADJUSTMENTS

Ancestry	Strength	Agility	Intellect	Will
Human*	+0	+0	+0	+0
Changeling	–1	+0	+0	+0
Clockwork	–1	–2	–1	–1
Dwarf	+0	–1	+0	+0
Goblin	–2	+2	+0	–1
Orc	+1	+0	–1	–1
Faun†	+0	+1	+1	–1
Halfling†	–1	+1	+0	+1

*Increase one attribute by 1

† See *Demon Lord's Companion*

RANDOM CHARACTERISTICS

Normally, characters derive their characteristics from their attributes, such that starting Health equals a character's Strength score and Perception equals a character's Intellect score. This does not, however, have to be the case. Using this variant, characters roll for their characteristics.

Each character has the following random characteristics in addition to attributes: Perception, Health, and Sanity. (Using this variant, Defense and Speed are determined using the normal rules.) Sanity, similar to the function of Health, describes the maximum amount of Insanity a character can have before going mad. A player rolls 3d6 three times and consults the Starting Scores table (above) to determine the starting scores, then assigns one score to each characteristic.

Once starting scores for characteristics have been determined, apply modifiers from ancestry. In addition to those modifiers, add the ancestry's

attribute adjustments from the Ancestry Attribute Adjustments table as follows: Intellect adjustment applies to Perception, Strength adjustment applies to Health, and Will adjustment applies to Sanity.

Example: Stacee creates a changeling character. Since the group uses random characteristics, she rolls 3d6 three times and gets 8, 7, and 16. These rolls give her starting scores of 9, 9, and 12, which she assigns to Perception (9), Health (12), and Sanity (9).

Now, she looks to the Ancestry Characteristic Adjustments table. She applies the +1 adjustment to her Perception, increasing it to 10, and the –1 adjustment to her Health, giving her Health 11. She makes no further adjustment to her characteristic scores.

ANCESTRY CHARACTERISTIC ADJUSTMENTS

Ancestry	Perception	Health	Sanity
Human	+0	+0	+0
Changeling	+1	–1	+0
Clockwork	–1	–1	–1
Dwarf	+1	+4	+0
Goblin	+1	–2	–1
Orc	+0	+1	–1
Faun†	+2	+0	–1
Halfling†	+0	–1	+1

† See *Demon Lord's Companion*

SKILLS

In this variant, player characters have skills in place of professions, and a character's mastery of a given skill is expressed as a number of ranks. While professions are broad descriptors, cues for the GM to use when considering the outcomes of performed tasks that relate to those activities, skills represent specific areas of expertise that characters have developed and refined through practice, instruction, and training. Skills, and skill ranks, provide clearer mechanical benefits at the expense of the more free-form applications of professions.

SKILL CATEGORIES

Skills are divided into three categories. The skills listed within each category below are by no means exhaustive. You can add more skills to add further detail to the game world, reflecting its people and their cultural and technological developments.

ATHLETIC SKILLS

Athletic skills represent areas of physical development that are acquired through a combination of training

and practice. Athletic skills apply to physical activities, usually coming into play when a character would make a Strength or Agility challenge roll.

Examples: Balancing, Climbing, Hiding, Jumping, Lifting and Carrying, Running, Sneaking, and Swimming.

LORE SKILLS

Lore skills represent areas of specialized knowledge that reveal something about the world and the people and creatures living in it. Characters acquire lore skills through study, memorization, and instruction. Most of them come into play when a character would recall useful information related to the topic. Knowing or recalling general information ought to be an automatic success, while little-known details might require a success on an Intellect challenge roll, possibly with 1 or more banes depending on the obscurity of the information sought.

Examples: Architecture and Engineering, Arts and Culture, Astronomy, Folklore, Geography, History, Language*, Magic and the Occult, Medicine, Military Sciences, Natural Sciences, Navigation, Politics and Law, and Theology and Philosophy.

*Individual languages are separate skills. Having 1 rank in a language enables a character to speak the language. Having 2 ranks in a language allows a character to also read and write in that language. There is no particular benefit for having more than 2 ranks in a language.

TRADE SKILLS

Trade skills are areas of professional training that enable characters to work in certain occupations. Having a trade also gives the character knowledge related to the activity. A character might gain a trade by apprenticing to a master or might pick up the skill through hard work and experience. Generally, having a trade skill enables a character to work in that occupation and imparts knowledge about anything related to doing so.

Examples: Actor, Animal Trainer, Apothecary, Baker, Barber, Beggar, Blacksmith, Boatman, Bookbinder, Brewer, Butcher, Carpenter, Chandler, Clown, Cobbler, Comedian, Cook, Courtesan, Dancer, Driver, Drover, Dyer, Equestrian, Farmer, Fisher, Forger, Gambler, Glassblower, Gravedigger, Groom, Guide, Herder, Hunter, Jeweler, Juggler, Laborer, Leatherworker, Locksmith, Mason, Mechanic, Merchant, Miner, Musician (specific instrument), Orator, Painter, Papermaker, Pickpocket, Pilot, Poet*, Potter, Printer, Puppeteer, Sailor, Scribe, Sculptor, Servant, Singer, Storyteller, Tailor, Teamster, Tracker, Trapper, Weaver, and Writer*.

*A character can choose these skills only if he or she can read and write at least one language.

HOW SKILLS WORK

A character begins with one or more skills gained from training and other skills granted by the character's ancestry. The character's ability to use each skill successfully is represented by ranks in that skill. Whenever a character makes a challenge roll that involves one or more of its skills, the roll is made with a number of boons equal to the character's ranks in all applicable skills. Thus, a character who tries to hide and has 2 ranks in Hiding would make the Agility challenge roll with 2 boons.

SKILLS GAINED FROM TRAINING

Referring to the Skill Training table, the player chooses or randomly determines the nature of a starting character's training. The types of training correspond to the profession types in the main rulebook, and each one allows access to certain categories of skills.

The table entry for each type of training indicates the number of ranks the character begins with in each of the categories. For instance, a character with academic training gains 4 ranks in Lore skills and 2 ranks in Trade skills, with those ranks assigned to skills of the player's choosing.

A character's training can also serve as a guide for coming up with what the character did to make ends meet before joining the group. Someone with martial training might have been a soldier, or someone with wilderness training might have worked as a tracker.

SKILL TRAINING

| d6 | Training | —Ranks by Category— | | |
		Athletic	Lore	Trade
1	Academic	0	4	2
2	Common	1	1	2
3	Criminal	1	1	2
4	Martial	2	0	0
5	Religious	1	2	1
6	Wilderness	1	2	1

SKILLS EXAMPLE

Chris creates a human character. His ancestry grants him the ability to speak the Common Tongue and either speak another language or gain a random profession. Chris opts for a random profession, so to replace that with a skill, he rolls a d3 and gets a 2, which tells him to select a Lore skill. Chris puts 1 rank into Medicine.

In addition, all starting characters begin with skills gained through training. Chris rolls a d6 to determine what kind of training he has and gets a 2, which is Common. From his training, he gains 1 rank in an Athletic skill, 1 rank in a Lore skill, and 2 ranks to use for Trade skills. He chooses Sneaking (Athletic), Folklore (Lore), and both Healer and Tracker (Trade), gaining 1 rank in each of those four skills.

SKILLS GAINED FROM ANCESTRIES

All ancestries grant languages and might grant one or more professions. To translate those features for this variant, any language granted by a character's ancestry counts as a skill, with 1 rank if it can be spoken and 2 ranks if the language can be read and written.

If a character would receive a random profession from a path, the player rolls a d3 instead, choosing an Athletic skill on a 1, a Lore skill on a 2, or a Trade skill on a 3.

IMPROVING SKILLS

Whenever a path indicates that a character would gain another profession, the character gains 1 rank that can be placed either in an existing skill or a different skill.

Some paths specify a group of professions to choose from, such as military or academic. In such a case, a new skill can come from any category that was available to the character from training. For example, the thief expert path allows a character to gain one criminal profession, so the new skill can come from any category. In contrast, the gladiator master path provides a new martial profession, which allows only the choice of an Athletic skill.

UNIVERSAL LITERACY

The game world posits that not everyone knows how to read, since literacy is not a crucial skill given the setting's technological level. You can ignore this assumption for player characters and simply grant them for the ability to read any language they can speak.

NEW NOVICE PATH: ADEPT

The following novice path allows players to pursue magic without the focus of a magician and without the religious aspects of a priest.

ADEPT

Born with magical talent, adepts learn to harness their gifts by awakening the power within them. Few adepts ever receive formal instruction, and thus their access to magic is limited compared to that of magicians. Adepts do enjoy great flexibility, however, when it comes to discovering their traditions, and they can tailor their spell arsenals to suit their needs.

Since their magical power comes from within, many adepts discover psychic traditions, such as Telekinesis

and Telepathy (see *Demon Lord's Companion*), or become able to exert their will over fire, wind, and storms. As they become more comfortable with their capabilities, adepts might go on to become elementalists, psychics, spellbinders, and sorcerers. Most adepts come from the ranks of faerie (mainly elves, fauns, changelings, and goblins), though an individual of any ancestry might be gifted—or cursed—with the adept's life.

ADEPT TRAINING

d6	Training
1	You always thought you were haunted. It wasn't until you realized you could control the strange events around you that you knew you were in fact a magical being.
2	A passing stranger paused before you, drew a mystic mark on your brow and left. Not long after, you discovered you could work magic.
3	One of your ancestors was a great user of magic, and you must have inherited something of that ability.
4	You believe that in a previous life you were a great witch or wizard. Something from that life before remains inside you and manifests as your magical talent.
5	You were born in a faerie borderland, and weirdness has followed you throughout your life.
6	You found a strange relic and called forth its power. The item was destroyed, but the experience left you forever changed.

LEVEL 1 ADEPT

Attribute Scores Increase two by 1.
Characteristics Health +4, Power +1
Languages and Professions You either read one language you can speak, speak another language, or add another profession to your list of professions.
Magic You discover one tradition. Then choose one of the following options.
You discover two traditions.
You discover one tradition and learn one spell.
You learn two spells.
Spell Recovery You can use an action to heal damage equal to your healing rate and regain one expended casting of a spell. Once you use this talent, you cannot use it again until you complete a rest.

LEVEL 2 ADEPT

Characteristics Health +4
Magic You either discover a tradition or learn one spell.
Potent Spellcasting When you cast an attack spell, you make the attack roll with 1 boon, and creatures make challenge rolls to resist the spell with 1 bane.

LEVEL 5 EXPERT ADEPT

Characteristics Health +4, Power +1
Magic You either discover a tradition or learn one spell.
Spell Fighting When you use an action to attack with a weapon, you also cast a spell that normally requires the use of an action to cast.

LEVEL 8 MASTER ADEPT

Characteristics Health +4
Magic You either discover a tradition or learn one spell.
Improved Spell Recovery When you use Spell Recovery, you regain two castings instead of one.

NOVICE PATH VARIANTS

The two changes described below can be incorporated into the priest and magician paths if so desired.

Unrestricted Priest Magic: The game rules restrict a priest's access to certain traditions by virtue of the priest's religion. *Uncertain Faith* goes farther by presenting individual priest novice paths for the various religions and gods that populate the supernatural world. If you want even more flexibility, when the priest path would let you discover a tradition at level 2, you can discover any tradition.

Alternative Magician Talent: A magician, at level 1, can take the Potent Spellcasting talent in place of the Cantrip talent.

Potent Spellcasting When you cast an attack spell, you make the attack roll with 1 boon, and creatures make challenge rolls to resist the spell with 1 bane.

SIMPLIFIED ARMOR

The rules for armor impose some drawbacks for wearing medium and heavy suits, making some tasks more difficult and slowing down creatures who wear the heaviest forms. This variant simplifies armor into four basic forms (including clothing) and lessens the penalties for wearing medium and heavy armor.

REQUIREMENT

Anyone can wear any form of armor. However, some forms of armor have requirements to ensure that you can support the armor properly and handle its bulk. If you fail to meet the requirement of armor you are wearing, you make Agility challenge rolls with 1 bane and take a –2 penalty to Speed.

If you use this variant, treat brigandine armor as leather, scale as mail, and all forms of plate as plate.

CLOTHING AND ARMOR

Name	Defense	Price
Clothing (No Strength Requirement)		
Clothing	Agility	Varies
Light Armor (Requires Strength 11 or higher)		
Leather	Agility + 2	5 ss
Medium Armor (Requires Strength 13 or higher)		
Mail	15	1 gc
Heavy Armor (Requires Strength 15 or higher)		
Plate	17	5 gc

SIMPLIFIED WEAPONS

The simplified weapons variant lets players define weapons within specific categories. Each category provides some suggested weaponry, but the exact form a weapon takes is up to the player and GM.

GENERIC MELEE WEAPONS

Name	Damage	Hands	Properties	Price
Light weapon	1d3	Off	Finesse, thrown (range 5)	1 ss
Hand weapon	1d6	One	—	5 ss
Heavy weapon	2d6	Two	Cumbersome	1 gc
Improvised Weapon	Varies	Varies	—	Varies

NEW MELEE WEAPONS

Name	Damage	Hands	Properties	Price
Katana	1d6 + 2	Two	Finesse	3 gc
Rapier	1d6	One	Finesse	1 gc
Shield	1d3	Off	Defensive +2	1 ss
Spear	1d6	One	Finesse, special	1 ss
Staff	1d6	Two	Finesse	5 cp
Unarmed strike	1	Off	Finesse	—
Whip	1d3	Off	Finesse, reach + 1	

RANGED WEAPONS

Name	Damage	Hands	Properties	Price
Blowgun	1d3	Two	Ammunition (needles), medium range	1 ss
Bow	1d6	Two	Ammunition (arrows), long range	5 ss
Crossbow	2d6	Two	Ammunition (bolts), medium range, reload	1 gc
Hand crossbow	1d6	Off	Ammunition (bolts), short range, reload	2 gc
Pistol	2d6	Off	Ammunition (rounds), medium range, misfire, reload	5 gc
Rifle	3d6	Two	Ammunition (rounds), long range, reload	10 gc
Sling	1d3	Off	Ammunition (stones), short range	5 cp

WEAPON DESCRIPTIONS

Descriptions and special rules for the items on the weapons tables follow. For the purpose of talents, all melee weapons on the table count as basic weapons, and any weapon that has the finesse property counts as a swift weapon. For weapons with no descriptions provided here, refer to the main rulebook.

Bow: If your Strength is 11 or higher, you gain a +1 bonus to damage rolls on attacks you make a bow.

Hand Weapon: A hand weapon is a weapon you can hold in one hand such as a sword, an axe, a mace, a flail, or a machete. If your Strength is 11 or higher, you gain a +2 bonus to damage rolls on attacks you make with a hand weapon.

INCOMING!

Whenever you throw a handheld object such as a bomb, there's a good chance it will bounce when it lands. When you throw the object, make a Strength challenge roll. On a failure, the object bounces. Roll a d6. On a 4, 5, or 6, the object moves forward or stops if it can't move forward. The object bounces to the left on a 2 or to the right on a 3. On a 1, the object bounces back in the direction it was thrown. The object comes to rest 1d3 yards from the spot where it originally hit.

Heavy Weapon: A heavy weapon is a weapon that you must use two hands to wield effectively, such as a maul, a warhammer, a bastard sword, or a greataxe. If your Strength is 13 or higher, the weapon loses the cumbersome property.

Improvised Weapon: An improvised weapon is any object that can be used as a weapon, though it was never intended for use in this way. The GM decides how you wield the object—off-hand, one-handed, or two-handed—which also determines how much damage it deals. Off-hand improvised weapons deal 1 damage, one-handed deal 1d3 damage, and two-handed deal 1d6. Improvised weapons impose 1 bane on attack rolls made using them.

Katana: A katana is a sword with a long, curving blade with a single edge. If your Agility is 11 or higher, you gain a +1 bonus to damage rolls on attacks you make with it. If your Strength is 11 or higher, you can wield a katana in one hand and you gain a +1 bonus to damage rolls you make with it. If you have Agility 11 and Strength 11, the bonus becomes +2.

Light Weapon: A light weapon is any weapon you can hold in your off-hand and throw. Possibilities include hatchets, cleavers, knives, hammers, short swords, and chains. If your Strength or Agility is 11 or higher, you gain a +1 bonus to damage rolls on attacks you make with these weapons.

Rapier: A rapier is a sword with a narrow blade designed for speed and precision. A rapier can also be a scimitar or a short sword. If your Agility is 11 or higher, you gain a +1 bonus to damage rolls on attacks you make with a rapier. If your Agility is 13 or higher, you can wield the weapon in your off-hand.

Shield: A shield is designed for defense and is usually strapped to your arm. This variant rids the game of the distinction between small and large shields.

Spear: If you have Strength 11 or higher, the weapon gains the thrown (short) property.

VARIANT MAGIC: POWER POINTS

In the standard rules, for each spell you learn, you receive a number of castings based on your Power score. Once you run out of castings for a spell, you cannot cast the spell again until after you replenish your castings, which you usually accomplish by resting.

Some groups might prefer a bit more flexibility when it comes to casting spells, even if that flexibility comes with greater complexity. The material here replaces the standard rules for spellcasting and some of the particular ways in which magical effects function.

GAINING POWER POINTS

Each time you learn a spell, including when you learn a rank 0 spell from discovering a tradition, you gain a number of power points depending on the rank of the spell and your Power score, as shown on the Power Points table. Each time your Power score increases, the number of power points gained from spells you have learned also increases.

Example: Jason's human character becomes a magician when the group reaches level 1. He decides to discover two traditions, learning two rank 0 spells from each one thanks to the Cantrip talent, and learns two rank 1 spells. Since his Power score is 1, at level 1 he gains 2 power points for each rank 0 spell learned and 2 power points for each rank 1 spell learned, which gives him 12 power points.

When the group reaches level 2, Jason decides to discover another tradition, which lets him learn two more rank 0 spells and another rank 1 spell. Learning these spells brings his power points up to 18.

At level 3, Jason's character becomes a sorcerer, which increases his Power score by 1 in addition to letting him learn another spell or discover a new tradition. Before he makes this decision, he must recalculate his power point total for all the spells he has learned already. Jason's character knows six rank 0 spells and three rank 1 spells. At Power 2, his rank 0 spells grant him 2 power points each for a total of 12, and his rank 1 spells grant him 4 power points each for a total of 12. Jason has 24 power points so far. He then decides to learn a rank 2 spell, which adds 3 power points to his supply and brings his total to 27.

POWER POINTS

Power	—Power Points per Spell by Rank—										
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
0	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1	2	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
2	2	4	3	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
3	3	4	3	4	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
4	3	4	6	4	5	—	—	—	—	—	—
5	4	6	6	8	5	6	—	—	—	—	—
6	4	6	6	8	10	6	7	—	—	—	—
7	5	6	6	8	10	6	7	8	—	—	—
8	5	6	9	8	10	12	7	8	9	—	—
9	6	6	9	12	10	12	7	8	9	10	—
10	6	6	9	12	15	12	7	8	9	10	11

CASTING SPELLS WITH POWER POINTS

Using this variant, you cast spells as described in the main rulebook, except that instead of expending a casting, you instead expend power points. The number of power points required to cast a spell equals its rank + 1.

You regain all expended power points and replenish your castings when you complete a rest.

LIMIT ON CASTING

On any given day, you can cast a number of spells of a certain rank equal to 1 + the number of spells you have learned at that rank. So, if you have Power 1 and you have learned two rank 1 spells, you could cast as many as three rank 1 spells. Similarly, if you have Power 3 and have learned one rank 3 spell, you could cast that spell twice between rests.

RULES CHANGES

Dropping castings in favor of power points requires changes to how some talents and spells work. The following changes affect descriptions found in the main rulebook. For rules in other sources, use these changes as a guide.

MAGICIAN

Spell Recovery You can use an action to heal damage equal to your healing rate and regain power points equal to 1 + your Power score. Once you use this talent, you cannot use it again until you complete a rest.

Improved Spell Recovery When you use Spell Recovery, you regain twice as many power points.

ARTIFICER

Store Spell You can use an action to touch one object you created from your Artificer's Bag. If you concentrate for 1 minute, during which time you must maintain contact with the object, you can cast a spell. The spell has no immediate effect. Instead, you imbue the object with

the spell effect, where it remains until you complete a rest or the spell is cast from the object. Any creature holding the object can use an action to cast the spell from the object.

PALADIN

Divine Smite When you attack with a weapon and get a success on the attack roll, you can expend a number of power points up to your Power score – 1 to deal extra damage. For each power point spent in this way (minimum 1), the attack deals 1d6 extra damage. If the target was a demon, devil, faerie, spirit, or undead, increase the extra damage by 1d6.

Faith Healing You can use an action to touch one living creature and expend 2 power points. Choose one of the following effects.

- The target heals damage equal to half its healing rate.
- You remove a diseased affliction from the target.
- You remove a poisoned affliction from the target.

SPELLBINDER

Invest Power You can use an action, or a triggered action on your turn, to invest greater power into the target of your *spellbound weapon* spell. Spend 2 power points. For 1 minute, eldritch flames dance across the weapon, lighting the area within 10 yards of it. Until the effect ends, your attacks with the weapon deal 1d6 extra damage.

WARLOCK

Steal Spell When a creature within medium range casts a spell, you can use a triggered action to make an Intellect attack roll against the triggering creature's Intellect. On a success, the spell has no effect. If your Power is high enough to cast the spell, you can cast that spell once without expending power points. You must cast the stolen spell before you complete a rest, or it is lost. Once you use this talent, you cannot use it again until you complete a rest.

WITCH

Flying Broom You can use an action to touch a broom and expend a number of power points up to your Power score. You imbue the broom with magic that remains for a number of hours equal to the number of power points you spent. Until the effect ends, while you sit astride the handle, you can move by flying. You can carry one or more passengers whose total Size is 1 or less.

WIZARD

Grimoire You gain a tome filled with magical lore. Choose three spells from any tradition and record them in the grimoire. Each of the spells must be of a rank you can cast. If learning these spells would cause you to gain Corruption, you gain Corruption as if you had learned them. If you are holding your grimoire, you can expend power points to cast spells from the book as if you had learned them. Whenever you learn a spell that you have written in your grimoire, you can also add a new spell of the same rank or lower to the spells contained in your grimoire. The spell you add must be of a rank you can cast, but can be from any tradition.

Spell Expertise Double the number of power points you gain from your rank 0 spells. In addition, you need to spend only 1 power point to cast a rank 1 spell.

Spell Mastery You further perfect the art of casting spells. Gain 6 power points.

ARCANIST

Arcana Mastery Reduce the power point cost for casting Arcana spells by 1 (minimum 1).

Reclaim Arcana When you spend power points to cast an Arcana spell, roll a d6. On a 6, you regain the power points you spent.

DIVINER

Omens When you make an attack roll or a challenge roll, you can spend a number of power points up to your Power score. You make the roll with 1 boon for each power point spent.

GEOMANCER

Earthen Defense You can use an action to spend a number of power points up to your Power score. For each point spent this way, roll a d6. The total of your rolls becomes your Earthen Defense, a pool of points you use to absorb damage. While your Earthen Defense pool has at least 1 point, you subtract any damage you take from the pool first and then, if any damage remains, you take that damage as normal. The effect lasts until the pool drops to 0, you use this talent again, or you complete a rest.

HYDROMANCER

Watery Form You can use an action to spend a number of power points up to your Power score. You assume a watery form and remain in that form for a number of rounds equal to your Power score + the number of points you spent. While in this form, you have the following benefits.

- You make all Agility rolls with 1 boon.
- You can move through openings wide enough to permit the passage of water.
- You take half damage from weapons.
- You cannot be grabbed, immobilized, knocked prone, or slowed.
- You are invisible while submerged in water.
- You can use an action, or a triggered action on your turn, to return to your normal form.

JACK-OF-ALL-TRADES

Magical Epiphany When you see a creature cast a rank 0 spell that you have not learned, you can spend 1 aptitude point to learn that spell and gain power points from learning that spell. You retain knowledge of the spell until you complete a rest. You retain the power points to cast that spell until you spend them or you complete a rest.

THAUMATURGE

Fluid Magic Each time you complete a rest, you can exchange one spell you have learned for a different spell of the same rank. The new spell can be from any tradition.

THEURGE

Pious Restoration You can use an action to spend a number of power points up to your Power score. For each point spent in this way, you heal 1d6 damage.

TRAVELER

Hasty Escape When a creature you can see attacks you, you can use a triggered action to spend a number of power points up to your Power score. You teleport to an open space within a number of yards equal to 1d6 for each power point you spent and then become dazed for 1 round. If the target can no longer attack you, the triggering attack results in a failure.

WOODWOSE

Forest Hide When you are in an area obscured by foliage, you can use a triggered action to spend a number of power points up to your Power score. You become invisible for a number of rounds equal to 1 + the number of points you spent.

SPELLS

Certain spells require revisions to work with this variant system.

Regain Castings: Whenever an effect would allow you to regain the casting of a spell you just cast, you instead regain the power points you spent to cast the spell.

Sacrifice: Ignore the Sacrifice line of any spell that has one.

HARNESS MAGIC

ARCANA UTILITY 4

Duration 1 minute

Triggered You harness magical energy. For the duration, you reduce the power points required to cast any spell by 1 (minimum 1 point).

WILD MAGIC

CHAOS UTILITY 3

Area A sphere with a radius of 1d6 yards centered on a point you can reach

Weird lights, strange sounds, and other oddness spread out through the area and then dissipate. Roll a d20 and find the result on the Wild Magic table to determine what results.

WILD MAGIC

d20	Effect
1	1d6 **small demons** appear in open spaces within the area. They take the next available turn to attack.
2–3	Each creature in the area gains 1 Insanity.
4–5	Each creature in the area makes attack rolls and challenge rolls with 1 bane for 1 round.
6–8	Each creature in the area takes 3d6 + 5 damage, or half the damage with a success on a Strength challenge roll.
9–13	You gain 4 power points.
14–15	Each creature in the area heals 3d6 + 5 damage.
16–17	Each creature in the area makes attack rolls and challenge rolls with 1 boon for 1 round.
18–19	Each creature in the area can take one extra turn before the end of the next round.
20	One creature of your choice in the area takes 6d6 + 10 damage, or half the damage with a success on a Strength challenge roll.

FORBIDDEN TRADITION

The Forbidden tradition requires you to sacrifice a creature to the dark powers to regain expended castings of your Forbidden spells. If you use the power points variant, you regain expended castings after completing a rest, but you must sacrifice a creature within 4 hours or you gain 1 Insanity.

FORM OF THE OAK GUARDIAN

NATURE UTILITY 5

Duration 1 minute

You assume the form of a mighty animated tree. For the duration, you cannot speak or cast spells, but you gain the following benefits:

- You gain a +3 bonus to Defense and a +15 bonus to Health, and your Size doubles.
- You make Strength attack rolls and Strength challenge rolls with 1 boon.
- Your branches count as a melee weapon that deals 3d6 damage.
- You can use a triggered action on your turn to expend 2 power points and extend the duration of this spell by 1 minute.

CANNIBALIZE MAGIC	NECROMANCY ATTACK 3

Target One creature within medium range

Make an Intellect attack roll against the target's Strength. On a success, the target takes 3d6 damage and you regain 2 power points.
Attack Roll 20+ The target takes 2d6 extra damage and you regain 1 additional power point.

SHADOW MAGIC	SHADOW UTILITY 3

Choose a spell of rank 2 or lower from any tradition. You cast the spell without expending power points to do so.

WEIRD MAGIC

On the Weird Magic table, replace the "2" result with the following.

2	The caster must spend twice the normal number of power points. If the caster does not have enough power points, the caster instead gains 1d6 Insanity.

ENCHANTED OBJECTS

On Enchanted Object Table 3, replace the "7" result with the following.

7	You can use an action to regain 2 power points. The object has one use.

On Enchanted Object Table 5, replace the "9" and "17" results with the following.

9	When you cast a rank 1 or rank 2 spell, roll a d6. On a 1, you gain 1 Insanity. On a 6, you regain the power points you spent to cast the spell. On any other number, there is no effect.
17	The object contains a rank 1 spell of the GM's choice. You can cast this spell once, and the object regains the expended casting 24 hours later.

CREATURES

Creatures use the standard rules for casting spells.

DOWNTIME

Adventures mark the most important moments in the player characters' careers, when they must overcome the most significant challenges, brave the greatest dangers, and receive the greatest rewards. These adventures might occur weeks, months, or even years apart, so characters might have a fair amount of downtime before embarking on their next mission. What happens between adventures is usually something the GM and players work out, but if you want a more formal and random method for filling in the narrative gaps, you can use the tables presented here.

   Each character rolls on the Downtime Experience table once between adventures. For longer periods of downtime, the GM might call for two or more rolls.

DOWNTIME EXPERIENCE

3d6	Experience
3	**You Died!** Roll on the **Cause of Death** table to find out how. You can either create a new character or be returned to life by some stroke of luck (your choice). If you return to life, you start the game with 1d6 Insanity. If you're using *Tombs of the Desolation* and you are of an appropriate ancestry, you can become a revenant or a vampire.
4–5	Roll on the **Major Setback** table.
6–8	Roll on the **Minor Setback** table.
9–12	Roll on the **Work** table.
13–15	Roll on the **Minor Windfall** table.
16–17	Roll on the **Major Windfall** table.
18	Roll on the **Strange Event** table.

CAUSE OF DEATH

3d6	Cause of Death
3	You were murdered.
4–5	You died in a freak accident.
6–8	You died from disease, starvation, or exposure.
9–12	Your time was up and you died from natural causes.
13–15	You were killed in a fight.
16–17	You died at work.
18	You killed yourself.

MAJOR SETBACK

d20	Major Setback
1	You did something profoundly wrong and evil. Gain 1d3 Corruption. Roll a d6. On an odd number, other people know what you did. On an even number, you managed to keep your act a secret.
2	You made many bad choices, and the consequences of your actions led to innocents being harmed. Gain 1 Corruption.
3	The place where you were living burned down. You lost 1d3 items of the GM's choice in the fire.
4	You gained the attention of a minor devil that tried to tempt you. Make a Will challenge roll. You resisted the temptation on a success, and you gain 1 Corruption on a failure (for accepting the devil's worthless gift).
5	You angered a powerful user of magic, and you are now cursed until the end of the next adventure (as if by a rank 1d6 spell). While cursed in this way, you make attack rolls and challenge rolls with 1 bane.
6	You contracted a disease. Make a Strength challenge roll. On a success, you recovered. On a failure, you are diseased when the next adventure begins. Each time thereafter that you complete a rest, you can make another Strength challenge roll. You remove the affliction on a success. If you are immune to the diseased affliction, ignore this result. Instead, you spent your time indulging your vices.
7	You were jailed! Roll a d6. On an odd number, you committed the crime, and you gain 1 Corruption. On an even number, you were innocent, and you gain 1d3 Insanity from your tribulations.
8	You were robbed! You lose all your equipment except for the clothes on your back.
9	You suffered a nasty injury that took from you an eye, an ear, or 1d3 fingers.
10	A romantic relationship or friendship came to an acrimonious end. The other person now regards you as an enemy.
11	Someone close to you died: a spouse, a child, a parent, or a sibling.
12	You were conscripted or press-ganged. You spent your time pulling an oar, standing guard, or swabbing a deck.
13	You angered the people of the community in which you were living. You were driven out, and now you face death if you return.
14	You saw something horrific. Gain 1 Insanity.
15	You pissed off the wrong person and received a savage beating as a result. You lost one piece of equipment of the GM's choice and have a broken nose, a nasty scar, or broken fingers to show for the experience.
16	The trials of your last adventure haunted you to the point that you became unhinged. Gain 1d6 + 1 Insanity.
17	A witch hunter or an inquisitor accused you of trafficking with dark forces. You were imprisoned, tortured, and forced to confess. Somehow, you escaped the pyre, but your captors are looking for you still.
18	You caused the death of someone you love: a spouse, a child, a parent, a sibling, or a friend. Gain 1 Insanity.
19	You indulged your vices to the point that you upset the community in which you live. Most locals are unfriendly to you, and you make attack rolls with 1 bane in social situations involving locals.
20	You made a dangerous enemy, one who seeks to harm you. Work with the GM to create a suitable nemesis.

MINOR SETBACK

d20	Minor Setback
1	A monster followed you back to town from your last adventure and ate a few people. Locals blame you, but they say nothing to your face since you helped destroy the beast.
2	You sprained an ankle, got sick, or suffered some other minor mishap.
3	You went on an adventure by yourself, but returned broken, bloodied, and defeated. Take your friends next time.
4	You suffered significant financial trouble. Lose 1d6 gc. If don't have the coin, you must sell your possessions to make up for the shortfall. Selling an enchanted object clears your debt.
5	A romance or a friendship ended. Roll a d6. On an odd number, it was your fault. On an even number, it was the other person's fault.
6	You got into a fight. Roll a d6. On an odd number, you lost. On an even number, you won. In either case, the other person now considers you an enemy.
7	Something you saw reminded you of a previous brush with the horrific. Gain 1 Insanity.
8	You did something that made you unwelcome to a certain group of people, such as a religious community, a guild, or the city guard. These people are unfriendly to you.
9	Nothing good happened to you. It was all disappointment and despair. The first time you make an attack roll during the next adventure, you must roll twice and use the lower result.

10	You misplaced something valuable. Lose an interesting thing.
11	You spent your time drinking or doing drugs. At the start of the next adventure, you become fatigued until you complete the adventure.
12	You dropped some money gambling. Lose 1d3 ss. If you don't have coin to cover this loss, sell off items until you clear your debt. Selling an enchanted object clears your debt.
13	You broke up with a lifelong friend. Roll a d6. It was your fault on an odd number, or the other person's fault on an even number.
14	You learned a dangerous secret. Work with the GM to determine what it is.
15	You suffered a nasty head wound. You have difficulty speaking. For the next adventure, you make attack rolls in social situations with 1 bane.
16	Someone you love became injured as a result of your actions.
17	You tried to travel, but a storm or a natural disaster dashed your plans. You lost one item of the GM's choice.
18	A spouse, a child, a sibling, a parent, or a friend vanished.
19	Your living quarters were burgled. You lost one item of the GM's choice.
20	An old enemy tried to kill you but failed. You suspect another attempt might be coming.

WORK

3d6	Work
3	You botched your work so badly that you lost 1d6 gc. If you don't have enough coin, you must sell off items to make up your shortfall. Selling an enchanted object clears your debt.
4–5	You couldn't find work and lived a destitute lifestyle.
6–8	You earned little. You lived the poor lifestyle.
9–12	You earned a bit. You lived the getting by lifestyle.
13–15	You earned some. You lived the comfortable lifestyle.
16–17	You earned a lot. You lived the wealthy lifestyle.
18	You earned a fortune. You lived the rich lifestyle.

MINOR WINDFALL

d20	Minor Windfall
1	You fell in love or got married. If you were already married, you had a torrid affair instead. Work out the details with the GM.
2	You started a business related to your profession. Roll on the **Work** table to see how you did.
3	You got someone pregnant, or you became pregnant.
4	You traveled extensively. Add one language to the list of languages you can speak.
5	You made the acquaintance of someone important. This character becomes a contact who is defined by the GM (see "Connections" in *Shadow,* page 207).
6	You furthered your education. You can either add a language to the list of languages you can speak, become able to read and write a language you can speak, or gain a random area of scholarship.
7	You won some money gambling. Gain 1d6 gc.
8	You obtained a horse. You can keep it or sell it.

9	You found work in a new field. Add a random common profession.
10	You gained a random interesting thing.
11	You helped foil a foul plot in your community. During the next adventure you undertake, you make attack rolls with 1 boon in social situations involving members of the community in which you spent your downtime.
12	You helped save the community from danger and are now considered a hero. During your next adventure, you do not have to pay for food or drink while you are in the community in which you spent your downtime.
13	You found a *healing potion.*
14	You escaped nearly certain death. You start the next adventure with Fortune.
15	You spent time in a sanitarium or similar institution to reclaim your Sanity. Reduce your Insanity by 1d6. If you already had 0 Insanity, you instead came into some money, gaining 2d6 cp.
16	An item you own turned out to be an enchanted object with a random property.
17	You made a lifelong friend (as a **commoner**) who will accompany you on your adventures and help you.
18	You organized and led members of your community to accomplish something important. You received the key to the community (worth 1d3 cp).
19	You fought to protect your community from an outside danger. You received a shiny medal worth 1 ss for your efforts.
20	You saved someone's life, and that person is now in your debt. This character is friendly to you and will help you. Work with the GM to identify the character and the kind of help this character might provide.

MAJOR WINDFALL

d20	Major Windfall
1	You did a service for a faerie lord or lady. If you have *Terrible Beauty,* you gain a random favor (see page 36). If not, you gain a random enchanted object.
2	You discovered a tradition of magic.
3	You made an important connection. Choose Influence, Information, or Security (see "Connections" in *Shadow,* page 207). Come up with details about this character with the GM.
4	You came into significant money. Gain 2d6 gc.
5	You made friends with a **medium animal.** The creature is friendly to you and accompanies you on your adventures.
6	You built and now own a small house in the community or a small ship.
7	You learned something significant. At any point during your next adventure, you can ask the GM one question pertaining to the adventure and the GM must answer you truthfully.
8	You found a treasure map that might lead to a future adventure.
9	You found a book of spells containing 1d3 + 1 incantations, all of rank 1.
10	You acquired a small box containing 1d3 + 1 potions of the GM's choice.
11	You spent your time performing charitable acts to atone for your misdeeds. Reduce your Corruption by 1. If you already had 0 Corruption, you start the next adventure with Fortune.

12	You made a friend of a powerful figure—an archmage, a high priest, a general, or a hero. The GM determines the person's identity and the benefits your friendship provides.
13	A god, a divine servant, or an ancestral spirit visited you and bestowed on you its favor. You can invoke the favor when you make an attack roll or a challenge roll to make the roll with 1 boon. When you invoke the favor, roll a d6. You lose the favor forever if you roll an odd number.
14	You saved the life of a **veteran**. The character accompanies you on your adventures and serves until death. Work out the details with the GM.
15	You gained an inheritance from a wealthy relative or friend. This inheritance pays for you to have a wealthy lifestyle. Alternatively, you can use your stipend to purchase the rich lifestyle at the discounted rate of 1 gc (see "Living Expenses" in *Shadow*, page 100).
16	You gained a suit of armor or a weapon of your choice.
17	You acquired a **small construct** that serves you loyally and obeys your commands.
18	You have become famous for your exploits, and you are known all across the lands in which you live. You make attack rolls with 1 boon in social situations involving people who have heard of you.
20	You received a warning about the future from a witch. If you would die, you can invoke this warning. Instead of dying, you are rendered unconscious for 1d3 hours, after which time you heal 1 damage and regain consciousness.

STRANGE EVENT

d20	Event
1	You stumbled into a borderland and spent your time living among the faerie. Add Elvish to the list of languages you can speak.
2	You suffered a weird magical mishap. Your skin, hair, or eyes changed to an unusual color or pattern of colors.
3	You angered a druid and were transformed into an animal of your Size. At the start of the next adventure, you are in this form, using the animal's statistics in place of your own. You remain in this form for the first 24 hours of the adventure.
4	You spent time in research. Add a language you can read or write, or gain an area of scholarship.
5	You went to a temple to find or strengthen your faith. The first time you make a fate roll during the next adventure, you can roll twice and use either result.
6	Your exploits attracted the attention of a demon, and you were possessed. If you have *Demon Lord's Companion*, you gain the Possessed story complication. Otherwise, you gain 1 Corruption and the demon moved on to other, more succulent targets.
7	You have no idea what happened during your downtime, but you woke up without clothes and with a strange scar on your chest. You lose one set of clothing.
8	Someone you killed during the previous adventure now haunts you as a spirit. If you have *Demon Lord's Companion,* you can add the Haunted story complication.
9	You suffered terrible nightmares involving the events of your previous adventure. You gain 1d3 Insanity, but you make challenge rolls with 1 boon to resist the frightening and horrifying traits for the duration of the next adventure.
10	You were struck by lightning and have a nasty scar to show for it.
11	A cult tried to recruit you. Make a Will challenge roll. On a failure, you joined the cult, and you gain 1 Corruption and 1d3 Insanity. Work with the GM to define the cult.
12	You faked your own death, then recently returned, revealing the ruse to your friends.
13	You spent time among the dwarfs, the gnomes, or some other people. Add the language of those folk to the list of languages you can speak.
14	You had a vision of the future. Once, when you get a failure on an attack roll or a challenge roll, you can turn the failure into a success.
15	You stopped a harvester from stealing another person's organs. The harvester ran off, but is sure to give you trouble. The person you saved is friendly to you and will try to help you. Work with the GM to identify this person and the kind of help the person might offer.
16	You encountered a mysterious stranger who whispered a secret to you before vanishing. The GM tells you this secret.
17	You went on a short adventure by yourself or with a different group of people. You returned with 3d6 gc and an enchanted object.
18	You have no idea what happened. You woke up in a wheat field, naked and sore. When you inspected your body, you discovered a weird scar on your back.
19	You gained a mutation, perhaps from something encountered during a previous adventure. The GM rolls on the Mutations table (*Shadow,* page 198) to determine what form your mutation takes.
20	If you are a living creature, a changeling murdered you and took your appearance. Create a new character with the changeling ancestry to join the group in your place. If you're not a living creature, you spend your time working instead. Roll on the Work table to see what happens.

BEYOND LEVEL 10

Most campaigns end when a group completes an adventure after advancing to level 10. At this point, the characters have reached the pinnacle of their careers. They are assumed to retire from their lives of danger and go on to pursue other objectives in the world. Magicians might withdraw to towers where they research new magic, construct relics, or master increasingly difficult spells. Priests build temples and gather congregations, while rogues might take over guilds and warriors find themselves at the heads of armies, masters of castles, or enlightened teachers in fighting academies.

But the game doesn't have to stop for characters at level 10. It can go on for as long as your group desires, the adventurers continuing their struggle against the encroaching darkness and the horrors unleashed by the Demon Lord's approach.

The following rules provide the basic mechanics for advancing characters beyond level 10.

PARAGON   LEGENDARY PATH

Paragons are storied individuals whose lists of accomplishments and exploits are the things of legend. They loom large in the minds of ordinary folk, for they are among the most powerful people in the world. Paragons include the greatest users of magic, adventurers of supreme cunning, battle-hardened veterans who have spilled the blood of countless enemies, and the living symbols of the gods' influence on the mortal world. Each paragon continues the mission it undertook earlier in life, keeping up the fight against the myriad horrors at large in the land, battling against demons and giants, dragons and krakens, always facing off against the greatest dangers in order to spare their world from the doom that casts such a long shadow across it.

LEVEL 11 AND HIGHER PARAGON

At level 11 and at each level thereafter, you gain the following benefits.

Characteristics Health +1
Legendary Talent Choose a talent from the list of legendary talents presented below.

LEGENDARY TALENTS

Legendary Power Increase your Power by 1. You can choose this talent multiple times, and its effect is cumulative.
Legendary Health Increase your Health by 5. You can choose this talent multiple times, and its effect is cumulative.
Legendary Magic You discover a tradition or learn a spell from a tradition you have discovered. You can choose this talent multiple times, and its effect is cumulative.
Legendary Attack When you make an attack roll, you can choose to get an automatic success. Once you use this talent, you cannot use it again for 1 minute.
Legendary Casting You can use a triggered action on your turn to cast a spell of rank 3 or lower. You can use this

talent a number of times equal to your Power score. You replenish your uses when you complete a rest.
Legendary Prayer When a creature you can see makes an attack roll or a challenge roll, you can grant that creature an automatic success. You can use this talent a number of times equal to your Power score. You replenish your uses when you complete a rest.
Legendary Strength Increase your Strength by 1 (maximum 20). You can choose this talent multiple times, and its effect is cumulative.
Legendary Agility Increase your Agility by 1 (maximum 20). You can choose this talent multiple times, and its effect is cumulative.
Legendary Intellect Increase your Intellect by 1 (maximum 20). You can choose this talent multiple times, and its effect is cumulative.
Legendary Will Increase your Will by 1 (maximum 20). You can choose this talent multiple times, and its effect is cumulative.
Legendary Perception Increase your Perception by 2 (maximum 25). You can choose this talent multiple times, and its effect is cumulative.
Legendary Resilience When you would take damage, you can reduce the damage to 0. Once you use this talent, you cannot use it again for 1 minute.
Legendary Defense Increase your Defense by 1 (maximum 25). You can choose this talent multiple tomes, and its effect is cumulative.
Legendary Spell Defense You impose 3 banes on the attack rolls of any creature attacking you with a spell, and you make challenge rolls to resist attack spells with 3 boons.
Legendary Boon You make all attack rolls and challenge rolls with 1 boon.
Legendary Endurance You are immune to damage from disease and poison and to the diseased and poisoned afflictions. In addition, you add your group level to your healing rate.
Legendary Speed Increase your Speed by 4. You can choose this talent multiple times, and its effect is cumulative.
Legendary Immortality You return to the prime of your life and stop aging. You cannot be aged, and short of violence or mishap, you are now immortal.
Legendary Stealth You are invisible in shadows and darkness.
Legendary Senses When you close your eyes, you have the sightless trait (see *Shadow,* page 215).
Legendary Recovery You need to rest for only 1 hour to complete a rest.
Legendary Stamina You can use an action, or a triggered action on your turn, to heal damage equal to your healing rate. You can use this talent once, and you regain the use of this talent when you complete a rest. You can choose this talent multiple times; each time you do so, you can use it one additional time between rests.
Legendary Fighting When you use an action to attack with a weapon, you can either deal 1d6 extra damage with that attack or make another attack against a different target at any point before the end of your turn.
Legendary Magical Sense You count as always being under the effect of the *sense magic* spell from the magician path. If you have learned this spell already, you can learn a spell of any rank you can cast from one tradition you have discovered.
Legendary Charm You make attack rolls in social situations with 3 boons.
Legendary Polyglot You can speak, read, and write all languages. In addition, when you would use an incantation, you get an automatic success on the challenge roll made to cast the spell.

INDEX

GODLESS

Enter the World of Fire and Blood

BEHOLD THE FORBIDDEN!

Forbidden Rules provides a comprehensive set of variant and optional rules for use with Shadow of the Demon Lord, letting you reshape the game in a variety of different ways. Whether you're looking for a points-based casting system or basic rules to kick off games beyond level 10, this supplement has it. Inside this book, you'll find:

- Dice rules that range from cooperative tasks to consistent damage, bell curve rolls, and variants in which players make all the rolls.
- More marks of darkness and rules for using fortune points.
- Damage reducing armor rules
- Wounds to replace damage
- Modified dying and death rules
- Variant healing methods
- Social combat rules
- Variant combat options, such as initiative or guidelines for running abstract combats
- New ways to use actions in combat plus details on how to handle chases
- Optional rules for customizing ancestries
- A skill variant to replace professions
- A new adept novice path
- A system of power points to replace castings
- Plus much, much more!!

Using the options in this book helps you tailor your Shadow of the Demon Lord game experience in a variety of new and interesting ways, but even if you don't alter the underlying system, certain options are perfect expansions for the main game. Do you have the courage to read these Forbidden Pages?

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