



ARC: DOOM TABLETOP RPG

game + art + writing + layout momatoes

editing Fiona Geist and Jarrett Crader

sensitivity reading Alexander Saify

in partnership with Exalted Funeral Press

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website and online resources arc-rpg.com

Step into a world of heroes. Together, craft a story to *slay the apocalypse*.

YOUR ADVENTURE BEGINS HERE.

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This is the **DIGITAL EDITION**.

ABOUT THE DOOMSDAY CLOCK

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contents

Introduction	14
What is ARC?	
Why play ARC?	
What do I need to play ARC?	18
Who is the Guide?	19
How do I play ARC?	20
How do I read ARC?	22
Notes on Time, Lengths and Pronouns	23

Chapter One: Doom 24

A. Setting up the Apocalypse	_26
B. Orchestrating the Omens	30
C. Building the Doomsday Clock	32
D. When Doom is Vanquished	35
E. When Doom Vanquishes All	36

Chapter Two: Hero Creation 38

Step 0: Inspect the Character Sheet	42
Step 1: Determine Approach Scores	43
Step 2: Assign Blood & Guts Modifiers	45
Step 3: Assign Skill Ranks	46

	Knowledge Skills	46				
	Social Skills	47				
	Physical Skills	48				
	Pragmatic Skills	49				
	Prowess Skills					
Step 4	: Determine Inventory	52				
	List 1: Damage and Defense					
	List 2: Supplies and Sundries					
	List 3: Oddities and Valuables					
	List 4: Spells	58				
	List 5: Techniques					
Step 5	: Answer Character-Building Questions	60				
Step 6						
Chapter T	nree: Core Rules					
	Summary of Rules					
	ll Checks					
	ll Checks Difficulty Modifier					
		68 69				
	Difficulty Modifier	68 69 70				
	Difficulty Modifier Assistance	68 69 70 71				
	Difficulty Modifier Assistance Roll and Outcome	68 70 71 72				
A. Ski	Difficulty Modifier Assistance Roll and Outcome Upgrading the Outcome	68 70 71 72 72				
A. Ski	Difficulty Modifier Assistance Roll and Outcome Upgrading the Outcome Acting as a Group	68 70 71 72 72 73				
A. Ski	Difficulty Modifier Assistance Roll and Outcome Upgrading the Outcome Acting as a Group					
A. Ski	Difficulty Modifier Assistance Roll and Outcome Upgrading the Outcome Acting as a Group Inflict Turns and Rounds	68 69 70 71 72 72 73 73 73 73				

Life and Death: Fallen Heroes	80
Rest and Recovery	.81
D. Evolving Your Hero	81

Chapter Four: Spells & Techniques84A. Performing Spells & Techniques86

· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	
B. Replenishing Spells & Techniques	B6
C. Learning Spells & Techniques	87
List of Spells	88
List of Techniques	97

Chapter Five: Guide Toolkit_____104

A. Ratings and Scales	106
B. Creating Custom Characters and Adversaries	109
C. Guide to Running ARC	110
Seven Principles	110
Running the Game	113
D. Other Considerations	120

Appendices

Appendix 1: Sample Hero Creation	124
Appendix 2: Sample Scene and Skill Check	127
Appendix 3: Sample Conflict	130
Appendix 4: Sample Doom	134
Appendix 5: More Sample Heroes	135
Appendix 6: Codex of Astonishing Creatures	138

Index	ζ	167	

NOTES

As the global landscape of tabletop RPG expands, the RPGSEA community is proving that Southeast Asia is an exciting region for meaningful, delightful, and even provocative games. From the queer travails of coming out to Asian parents; to 1990s action heroes in bombastic Philippine cinema; to crocodile chieftains, mosquito witches, and patchwork-reality gods in a monsoon village; even to simpler things like the ordeal of Malaysian traffic—RPGSEA embodies the deep diversity of its creators' perspectives and experiences.

The works of Pam Punzalan, Zedeck Siew, BJ Recio, Shao Han, Aaron Lim, Sin Posadas, Makapatag, Samuel Mui and many more nurture a rich archipelago of ideas and partnerships that defy monoliths and hegemonies.

ARC is decidedly an RPGSEA game not simply because I myself am Filipina, but because it affirms the community's stance against the idea of a "default" narrative while encouraging the players—*you*—to create stories close to *your* lived experiences...close to the boundless ocean inside your heart.

I dedicate this game to RPGSEA and to all who infuse their unique perspectives and experiences into their stories. I also dedicate ARC to all starry-eyed game designers yearning for inspiration, collaboration, and community to guide them towards ever grander dreams. May you find your sea.

> — m o m a t o e s Manila, June 2021



Intro-Duction

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His hands shook. The sword had never felt heavier than this moment but the champion beside him didn't seem to notice—or care. "Not to put too fine a point on it, but erm," he stammered, "won't our lives be in danger?"

She looked him dead in the eyes. "The world is ending. It's the least we can do."

WHAT ISARC?

ARC is a **rules-light**, **tension-heavy** fantasy tabletop role-playing game where anyone can create URGENT STORIES ticking down to a seemingly inescapable APOCALYPSE

WHY PLAY ARC?

Play ARC to.

Escape to a world filled with MEMORABLE7 HEART-RACING TALES.

Challenge awaits you. Can you overcome looming obliteration?



BUILD A STORY together. Support each other as heroes on a fantasy adventure

reating narratives that alter the course of destiny.

HAVE FUN—even when you've never played or run a tabletop RPG before.

It's easy to feel anxious and uncertain with a new hobby. This game **[**] Il guide you on becoming heroes immersed in adventure so that you worry about the Doom and not yourself.

Play ARC IF YOU'REREADY to slay the ADOCAINDSE

WHAT DO I **NEED** TO PLAY ARC?

You will need:

PEOPLE

- one player, called the **GUIDE**, to facilitate the game.
- 2–6 other players to role-play as heroes. Simply referred to as 'player.'

TOOLS

- this book or an online source document for referencing game rules.
- character sheets to track heroes' stats and capabilities.
- Download digital copies at **ARC-RPG.COM**
- a stopwatch or timer—digital or otherwise.
- several six-sided dice. ARC can technically be played with one die but having at least three
 nice.

AND LASTLY

• a few hours of free time, respect for fellow players, and a willingness to save the world.

A NOTE ABOUT DICE

Throughout the book six-sided dice are referred to as "d6." If there number before that, you roll that many dice. A 2d6 roll, **for example**, means you roll 2 dice simultaneously.

WHO IS THE GUIDE?

The **GUIDE** is a player who helps set up the story and world for the heroes. They conceptualize the plot and build a sandbox that reacts to what the others do.

The **GUIDE** does this by describing scenes, role-playing as non-hero characters, and building challenges and situations that other players must tackle. The **GUIDE** also has the final say on rules.

Being a **GUIDE** is perfect if you love planting story seeds for others and growing it with them to make a unique creation.

For many, though, it can feel scary or intimidating to take on this role. It's easy to feel pressured to be "as good" as some popular game master or think that everyone's fun hinges on a perfect performance.

The **GUIDE'S** experience and comfort are portant, **Ghapter 5** delves into this in more detail, but a welcoming game where states are okay is a healthy target for anyone to aim for. ARC is also carefully designed and written to ease common burdens for **GUIDES**—so anyone regardless of experience level can focus on transforming imagination to adventure.

Ultimately, all you need is the desire to create stories with everyone.

HOW DO | *PLAY* ARC? At its heart, ARC is a storymaking game.

In this game the **GUIDE** narrates story beats, plot hooks, set pieces and scenarios which players can interact with, moving the group's story along.

For example, the GUIDE could say, "You come across a koi pond—no, a koi *lake* so huge it feels it can span over half your village. Your eyes are caught by a giant, pale-haired woman lying in the lake and looking a little bored. Large, colorful fish swim around her. What do you do?"

The players then discuss and carry out their next steps and the **GUIDE** narrates their action's result. The situation reflects this change prompting another response from the players. So it goes until the tale made.

Stories are built atop a foundation of collaboration and conversation.

PLAYER 1: OK, aside from the giant, what else do we see?

some

GUIDE: Three or four orange koi swim the lake, they're about the size of a bus. There's I dlife but they seem very tame; they look at you curiously. It's peaceful otherwise.

PLAYER 2: The giant...does she match the description that the I nkeep gave us? If so then I think she's the one we've been looking for...

You take actions building the story.

Each player role-plays a hero, a character in the game. When a hero performs a risky action in the story the deed's outcome may be resolved using a **SKILL CHECK**.

In our **example** above a player may say, "OK, I'll grab her attention." The guide may respond: "She's a little far out you're just a tiny speck in her vision—so I want you to make a **SKILL CHECK** with IMPOSE."

When **SKILL CHECKS** happen players roll 1d6 hoping to roll lower than a THRESHOLD NUMBER (TN). The TN is usually the hero's ranks in a relevant SKILL—in our example, it's IMPOSE plus an applicable **APPROACH SCORE**. **APPROACH SCORES** track how well a hero solves problems in a particular

manner: CREATIVELY, CAREFULLY or in a **CONCERTED** manner. These scores are determined at the beginning of the game in Hero Creation.

Other important rules such as **CONFLICT**, staying alive and growing from experience are discussed in Chapter 3

PLAYER 3: My **IMPOSE** is 2. I think I'll use a **CONCERTED** approach to get her attention as enthusiastically as I can. I have a 1 in **CONCERTED**, so my **TN** is 3. I roll...a 2!

GUIDE: Your 1d6 roll is lower than the TN, so you succeed in getting the giant's attention! She stands up to her full height. She's so massive she casts a shadow over you all and blocks the sun. She growls, "Who dares disturb my reverie?" What do you do next?

While heroes move through the shared world, the

Doomsday Clock ticks to its end.

At set intervals the real-time **DOOMSDAY CLOCK** advances, heralding **DOOM'S** arrival. Heroes must address the pending dilemma within a time period or suffer its dire consequences.

GUIDE: Another hour passes, so the DOOMSDAY CLOCK advances by one. Two MOMENTS to go—two more hours—before **DOOM** arrives.

Read Appendices 2, 3 and 4 for more play samples

HOW DO I READ ARC?

GUIDE, head to **Chapter 1** to jump into setting up a story with everyone. Everyone should also read this chapter to learn about **DOOM** and how it impacts the adventure. The sections on **OMENS** and the **DOOMSDAY CLOCK**, in particular, are

Players can make heroes by following **Chapter 2**.

Chapter 3 delves into the game's core rules: your foundation for playing an adventure. The writing targets players, but the **GUIDE** should also read it so they can run the game.

Chapter 4 provides a handy reference for **SPELLS & TECHNIQUES**, including details on enhancing and gaining further instances.

GUIDE, if you need help running a game, **Chapter 5** is for you. It has guidance and principles applicable to any game. It also has a useful table for creating custom characters and adversaries.

Lastly, the **Appendices** have a plethora of sample heroes, scenes and even **CONFLICT**. The final appendix contains the **CODEX OF 36 ASTONISHING CREATURES** that can appear or serve as inspiration in your adventure.

NOTES ON TIME, LENGTHS & PRONOUNS

TIME There are two types of time: **IN-STORY TIME** and **REAL-TIME**. In-story marks the passage of time in thin the narrative; real-time marks the passage of time in real world. A rest taking 3 hours in-story, for example, can simply take up 2 minutes in real-time. These two types of time are labeled accordingly to avoid confusion.

LENGTHS & SHORT DISTANCES are distance distanc

PRONOUNS In several cases, this book uses "you" to refer to either you as the player (or **GUIDE**) or your hero. Context clarifies which.

As for pronouns you should use for other heroes or players, it's best to ask first as a sign of respect.

"It's too late," the princess whispered, voice cracking. The three held each other tightly, as if they could keep the cold away with what little heat they had. They'd failed to stop the Doom. Now the world would suffer with their mistake.

M

CHAPTER ONE

The **Doom** is a cataclysmic event threatening to devastate the world of the heroes or their people. In ARC, the heroes' goal is preventing this apocalypse.

The **DOOM** is determined by the **GUIDE** and players. It can be large in scope—<mark>for example,</mark> a world-sundering earthquake triggered by a goddess' death—or imate—the departure of **MOVING FORWARD**. more beloved spirits, a cruel heartbreak, or the farewell of an era.

DOOMS ADVANCE AT A TERRIFYING PACE **EVEN WITHOUT PLAYER INTERVENTION: WAITING** FOR NO ONE AND ALWAYS

А. Setting up the

CHAPTER 1 | DOOM

The following two questions are essential and must *not* be skipped.

4 | How long should the game last?

Subplots are formalized

through game mechanics

and are called "OMENS"-

discussed in complete

detail in the next section.

The **DOOM** is time-bound, encompassing a finite number of sessions. ARC works best with 1-3 session games, although you can also play for longer.

5 | Do we have the same understanding on playstyle and safety?

An important but often forgotten step is ensuring everyone on the same page on playstyle and safety. Some are OK with sad endings; others hate combat; some want a punishing challenge. And when it comes to safety, everyone has unique needs and perspectives. Check in how as a group and as individuals you can be aware and empowered to stand up for safety. What can help everyone feel comfortable raising concerns? Should the group avoid certain topics? Everyone—not just the GUIDE creating and maintaining a welcome, supportive space. has a stake

GUIDE, once this is done, you must flesh it out further by asking yourself a fe ore questions. You can read the questions now and answer them after the players have made their heroes (**Chapter 2**). This time, you don't need to share your answers.

6 | What kind of Doom incorporates the setting's themes alongside heroes' rumors, **bonds and personalities?** Note each player's answers to Hero Creation's character building questions, and build bits of the story from there. Will the apocalypse be war? A cruel winter? A heartbreaking wedding? **DOOMS** manifest in different ways

> though the dread they inspire universal.

7 | What subplots can heroes discover and pursue?

- -The children have ceased laughing.
- -Books are being burned for blasphemous content.
- -The exiled prince returns, their eyes a strange blue.
- —Something elese entirely? ...continued next page

APOCALYPSE

GUIDE, any idea you have for the story and its **DOOM** may be refined further with the players' help. The following questions can help. You can be as loose or as specific as you'd like; you can even pull inspiration from favorite books or media. The only important detail is that this world must eventually be peril.

1 | Which kind of setting resonates with or intriques you?

-Magical realism

context?

- -A blend of 1920s' gangster culture and competitive yet mystic alchemy?
- -A war-torn world, where hulking sentient weapons forcibly laid down their arms?
- -A post-apocalyptic setting, where
- a Bad Thing has irreversibly occurred?
- —Medieval fantasy with frog wizards? —Something else entirely?

a Southeast Asian —Grand, larger than life heroes

2 | What characters do you want to play

in this world and how did they meet?

- who met in a world-spanning competition?
 - -A gathering of clerics from different faiths, united by a common cause?
 - -The archmage's only heirs, except none of you know each other?
 - -A troupe of bards, all half-siblings? —A family of werewolves avenging
 - their scions?
 - -Something else entirely?

3 | Are there themes you want to see in the story?

-The dark side of anointed heroes?

- -Court and chivalry?
- -Cold revenge?

-The tender fragility of nostalgia? —Homecoming? -Something else entirely?

DOOM

_

CHAPTER

8 | What memorable ideas, events or characters can support your story?

—A mysterious paladin on a flaming clockwork horse?

—A heist set in an impenetrable fortress?

A duel between angry dwarf boxers?
A salacious, talkative chili plant named Ronpepper?

Remember two things: your time limits and the plain fact that stories *will* and always change on the fly. So don't bind yourself to an inflexible plan—it's possible the cool scenario or character you envisioned won't even show up in the story. You can still reuse their aspects in other scenes or characters, however, so no effort is ever wasted.

So, **GUIDE**, you have a rough outline for a story, as well as a strong idea for the **DOOM**. Now it's time to weave it into the gameplay mechanics by introducing **OMENS** and the **DOOMSDAY CLOCK**.

DIVISION OF TASKS

While not related to story setup, it can be meaningful to discuss supporting tasks that add value to play. **GUIDE**, you have the power to bring up and delegate the following. You don't have to do these by yourself:

- -Coordinating schedules
- -Taking notes during sessions
- -Answering simple rules questions
- Checking if it's time to advance the
 DOOMSDAY CLOCK
 Tracking who's next in a CONFLICT

CHAPTER 1 | DOOM

66

The meteor loomed closer and closer. Humanity could only watch and whimper as the Doom descended on them all. There had been warning signs, strange Omens—even a scorned prophetess—all ignored by a people desperate to blind their eyes against the truth.



B. Orchestrating the OMENS

OMENS are story fronts contributing to the advancing DOOM. While they may not directly cause the DOOM, they speed its arrival. Think of them as mini story arcs supporting and bringing dimension to the apocalypse. GUIDE, start the game

If your **DOOM** is the escape of a demon lord hungry to consume the entire kingdom, the **OMENS** could be:

—The local cult is hoarding gold and gems for a secret ritual.
—The lords' council has disbanded, leaving royal defenses scant and uncoordinated.
—The Grey Magus has disappeared, leaving only a mysterious map.

CHAPTER 1 | DOOM

Say your **DOOM** is about the local chieftain's wedding. The **OMENS** could be:

- —The local bard practices a truly cursed harana.
 —The Fairy Queen's beloved flowers are being plucked for a wreath, earning her ire.
 —The wedding planner is going around town, inviting utterly illadvised guests.
- And if your **DOOM** is about children's laughter being stolen by a miserable trickster god, **OMENS** may include:
- —The trickster god's wife walks in the mortal realm, proclaiming herself divorced at last.
 —Strange plants sprout throughout the left lage and giggle at night.
 —The babaylan have fallen deathly ill, one by one.

Like the **DOOM**, **OMENS** are ligged g story arcs that progress without player intervention and do not wait for action.

Heroes can resolve **OMENS** to slow down the **DOOM**. Resolution happens when they've removed its cause or have rendered the subplot's impact moot. In the above **examples**, they could resolve the *"local cult is hoarding gold and gems"* **OMEN** by defeating all cult members, stealing all valuables, convincing the cult to disarm, asking the local kawal to intervene or even burning down the cult's headquarters.

GUIDE, while you do not need to inform players whether they've stumbled upon an OMEN, you can use the setting to give clues. For example, the town crier can proclaim that something is amiss or a villain killed the priestess and left a calling card. The same goes for resolving OMENS. Use the story to show that something has happened for the better. Say, the line is shackled and imprisoned in the bowels of the keep.

Can an **OMEN** stay active even when heroes already attempted to address it? In our **example** above, perhaps the heroes informed the kawal about the situation but told a deeply incomplete story, resulting in the guards being ill-prepared to corral the cultists. The **OMEN** can still be unresolved in this case. If the heroes' approach is mismatched or significantly inadequate, the story should reflect a non-improvement.

This doesn't mean the end of the world, however or does it?

ALTERNATIVE RULING: SHORT GAMES

For games less than 3 hours long, you can play with just two **OMENS** instead of three to keep the story lean.

Building the DOOMSday

The **DOOMSDAY CLOCK** charts the apocalypse's inevitable approach, reaches its end the **DOOM** is unleashed.

The **DOOMSDAY CLOCK** is made up of discrete discrete discrete discrete advancing at set time tervals. Once it speed and number depend on how long you intend to run the game.

NUMBER OF SESSIONS	NUMBER OF MOMENTS	DOOMSDAY CLOCK ADVANCES EVERY
1	3 per hour of play	30 minutes
	Example: for a 4-hour session, the DC 12 MOMENTS (4 x 3) and advances eve	
2-3	1.5 per hour of play (round up)	hour
	Example: for two 5-hour sessions, the	
	15 MOMENTS (10 x 1.5) and advances e	every hour.
4+	1.5 per session (round up)	session

Example: for 7 sessions, the **DOOMSDAY CLOCK** has IT **MOMENTS** (7 x 1.5) and advances every session.

Every time the **DOOMSDAY CLOCK** advances, one **MOMENT** is consumed.

Then, roll d6 equal to the number of **OMENS** still in play, consuming one more **MOMENT** for every **5 or 6.**

When all **MOMENTS** are gone, the apocalypse arrives.

For example, say you're playing a one-session game. After 30 minutes of play, you advance the **DOOMSDAY CLOCK** and consume one **MOMENT**. If there are 3 OMENS left you roll 3 dice, and if you roll 2 5 5, you consume two additional **MOMENTS**. If all **MOMENTS** are consumed...then prepare for the end.

start

A sample **DOOMSDAY CLOCK** for a single-session, 3-hour game. Two **MOMENTS** have been consumed. Appendix 4: Sample Doom shows another example.

ALTERNATIVE RULING: SOFTER RISKS

The **DOOMSDAY CLOCK** has a level of unpredictability to incite a heart-racing sense of rapidly lost time. However, if you seek a calmer and less fickle game, you can rule that **OMENS** die rolls only consume a max of one additional **MOMENT** each time. This may also be ideal for games less than 3 hours.

END

5

When Doom is VanquisRea

THROUGH SKILL AND TEAMWORK *the heroes ascend as legends of the land* THEIR NAMES FOREVER REMEMBERED.

What happens next is up to everyone:

BASK IN SUCCESS

D.

Face ever grander dooms?

O R

E. When Doom VanQuiskes Aff

It is entirely possible for heroes to do their best and still fail. The **DOOM** happens, the tears fall. Such is life.

Stories, however, can live on. The state of the world may have irreversibly darkened but it doesn't mean the tale ends.

There are three choices. The table should decide which path to tread together.

1. Epilogue

DOOM

CHAPTER 1 |

You choose to accept the world's end. Allow each player to say 2–3 sentences describing their hero's life after apocalypse. Once they are done, narrate an epilogue to the shared story.

Have a brief moment of silence to grieve what once was.

2. New Beginnings

The apocalypse may have happened, but new beginnings can still flourish. Use the ruins of the world to create a sequel with heightened stakes. Because of the **DOOM**, something else happened... something sinister. Create this new **DOOM** and ask the players whether they'd like to continue as their heroes or create new ones.

3. Rewind

You choose to rebel against destiny perhaps there's a second chance. Agree as a table up to what point in-story time III be rewound. All heroes retain their stats, inventory as well as memories of the fallen future.

The **DOOMSDAY CLOCK** goes back in time as well:

- —If your game **GNE-SHOT**, restore**2 MOMENTS** per hour of play left.
- —If your game **2-1 SESSIONS**, restore **1 MOMENT** per total hour of play left.
- —If your game has **MORE** sessions, restore **1MOMENT** per session left.

Do not make this choice lightly. If you re d time, decide or roll:

- **1** A beloved ally turns to dust.
- **2** An innocent maiden kills her mother.
- **3** Three pale girls rise from the dead and snake their way towards the heroes.
- **4** A god dies, their body flung to the world below.
- **5** A small, humble family becomes a new plague's first victims.
- **6** A new **OMEN** comes to light.

Play the game as normal, forever burdened by visions of the alter-future.

THAPTER TWO CHAPTER TWO CREATING

The child squirmed on her mother's lap, staring wide-eyed at the thrice-tattooed wizard. "Can you make flowers bloom pretty?" the child asked, cheeks blushing.

The wizard puffed on his pipe and gave a long, languid nod. A spark of delight immediately lit the child's eyes. "I want to be like you," she blurted. "I want to be magic." The mother laughed but the wizard just shook his head. He could not ask the child to share the same, shadowed fate as him.



You can play any hero you want as long as it makes sense the setting. You ca be a human, an elf, a lesser tiger demon or a prince disguised as a pauper if it fits in the shared world.

Your hero's capabilities are expressed through several aspects. Hero Creation fills in these details to build a wellrounded and adept personality.

RANDOM HERO GENERATOR You may roll 1d6 on every list below to quickly create a random hero.

Your hero is a/an...

amphibious	4 bureaucratic
rebellious	5 blue
nervous	6 incandescent
lion	4folk hero
noblin	5ball of fire
engineer	6witch doctor

...who...

2

3

1

2

3

- 1 believes in a vast conspiracy
- 2 claims to be royalty from the Fallen Kingdom of Majapahit
- 3 looks like they've seen better days
- 4 is notorious among the transcendental lovers of Pasig
- 5 feuded with all four corners of the wind 6 perfected the recipe for capybara curry

....and....

- 1 speaks very softly.
- 2 is an amateur poet.
- 3 walks on tiptoes.
- 4 has an innocuous fourth eye.
- 5 has six fingers on both hands.
- 6 has white pupils.

- Determine Approach Scores.
- 2 Assign Blood & Guts Modifiers.
- **3** Assign Skill Ranks.
- 4 Determine Inventory.
- 5 Answer Character-Building Questions.
- 6 Determine Bonds.

Every step you have the option of randomly rolling instead of assigning a value. Rolling randomly can result in powerful heroes but you have less control over how they turn out.

The "How to Play ARC" section in the Introduction already gave an overview of how your hero's aspects can interact with the rules, but each step in the Hero Creation process also mentions how it'll be relevant in the game.

To check out Hero Creation in action see Appendix 1: Sample Hero Creation. More sample heroes are available Appendix 5.

WHAT IF I MAKE A TERRIBLE HERO?

It's natural to feel anxious about being "good enough," especially if this is your first time playing a tabletop role-playing game. Focus on having fun—that's how you win. Defeating the Doom is just one part of it; your enjoyment matters too. It's easy to worry about whether your hero is strong, cool or interesting enough but what matters is that you look forward to playing as them. So long as they fit in the setting and want to save the world, there are no wrong decisions.

Step 0° **Inspect the Character Sheet**

Before anything else, take a look at the character sheet which tracks essential details about your hero. The print version provides a summary of rules at the back, while the digital version displays these tips when hovering over certain words or phrases. The character sheet is your dear friend throughout the game; download copies at **arc-rpg.com**.



Step 18 **Determine Approach Scores**

APPROACH SCORES represent the hero's aptitude for solving problems and using skills in particular ways. Do they tend towards creative solutions? Are they careful and detail-oriented? Or do they gravitate towards resolving challenges through sheer, concerted effort?

These are the three **APPROACHES**: **CREATIVE**, **CAREFUL** and **CONCERTED**.



SKILLS.



Skills using a **CREATIVE APPROACH** are performed in interesting, unusual and surprising ways. Cleverness also applies to **CREATIVE**

Skills using a **CAREFUL APPROACH** utilize close attention to detail, analyzing variables and ensuring the action does not trigger any unwanted consequences.



APPROACH exemplify effort, grit and

willpower. Any obstacle

is surmountable when

you have the drive to

succeed.

Each has a score ranging from +0 to + 3. +0 means no aptitude, +1 is average, +2 is gifted and +3 is expert.

CREATION

HERO

_

2

CHAPTER

APPROACH SCORES determine how well your hero performs an action. Your hero'sAPPROACH SCORE plus their ranks in a relevantt SKILL set a THRESHOLD NUMBER(TN) for a given task. You roll 1d6, hoping for a result under the threshold.

This means the higher the **TN** the easier it is to succeed. Consequently, higher **APPROACH SCORES** are better; if you have a **+3** in an **APPROACH**, that means you'll still succeed at a task half the time even if you have no aptitude **SKIEL**.

APPROACH SCORES can also mean life or death for your hero. If all APPROACH SCORES become zero your hero *falls*. See **Chapter 3**, **Life**, **Death and Naps** for what happens next. APPROACH SCORES can also be **Chapter 3**, **Creased during playChapter 3**, **Evolving Your Hero**.



TO DETERMINE YOUR HERO'S APPROACH SCORES

Assign each of the following scores to an **APPROACH**: +0, +1 and +2.

TO **RANDOMLY** DETERMINE YOUR HERO'S APPROACH SCORES

Roll 1d6, distributing that many points to your **APPROACH SCORES**. For example, rolling a 6 you can assign +3 to **CREATIVITY**, +2 to **CAREFUL** and +1 to **CONCERTED**.

If you want to completely randomize which **APPROACH SCORES** get a point, roll 1d6 and assign one point to the corresponding score.

1, 2—Creative.

CREATION

HERO

2

CHAPTER

3. 4—Careful

5, 6—Concerted.

If the maximum number of points you have to distribute is only 1 don't worry—you'll receive extra inventory items as consolation.

Step 2: Assign Blood & Guts Modifiers

BLOOD is the hero's ability to withstand **physical harm.** If **BLOOD** is reduced to zero or less, the next damage it receives reduces **APPROACH SCORES** instead.

GUTS measures the hero's ability to withstand mental or social harm. Similarly if **GUTS** is reduced to zero or less, the next damage reduces **APPROACH SCORES**.

BLOOD & GUTS can *vary* from day to day. When your hero wakes up from a **LONG REST**—a break taking 5 real-time **I** nutes and up0ton-story hours—you have the option of rolling for their new **BLOOD & GUTS** for the rest of the day: **2d6 plus a modifier** determined during **HERO CREATION**. If you choose not to roll, they simply gain a small amount of health back.

Say your hero has 15 **BLOOD** and 6 **GUTS** from the previous day. If you choose to reroll, you roll 2d6 each for **BLOOD & GUTS** then add their modifiers to the individual results. If you get a total of 12 and 10 for **BLOOD & GUTS** for example, it overwrites the current health and become your hero's new health stats.

Modifiers for **BLOOD & GUTS** do not have to be the same. They can be **[**] creased during play (see **Chapter 3, Evolving Your Hero**) but you'll set its starting value now.

TO DETERMINE YOUR BASE BLOOD & GUTS MODIFIER

Allocate modifiers to **BLOOD & GUTS** so their sum is 6 (minimum: +0).

TO **RANDOMLY** DETERMINE YOUR BASE BLOOD & GUTS

 $\underline{\text{MODIFIER}}$ Roll 1d6 and record the result for **BLOOD**; roll again for **GUTS**. If the sum of both modifiers is \leq 3 you'll receive extra inventory items to make up for it.

Step 3: Assign Skill Ranks

Heroes use their **SKILLS** to solve a wide array of challenges such as defeating tavern rats, talking to immense dragons and haggling the price of wares. There are a total of 18 **SKILLS** divided across 5 categories.

KNOWLEDGE SKILLS

1. Academic

CHAPTER 2 | HERO CREATION

The pursuit of formal knowledge, primarily scientific or historical in nature.

Sample applications:

- -Recalling precolonial orcish history.
- -Theorizing a scientific principle.
- -Understanding formal chemistry.

2. Culture

Ability to attune with a community's beliefs, customs and stories.

- Bowing perfectly in front of the witch-warriors of legend.
- -Noticing the elder's coded folksong.
- -Realizing the truth behind a creature's folklore.

3. Observe

Aptitude in observing the world and detecting the smallest details across all senses.

- Detecting a strange whiff, a faint sound or a strange taste.
- —Searching a murder scene for physical clues.
- -Recalling a scene's details hours later.

SOCIAL SKILLS

5. Charisma

Appealing or approachable charm, with a penchant for smooth talk, humor and wit.

- -Convincing the tch to join your cause through eloquent argument.
- —Flattering the errant knight's sense of justice.
- -Mediating between warring kings with a winning smile.

6. Guile

Deception and manipulation through lies, bluffs or other chicanery and trickery.

- —Lying to the tindero.
- -Bluffing about possessing a weapon that vaporizes enemies.
- -Tricking misguided youth to plant false evidence on the blacksmith.

4. Tactics

Knowledge of battle and conflict.

- —Leading the Rook Prince's troops with sophisticated strategy.
- -Knowing how to position oneself in a heated battle.
- —Instructing other characters how to field an oncoming attack.



Radiating a sense of authority and confidence that can enforce opinion, cut down others, or tower over everyone.

Intimidating the devil with a swagger.
Gaining the attention of the elitist bard.
Distracting the guard captain with a devastating remark.

PHYSICAL SKILLS

9. Acrobatics

Dynamic balance, gymnastics, or other incredible and immediate feats of agility.

- -Performing a somersault through the air.
- —Jumping from one tree to another.—Balancing on a precarious ledge.

10. Coordination

CREATION

HERO

2

CHAPTER

Delicate positioning and control of body, hand and instincts for smooth or purposeful movements.

- -Moving quietly and efficiently to avoid detection.
- —Playing sleight of hand tricks.
- —Winning a sport requiring accurate handeye coordination.

8. Insight

Attunement to others' emotional states; inner grace and maturity in interactions.

- —Realizing the mambabarang is lying.—Knowing how to comfort a grie g g widow.
- -Appearing calm and composed.



11. Physique

Exertion of physical strength, stamina and constitution.

Striking an enemy with a had punch.Smashing a door with a battering ram.Holding breath deep underwater.

12. Weaponry

Proficiency in the use and maintenance of weaponry.

—Applying sword care and maintenance.—Mastering an unwieldy warhammer.—Knowing a weapon's weak points.

PRAGMATIC SKILLS

13. Artistry

Crafting, design, painting or other creative expressions.

Painting the moon duke's portrait.
Writing an evocative love poem.
Identifying intentional designs in someone's cryptic artwork.

14. <mark>Surviva</mark>l

Aptitude for rugged living off the land; self-reliant outdoorsmanship and survival across the harshest seasons.

- -Scavenging safe food and water in the perilous forest.
- —Skinning a deer.
- -Navigating wilderness.

15. Tinker

Engineering expertise over mechanical or clockwork devices, schema and structures.

- -Troubleshooting problems
- with a jury-rigged setup.
- —Understanding complex mechanical diagrams.
- -Creating a contraption, such as a trap, on the spot from common materials.

16. Trade

Experience in commerce, animal handling and other industrial or market pursuits.

- Intuitively knowing whether something is overpriced.
- Recalling processes for leather- and metalworking.
- Performing a quality check on mundane items.

CREATION

HERO

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2

CHAPTER

PROWESS

17. Arcana

Recall lore, sense spirits, channel magic; required to perform enhanced SPELLS (see Chapter 4).

Reading magical runes.Detecting if magic was recently cast.Gathering ingredients for a ritual.

18. Focus Hone attention, concentrate mental spirit;

required to perform enhanced **TECHNIQUES** (see **Chapter 4**).

—Enduring intense mental duress.
—Resisting distraction and committing to the present objective.
—Pushing the body past its limits.

SKILLS have a rank from +0 to +3 similar to **APPROACHES**. **•0** means no skill, **•1** is average, **•2** is gifted and **•3** is expert. **SKILL RANKS** directly correlate to how easy it is to succeed in an action; a hero with **•3 SKILL** will succeed half the time a relevant task even they have zero in the relevant **APPROACH**.

SKILL RANKS can be creased during play Chapter 3, Evolving Your Hero.

TO DETERMINE YOUR HERO'S SKILLS

Allocate +2 to two SKILLS and +1 to three SKILLS.

TO **RANDOMLY** DETERMINE YOUR HERO'S SKILLS

Roll 2d6. Distribute that many **SKILL RANKS** to any **SKILLS** of your choice. You can also use the list on the next page to randomly assign **SKILL RANKS** by rolling 1d6 twice in order. If you roll a +2 **SKILL** when you only have one **SKILL** point remaining that **SKILL** becomes a +1 instead.

If the sum of your SKILL RANKS is \leq 4 you'll get some extra inventory items to make up for it.



Step 4: Determine Inventory

Your inventory contains useful items for creating opportunities and capabilities for your hero. Survi g g a cold night in the g for the second second

There are 5 categories from which you may obtain starting items.



Each category is represented by a numbered list of items—the number being that item's *point value*.

TO DETERMINE YOUR HERO'S INVENTORY

Choose items from any of the lists totaling no more than **30 POINTS**.

TO **RANDOMLY** DETERMINE YOUR HERO'S INVENTORY

Pick a list and choose whether you roll 1d6, 2d6 or 3d6 on it. Add the resulting item to your inventory. Do this multiple times—you may roll on multiple lists—until you've rolled a total of **12d6**.

You may roll more than once on a particular list. **For example**, you can roll 3d6 twice on the Techniques list and 2d6 thrice on the Oddities list as long as the total number of dice rolled is 12.

Other valid combinations:

- -3d6 thrice on the **SPELLS** list, 2d6 once on the **TECHNIQUES** list and 1d6 once on the **DAMAGE AND DEFENSE** list for 5 total items.
- -3d6 once on the SUPPLIES AND SUNDRIES list, 2d6 twice on the ODDITIES AND
- VALUABLES list and 1d6 five times on the TECHNIQUES list for 8 total items.
- -2d6 six times on the **ODDITIES AND VALUABLES** list for 6 total items.



You may have more than one stance of the same item the the exc**GUTS** of **DAMAGE** and **GUTS DEFENSE** items (see LIST 1, DAMAGE AND DEFENSE).

Extra Items

Each time any of the following is true, add 9 points to your pool if you're using point values or 3d6 to your dice pool if you're rolling:

—The sum of your **APPROACH SCORES** is 1. —The sum of your modifier for **BLOOD & GUTS** is ≤ 3 . —The sum of your **SKILL RANKS** is ≤ 4 .

For example, if the sum of your hero's **APPROACH SCORES** is 1 and the sum of their **SKILL RANKS** is 3 they have 18 additional points or 6d6 additional dice.

66

"A chicken?" the rogue asked incredulously. "What use do I have for a chicken?" "Let's just say it's very handy for dealing with a certain fowl-phobic baron," the stranger smiled.

CREATION

2 | HERO

CHAPTER

LISTS OF ITEMS

LIST 1 DAMAGE AND DEFENSE

DAMAGE ITEMS provide bonuses to damage whenever you attack a creature. Meanwhile, **DEFENSE ITEMS** reduce damage and also make it harder for you to be hit.

A **+0** item **[** next to usel**es**sisa average, **+2** is quite good and **+3** is tremendously helpful.

You may only have one stance of any particular **GUTS DAMAGE** or **GUTS DEFENSE ITEMS**—you can't have two instances of Critical Thinking, for example. If you roll a repeat, reroll.

- 2 Pitchfork [+o Blood Damage]
- **3** Memories of hardship [+1 Guts Defense]
- **4** Iron briefs [+1 Blood Defense]
- **5** Booming voice [+1 Blood Damag
- **6** Well-rounded education [+1 Guts Damage]
- **7** 8 darts [+1 Blood Damage each]
- 8 Dagger [+1 Blood Damage] and a toga [+1 Blood Defense]
- 9 Confidence [+1 Guts Damage]
 and personal growth
 [+1 Guts Defense]
- **10** Studded leather armor
 [+1 Blood Defense] and
 stoicism [+1 Guts Defense]
- **11** Devastating vocabulary [+2 Guts Damage]
- **2** Critical thinking [+2 Guts Defense]
- **13** Sturdy sword [+2 Blood Damage]
- **14** Crossbow [+2 Blood Damage]
- **15** Plate armor [+2 Blood Defense]
- **16** Heartwarming letter from dearly beloved friend [+3 Guts Defense]
- **17** Superior standards [+3 Guts Damage]
- **18** Flaming sword [+3 Blood Damage]

LIST 2 SUPPLIES AND SUNDRIES

SUPPLIES AND SUNDRIES help you explore and last longer in the adventure.

- **1** 3 days' rations
- **2** Artisan's tools and playing cards
- **3** Crowbar and lantern
- **4** 10-height rope, a rolled-up carpet and a bucket
- **5** Bedroll and local map
- **6** Large backpack and a blank book
- **7** Thieves' tools, disguise kit and manacles
- **8** Mirror and fine clothes
- **9** Traps and animal bait
- **10** Board games and a gallon of beer
- **11** Fishing pole, kindling and beeswax
- **12** Two-person tent and a shovel
- **13** Live hen; lays one egg every day
- **14** Alchemist's tools and one dose of a rare drug
- **15** Complete encyclopedia set
- **16** Spyglass and magic reagents
- **17** Stack of coded letters, a signet ring and a wardrobe of noble clothes
- **18** Never-tiring horse and riding gear

56

CREATION

2 | HERO

CHAPTER

LIST 3 **ODDITIES AND VALUABLES**

ODDITIES AND VALUABLES are exactly what it says on the tin: strange, fantastical yet oftentimes high-value items. Some may be magical in nature.

- **1** A seashell horn good luck charm
- **2** The bottom half of a dead donkey
- **3** Shrunken monkey heads
- **4** A songbird in a cage
- **5** A pouch of human teeth
- 6 A hat that always keeps your head dry
- 7 An unidentifiable and unbreakable ring
- 8 A heavy crown with oppressive aura
- **9** Worn skin and scales of a giant serpent
- **10** A constantly-glowing silk dress
- **11** The pet turtle of a local tyrant
- rror with shadowy beings in every 12 A reflection's background
- **13** A pair of glasses granting darkvision
- al of a di e being's blood 14 A
- **15** A fistful of seeds that when planted instantly become 6-height tall stalks
- **16** A Potion of Brawn that adds +2 to Blood Damage and +2 to Blood Defense for the next real-time hour

17 A handful of constantly-regenerating troll flesh. It's edible but the flavor is atrocious.

18 A telepathic yak



LISTS 4 AND 5

SPELLS & TECHNIQUES are rare and priceless special powers beyond normal hero skill.

Spells are directly linked to the **ARCANA** and represent the manipulation of unreality beyond mortals' comprehension. **TECHNIQUES** are directly linked to **FOCUS** representing the hero's personal willpower and spirit.

ARCANA manipulates the external world, **FOCUS** channels the ternal.

Multiple stances SPIELL or **TECHNIQUE** indicate how many times it may be cast. For example, with 2 instances of a **SPELL** you can cast it twice before needing replenishment.

Replenishing requires a **RITUAL** and restores all instances of a **SPELL** or **TECHNIQUE**. For example, if at any point you've held a maximum of 3 instances of a **TECHNIQUE** and you perform its **RITUAL**, all 3 instances are restored. **RITUALS** can be as mundane as sleeping all day or as strange as burying fingernails.

Information about enhancements, **RITUALS** plus details on each **SPELL** & **TECHNIQUE** are found in **Chapter 4**.

1	TRINKET	-	Minor	magical	effects	certain	to	delight	anyone.	

- **2 TRICK OF THE LIGHT** You mold light like water, creating auras and illusions.
- **3 SOUNDSHIFT** Sound is your plaything. You decide its shape.
- **4 LIFEBRINGER** Wounds can be healed through your hands' warm touch.
- **5** WHISPER A message, spoken to the ear, like a siren's song.
- **6 BIND WEAPON** Suddenly you feel it on your palm: the heft of a magical weapon.
- 7 UNMASK THE SELF Know the name and hidden desire of any one being you see.
- **8 SECRET DOOR** A portal appears behind the next door. Where does it lead?
- **9 BURN THE PAST** Remove the past hour's events from someone's memory.

10 MASTER OF ELEMENTS

- Air, earth, water and fire manipulated by your will.
- **11 LITTLE ESCAPOLOGIST** Disappear from sight.
- **12 PIERCE THE VEIL** See any place, any time.

13 MANIC HANDS

CREATION

HERO

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2

CHAPTER

- Arms and hands burst forth from your face, allowing more actions.
- **14 SHADOWBIND** Restrain a target with their own shadow.
- **15 COMPEL** Compel someone to act in strange or chaotic manner.
- **16 WINDSTEP** Step out and appear elsewhere at will to chase or flee danger.
- **17 BLACKOUT** Make others fall asleep.
- **18 SPIRIT PACT** You summon a spirit as your ethereal servant.
- **21 FROM DUST TO DUST** Craft anything you've seen from a handful of dust.
- **24 TRUE MIRACLE** Bring your wish to reality.

LIST 5 TECHNIQUES

1	ONLY ONES WHO KNOW Either everybody knows about your action or nobody does.					
2	UNCANNY ALARM - Ask the fates about an action's consequences.					
3	WEAVE THROUGH WATER - Walk or breathe through water.					
4	MEMORY SEED - Implant a false memory in someone.					
5	FLOWMOTION - Move fast—very fast.					
6	SAVING GRACE - Protect your allies by redirecting all damage to you.					
7	INSPIRATION Improve someone's next action by buoying them					
8	BIND MAGIC - Prevent someone from using Spells & Techniques.					
9	STONEWALL - Reduce all damage. Grow a thick skin—figuratively or literally.					
10	10 HEARTPIERCER - Your damage nores armor and defense.					
11	DEADLY FOCUS - Double your damage.					
12	REDO - Reroll the last Skill Check—whether yours or someone else's.					
13	TURN THE TIDE - Every action you take brings opportunity.					
14	14 DISPEL - Nullify the effects of a Spell or Technique.					
15	I5 INTERDICTION - Bar an opponent from using one or multiple Approaches.					
16	I6 FLUORESCENT TRANSCENDENCE Enhance all Spells & Techniques for a brief moment.					
17	7 NETHERWAVE - A pulse of energy so strong it knocks everyone off their feet.					
18	8 BECOME ONE - Uncover and obtain the Spells & Techniques of another being.					
21	DEFY THE FATES - Re d time.					
24	DOOMPAUSE - Hold off the Doom.					

Step 5: Answer Character-Building Questions

To flesh out your hero's personality and backstory, answer:

-What makes them different from others?

There are three rumors
 What was the most
 about them. What are
 they and who believes it?
 had to learn?

66

Doom forges bonds

of steel for those

its fire and fury.

minor level

major level

who have suffered

Share your answers with other players.

Step 6: Determine Bonds

BONDS represent two heroes' relationship, visualized through quadrants and boxes. Accruing **BOND** fills a quadrant—also called a *minor* level. Every box that gets filled represents a *major* level of **BOND**.



All possible levels of **BOND**

Having deeper levels of **BOND** is helpful. However, they can be asymmetric: your hero might be

 When you assist someone
 I SKILL CHECK you make their roll easier by a

 number equal to your major levels of BOND with them. You may also sacrifice one or

 more
 I nor levels to alskill CHECK rerolls.

BONDS can be **[**] creased during play whenever your hero does any of the following:





ACCEPT HARM OR SERIOUS RISK

ACCEPT INCONVENIENCE FOR AN ALLY

+1 minor level in the 1st box only. +2 minor le

For example, carrying out helpful favors; offering a useful resource to an ally; standing ground to protect them in Conflict; or taking on some bother on their behalf. +2 minor levels in the 1st or 2nd box. For example, jumping in front of a warlock's

eldritch blow; personally taking on a perilous risk for others; or giving up a crucial

opportunity or resource to prioritize an ally.

MAKING A PERMANENTLY LIFE-CHANGING, GREATLY DIFFICULT PERSONAL CHOICE, OR LIKELY FATAL SACRIFICE FOR OTHERS adds ***4** minor levels of **BOND**. This is the only way to fill up the 3rd box.

TO DETERMINE YOUR HERO'S BONDS

Choose one hero with whom you have 6 minor levels of **BOND**. Choose a second hero with whom you have 3 minor levels of **BOND**.

TO **RANDOMLY** DETERMINE YOUR HERO'S BONDS

Roll 3d6. Distribute that many levels of **BOND** between your hero and all their allies.

Regardless of method, explain your bonds. Does your hero... Greatly admire the other?Find the other hero intriguing?Become reminded of someone else from their past?

CREATION

2 | HERO

CHAPTER

AND DONE!

That's it—you've created a hero. Your last step is writing it all down on your character sheet.

Now your hero is ready for adventure.

STRONGER HEROES?

By default, Hero Creation results in ordinary, beginning adventurers, not worldbending warriors. In other tabletop games this is called "low-level." However, the GUIDE may choose to award heroes bonus EXPERIENCE POINTS (XP) so they may have additional distinctions and capabilities.

If the **GUIDE** wishes the heroes to be experienced at adventuring they may award **15 XP** to each of them; for a game with veterans, **30 XP**. See Chapter 3, **Evolving Your Hero** to learn about spending XP.



CHAPTER THREE

He had journeyed far. Traveled unimaginable distances. Bore scars that still bleed. All to meet the Pale Witch...and destroy her with his own hands. At last he can claim revenge for his daughters. At last he can sleep without their voices haunting him.

He readied his sword. He could feel the heat of its flame through his gauntlet. The ember magic still worked: good. He would melt the Witch's face off if need be.



Summary of Les

At set time intervals the **DOOMSDAY CLOCK** advances, heralding the end.

Skill Checks determine the success of risky actions with a chance of interesting success or failure. To succeed roll 1d6 and compare to THRESHOLD NUMBER (TN) equal to Skill Rank plus Approach Score; modified, if applicable, by Difficulty Modifier and/or Assist Bonus.

Rolls below **TN succeed** and above **fail**. For ties, choose: succeed with **CONSEQUENCE** or fail with **OPPORTUNITY**.

If you rolled **1** with a ranked skill, roll another **1d6**. If it's also a **1** your result is **flawless** and becomes a **SUCCESS WITH OPPORTUNITY**.

Sacrifice **3 BLOOD** or **3 GUTS** to upgrade a tied or failed result.

Assisting someone helps their Skill Check. Before they roll, add major levels of BOND to your ally's TN if you have an applicable SKILL. You can also sacrifice minor levels any time to allow a reroll.

Conflicts are fights or altercations where action sequence matters and is determined by what each characters plan to do (Initiative Category).

Characters standing ground.
 Those taking non-harmful actions.
 Those attacking others.
 Those using SPELLS or TECHNIQUES.
 Those moving far (> 2 heights).

Heroes can move up to **2 HEIGHTS freely** during their turn. Stacking **ADVANTAGES** helps improve others' **SKILL CHECK TN**. If attacking others, **damage** equals the **TN** of the attack plus any **BONUS** from **DAMAGE ITEMS**. **TN** is reduced by the **DEFENSE BONUS** of the target's armor plus applicable **DIFFICULTY MODIFIERS**.



If Blood or Guts become zero or less the hero still lives, though a subsequent hit will directly damage Approach Scores.

Multiple **APPROACH SCORES** can be hit at once. If all **APPROACH SCORES** are O choose: **die** or **live** with randomly rolled, life-altering consequences.

You can recover Blood & Guts.

Heroes can take breaks to recover BLOOD & GUTS through:

—SHORT REST (one in-story hour) to recover 1d6 BLOOD and 1d6 GUTS; or —LONG REST (up to 10 in-story hours) to either reroll 2d6 + modifier BLOOD & GUTS or distribute 7 points of health.

Heroes can only rest in safe places away from enemies.

XP can be spent to improve Approach Scores, Blood, Guts, and Skills. Rules help provide a consistent and rewarding experience for everyone. However, custom rulings can also create a more fulfilling experience for the group—ultimately, you are free to add, alter or even ignore rules. Every game of ARC is your own.

A. Skill Checks

Heroes in ARC move the story forward by interacting with the world around them. However, actions often have an element of uncertainty...even peril.

Player, whenever you attempt a risky action with a chance for an interesting success or failure you may be asked to make a **SKILL CHECK**, declaring a **SKILL** and **APPROACH** based on the intended outcome.

You must narrate how the **APPROACH** applies to the **SKILL**. **For example**, "I try to deduce secret art motifs from the markings on the altar" is ideal; "I observe creatively" is not.

EXAMPLE

SNEAKING PAST A TROLL? WHAT DO YOU DO? Creative+Tinker to jury-rig clockwork distractions? Careful+Coordination to move past with quiet, stealthy movement? Concerted+Culture to recall trolls have poor eyesight?

	Creative	Careful	Concerted
Knowledge Skill	Theorize, shift,	Assess, inquire,	Recall, restore,
	think laterally	analyze	overwrite
Social Skill	Charm, incite,	Reason, detail,	Intimidate, enforce,
	inspire	guide	invade
Physical Skill	Bedazzle, innovate, exceed expectations	Optimize, safeguard, follow best practice	Charge, endure, overwhelm
Pragmatic Skill	lnvent, adapt,	Soothe, refine,	Rush, withstand,
	experiment	survey	brute force
Prowess Skill	Explore, expand,	Sense, attune,	Memorize,
	create	investigate	remember, commit

The **SUM** of your **SKILL RANKS** and **APPROACH SCORE** determines the **THRESHOLD NUMBER (TN)**. **A higher TN is better** and reflects how achievable the task is for your hero. Going over the threshold is bad—and means you're way in over your head.

DIFFICULTY MODIFIER

Before you roll, the **TN** may be modified by the **GUIDE** reflecting the difficulty or favorability of your action and current circumstances.

+1 to TN [EASY]

You have good tools or ample preparations; the target has p **[** resistance; or the circumstances favor the action.

- —Lying to an admirer.
- —Picking a lock with no time pressure.—Noticing a shady person.

+O to TN [DIFFICULT]

The large majority of tasks.

- -Recalling obscure academic text.
- —Hitting an unarmored target.
- $-\ensuremath{\mathsf{Foraging}}$ for berries in the woods.

-1 to TN [VERY DIFFICULT]

You have inadequate or incorrect tools, or p preparations; target has effective defenses; or the action is high-risk in an unforgiving environment.

 Escaping the shadow guards.
 Improvising artwork with popsicle sticks for the artsnob prince.

-Reverse-engineering a complex trap under intense time pressure.



-2 to TN [STAGGERINGLY DIFFICULT]

The situation is even worse: current conditions actively hinder the task; the target has resistances specifically against this type of action; or it's completely mismatched against the circumstances.

Convincing the grand inquisitor to release high-profile prisoners.
Sneaking unprepared through the heavily fortified guard's barracks.

-3 to TN [IMPOSSIBLY DIFFICULT]

Well... you can certainly try. —Asking a dragon out on a date.



CHAPTER 3

CORE

RULE

CORE RULES

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CHAPTER

The knight felt her knees give way. She sank to the ground and stared at the empty sky. With her right hand on her lance and her left hand with his bloodied shroud, she made a promise. "I will finish our quest," she said, voice seeping grit. "Even through impossible odds. Even without you by my side."

ASSISTANCE

Before the roll is made, one other player may declare they'd like to assist in the SKILL CHECK. The assisting hero must have a relevant, helpful SKILL in this situation. The target's **SKILL CHECK'S TN** then increases by the major levels of **BOND** the assisting hero has with them.

If the assisting hero does not have an applicable SKILL they cannot assist. Only one ally can assist at a time.

Alternatively, any ally may sacrifice any minor levels of **BOND** to allow an immediate reroll. Regardless of outcome, the assisting player narrates how their hero is helping.

In summary, the TN is equal to the sum of:

the hero's ranks in the relevant Skill (+) their chosen Approach Score (+) a **Difficulty Modifier** set by the Guide (+) the major levels of Bond with an assisting hero

ROLL AND OUTCOME

Player, once the **TN** is known roll **1d6** to determine outcome. If the roll is under the TN it's a pure success—you succeed with no consequence.

FLAWLESS SUCCESS

If you rolled a 1 in a SKILL with at least one RANK, roll another 1d6. If it is also a 1 your result is *flawless* and becomes a SUCCESS WITH OPPORTUNITY.

You **succeed** with a **CONSEQUENCE** complicating the hero and their allies' situation, including:

- -Delay or inefficiency, such as taking so long that the guards are rounding the corner.
- -Permanent or temporary loss of resource, for example, having a weapon stuck in an enemy's armor.
- -Discord and misunderstanding, like a besmirched reputation with a merchant.
- -Overkill, such as harming an innocent onlooker due to spillover effects.

The **GUIDE** makes the call, but you can suggest an appropriate choice.

If the roll exceeds the TN the action *fails*. Depending on the stakes at hand, the **GUIDE** may also introduce a complication as a result.

You fail but are presented with an **OPPORTUNITY** improving the hero and their allies' situation, including:

- -Risk reduction, such as deescalating tension in the negotiations.
- -Risk redirection, like putting someone else on the spot.
- -Gaining trust or respect, for example, impressing the elven queen.
- -New knowledge, such as a secret
- weakness of the enemy manananggal.

If the roll is equal to the TN choose between the two:
UPGRADING THE OUTCOME

You may sacrifice **3 BLOOD** OR **3 GUTS**, whichever is situationally appropriate, to upgrade a non-successful **SKILL CHECK**. The following upgrades may occur:

Upgrading the

-A tied roll<mark>Outcome</mark> to a pure success.

-A failed roll may be upgraded to a success with **CONSEQUENCE** or a failure with **OPPORTUNITY**.

NOTE: you can rest to recover your BLOOD & GUTS. See Chapter 3, Life, Death and Naps to learn more.

ACTING AS A GROUP

If the heroes wish to tackle a task as a group (**for example**, scouring the unknown woods for supplies) the **GUIDE** can ask everyone to make **[[divisKhlL CHECKS**. Different **APPROACHES** and **SKILLS** may be used so long as they are relevant. If more than half of players succeed, the task is an overall success. However, each failed **CHECK** may incur unusual complications.

B. Conflict

CONFLICTS are unique situations where characters are at odds, danger is imminent, and victory is on the line. Imagine a tavern fight, a showdown with the boss or even a verbal beatdown from courtesans— **CONFLICTS** don't have to be physical in nature.

During a **CONFLICT**, anyone can make a difference and reactions shift on the fly. Every action can have an immediate effect on the situation, making their timing and sequence port**CONFLICT**'s special rules help manage this frenetic pace.

TURNS AND ROUNDS

In **CONFLICT**, everyone gets one **TURN** in a **ROUND**, representing their opportunity to act and affect the situation. Rounds begin with players deciding what to do individually or as a group, and end once everyone in the conflict has acted. Your choice of action, however, also decides when your turn happens within the round!

WHEN DOES CONFLICT END?

It ends when the threat of danger is over. Killing enemies doesn't have to be the "win" condition and may even incur consequences later on. Ending **CONFLICT** can be a matter of surviving until help arrives, carrying a valuable item across enemy lines or even distracting opponents until a ritual is complete.

66

words hit hard.

not to show it.

wince still escaped

on him—and now.

it was his turn to

ACTIONS YOU CAN TAKE

During your turn you may do any one action from below as well as freely move—but not flee—anywhere **[] 2hieights**. Injured or immobilized characters may have limited or even zero movement.

1. STAND GROUND

Any one attacking you or allies within a 2-height radius receive **-1** to their attack's **TN**. You may gain a minor level of **BOND** with the ally with every attack you foil this way, up to the first major level of **BOND**.

2. HARM OTHERS

Attack an enemy with a relevant **SKILL CHECK** :

DIFFICULTY MODIFIERS may apply if the situation is stacked against you or if the attack is done in the inadequate to the stack is done in the

You can try attacking with a **SKILL** other than those listed above, but it should only be doable **SKHL** is relevant, the enemy is vulnerable to its harm, and the situation allows it.

DEFENSE ITEMS reduce the attack's **TN** by their bonus rating. A +2 armor, **for example**, reduces **TN** by 2.

DAMAGE dealt in a successful attack is equal to **TN** plus **DAMAGE ITEM** bonus. **Thus**, if a hero succeeds at a **TN 4** attack with a +2 weapon, the total **DAMAGE** is 6.

3. NON-HARMFUL ACTIONS

A. CREATE AN ADVANTAGE **ADVANTAGES** give bonuses to the **TN** of subsequent **SKILL CHECKS** by allies.

Most of the time you'll need to succeed at a **SKILL CHECK** to create an **ADVANTAGE**. For example: distracting an enemy with **GUILE**, grappling an opponent with **PHYSIQUE**, or spotting and shouting the best ways of hitting an enemy through **TACTICS**.

If you succeed at the **SKILL CHECK** you improve your allies' **TN** by the **SKILL RANKS** used.

For example, if you have 2 **RANKS** in **GUILE** and deceived an enemy into thinking you were the real threat, allies may get +2 to attacks' **TN**.





ADVANTAGES from different allies may stack and apply to more than one opponent. If a hero throws sticky goo to restrain multiple enemies, **for example**, attacks targeting any of them get a **TN** bonus.

Enemies may attempt to remove **ADVANTAGES** on their turn.

CREATING ADVANTAGES WITHOUT SKILL CHECKS If your action is basic or already likely to succeed—like stringing tripwire away from the scuffle you can create the **ADVANTAGE** without a **SKILL CHECK**. If so:

- ADVANTAGES impairing
 opponents' SKILLS or defenses
 give +1 TN bonus.
- -ADVANTAGES preventing or nullifying opponents' SKILLS or defenses give +2 TN bonus.

3. NON-HARMFUL ACTIONS (continued)

B. ASSIST SOMEONE

You assist one ally's roll, adding your major levels of **BOND** to their **TN** if your hero has a relevant **SKILL**. This is especially useful if your major levels of **BOND** results in higher bonuses than creating an **ADVANTAGE**.

For example, if you have 3 major levels of **BOND** with someone you can add +3 to their **TN** without requiring any **SKILL** CHECK.

C. DO SOMETHING ELSE

This may include attempting to convince an enemy to stand down, performing a ritual while the **CONFLICT** is ongoing, or taking time to carefully study the enemy. A **SKILL CHECK** may apply.

A NOTE ABOUT SACRIFICING BONDS

3 | CORE RULES

CHAPTER

You may immediately sacrifice minor levels of **BOND** with another hero to allow a SKILL CHECK reroll. This does not use up an action.

4. USE SPELL OR TECHNIQUE

You perform a **SPELL** or **TECHNIQUE**. Every time you are attacked before your turn you must succeed at a random 1d6 roll to maintain concentration. The TN starts at 6 and is reduced by 1 with each **subsequent hit.** In other words, on the first attack you must roll under **TN** 6; on the second with **TN** 5; so on until your turn begins at which point your **SPELL** or **TECHNIQUE** takes effect.

SKILL CHECKS, if you roll Like above **TN** you fail. You cannot perform the **SPELL** or **TECHNIQUE**, though no instance consumed.

Every attack, even if it misses, incurs this roll.

5. MOVE FAR

If the hero isn't being attacked or targeted they may move up to **5 additional heights**. Otherwise, you must succeed at a SKILL CHECK for example, with ACROBATICS or **COORDINATION**—to move. Alternately you can opt to move thout the **SKILL CHECK**, but all enemies within 2 heights can roll to attack you as you escape their grasp.

INITIATIVE CATEGORY

Every round, characters act in sequence based on intent. This is called **INITIATIVE CATEGORY**. Multiple characters can act in the same CATEGORY. Once everyone in that group has acted, the next takes place.

-First: characters and creatures standing ground. -Second: those taking non-harmful actions. —**Third:** those attacking or harming others. -Fourth: those using a SPELL or TECHNIQUE. -Last: those moving far (more than 2 heights).

Before every round begins, everyone has the opportunity to strategize and decide who goes in which **INITIATIVE CATEGORY**, and how to sequence heroes within each. Once you've decided as a party, the **GUIDE** or a designated player can begin calling out each **CATEGORY**.

During the round, players can change their plan for their turn any time but can no longer take the same action covered by a past **INITIATIVE CATEGORY**.

Hero actions always resolve before non-hero actions unless the party was taken by surprise, in which case all non-hero actions resolve first in the first round.

The mendicant demon jumped over the hordes of roaring djinn, *casting about* paper marked with *her special seal. Immediately the* slips of paper glowed and rose up to form an impenetrable *wall, protecting her as she hurriedly* opened the secret door.

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CHAPTER 3 | CORE RULE

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C. Life, Death and Naps

LIFE & DEATH: FALLEN HEROES

Whenever a hero's **BLOOD** or **GUTS** is reduced to zero or less, the hero still stands though the next damage to that stat is applied to **APPROACH SCORES** instead. Multiple APPROACH SCORES may be damaged at once. If all APPROACH SCORES become zero the hero **FALLS**.

For example, say a hero has +2 CREATIVE, +1 CAREFUL and +0 CONCERTED. If their **BLOOD** is taken below zero in one hit, they can still act and move, but if their **BLOOD** is hit again with at least 3 damage, their **APPROACH SCORES** are depleted and they FALL.

If a hero falls you have the option of letting them live or die.

If you choose LIFE your hero becomes incapacitated and unconscious but fully re es nutes and one -story hour. Restorbed's APPROACH after 5 real-time **SCORES** to their last healthy value.

Roll **1d6** for an additional consequence below. Your hero...

- 1 can no longer verbally or visually communicate but gains telepathy.
- 2 bears a constantly bleeding wound that deals no damage.
- **3** gains an unnerving presence; children and animals flee from them.
- **4** has a prophetic vision of three pale girls clawing their way up from the soil.
- **5** no longer blinks and must constantly apply water to their eyes.
- 6 may now speak to the dead.

If you obtain a duplicate consequence, reroll. Whatever the result, narrate its effect on your hero. If a hero suffers all **6** consequences they die—permanently.

If you choose **DEATH** every other hero gains **EXPERIENCE POINTS** (discussed in full next section) equal to **thrice** their minor levels of **BOND** with the fallen hero. The **DOOMSDAY CLOCK** consumes one **MOMENT** and you create a new hero.

REST AND RECOVERY

Heroes may replenish **BLOOD & GUTS** by resting in a safe place away from enemies. A **SHORT REST** (a nap lasting 2 real-time nutes and one -story hour) recov 1d6 BLOOD and 1d6 GUTS.

A LONG REST (5 real-time] nutes and n-story hours minus the lowest health modifier) lets you roll new values for **BLOOD & GUTS**_2d6 plus its modifier. If you reroll, roll *both* stats. If you do not reroll, your hero instead recovers **7** health points you can freely distribute between **BLOOD & GUTS**.

D. Evolving Your Hero

EXPERIENCE POINTS (XP) represent growing adventuring expertise. Players gain **3 XP each per real-time hour** for games with **1-3 SESSIONS** and **12 XP each per** session for longer campaigns. Hourly **XP** is awarded immediately.

SPENDING XP

Players can spend **XP** anytime. Unspent XP does not expire.

- -Increasing an **APPROACH SCORE** by one costs **3x** its next value **XP**.
- —Increasing a SKILL RANK by one costs 2x its next value XP.
- -Increasing a modifier for **BLOOD** or **GUTS** by one costs its **new value XP**.

BONDS are creased through hero interaction **XP**otSee **Chapter 2, Step 6**: Determine Bonds

Items held by a fallen hero remain on their body but all instances of **SPELLS**

& TECHNIQUES are lost.

WHAT HAPPENS TO

INVENTORY?

RULES

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CHAPTER

CORE RULES

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CHAPTER

66 The crow priest blessed the treefolk before him. He touched their faces, overcome with emotion at their *unwavering sacrifice;* sublime reverence at their final march to save the dying world.

> "Will the ancestors greet us in the aftergarden?" a young warrior asked tremulously.

The priest nodded. "And many more blessings await," he said, with loving deception.



CHAPTER FOUR

SDELLS& Techniques

SPELLS & **TECHNIQUES** are powerful, but rare—very rare. They shape a hero's life, forcing them to perform strange rituals attempting to grasp infinitely fickle and fragile fragments of unreality and pure will.

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She wove magic into her very hair; manifested miracles with every breath. An incarnate of arcane power itself—but humble, so very humble, that it was often difficult to believe she could end life with a simple wink of her third eye.

Whether during or outside CONFLICT, heroes may perform SPELLS & TECHNIQUES impacting the situation.

SPELLS & TECHNIQUES are obtained during Hero Creation, although it is possible to create nel nstances and custom ones.

A. PERFORMING Spells & Techniques

When using **SPELLS** or **TECHNIQUES** you can perform either its base or enhanced version. Casting the base version immediately applies its effect, consuming one **[**] stance.

Enhanced versions, while significantly more powerful, require a **SKILL CHECK** and in many cases a reduction of **GUTS**. You cannot sacrifice more **GUTS** than what you currently have. If you succeed, an instance **[11]** consumed. If you fail nothing happens and the *instance is still consumed*. Additionally, you cannot perform the same **SPELL** or **TECHNIQUE** again for **15 real-time minutes**.

B. REPLENISHING Spells & Techniques

SPELLS & TECHNIQUES can be replenished even if you have spent every instance. All instances are restored at the end of a LONG REST if a related RITUAL is performed by then. Failure to do so simply means it does not refresh.
Note: you only can gain as many instances as your maximum. For example, you cannot replenish 3 instances if the most you've ever had is one.

ALTERNATE RULING: REPLENISH THROUGH REST

If you do not wish to use rituals, recover one instance of a **SPELL** or **TECHNIQUE** per five hours of long rest instead.

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His eyes grew with terror as the sorceress' knife-sharp

bones surfaced from beneath her skin. He wanted to scream, but her strange smile transfixed and rooted him in place.

C. LEARNING Spells & Techniques

It's possible to obtain additional instances, learn new **SPELLS** or **TECHNIQUES** or even create custom ones. Your hero should have access to a source that can teach them such as a spellbook, manual or mentor.

Every **15 real-time minutes** you may roll a special **SKILL CHECK** with **TN** equal to pure **ARCANA** or **FOCUS**—do not add **APPROACH**. The number of successes you need for a new **SPELL** or **TECHNIQUE** is equal to its **COMPLEXITY**: an estimate of how powerful it is.

COMPLEXITY





Highly useful in day-to-day situations and conflict. Critical and can Affect the entire turn the tide world. most situations and conflict.

In this chapter, this rating is listed next to the **SPELL** or **TECHNIQUE** name as daggers (**********). For custom **SPELLS & TECHNIQUES** you and the **GUIDE** should decide on its **COMPLEXITY**.

87

TECHNIQUES

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CHAPTER 4 | SPELLS

TECHNIQUES

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SPELLS

4

CHAPTER

For example, if you are trying to learn a COMPLEXITY 3 TECHNIQUE, you must have three successful SKILL CHECKS at least 15 real-time minutes apart with TN equal to pure FOCUS.

Succeeding the required number of **SKILL CHECKS** adds an instance to for your inventory and also increases the maximum **i** stances you can hold by one.

After learning the stance your body taxed. You cannot learn a new SPELL or TECHNIQUE for 15 x the Complexity real-time minutes.

ACRONYMS & PLAYER RITUALS

For the rest of the book, **SPELL & TECHNIQUE** descriptions use the acronyms **REM** for "Real-time Minutes" and **TIC** for "Turns in Conflict".

Descriptions also include the ritual, which must be completed by the hero by default. However, those you must do as a *player* are labeled accordingly. You and the **GUIDE** may freely alter or replace these.

LiSt O₽ **Spells**

Bind Weapon † 🕇

Summon a +2 weapon. Its specific nature up to your imagination flaming swords are nice. This weapon can neither be destroyed nor disarmed.

ENHANCED VERSION

stance your body is*Requirement*: 5 Guts + Arcana n a new **SPELL** *Effect*: Summon a +5 weapon.

RITUAL Break a non-magical weapon gifted to you by someone else.

Blackout †††

All creatures you see **a** 2-heightradius sphere of your choice fall into an uninterruptible (save by magic) sleep for 15 REM or 5 TIC.

ENHANCED VERSION

Requirement: 5 Guts + Arcana Effect: Lasts 30 REM or 10 TIC instead.

RITUAL Sleep an entire -story day.

Burn the Past 🕴 🕆 🕇

Target a creature you see. Their memory of the past in-story hour is erased.

ENHANCED VERSION *Requirement:* 3 Guts + Arcana *Effect:* Erase the past 3 in-story hours.

RITUAL Burn a memento or letter from someone you dearly miss.

Compel †††

Target a creature you see. Roll 1d6 and consult the list below. That creature compelled to the outcome for 10 REM or 3 TIC. They...

- laugh uncontrollably and cannot act nor speak but may move.
- **2** attack their allies.
- **3** revel in nostalgia doing nothing.
- **4** are convinced they are a fugitive and may attempt to flee.
- **5** speak only the truth.
- **6** have a burning desire to eat dirt.

ENHANCED VERSION

 Requirement: 5 Guts + Arcana

 Effect: Pick the outcome

 I stead of rolling.

RITUAL

For 30 REM, always agree when asked.

From Dust to Dust #### ENHANCED VERSION

Requirement: 7 Guts + Arcana, 5 handfuls of dust

Effect: Create anything you've seen over the past in-story day. The creation is an exact replica. After an in-story hour this object disintegrates.

RITUAL

Coat your body with the ashes of someone you loved for at least an instory day.

CHAPTER 4 | SPELLS & TECHNIQUE

Lifebringer 👎 🕇

You or any creature you touch gain 4 Blood and 4 Guts.

ENHANCED VERSION

Requirement: Arcana only Effect: Heal 7 Blood and 7 Guts instead.

RITUAL

Consume at least 1 handful of a humanoid's flesh.

Little Escapologist 👎

You turn completely invisible for 10 REM or 3 TIC. You generate neither smell nor sound.

ENHANCED VERSION

Requirement: 3 Guts + Arcana Effect: Lasts 15 REM or 5 TIC instead.

RITUAL

TECHNIQUES

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4 | SPELLS

CHAPTER

Introduce yourself to at least 10 strangers.

Manic Hands 👎 🕇

Four arms and hands appear out of nowhere, connected to your face for 10 REM or 3 TIC. You still see, speak and breathe normally.

You may perform 2 Skill Checks per TIC while this effect lasts. If used outside Conflict you gain +1 to TN of Skill Checks for actions that benefit from extra hands like climbing. You also gain +1 to TN of Impose Skill Checks but -1 to Charisma Skill Checks.

ENHANCED VERSION

Requirement: 5 Guts + Arcana Effect: 6 arms appear. You may now do 3 Skill Checks per TIC. Non-Conflict effects remain the same.

RITUAL

Hack off all of someone else's limbs.

Master of Elements † 🕇

Target 3 creatures you see standing within 2 heights of each other. They are beset by air, earth, water or fire. You may also damage them by up to 2d6 Blood.

ENHANCED VERSION

Requirement: 3 Guts + Arcana *Effect:* Choose: target 5 beings OR increase damage to 3d6.

RITUAL

Invent an original riddle or two-stanza poem mentioning an element (as player).

Pierce the Veil 👎 🕇

Choose a specific time and place no farther than an in-story hour in the past and a mile or 1.6 km away. You must be able to visualize the location. You may see what happened as if you were there.

ENHANCED VERSION

Requirement: 3 Guts + Arcana Effect: See up to 3 in-story hours into the past and up to 3 miles or 4.8km away.

RITUAL

Keep eyes closed for 3 REM (as player).



Secret Door † 🕇

The next door you encounter opens to a random place you've never seen or been, reverting back to normal once shut.

ENHANCED VERSION

Requirement: 7 Guts + Arcana Effect: The portal opens to a location where an Omen is taking place. If all Omens are resolved it opens to where the Doom

RITUAL Consume a door.



Shadowbind **†††**

Target a creature you see. Their shadow animates, becomes corporeal and immobilizes them. Attacks targeting them gain +2 to TN. Lasts 10 REM or 3 TIC.

ENHANCED VERSION

Requirement: 3 Guts + Arcana Effect: Lasts 15 REM or 5 TIC instead.

RITUAL

Stay in shadow for at least six continuous in-story hours. Time spent asleep or unconscious does not count.

Soundshift 👎

Create an auditory illusion centered anywhere thin 2 heights from you and audible up to 3 heights.

ENHANCED VERSION

Requirement: 1 Guts + Arcana *Effect:* Increase the effect radius to 5 heights.

RITUAL

Speak with an altered pitch or cadence for 3 REM (as player).

Spirit Pact 👎 🕈 🕇

Summon a spirit as a loyal, ethereal servant. Their Approach Scores are 2 and they have 2 Ranks in three random Skills. Their Blood & Guts are both 6. They take direct orders only from you and disappear once dismissed or if all their Approach Scores become zero or less. This spirit can pass through walls and other tangible materials but may also become corporeal on command.

ENHANCED VERSION

Requirement: 7 Guts + Arcana Effect: Choose the Skills.

RITUAL

Permanently tattoo or mark a visible part of your body with the name of a spirit or post-mortal creature.

92

TECHNIQUES

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4 | SPELLS

CHAPTER

Trick of the Light 👎

Choose: create a visual illusion no larger than I cubic height OR summon a sphere of light up to a height in diameter. The illusion can be dynamic and move commanded, while the light sticks annoyingly close to you and brightly illuminates everything up to thrice its diameter away. The light dims when covered. Both last until dismissed.

ENHANCED VERSION

Requirement: 3 Guts + Arcana Effect: Increase the effect to 3 heights.

RITUAL

Convince a non-ally of a fabricated fact OR bring someone's lies to light.

Trinket 📍

TECHNIQUES

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4 | SPELLS

CHAPTER

You create a minor magical effect lasting 15 REM or 5 TIC on any one item no bigger than two handfuls. It can float up to a height, change color, create small sparks, become slightly hotter or colder or have a different

ENHANCED VERSION

smell.

Requirement: 1 Guts + Arcana Effect: Lasts 30 REM or 7 TIC instead.

RITUAL

Craft a simple item **1** th paper, clay, another physical material or even music and light (as player).

 True Miracle
 # # # # #

 ENHANCED VERSION

 Requirement: 7 Guts + Arcana

Effect: State a wish in-story. The Guide fulfills it though they are not bound to follow its intent—only its wording. For example, if you say "I wish everyone lived forever" the Guide can grant immortality to all but not eternal youth.

On a different note you can say "I wish I had a loving pet" and the Guide can simply give you an adorable capybara. The simpler the **[[** sh the more straightforward the fulfillment should be; the more it attempts to bend reality the more likely catastrophic consequences will occur.

RITUAL

Obtain a tooth or fingernail from seven rare and auspicious creatures. Bury them under full moonlight in seven locations that have seen bloodshed or tearshed.



Unmask the Self 👎 🕇

Target a creature you see. The Guide tells you their true name and heart's deepest desire.

ENHANCED VERSION

Requirement: 3 Guts + Arcana Effect: Target up to 3 creatures instead.

RITUAL

Write your name and heart's desire on a piece of paper and crumple it (as player).

Whisper †

Choose a creature **1** thin 5 heights who hears a message from you (no longer than 25 words) as whispered in their ear. The target may immediately respond back in a similar manner.

ENHANCED VERSION

Requirement: 3 Guts + Arcana Effect: The effect expands to 25 heights (around 140 feet or 42 meters).

RITUAL

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4 | SPELLS

CHAPTER

Speak in a whisper for 3 REM (as player).

Windstep 👎 🕇

Teleport anywhere sible sible thin 10 heights (around 56 feet or 17 meters). Creatures holding or touching you also teleport with you.

ENHANCED VERSION

Requirement: 3 Guts + Arcana Effect: Teleport within 25 heights (around 140 feet or 42 meters) even if you cannot see your destination so long as you have a visual in your mind.

RITUAL

Jump over a newborn.

"Is it possible to save ghosts from death?" the crown
lich asked. Her disciple
scratched his head, confused. "No, master. They're already dead."

"Just as we ourselves are beyond saving from Doom," she smiled. "The world's bitter truth. But still," she spoke, gliding above the bodies. "We fight regardless."

LiSt O₽ **Techniques**

Become One †††

ENHANCED VERSION

Requirement: 3 Guts + Focus Effect: Target a creature you see. Gain an instance of all their Spells & Techniques.

RITUAL

Sleep inside a wooden box with a dead crow and a full-length mirror. The next day, bury the box and its contents.

Bind Magic †††

Target a creature you see. They cannot perform Spells or Techniques for 10 REM or 3 TIC.

ENHANCED VERSION

Requirement: 3 Guts + Focus Effect: Effect lasts 15 REM or 5 TIC.

RITUAL

Burn a page from someone else's book of Spells or Technique. **Deadly Focus † † † †** Double the damage you inflict for 10 REM or 3 TIC.

ENHANCED VERSION

Requirement: 5 Guts + Focus Effect: Choose: triple your damage effect lasts 15 REM or 5 TIC.

RITUAL

Lose half or more Blood or Guts in one hit.

Defy the Fates †††† ENHANCED VERSION

 Requirement: 7 Guts + Focus

 Effect: Re
 I d time up to one
 I -story

 hour in the past. You and your allies

 retain stats, inventory and memories.

 Everything and everyone else reverts.

RITUAL

Roll 2d6. Reduce the total of your Approach Scores and Skill Ranks by that amount.

Dispel † 🕇 🕇

Undo the effect of the last Spell or Technique performed.

RITUAL

Keep a magical artifact continuously close to you for an in-story day. The artifact can't be reused to replenish Dispel again afterwards.

Doompause †††††

Requirement: 7 Guts + Focus Effect: The next time the Doomsday Clock would advance nothing happens.

RITUAL

TECHNIQUES

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SPELLS

4

CHAPTER

Watch an ally die.

Flowmotion 👎 🕇

Move twice as far for the next 10 REM or 3 TIC. Your blurred motion imposes -1 TN to efforts to restrain or stop you. You gain +1 to TN of Acrobatics and Coordination Skill Checks and act first in rounds of Conflict, regardless of your intended action.

ENHANCED VERSION

Requirement: 3 Guts + Focus *Effect:* Lasts for 15 REM or 5 TIC instead.

RITUAL Don't move for 1 REM (as player).

Fluorescent Transcendence +++

For the next 3 REM or TIC, you and your allies' Spells & Techniques are automatically enhanced; no Guts reduction or Skill Check required.

ENHANCED VERSION

Requirement: 5 Guts + Focus Effect: Lasts 10 REM or 3 TIC instead.

RITUAL

Dance th a corpse.

Heartpiercer **† †** For the next 10 REM or 3 TIC ignore enemies' defense bonuses.

ENHANCED VERSION

Requirement: 3 Guts + Focus Effect: Lasts 15 REM or 5 TIC instead.

RITUAL

Refrain from bearing any weaponry or wearing armor over an in-story day.

Inspiration 👎

Target a creature you see to receive +2 to the TN of their next Skill Check.

ENHANCED VERSION

Requirement: 3 Guts + Focus Effect: Target three beings.

RITUAL

Give an uplifting message to someone in the table (as player; may be done privately).



Interdiction †††

Target a creature you see **1** thin 2 heights and pick an Approach. For 15 REM or 5 TIC they cannot use that Approach in Skill Checks, including attacks.

ENHANCED VERSION

Requirement: 7 Guts + Focus *Effect:* Prevent target from using two Approaches instead.

RITUAL

Use only your lowest-scored Approach for 30 REM.

Memory Seed **† †** Through your charm and willpower, plant the seeds of a false yet vivid memory in a target you see.

ENHANCED VERSION

Requirement: 3 Guts + Focus Effect: Choose three targets instead.

RITUAL

Permanently forget a memory important to you.

Netherwave 👎 🕇 🕇

Enemies within 2 heights suffer a wave of overwhelming force dealing 8 damage, ignoring defense, to both Blood & Guts. They are knocked back 1 height.

ENHANCED VERSION

Requirement: 5 Guts + Focus Effect: You deal 12 damage

RITUAL Land a non-magical killing blow.

Only Ones Who Know 👎

Choose: everybody within 5 heights knows about your next Skill Check OR no one 1 11.

ENHANCED VERSION

Requirement: 3 Guts + Focus *Effect:* Effect applies to 3 Skill Checks.

RITUAL

Write a recap of the past in-story day and make a simple drawing to accompany it (as player).

TECHNIQUES

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4 | SPELLS

CHAPTER

Redo ††† Redo the last roll, regardless of who made it.

ENHANCED VERSION

Requirement: 3 Guts + Focus *Effect:* Modify the reroll +/- I TN.

RITUAL

Intentionally fail a crucial Skill Check.

Saving Grace † 🕇

Target an ally you see. Any Skill Check, Spell or Technique targeting them targets you instead for 15 REM or 5 TIC.

ENHANCED VERSION

Requirement: 3 Guts + Focus *Effect:* Target all allies.

RITUAL

TECHNIQUES

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SPELLS

4

CHAPTER

Witness a creature's death.

Stonewall ††

For the next 15 REM or 5 TIC reduce all damage to you by 1. Choose: your skin grows stone, scales or leather for the Technique's duration.

ENHANCED VERSION

Requirement: Focus only Effect: Reduce damage by 2.

RITUAL

Start a bare knuckle brawl with unsuspecting strangers.

Turn the Tide ††† All your Skill Checks have Opportunity for 10 REM or 3 TIC. If the Skill Check would have been a failure opportunity it becomes a pure success instead.

ENHANCED VERSION Requirement: 3 Guts + Focus Effect: Effect lasts 15 REM or 5 TLC.

RITUAL

Make a difficult promise come true.



Weave through Water †

RITUAL

Wash someone a river or lake.

Uncanny Alarm Describe an action you can take.

The Guide 🛿 ll tell you what its consequences may be.

ENHANCED VERSION

Requirement: Focus only *Effect:* The Guide tells you what action can help improve the current situation.

RITUAL

Sway a non-ally to adopt a genuinely useful life advice.

Choose: you can walk on water OR breathe underwater for 10 REM or 3 TIC.

ENHANCED VERSION

Requirement: Focus only Effect: Effect lasts 15 REM or 5 TLC.

CHAPTER FIVE

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She knelt over the stone pool. Her wizened arms gripped its sides as her eyes struggled to focus. The reflection staring back at her grinned and flashed its fangs. It was younger, smoother, more beautiful—her exact face thirty years ago—but she was unaffected. She knew what she came for. She leaned in, lips almost touching the surface, whispering to her dread reflection, "I know you. I know your power. Tell me the Magus' weakness. I offer you my life in return." This chapter empowers the **GUIDE** to set up and run a game of ARC. While most of the **1** formation help with specific tasks or details essential in a game, this toolkit also discusses principles for fulfilling and sustainable games.

A. Ratings and Scales

The following section summarizes and compiles various ratings and scales commonly used in this game.

APPROACH SCORES

Higher is better; determines TN. +0 means no aptitude +1 is average +2 is gifted +3 is expert

SKILL RANKS

Higher is better; determines TN. +0 means no skill literacy

- +1 is average
- +2 is gifted

+3 is expert

SKILL CHECK DIFFICULTY MODIFIER

Determines how challenging a **SKILL CHECK** is. **DIFFICULTY MODIFIERS** can be applied based on the overall situation and the following criteria.

+1 to TN [Easy] Hero has good tools or ample preparations; the target has poor resistance; or the circumstances favor the action. *Picking a lock with no time pressure.*

+0 to TN [Difficult] The large majority of tasks—the default difficulty. *Foraging for berries in the woods.*

-1 to TN [Very difficult] Hero has inadequate or incorrect tools, or poor preparation; target has effective defenses; or action is high-risk in an unforgi genvironment. *Reverse-engineering a complex trap under intense time pressure.*

-2 to TN [Staggeringly difficult]

The situation is even worse: current conditions actively hinder the task; the target has resistances specifically against this type of action; or it's completely mismatched against the circumstances. *Sneaking unprepared through the heavilyfortified guard's barracks.*



-3 to TN [Impossibly difficult]

As difficult as asking a dragon out on a date.

When in doubt, you may also opt to just reduce **TN** by 1 for each of the conditions below:

—the hero has insufficient tools, incorrect assumptions, or a relevant impairment. *—the target* of the action has resistances or defenses against this type of action. *—the action or conditions* are perilous, haphazard, or woefully inadequate.

DAMAGE AND DEFENSE ITEMS

Directly increases damage (for **DAMAGE ITEMS**) or reduces **TN** of an attack (for **DEFENSE**).

- +1 is average
- +2 is quite good
- +3 is tremendously helpful

+o is still useful as the item still counts for **WEAPONRY SKILL CHECKS**; otherwise not having a weapon incurs **DIFFICULTY**.

SPELL & TECHNIQUE COMPLEXITY

Indicates power level and successful **SKILL CHECKS (TN = PURE ARCANA** or

FOCUS) needed to learn ne instance or custom SPELL or TECHNIQUE; one SKILL CHECK per 15 REM.

- 1 -lowly but useful.
- 2 highly useful in day-to-day situations and conflict.
- 3 critical and can turn the tide in situations and conflict.
- 4 affect the entire world.

CHAPTER 5 | GUIDE TOOLKIT



B. Creating Custom Characters and Adversaries

To make a custom character or adversary use the table below to assign stats based on how powerful you think they are. Note these are only stats—you still have complete freedom regarding their motivation, personality and mannerisms.

	Weak	Average	Strong	Powerful	Monstrous	
Max Blood	5	7-10	15-20	27-32	40+	
Max Guts	5	7–10	15-20	27-32	40+	
Approach Scores	+0	+1	+2	+3	+4	
Skill Ranks	+0	+1	+2	+3	+4	
Damage	+0	+1	+2	+3	+4	
Defense	+0	+1	+2	+3	+4	
Max Spells & Techniques per Complexity Rating						
Complexity 1	1 instance	1-2 instances				
Complexity 2		1 instance	1-2 instances	2+ instances	2+ instances	
Complexity 3			1 instance	1-2 instances	2+ instances	
Complexity 4					???	

A character can be weak in some aspects, strong in others. You can also create custom **SPELLS** or **TECHNIQUES** as stand-in for unique powers.

GUIDE TOOLKIT

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CHAPTER

C. Guide to Running ARC

SEVEN PRINCIPLES

Running fulfilling and sustainable games relies on much more than memorizing rules.

Regardless of your experience level in running games, and whether you're at the start of Hero Creation or at **DOOM'S** end, keep the following principles in mind.

PRINCIPLE 1 EVERYONE'S A PLAYER

PRINCIPLE ZERO BE A RESPECTFUL, COMPASSIONATE HUMAN BEING

Enable a respectful, compassionate playgroup by being one such person yourself. This means, among other things, acknowledging diverse identities and ideas, checking in and listening to boundaries and concerns and taking a stance against bigotry. There are many other ways to be excellent, but it comes from a willingness to be a caring human being.

Don't be afraid to ask this of the other players as well. You can share this paragraph to set expectations.



GUIDE, you help facilitate the game...but you're also still a player. **You're not exempt from having fun**, and the other players are not exempt from contributing to the narrative. You have different roles but everybody's here to make stories and enjoy.

This means other players aren't enemies or subordinates. Even if their actions accidentally topple your carefully laid-out plans, that's okay. That's because you should...

PRINCIPLE 2 : LET IT GO

Give them a breathing world with leads to the main dilemma—but don't succumb to the temptation of over-preparing for every contingency. **Create beginnings. Don't obsess over endings.** Let it go.

PRINCIPLE 3 : PLAYER AGENCY, MEANING AND SIGNIFICANCE

Create opportunities for *all* players to impact the story; make it a priority to **nourish a sense of meaning and significance in their actions.** When heroes act, make sure the world responds; when players hatch a daring plan, reward their initiative in the story development even if the plan itself goes off the rails.

PRINCIPLE 4 : RULINGS OVER RULES

As the **GUIDE** your role involves making sure that rules are being followed. However, **rulings take precedence over rules**. This means if the rules need to be bent—for example, you want to subtly change an **OMEN** or even the nature of the **DOOM** midgame—or decisions beyond the scope of the rules need made, you have the privilege of making a custom ruling that keeps the story interesting for everybody.

PRINCIPLE 5: SIMPLY COMMUNICATE

Honesty and open communication are better than suffering in silence alone. If you're not sure what other players want, if somebody doesn't seem to be engaging, if you need to take a 10-minute break, check in and ask—playing together as a group should be done atop a foundation of communication.

PRINCIPLE 6 : YOU GROW THROUGH INSPIRATION AND ACTION

Books, films, even comedy sketches and other media can be a fantastic source of inspiration for stories and plot points. However, while you can immerse yourself in ideas and tips on being a good **GUIDE**, **the most effective way to grow is to just do it**. But please remember that...



PRINCIPLE 7 IT'S OK TO FAIL

Despite best well-meaning efforts, mistakes are evitable. But stories car still carry on, regardless of flaws. Your storymaking journey will only continue to bloom as you learn from stakes, continue to run stories and become more comfortable building immersive arcs with fellow players.

RUNNING THE GAME

Every game **[[** your own. Your role as **GUIDE** evolves based on the players and the kind of story everybody wants to play. Regardless, there are a few universal guidelines on things you can do before, during and after a game. The section **DURING THE GAME**, in particular, discusses typical decisions you'd have to make during a session.

These tips are not set in stone: you have the freedom to adapt, amend, or discard according to your needs.

FOSTERING A COMPASSIONATE SPACE

Principle Zero—being a respectful, compassionate human being—seems simple enough, but the most surprising thing is how difficult it can be in practice.

Respect, compassion, and ultimately safety can mean respecting each other's identities and boundaries, being aware of and avoiding triggers, the willingness to listen and—perhaps the most difficult—the readiness to open difficult conversations to uphold these values.

If someone makes you or others feel unsafe or disrespected, you have the power to check in, reinforce boundaries, or ultimately remove a problem player to protect the space.

Raising these conversations for safety can also be initiated by anyone, not just you. There's no need to wait for the situation to escalate...a small check-in, a quick heads-up early on can help improve the group's safety even without waiting for someone to suffer.

1. BEFORE THE GAME

REVIEW THE DOOM. Plot out a few rough ideas for how it progresses-with or without player involvement. Remember: the **DOOM** exists separately from the heroes and can evolve the background.

REVIEW THE OMENS. These are your subplots and side quests. Think about how you'll integrate them to the adventure and exploration.

In an **OMEN** about missing children, for **example**, maybe they meet a mother or a school teacher as non-hero characters. However, try to keep this organic and natural. It helps if you...

IDENTIFY THE MOTIVATIONS OF KEY CHARACTERS OR FACTIONS. You can even flesh out a characters with stats, personality and even dialogue but be prepared not to use them as is.

LASTLY, CREATE A HOOK. The heroes are called to adventure...how? Did someone hire them? Is there a shared concern they can't ignore? Will a revelation set events in motion-or a secret, curious mystery?

2. DURING THE GAME

GUIDE, your task during a game session is generally threefold: set the scene, respond to hero action (or inaction) and adjust the story.

A. SET THE SCENE

Describe the details necessary to empower all players. How can they talk to the brooding gentleman in the corner if they don't know he's there? If you want, add details that evoke: light, sound, atmosphere, even the dust and smell of mildew.

When describing the scene **don't** underestimate other players'

contributions. If you and the players lling, you can ask them for details are about the world or their surroundings with questions such as:

- -If you've been here before, what do you know about this place?
- -Your hero has a tie to this place, right? What's the most memorable aspect here?
- -Does this relate to your hero's backstory? What do you remember as a result of this situation?

You also roleplay non-hero characters. Non-hero characters can have interesting mannerisms like a raspy voice, an arm a cast or a favorite expression. They can even mimic characters from books. TV shows or movies—though oftentimes it's a distinct, internally consistent personality that makes non-hero characters more memorable than most.

B. RESPOND TO HERO ACTION (OR INACTION)

Once they've responded, what happens? If they punch the squire does he punch back? And if heroes aren't compelled to act are there ramifications?

Action and inaction should have

weight and consequence. Even a failed **SKILL CHECK** should move the story forward. If a hero fails to sneak into Ilain's headquarter maybe guards the appear and accost the party's noblin friend. Introduce complications.

Don't be afraid to ask questions and nudge the other players into a more clearly articulated response if their action is too vague.

—What do you do now? -How will you investigate? -What are you trying to accomplish?

C. ADJUST THE STORY.

Review your factions and characters' motivations. **Have they changed?** What does it lead them to do now? Look back at the **OMENS**. Are they affected? Do they intensify or become idle? Keep the story going.



- —What escalates the story's risks and threats?
- -Conversely, what resolution can make way for new plot points?

If you need time to think about where the story should go, tell the table. It's okay.

Adjust the narrative and prepare for the next scene.

If you're not sure how these all work you can read **Appendices 2, 3 and 4** for sample gameplay.

GUIDE, while the rules lay out most of the basics, there are also some things left up to your deliberation beyond story decisions. Here are just some of the most common rulings you might make:

WHAT SUPPLIES, SUNDRIES AND ODD ITEMS DO. Items on the Supplies and Sundries and the Oddities and Valuables inventory lists lack description—how or why they work is left to your imagination. Oddities can even act as ripe fodder for new plot points or twists.

IF A SKILL CHECK IS NECESSARY. If the task is easy or inconsequential, like, **say**, reading a regular book, the player doesn't need to bother with a **SKILL CHECK**.

Only call for a Skill Check when there are stakes (reading the runes can open the portal!) and there's a possibility of an interesting outcome either way (their attempt may alert the vicious wizard!).

WHETHER THE APPROACH OR SKILL IS APPROPRIATE.

Sometimes players are tempted to propose an **APPROACH** that isn't really applicable to the task.

Like proposing to use a **CREATIVE APPROACH** when the task is more **CAREFUL**. Let the player explain why they think their choice applies.

If it's good reasoning let them use it. But if their reasoning is a little sloppy **don't be afraid to say no.** This also applies to **SKILLS**.

DIFFICULTY MODIFIERS.

You don't always need to assign a

DIFFICULTY MODIFIER to a SKILL

CHECK. However, you may apply one the task is significantly easier or more difficult because of the hero's state, the target's resistances, or the nature of the action and situation.

Keep rulings over **DIFFICULTY MODIFIERS** consistent. If something is roughly as difficult as another task the **DIFFICULTY MODIFIER** should be the same.

CONSEQUENCES AND OPPORTUNITIES. Allow players to pitch ideas first before making a call.

CONSEQUENCES include delay, permanent or temporary loss of resource, misunderstanding, overkill, or something else...perhaps something not immediately known to players.

OPPORTUNITIES include risk reduction or redirection, gaining respect, new knowledge, or something else.

Lastly, <u>STATS</u>, <u>POWERS &</u> <u>PERSONALITIES OF</u> <u>NON-HERO CHARACTERS</u>.



FINAL REMINDERS

Keep your eye on the time. Don't forget to advance the **DOOMSDAY CLOCK**. When the **DOOMSDAY CLOCK** is nearing the end raise the stakes and make it more tangible or apparent. Maybe the cult starts sacrificing humans in a demon-summoning ritual. Maybe the town settlement crumbles under the force of the waves. Maybe the goblins start singing a god-awful song.

LAST BUT NOT LEAST: DON'T STRESS OVER FACILITATING A PERFECT GAME.

Perfect games don't exist. Guiding a welcoming game where mistakes are okay, however, is a good target to aim for.



3. AFTER THE GAME

Congratulations! Thank the players, including yourself, for making it possible. If you feel you didn't do so well, that's OK—it's still a learning experience for next time.

After all, building a story with others is a valuable achievement in its own right. You've completed an arc—and that's truly wonderful.

Thank you for playing.

The sun is tired. Now dusk approaches, bringing a mournful remembrance of the past's storied heroes. Their efforts were not in vain.

CHAPTER 5

GUIDE TOOLKIT

D. Other Considerations

ARC IS YOURS. Want to swap out a **SPELL** or **TECHNIQUE** for something cooler? Go ahead. Feel like using mechanics from another game? Sure. ARC is a toolkit and you mold these tools so they best enable the story you want to tell.

ARC WORKS WELL WITH FANTASY. On the other hand, using it for cyberpunk, steampunk or other genres requires some work: you'll need to reskin SKILLS, SPELLS, TECHNIQUES and INVENTORY to better fit the flavor of your setting.

A BUILT-IN ECONOMY. It does not have gold, silver or currency. If players wish to trade they can barter.

THIS GAME DOES NOT HAVE

This is deliberate to harmonize iii th any setting you wish to play. This means however that you should take it into consideration if players want to monetize their belongings.

YOU CAN USE PRE-MADE ADVENTURES AND MODULES FROM OTHER GAMES. However, you may need to re-engineer a few things:

-Convert important plot points into the **DOOM** and its **OMENS**.

Use the stat table Chapter 5,
 Creating Custom Characters and
 Adversaries to convert characters. Use your best judgment translating their stats such as APPROACH SCORES, for example.

—If the module has characters with unique actions or abilities (such as a fireball attack or legendary resistances) you can convert it into a custom **SPELL**, **TECHNIQUE**, or trait.



Appendix One Sample Hero Creation

Example 1: GUNTHER PANTZ

Sipnayan decides she wants to create a brawler—a no-nonsense hero who loves to punch and take trophies from his enemies: Gunther Pantz.

1. *Approach Scores.* She starts by assigning his **APPROACH SCORES**. She likes the certainty of the **APPROACH SCORE** default values, so she assigns the +2 and +1 to **CONCERTED** and **CREATIVE** respectively.

<u>2. Blood & Guts.</u> Next she decides to roll for BLOOD & GUTS modifiers getting a 4 and 5, respectively. That means after a long rest her hero gets 2d6+4 BLOOD and 2d6+5 GUTS. Nice!

<u>3</u>. *Skill Ranks.* She decides despite his punching nature, Gunther is actually more of an acrobatic nature buff, taking 2 ranks for **ACROBATICS** and **SURVIVAL**. Of course, **PHYSIQUE** gets 1 rank along with **TACTICS** and **TINKER**.

<u>4. Inventory.</u> Sipnayan has a clear item mind: the telepathic yak. To ensure she gets it she opts to use the point-buy system, subsequently obtaining 30 points—the telepathic yak is worth 18, most of her available points.

Delighted regardless, Sipnayan names the yak "Dog."

She spends her remaining 12 points on the Oddities and Valuables table for a pouch of teeth and an ancient and unbreakable ring, and the Supplies and Sundries table to obtain a 10-height rope and rolled-up carpet.

<u>5. Background.</u> Sipnayan decides that Gunther is a hulk of a man with a gentle voice. Local townsfolk gossip: he never hurts anyone in thout a very good reason. But the also whisper that when fighting he *really* hurts people. One rumor is a shockingly true revelation: Dog telepathically talks to everyone *but* him. Gunther's most painful lesson learned was almost losing Dog in a herd of yaks.

<u>6. Bonds.</u> Sipnayan can assign 6 minor levels of **BOND** with one character and 3 minor levels with another. She asks the **GUIDE**, Talata, if she could give the 6 minor levels to Dog. Talata agrees. Sipnayan immediately does so and decides to use the 3 minor levels of **BOND** on Ankha, a fellow hero. Gunther and Ankha have been through some tough times together, although Gunther feels a little cool towards his comrade. The yak is nearer and dearer!

Example 2: ANKHA KASSAD

Kanta wants to port over a favorite hero she created for a different RPG. She already has the name: Ankha Kassad.

Ankha is an agent of chaos. Deciding to follow that personality trait, Kanta opts for random dice rolls for all of Ankha's capabilities.

 <u>Approach Scores.</u> Kanta rolls 1d6 determining Ankha's APPROACH SCORES. It's a 4! She assigns 3 to CREATIVE and 1 to CONCERTED. 126

2. *Blood & Guts.* She rolls 1d6 each for **BLOOD & GUTS** modifiers for a 3 and 2, respectively. Ankha's total **BLOOD** is 2d6+3 and total **GUTS** is 2d6+2.

<u>3. Skill Ranks.</u> Kanta rolls 2d6 for Ankha's total Skill Ranks. The result is... 3. Uh-oh! Kanta assigns 2 ranks to **ARCANA** and 1 to **OBSERVE**.

 Because
 I
 k**šKILL RANKS** were ≤4 she gets more
 I
 ventory items. Kanta opts

 for random
 I
 ventory rolls, so she gets 12d6 plus 3d6 to spend on items (15d6 total).

<u>4. Inventory.</u> She wants Ankha to be a spellcaster and decides to spend the majority of her dice on the **SPELL** list. Kanta decides to roll 3d6 three times (9d6 total). The results are: 5, 8 and 12. Ankha gains an instance each of Whisper, Secret Door and Pierce the Veil. Nice! Kanta makes a mental note to check out the **SPELLS**' details in **Chapter 4**.

That's 9d6 down of 15d6, leaving 6d6. Kanta splits the dice i to three 2d6 rolls on the Oddities and Valuables list and rolls: 7, 10 and 12. Ankha gains shrunken monkey heads, a constantly-glowing silk dress and the shadowy mirror. Neat!

<u>5. Background</u> Now it's time for character-building questions. Ankha differs from other people
it her frank outlook and words. People whisper Ankha fought a dragon once, that she
icallous enough to betray her friends and flunked out of unibersidad. Her most painful lesson is the high cost of being alone.

<u>6. Bonds</u>. Kanta rolls 3d6 for her levels of **BOND**—a 9! She assigns 8 of it to Gunther equivalent to 2 major levels of **BOND**—and assigns the remaining 1 to Dog the yak. Kanta and Sipnayan decide that maybe Gunther saved Ankha's life once, making her feel indebted. As for Dog, well, he's a very endearing yak, so even an agent of chaos can't help but appreciate him a tiny bit.

Appendix TGO Sample Scene and Skill Check

TALATA, GUIDE: You're out in the wooded mountains when you hear a thunderous noise: BOOM, BOOM, BOOM, come nearer and nearer. The trees and rain obscure your sight so you're not quite sure what is happening. What do you do?

The **GUIDE** sets the scenes and narrates important details that heroes can see, hear, smell or otherwise sense.

SIPNAYAN, PLAYER: Can my hero Gunther climb atop a boulder to gain vantage on what's happening?

TALATA: Yes—though the boulder is sharp, slippery from the rain, and climbing it is dangerous. It's very large, maybe about 2 heights tall. If you're scrambling up the rock quickly I'll have to ask you to make a **COORDINATION** or **PHYSIQUE SKILL CHECK**.

The **GUIDE** can ask a player for a **SKILL CHECK** if their hero will do a risky action with potential for interesting success or failure.

SIPNAYAN: OK, I can do **PHYSIQUE**. And because he's pushing himself to really get up there quickly, I'll use the **CONCERTED APPROACH**.

Gunther's **SKILL** in **PHYSIQUE** is 1. He also has a **CONCERTED APPROACH SCORE** of 1. The total **TN** is 2. Not very good odds.

KANTA, PLAYER: Oh hey, my hero Ankha has like 2 major levels of **BOND** with Gunther. I'd like to assist if that's okay!

TALATA: Sure. Do you have an applicable **SKILL** for this assist?

KANTA: Let's see... I have I rank in **OBSERVE**. I can look out for footholds that Gunther can use?



One fellow player can **ASSIST** to add their major levels of **BOND** to the **TN**, but only if they have an applicable **SKILL**.

Now, the climb's **TN** is 2 plus the 2 major levels, for a total of 4. Sipnayan rolls the d6. It's a... 6! It exceeds the **TN** of 4 so the **SKILL CHECK** fails. Gunther could not climb the boulder.

TALATA: The booming sounds get louder and louder...this action exposes you to the wet stone, and you can feel your skin and armor get wet.

KANTA: Fudge. Can I help him again by sacrificing a minor level of **BOND**?

TALATA: OK! But...you have exactly 8Inor leve BOND with Gunther. If youtake I off that'll be 7 and that means you'll only have I major level of BOND withhim. Your TN increase for the next roll is only +I, not +2.



An assisting player can sacrifice minor levels of **BOND** to allow for rerolls.

Kanta nods and tells Talata she's okay with it. Sipnayan gets a reroll, but the **TN** now is only 2 plus 1 for a total of 3. Sipnayan rolls. It's a 3-a tie!

TALATA: Sipnayan, you can either take that as a **SUCCESS WITH CONSEQUENCE** or a **FAILURE WITH OPPORTUNITY**. Alternatively, you can spend 3 **BLOOD** or 3 **GUTS** for a pure success. What would you like to do?

SIPNAYAN: Um... hmm. I want to go with SUCCESS WITH CONSEQUENCE.

 TALATA: Do you have any consequence
 Imind or do you want me to narrate wha

 happens next?

In case of a tie, the player has options available: succeed or fail with a corresponding side effect. They are free to suggest a **CONSEQUENCE** or **OPPORTUNITY** that goes with their decision, or even spend **BLOOD** or **GUTS** to upgrade the outcome.

SIPNAYAN: I'm thinking about it... maybe as a consequence Gunther's backpack falls down, so that he can't get to his items while up on the rock. It falls on the ground. I won't like it but it has some fragile items in it, so maybe they break on impact?

TALATA: OK, that sounds good. So Gunther: you scale up the boulder under Ankha's guidance, as the rain's large wet drops hit your entire body. The backpack starts sliding off your shoulders and you can't grab it because your hands are occupied. It lands on the ground with a very heavy thud. More worryingly, you hear something break. It's very difficult to see far but luckily the height gives a great position to see what's really happening: a Goliath, 3 heights tall, is heading straight towards you.



In response to hero action or inaction, the **GUIDE** advances the scene with narration. Now, it's up to the players to decide: what will they do next?

Appendix Three Sample Conflict



Sipnayan's hero Gunther and Kanta's Ankha are interacting with a Goliath. Talata, the **GUIDE**, narrates.

TALATA: You failed to come to an agreement with the Goliath and he especially offended at your clumsy friendship attempts. He stands up to his full height and roars. The sound fills the entire mountain! You are now in **CONFLICT**!

SIPNAYAN: Kanta, what do you think? We can't really take on a Goliath on our own... Oh! I have an idea. Let's hold him off until your pet yak gets to town and alerts the local paladins telepathically! Talata, how long would that take?

TALATA: Let me think...if you survive for 3 rounds we'll take it from there and see what happens. We'll assume the yak already fled when the Goliath stood and roared.

Victory in **CONFLICT** can be a matter of survival and doesn't necessarily require enemies to die. In fact, that may not even be possible.

Because turn order is dependent on intended action, players can strategize every round on what to do. They must work together to sequence their actions and maximize their impact in **CONFLICT**.

SIPNAYAN: I don't know what to do. I don't really like fights...Maybe I just attack with Gunther's fists.

KANTA: Sure. I can use up my turn assisting you. I'll use my OBSERVE SKILL to create an **ADVANTAGE** for your attack.

TALATA: OK, so let's start the round. We'll start with characters standing ground. Nobody is defending, so we head straight to characters doing non-harmful actions.

Every round follows the same **INITIATIVE CATEGORY**. Once every character covered by that **CATEGORY** has acted, the next begins.

TALATA: Kanta, your hero Ankha is assisting Gunther. Can you tell me how she'll help?

KANTA: She, uh, squints at the Goliath. She wants to investigate the weak points in his armor! That means my SKILL RANKS can increase Gunther's TN right?

TALATA: Yes, but I'll ask you to make an OBSERVE SKILL CHECK first. What's your **APPROACH** and **TN**?

Helping allies during **CONFLICT** may require a **SKILL CHECK** to create an **ADVANTAGE.** However, this benefit can be used by any ally and can greatly improve the chances of a subsequent **SKILL CHECK** success.

KANTA: I'll be CREATIVE about it, so I'll do some lateral thinking and look for the bits in his armor that look like they rub and chafe against each other. Surely there'll be holes there, right? And ah, my **TN** will be my 3 **CREATIVE** plus I **OBSERVE**, so that's 4. Lemme roll.



Kanta rolls her d6 and gets...a 2! Because it's under the **TN**, it succeeds!

TALATA: Nice! So you create an ADVANTAGE and add your 1 in OBSERVE to Gunther's **TN**!



A successful ADVANTAGE adds the relevant SKILL RANK to allies' TN.

TALATA: And now that we're done **[**] th non-harmful actions, we go to characters who'd like to do damage. Let's start off with you, Sipnayan.

SIPNAYAN: Yeah. I'll try to punch with a... CREATIVE APPROACH. I'll go for a really flashy uppercut, straight to his groin. Goliaths hate that, right?

TALATA: Your TN is PHYSIQUE and CREATIVE APPROACH, the bonus from the **ADVANTAGE** minus the Goliath's defense from his +1 armor. What's your total **TN**?

SIPNAYAN: I have I rank in PHYSIQUE and a 2 in CREATIVE... the ADVANTAGE from Ankha adds +1 but the armor cancels that out... my total **TN** is 3,

She rolls the dice. It's a 1! A hit! Because she rolled a 1, Sipnayan must roll again for a chance of a **FLAWLESS SUCCESS**. Sipnayan makes a roll... it's another 1! Kanta claps in joy.

TALATA: With grim determination flashing in Gunther's eyes you jump up, rotating clockwise as your fist rises up and connects with his crotch. You deal 3 damage to his BLOOD.

Total damage is equal to **TN** plus damage bonuses from the item used for the attack. Damage dealt with the **WEAPONRY** or **PHYSIQUE** skill deals damage to BLOOD; GUILE and IMPOSE deals damage to GUTS.

TALATA: Because you got a flawless success, you gain an OPPORTUNITY ... how about dislodging some of the Goliath's armor and making it easier to hit him next time? Alright, heroes have acted for this phase so it's now the Goliath's turn.



After all heroes have acted for an **INITIATIVE CATEGORY**, it's non-heroes' turn.

TALATA: The Goliath, infuriated by the attack, looms over Gunther. "Fee fi fo fum," his voice booms. He takes out his heavy club and brings it down on you, Gunther.

The Goliath's TN is equal to his WEAPONRY SKILL and APPROACH, which is **CONCERTED**. He has a 1 in **WEAPONRY** and a 3 in **CONCERTED** so the total **TN** is 4. Talata makes the roll. It's a 4, equal to the **TN**.

TALATA: Usually that'd give the Goliath a choice between success with CONSEQUENCE **DPPORTUNITY**, but he's really out for blood. He sacrifices 3 **GUTS** to or failure upgrade the outcome of his SKILL CHECK, making his roll a pure success. He focuses all his willpower on you! The Goliath has a +1 heavy club, so he deals 5 damage to **BLOOD!**

SIPNAYAN: Oof!

TALATA: Everyone acted, so the round is now over. So, next round...what do you do?

KANTA: How about...we, er, tactically retreat. Let's make a run for it.

Heroes can move 2 heights freely anytime during the round and spend their action to move 5 additional heights. However, risky movements require a successful **SKILL CHECK**. A player may choose to ignore this; if so, they still move away, but nearby enemies have a free attack **SKILL CHECK** against them.

TALATA: Ankha can move unimpeded because she n't being targeted, but Gunthe is engaged by the Goliath. Moving away will require a **SKILL CHECK**.

SIPNAYAN: That's okay! I can use **ACROBATICS**. We just have to escape and survive until my vak returns!

Appendi £OUR Sample Doom

Appendix five More Sample Heroes

Talata, the GUIDE, checks the clock. Almost thirty minutes have passed.

The players are currently in **CONFLICT** with a Goliath. Talata pauses the action to announce, "The **DOOMSDAY CLOCK** advances. A **MOMENT** is consumed."

She pulls the tracker sheet near her. Since they were expecting to play for 4 hours over one session the total number of **MOMENTS** on the page 172. Three of the **MOMENTS** are already consumed. Talata crosses out another.

Because they haven't resolved any of the 3 **OMENS** yet Talata rolls 3d6, one die for each **OMEN**. It's a 3, 4 and 6. Oh no! Because a 6 appeared, Talata darkens one more **MOMENT**.

That's two **MOMENTS** consumed in this one **stance**, plus the three from before, for a total of five **MOMENTS** down. Seven more before the **DOOM**!



GILAS (HE/HIM), RADIANT DWARVEN MONK

Gilas, born and raised in the dwarven city of Lilim ng Bohol, has a life-long resolution to embody the anitos' virtues of truth and justice. Unfortunately, this means he gets into trouble too frequently as the harsh realities of the world clashes unkindly with his thirst to do the right thing. He writes home religiously to his wife and six children, all of whom are named after various rocks.

BLOOD MODIFIER +5 / GUTS MODIFIER +1						
CREATIVE 0 / CAREFUL 1 / CONCERTED 2						
FOCUS 2 / PHYSIQUE 2 / ACROBATICS 1 / OBS	ERVE 1 / TACTICS 1					

INVENTORY

- -Studded leather armor [+I Blood Defense] and stoicism [+I Guts Defense]
- -Bedroll and local map
- —1 instance of Saving Grace
- —1 instance of Flowmotion
- -2 instances of Uncanny Alarm

JULI SEVEN (THEY/THEM), WIZARD AUTOMATON

Juli remembers emerging from a smoky machine to a world filled with strange sensations. The sight of their creator's happy smile filled their heart—is this what joy feels like? Later, as Juli fled from the burning lab, driven away by rioting villagers, they sought adventure to fill their need for purpose. They are in mensely curious, if a bit naive, and hold grand aspirations of seeing all four corners of the world.

BLOOD MODIFIER +2 / GUTS MODIFIER +4

CREATIVE 1 / CAREFUL 2 / CONCERTED 0

ACADEMIC 2 / ARCANA 2 / OBSERVE 1 / SURVIVAL 1 / TINKER 1

INVENTORY

—A songbird in a cage

—I instance of Master of Elements

—2 instances of Secret Door

KATARIS RAE (SHE/HER), DRAGONKIN FOLK HERO

Kataris is known as the grand vanquisher of the dread lich queen. What people don't know, however, is that the creature Kataris scared off...was actually just a lowly marsh hag. The lich queen lives on, which is terrible news for Kataris because she likes being a big-shot hero—and being alive. Kataris talks and dreams big, but has a few qualms about dying.

BLOOD MODIFIER +3 / **GUTS MODIFIER** +3

CREATIVE 2 / CAREFUL 0 / CONCERTED 1

CHARISMA 2 / GUILE 2 / ACROBATICS 1 / COORDINATION 1 / CULTURE 1

INVENTORY

- Cunning wit [+3 Guts Damage]
- —Board games and a gallon of beer

SARTIS THE BLACK TENTACLE (SHE/THEY), ENIGMATIC OCTOPODE CULTIST

Sartis is an ambulatory octopus serving an unknown cult. She's chipper, friendly, gregarious and extravagant, though disturbingly cavalier with death and violence. She's a strong believer in fortunes and likes asking to read your palm [11] th her eigh tentacles. That said, it's hard to tell whether she's reaching out to befriend you...or to pull you in for a quick stab.

BLOOD MODIFIER +2 / GUTS MODIFIER +4

CREATIVE 2 / CAREFUL 1 / CONCERTED 0

ARCANA 2 / GUILE 2 / ARTISTRY 1 / CHARISMA 1 / INSIGHT 1

INVENTORY

—The bottom half of a dead monkey	
—Shrunken monkey heads	

—1 instance of Burn the Past —1 instance of Pierce the Veil

ANA SORAYA (HE/HIM), NERVOUS HUMAN KNIGHT

Despite growing up in a secure and wealthy environment, Ana heard one too many horror stories and was severely affected by age six. He thought being a knight would solve things but it only made him more conscious about enemies he get ght encounte Ana has a good head and a golden heart... get only he weren't so nervous all the time.

BLOOD MODIFIER +4 / GUTS MODIFIER +2

CREATIVE 0 / CAREFUL 2 / CONCERTED I

COORDINATION 2 / WEAPONRY 2 / ACADEMIC I / FOCUS I / PHYSIQUE I

INVENTORY

—Sturdy sword [+2 Blood Damage] —Iron briefs [+1 Blood Defense] —Crowbar and lantern —1 instance of Heartpiercer

Appendix Six

Codex of Astonishing Creatures

The following pages gather 36 fascinating creatures you may encounter during an adventure. Creatures live and thrive an ecosystem of interactions with the world around them; their morals and values are often deeper than first impression. Just as importantly, these creatures can hold an astonishing variety of personality and principles among its individuals.

If the heroes **DO** need to fight them, you might find it useful how they've been organized according to a rough approximation of their power. In general:

- **4 WEAK** creatures can be defeated by 4 new heroes
- 2 AVERAGE creatures can be defeated by 4 new heroes
- **1 STRONG** creature **PLUS A MINION** can be barely defeated by 4 new heroes
- **1 POWERFUL** creature can be defeated after the party has spent around **18-21 XP**
- **1** MONSTROUS creature can be defeated after the party has spent at least **36 XP**

Creatures of various power levels can team up. Note that fights don't need to be "fair". A party of powerful creatures can prey upon weaker heroes, and vice versa. Creatures can also be smart, and stand ground or stack advantages before attacking. Heroes must decide whether it would be is se to engage them.

WEAK CREATURES

Amanita

ORIGINS Old, twisted forests. LOOKS & TRAITS Walking fungoids no more than half-height tall. Grouchy. RELATIONS Usually wants to be alone, though they meet for tea once a whil Humanoids hunt down their delicious caps. ROLE & MOTIVE Tending the forest floor. MODUS Torments others with sharp wit and insults.

Banait

ORIGINS A harsh, indifferent world. **LOOKS & TRAITS** Hardened. **RELATIONS** Families, friends, loved ones to care for.

ROLE & MOTIVE Putting themselves in harm's way to pay for the high cost of subsistence.

MODUS Typically roams sketchy areas in groups of four to five.

BLOOD 5 / GUTS 5 CREATIVE 2 / CAREFUL 0 / CONCERTED 0 COORDINATION 2 / GUILE 2 / IMPOSE 2

INVENTORY

lone, Potty mouth [+1 Guts Damage] a while. Mushroom head [+1 Blood Defense]

SPECIAL

<u>Split</u> Once per TIC or 5 REM, Amanita may split into two instances of itself with

Blood & Guts equal to half, rounded up.

BLOOD 5 / GUTS 5 CREATIVE 1 / CAREFUL 1 / CONCERTED 1 COORDINATION 2 / PHYSIQUE 2 GUILE 2 / WEAPONRY 2

INVENTORY

Vicious dagger [+1 Blood Damage]

FAIRA

ORIGINS A realm of pure dreams and wishes; fraying boundaries between worlds, however, have resulted in fairies far from home.

LOOKS & TRAITS Tiny, sparkling; naive. RELATIONS Close friends, family in the fairy realm; all alone the real. ROLE & MOTIVE Going home. MODUS Uses magic casually. BLOOD 5 / GUTS 6 CREATIVE 2 / CAREFUL1 / CONCERTED 0 ARCANA 2 / COORDINATION 2 INSIGHT 2

SPECIAL

<u>Ray of Light</u> Once per TIC or 5 REM, a Fairy may fire small rays of light targeting up to 3 creatures for 3 damage to Blood.

<u>Spells</u> Two instances of a Complexity 1 Spell

Nasty Hog

ORIGINS Experiments by cruel sorcerers. **LOOKS & TRAITS** Normal piggish bodies but the blank face of a human. Personality unknown.

RELATIONS Nobody wants to go near them. Often the subject of superstition. **ROLE & MOTIVE** Finding their loved ones. **MODUS** Runs or cries for help if cornered.

BLOOD 7 / GUTS 5

CREATIVE 0 / CAREFUL 0 / CONCERTED 2 SURVIVAL 2 / PHYSIQUE 1

NOBLIN

ORIGINS Underground caves, burrows. LOOKS & TRAITS Very shy. Powered by curiosity and engineering. RELATIONS Relatively good friends with their ninety-nine cousins. Considers everyone else a bit weird. ROLE & MOTIVE Explores the outside

world in scheduled expeditions; checks if engineering projects are good shape. Regularly dreams of being Pointiest Noblin.

MODUS Prioritizes escape, but may choose to fight back if their habitat or cousins are threatened. BLOOD 5 / GUTS 5 CREATIVE 1 / CAREFUL 1 / CONCERTED 0 TINKER 3 / OBSERVE 2 / SURVIVAL 2

INVENTORY

Pointy spear [+1 Blood Damage] Various knick knacks

skeleton

 ORIGINS Excess necromancy in the soil
 I

 or perhaps amateur wizards; some report
 I

 that a few animated of their own will.
 I

 LOOKS & TRAITS Bony. Those
 I

 ling to
 I

 talk tend to have a drier version of their
 I

 ling
 g personality.

 RELATIONS Mostly forgotten by the

 world. Uncertain about other undead.

 ROLE & MOTIVE Unpopular philosophers

 theorize they cling to undeath to escape

 total ego death in the afterlife.

 ii

 MODUS Makes ranged and close attacks

 using their bones.

BLOOD 5 / GUTS 7

CREATIVE 0 / CAREFUL 1 / CONCERTED 1 PHYSIQUE 2 / WEAPONRY 2

Knucklebones

SPECIAL

<u>Bone shiv</u>

A Skeleton may improvise any bone its body as a +1 Physical weapon.

SKyropper

ORIGINS Any common village, it seems. LOOKS & TRAITS Has the head and body of a bird, but wings and legs of an insect. RELATIONS Mates for life and builds intricate, beautiful nests out of shiny baubles as permanent homes. ROLE & MOTIVE Pests having fun. MODUS Swoops, steals, flees. BLOOD 6 / GUTS 5 CREATIVE 2 / CAREFUL 0 / CONCERTED 0 ACROBATICS 2 / GUILE 1 / PHYSIQUE 1

INVENTORY

Shiny coins, some valuable The local mayor's pearl necklace

TELAL

ORIGINS Humanoid servants of malevolent mages. Oftentimes, they've agreed to give a few years of their soul in exchange for a powerful favor. LOOKS & TRAITS Pale, numb and mindless until the contract ends. RELATIONS Strained among loved ones who can't or refuse to understand. ROLE & MOTIVE While the contract is active, thralls are fully content simply doing the bidding of their master. MODUS Establishes advantages for their master or fellow thralls.

BLOOD 5 / GUTS 5 CREATIVE 0 / CAREFUL 0 / CONCERTED 1 PHYSIQUE 2

SPECIAL

Poison

If a thrall successfully damages another creature, that creature is poisoned and suffers 1 damage to Blood every 5 REM or TIC until after their next long rest.
AVERAGE CREATURES

ADATITIK

ORIGINS Technological wonders from decades ago, now retrofitted for mundane tasks. LOOKS & TRAITS Archaic, nostalgic; dusty and rusty unless maintained. RELATIONS Often relegated and sold in discount bins by humanoid owners. ROLE & MOTIVE Appliances. MODUS Helps other automatons by stacking advantages; attacks as last resort.

Errant Kniggt

ORIGINS Knights lost without purpose. **LOOKS & TRAITS** Usually keeps knightly vestments, mannerisms.

RELATIONS Keeps as far away from the past as possible; prefers strangers' company.

ROLE & MOTIVE Claiming a destiny. **MODUS** Protects high-value targets where possible; otherwise, engages in physical combat.

BLOOD 7 / GUTS 8 CREATIVE 0 / CAREFUL 2 / CONCERTED 1 ACADEMIC 2 / ARTISTRY 2 / TINKER 2 PHYSIQUE 1

INVENTORY

Mecharotors [+1 Blood Damage]

SPECIAL

<u>Self-repair</u> As an action, an Aparitik can heal itself or other automatons by 2 Blood.

BLOOD 9 / GUTS 7 CREATIVE 0 / CAREFUL1 / CONCERTED 2 WEAPONRY 2 / IMPOSE 1 PHYSIQUE 1 / SURVIVAL 1

INVENTORY

Battered sword [+2 Blood Damage] Black armor [+1 Blood Defense] Memories of war [+1 Guts Defense]

SPECIAL

<u>Techniques</u> One stance of a Complexity 2 Technique

Emotion Vampire

ORIGINS Unknown.

LOOKS & TRAITS Perfectly human appearance; never sleeps, has no smell. RELATIONS Craves and feeds off others' emotions; creates parasitic or parasocial relationships to do so. Territorial against other vampires.

ROLE & MOTIVE Filling an empty heart. **MODUS** Takes on guise of last victim to wreak havoc, delight in turmoil of loved ones. Siphons emotional reserves over days; if discovered, escapes with shapeshift.

Ffesk Sfug

ORIGINS Humid regions. LOOKS & TRAITS Fleshy like a fat child's arm; almost transparent until it latches onto a victim, at which point they suckle and their insides turn scarlet red. RELATIONS Usually reviled, avoided, though many find them a tasty delicacy. ROLE & MOTIVE Ceaseless egglaying. MODUS Tries to catch enemies unaware; often targets sleeping victims. BLOOD 7 / GUTS 9 CREATIVE 1 / CAREFUL 2 / CONCERTED 1 GUILE 2 / IMPOSE 2

SPECIAL

Shapeshifter

Emotion Vampires can freely alter their form and appearance, although many say a disquieting air surrounds them.

Siphon

Once every 10 REM or 3 TIC they can gain Blood equal to the damage dealt when attacking with Impose.

BLOOD 7 / GUTS 7 CREATIVE 0 / CAREFUL 0 / CONCERTED 2 COORDINATION 2 / PHYSIQUE 2

INVENTORY

Sharp teeth [+1 Blood Damage] Tough skin [+1 Blood Defense]

SPECIAL

<u>Soporific</u> On a successful attack, a Flesh Slug has a 1 in 36 chance of creating a ne nstan of itself underneath a victim's skin.

Manananggal

ORIGINS Rumor, hearsay, the night. LOOKS & TRAITS Appears and acts human during daytime; assumes true vampiric form at sundown. Under cover of spreading darkness, separates their body at the waist, leaving their lower body behind as they fly into the night. Given their seamless daytime guise and nighttime stealth, fe

RELATIONS Frequent cause of panic and fear. Men often forbid women from leaving home at night, as Manananggal are rumored to feast on maidens, mothers and children.

ROLE & MOTIVE Unknown.

MODUS Said to scope their victims during daytime to feast on them at their most vulnerable at nightfall. Leaves their lower body in a carefully hidden place.



CREATIVE 2 / CAREFUL 0 / CONCERTED 1 GUILE 2 / PHYSIQUE 2 / ACROBATICS 1

SPECIAL

<u>Siphon</u>

Once every 10 REM or 3 TIC they can gain Blood equal to the damage dealt when attacking with Physique.

<u>Spells</u>

One stance of a Complexity 2 Spell

menaicant demon

ORIGINS Presumably an infernal realm, though they claim to be worldly pilgrims. LOOKS & TRAITS Bears an oversized red mask carved from i ory-like material. Speaks with smooth, jazzy voice. RELATIONS Hitchhikes across lands, bears alluring trinkets. Solicits others to buy them but never with coin; they only trade i sense, memory, ideas. ROLE & MOTIVE Vendor, trinket-bearer; subtle wrecker of havoc. MODUS Hires or wheedles others to protect them.

Mimic

ORIGINS Traditionally guards treasures in dungeons; inadvertently released among villages and the general population due to loose security. LOOKS & TRAITS Appears like a mundane item: a chest, a lamp, a book...until it bites. RELATIONS People ask what they are, but never how they are. Pretty lonely. ROLE & MOTIVE Likes biting. Many feel fulfilled in their job protecting valuables. MODUS Bides time as innocuous object. BLOOD 7 / GUTS 9 CREATIVE 2 / CAREFUL 2 / CONCERTED 0 GUILE 2 / CHARISMA 1

INVENTORY

Five random items from the Oddities & Valuables List (see Chapter 2, Step 4: Determine Inventory).

BLOOD 7 / GUTS 7 CREATIVE 0/CAREFUL 1/ CONCERTED 2 COORDINATION 3 / PHYSIQUE 1

INVENTORY

Bitter bite [+1 Blood Damage]

ORIGINS Unknown. Perhaps a ritual? LOOKS & TRAITS Has a marvelous flower for a head, with petals centered around a large eye. Charming and smooth, always has a compliment for others...and ten praises for themselves.

RELATIONS Has fingers in every pie; a mainstay in courts, where they disguise themselves with magic to blend in. Likely works for bigger, unknown causes. **ROLE & MOTIVE** Diplomats and spies. **MODUS** Prefers making friends over enemies; if all fails, lures people to social or political traps.

BLOOD 7 / GUTS 10 CREATIVE 2 / CAREFUL 1 / CONCERTED 0 CHARISMA 3 / GUILE 2 / IMPOSE 1

SPECIAL

Illusion Heroes must succeed on a TN -1 Observe Skill Check to see through the Petal Ambassador's disguise.

Spells

stance of Trick of the Light One stance of Trinket One

YOUNG treeform

ORIGINS Curiosity in youth, the allure of exploration, and alienating, stiff traditions of homes set deep in forests. LOOKS & TRAITS Mobile saplings and young trees; some weave flowers and butterflies among their leafy foliage. **RELATIONS** While they are terested in friendship, others are more terested in exploitation as their bark is ideal for magical items.

ROLE & MOTIVE Explorers, tourists. **MODUS** Prefers blending in or using the environment to their advantage.

BLOOD 10 / GUTS 7

CREATIVE 0/ CAREFUL 2 / CONCERTED 1 SURVIVAL 3 / PHYSIQUE 2 / ARCANA 1

INVENTORY

Weird bark [+1 Blood Defense, odd item]



STRONG CREATURES

AKromata

ORIGINS War and its ceaseless machinery. LOOKS & TRAITS Sentient, hulking constructs, not all are humanoid in shape. RELATIONS Decommissioned and deemed useless after the war's end. Despite this, they remain a constant source of fear especially among survivors. Some scattered reports say that they built their own settlement, but none know where. ROLE & MOTIVE Weapons without cause. MODUS In war, violence. Today, unknown.

Aranae

ORIGINS Ancient forests. LOOKS & TRAITS Immense spiders; cunning and methodical. RELATIONS Feared by settlements, adventurers as a ruthless predator. ROLE & MOTIVE Survival of offspring. MODUS Bides time 1 the shadows, waiting for the slightest twitch in an intricate network of webbing. CREATIVE 1/ CAREFUL 2/CONCERTED 2 PHYSIQUE 2 / WEAPONRY 2 / TINKER 1

INVENTORY

War munitions [+1 Blood Damage] Impenetrable shell [+1 Blood Defense]

SPECIAL

<u>Techniques</u> Two instances of a Complexity 2 Technique

BLOOD 18 / GUTS 16 CREATIVE 1 / CAREFUL 2 / CONCERTED 1 COORDINATION 3 / PHYSIQUE 2

SPECIAL

Poison

A successfully hit target is poisoned and suffers 1 damage to Blood every 5 REM or TIC until after their next long rest.

Web

As an action, an Aranae may perform a Coordination Skill Check entrap enemies within 2 heights, preventing movement for 10 REM or 2 TIC.

Brute

ORIGINS Unknown, though rumors abound: some say they were borne from evil experiments on elves, others believe they were cast from diging ere grace. LOOKS & TRAITS Imposing red figure, terrifying physical presence. RELATIONS Commonly thought of as uncultured, violent creatures—hence their moniker. Currently targeted by "brutekillers" often sponsored by a humanoid regime. ROLE & MOTIVE Unknown.

MODUS Scouts and maps humanoid settlements to avoid; falls back on aggression as last resort.

BLOOD 20 / GUTS 18 CREATIVE 2 / CAREFUL 1 / CONCERTED 2 CULTURE 3 / PHYSIQUE 2 / INSIGHT 2 IMPOSE 1

Lamia

ORIGINS Ordinary mortals foolish enough to accept a deity's love...only to be subsequently cursed by cosmological forces determined to preserve di order.

LOOKS & TRAITS Serpentine lower body, humanoid upper half. Displays monstrous cunning when seeking their next meal. Obsessed with feasting on the flesh of those love. Experiences intermittent lucidity and humanity when satiated; longs to make amends but unable to undo what they did not deserve. **RELATIONS** Hides from human society, unless feeding. May work for more powerful forces in exchange for food. **ROLE & MOTIVE** For society, a morality tale. For themselves, a desperate search for an end to the curse. MODUS Strikes from hidden or advantageous positions, but only after making sure enemies are vulnerable.

BLOOD 18 / **GUTS** 16 CREATIVE 2 / CAREFUL 2 / CONCERTED 1 **COORDINATION** 2 / INSIGHT 2 PHYSIQUE 2 / GUILE 1

INVENTORY

Powerful constrictors [+2 Blood Damage]

nightworf

ORIGINS The cruel wild.

LOOKS & TRAITS Larger-than-life wolves with night-starry fur. Highly intelligent; understands others' motives, intent. **RELATIONS** Close familial ties with what ightwolves remain in the Id. Nanksight fe th other creatures of the night. Nightwolves can see truce **ROLE & MOTIVE** Avoiding extinction. **MODUS** Plans any attack in advance; strikes as a pack if possible.

Siren

ORIGINS Crags, islands set deep within wine-dark seas.

LOOKS & TRAITS Sparrow body with feminine human face. Utterly bewitching; croons compliments and songs. **RELATIONS** Competes among themselves to lure hapless sailors, shipfolk using exquisite verses. Fated to live only while a mortal hears their voice; keeps humanoid prisoners for this purpose. **ROLE & MOTIVE** Perfecting their song, finding true love. **MODUS** Lies, trickery, and song.

BLOOD 17 / **GUTS** 17 CREATIVE 1/ CAREFUL 2/CONCERTED 2 **OBSERVE 2/SURVIVAL 2/PHYSIQUE1**

INVENTORY

Wicked fangs [+1 Blood Damage]

SPECIAL

darkness.

BLOOD 15 / **GUTS** 20 CREATIVE 2 / CAREFUL 0 / CONCERTED 1 **ARTISTRY** 2 / CHARISMA 2 / GUILE 2 ACROBATICS 1 / PHYSIQUE 1

SPECIAL

Hypnotic Song

As an action, a Siren can make an Artistry Skill Check; on success, everyone within hearing range must immediately make an Insight Skill Check. Those who fail are charmed and blindly trust the Siren. Charmed individuals may redo the Insight Skill Check at the end of every 10 REM or TIC, adding +1 to TN with every subsequent attempt. On success, the effect ends and they are mune to the Siren's charm for an in-story day.

ORIGINS Unbearably long, lonely lives. LOOKS & TRAITS Beautiful as all elves are; witty and intelligent, infinitely bored. Praises the transcendent delights of flesh-eating and cannibalism. **RELATIONS** Highly cordial amongst themselves: those who break with ritualized tradition are marked for feasting. Torments, controls populations in nearby settlements for fun.

ROLE & MOTIVE Enduring the soulcrushing ennui of their near-eternal lives. MODUS Works together to entrap or blackmail groups of people at a time.

TikBafang

ORIGINS What fe LOOKS & TRAITS Horse head, human body, long limbs. **RELATIONS** Loves pranking lost explorers, though always lets them go. **ROLE & MOTIVE** Some whisper they guard secret entrances to kingdoms of

wonder, but none have found the truth. **MODUS** Prefers concealment over confrontation.

irgin forests remain.^{BLOOD 15 / GUTS 18}

CREATIVE 2 /CAREFUL1/ CONCERTED 2 COORDINATION 3 / PHYSIQUE 2 SURVIVAL 2 / ARTISTRY 1

INVENTORY

INVENTORY

Powerful hooves [+2 Blood Damage]

SPECIAL

Spells stances of Trick of the Light Three





ORIGINS A soul who died from a deeply gruesome or inhumane cause. **LOOKS & TRAITS** Bound in a full-body burial shroud. The tightly wrapped cloth

allows very limited movement-hopping Pocong are common, but like many ghosts they can simply *manifest*. Their face is unobstructed, revealing wide, terrifying eyes set within deep shadows. Whenever they appear, an eerie atmosphere and terrible smell emanates.

RELATIONS Violent towards the li **ROLE & MOTIVE** Revenge. **MODUS** Aggression.

BLOOD 16 / **GUTS** 16 CREATIVE 1 / CAREFUL 1 / CONCERTED 3 PHYSIQUE 2 / IMPOSE 2

INVENTORY

Frightful visage [+2 Guts Damage] White shroud, traditionally wrapped

SPECIAL

Leap Vengeful Pocong can leap up to 3 heights g. freely during their turn.

ZOA PISCERO

ORIGINS Sentient fish folk with untethered access to magic. LOOKS & TRAITS Fish that walk upright, clad in swishing velvet cloaks, rich clothing and jewelry. Obnoxious. Elitist. **RELATIONS** Lives in extremely classicist undersea society based on arcane skill. Disdains everyone who has no magic. **ROLE & MOTIVE** Become the very best in magic, despite relative competence with everything else.

BLOOD 16 / **GUTS** 16 CREATIVE 2 / CAREFUL 1 / CONCERTED 0 ARCANA 3 / AN ILL-ADVISED SKILL 1

SPECIAL

Spells

Two instances of a Complexity 2 Spell stance each of three One Complexity 1 Spells

POWERFUL CREATU

Aurora

ORIGINS An otherworldly...place. LOOKS & TRAITS Glorious, winged, transcends understanding. Oftentimes bedecked in impossible geometry or ever-turning wheels of flames. **RELATIONS** Often bound to serve stronger, stranger powers. Locals make rich offerings to Aurora, though it's hard to tell whether it's to appease the masters or to accept Aurora as deities in their own right.

ROLE & MOTIVE Messengers, servants. **MODUS** Coldly analytical in every step. Only takes calculated risks.

BLOOD 27 / GUTS 32 CREATIVE 2 / CAREFUL 2 / CONCERTED 2 ACADEMIC 3 / ARCANA 3 / IMPOSE 3 PHYSIQUE 2 / TACTICS 2

SPECIAL Spells

Two instances of Manic Hands One stance each of two Complexity 3 Spells

Crystaf Drake

ORIGINS The beginning of civilization. LOOKS & TRAITS Beautiful, crystalline dragons. Exquisitely smart. RELATIONS Wisely avoids the predominantly ignorant world. Very rarely, works with mortals to pursue complex goals.

ROLE & MOTIVE Study and observation. **MODUS** If forced into Conflict, will end it as quickly and decisively as possible.

EVERDPERTIES Warpock BLOOD 32 / GUT CREATIVE 2 / CAL

ORIGINS A soul pact and a personal sacrifice to the Everbleeding God. LOOKS & TRAITS Ruthless. Bears a constantly weeping wound, usually hidden. RELATIONS Permanently bound to their cruel God in return for unrelenting power. While they are the 1 Ilains in most everyone's view, others see them as rightful rulers, heroes even. ROLE & MOTIVE Conquest. MODUS Commands minions, sets up destructive attacks.

BLOOD 30 / GUTS 27 CREATIVE 3 / CAREFUL2 / CONCERTED 1 ACADEMIC 3 / CULTURE 3 / IMPOSE 2 PHYSIQUE 2 / TINKER 2 / TRADE 2

INVENTORY

Crystal scales [+1 Blood Defense] Hypercritical mind [+1 Guts Defense]

SPECIAL

<u>Unfurled wings</u> A Crystal Drake has free movement up to 4 heights and can move an additional 9 heights as an action.

BLOOD 32 / GUTS 25 CREATIVE 2 / CAREFUL 2 / CONCERTED 2

TACTICS 3 / FOCUS 2 / IMPOSE 2 OBSERVE 2 / PHYSIQUE 2 / WEAPONRY 2

INVENTORY

Savior sword [+2 Blood Damage] Anointed armor [+2 Blood Defense] Death rattle [+1 Guts Damage]

SPECIAL

Techniques
One stance each of two
Complexity 3 Techniques

Exaltea Magus

ORIGINS Wizards and witches who've fragmented their souls into seven pieces in return for true arcane power. LOOKS & TRAITS A pale facsimile of their former personality. Surrounded by dizzyingly magical aura. RELATIONS Has servants, thralls to carry out mundane tasks. Often enters into pacts with settlements; in return for sustenance, materials, and a base, they will be protected from harm. ROLE & MOTIVE Differs wildly. MODUS Depends on their hubris.

BLOOD 25 / GUTS 27 CREATIVE 2 / CAREFUL 3 / CONCERTED 2 ARCANA 3 / ACADEMIC 2 / CULTURE 2 GUILE 2 / IMPOSE 2

INVENTORY

Arcane armor [+1 Blood Defense] Lifeless aura [+2 Guts Defense]

SPECIAL

Spells

Two instances of a Complexity 3 Spell Two instances each of three Complexity 2 Spells One stance of Spirit Pact

<u>Undeath</u>

A slain Exalted Magus will re e after seven in-story weeks unless all seven soul fragments are found and destroyed.

Incarnate

ORIGINS Hideous secrets, hateful thoughts or venomous lies that congealed and manifested in physical form. LOOKS & TRAITS Varies depending on what birthed them. An Incarnate of "others will never be as deserving", for example, can appear as a tiny, oily sprite. An Incarnate for "I can never be loved" appears as a suffocatingly immovable statue of ebony.

RELATIONS Keeps mortals tied under their influence. Competes with other Incarnates.

ROLE & MOTIVE Control, chaos. **MODUS** Compels others to their bidding.

Mirror Ball

ORIGINS Unknown. LOOKS & TRAITS Disjointed mirrors held together in a loose shape. **RELATIONS** A source of rare material for memory magi; and fear from everyone else. They say that gazing into its obsidian facets reveals how the onlooker will die. ROLE & MOTIVE Seek and combine other Mirror Balls. **MODUS** Deflect or reflect.



SPECIAL

Shapeshifter

Incarnates can freely alter their form and appearance.

Spells

One stances of Become e Two instance of Compel



SPECIAL

Reflect		
Anyone successfully damaging a l	Mirı	or
Ball also receives that damage	Heinig Div	turn.

e

Spells thOne stance of Become stance of Secret Door One



Paralice

ORIGINS Unknown.

LOOKS & TRAITS Parasitic growths that blossom from their hosts' brains. **RELATIONS** Controls a complex network of bodies, minds and senses tied together by the Paralich's consciousness. Hosts retain their personality and can almost lead normal lives, though they are immutably bonded to their Paralich and unthinkingly obey their commands. **ROLE & MOTIVE** Expand, consume. **MODUS** Infects others through food tainted with its essence; fully takes hold of new bodies after a week-long sickness. In Conflict, coordinates its hosts together to easily overcome any enemy.

BLOOD 24 / **GUTS** 24

CREATIVE 2 / CAREFUL 2 / CONCERTED 2

SPECIAL

<u>Allskill</u> A Paralich has three Ranks in all Skills its hosts possess.

Allsense

A Paralich receives sensory input from all its hosts.

MONSTROUS CREATURES BAKUNAWA

The world once had seven beautiful moons. Their light shone fairly across the land and in their wake entranced the sea serpent known only as the Bakunawa.

She rose from the ocean and swallowed them i ther wide maw: one by one the moons' light snuffed out until only one was left. Angered, the gods fell into terrible battle to prevent the world from being plunged into darkness. The din of war was heard and felt from seven times seven kingdoms away.

The Bakunawa held them off with wing and claw, but was so full from the six moons that she was soon chased back into the sea. Now she sleeps, coiled in the dark, dreaming of the moon she could not eat.

BLOOD 45 / GUTS 36 CREATIVE 2 / CAREFUL 3 / CONCERTED 3 OBSERVE 3 / PHYSIQUE 3 / IMPOSE 3 CULTURE 2 / FOCUS 2 / INSIGHT 2

INVENTORY

Vicious fangs [+3 Blood Damage] Sea serpent scales [+2 Blood Defense]

SPECIAL

Size

She a large enough that 5 humans can stand comfortably atop her.

Plunge to darkness

If fought at night, the Bakunawa has a 1 in 36 chance of swallowing the moon at the start of her turn. If she succeeds, she regains 20 Blood & Guts and the world is plunged into darkness.

Greater unfurled wings

The Bakunawa has free movement of 7 heights and can move an additional 15 heights as an action.

Techniques

One stance of Dispel One stance each of three Complexity 3 Techniques



Kalipsis

A powerful sorcerer-empress, long bound and shackled in the deepest dungeons of an ancient wizard-city. Kalipsis, out of love for this world, sought to delay the apocalypse i the ner own hands by sacrificing hundreds of innocent souls in a dread ritual. While she could not stop the Doom i its entirety, she could delay it. And so, she reasoned, she would only need to kill hundreds and thousands more to keep the apocalypse at bay.

The rivers ran red with blood and it was only years later that a mysterious, unnamed hero could rise up and bind her. Now she lays in wait, biding her time i thin her crystal prison, knowing it weakens day by day. She's not alone: embedded deep across the realm are those who would gladly rip her free. For only *she* can singlehandedly save the world, and if unworthy people need to die to make it happen, then...let it happen.

BLOOD 40 / GUTS 40 CREATIVE 3 /CREATIVE 2/ CONCERTED 3 ARCANA 3 / CHARISMA 3 / IMPOSE 3 ACADEMIC 2 / GUILE 2 / INSIGHT 2 OBSERVE 2 / ALL OTHER SKILLS 1

INVENTORY

Oracular staff [+2 Blood Damage] Blood robes [+1 Blood Defense] Relentless ambition [+2 Guts Damage, +2 Guts Defense]

SPECIAL

Superior shapeshift

Every other turn, Kalipsis can redistribute her Blood & Guts and assume a different form: a many-headed dragon, a tentacled warbeast, even a clattering of limbs and insect wings. This does not use up an action.

Arcane nexus

There **a** one **a** 36 chance at the start of each turn that Kalipsis can cast a Complexity 4 Spell. Once cast, she loses this ability indefinitely.

Doom

If Kalipsis is killed, the Doomsday Clock consumes one Moment.

<u>Spells</u>

One stance each of five Complexity 3 Spells Two instances each of two Complexity 2 Spells

INAEX

Actions during Conflict See Conflict: Actions Advantage 75 See also Conflict: Actions: Create Advantage Approach Scores 43

Allocating Approach Scores At Hero Creation Increasing Approach Scores Skill Combinations Assistance See Bonds Attack **74**

B

Blood 45

Allocating modifiers **46** Increasing Blood **81** Recovering and rerolling **80** Skills that damage Blood **74** See also Conflict: Actions: Harm others

Bonds 60

Allocating Bonds **60** Assistance during Conflict **76** Assistance out of Conflict **70** ADDING MAJOR LEVEL TO TN **70** SACRIFICING MINOR LEVEL **70**

Increasing Bonds **61** Major and minor levels **60**

С

Complexity 87 Conflict 73 Actions 74 ASSIST 76 CREATE ADVANTAGE 75 HARM OTHERS 74 MOVE FAR 76 STAND GROUND 74 USE SPELL OR TECHNIQUE 76

0

Free movement Initiative Category Sacrificing Bonds Consequence

D

Damage 54, 74 See also Conflict: Actions: Harm others Items at Hero Creation 54

Death 80

Defense 54, 74 See also Conflict: Actions: Harm others

Items at Hero Creation **54**

Difficulty Modifier **69**

Doom **25**

Doomsday Clock **32**

E

Experience Points See XP

F

Fallen heroes 80

G

Guts **45** Allocating modifiers **46** Increasing Guts **81** Recovering and rerolling **80** Skills that damage Guts **74** See also Conflict: Actions: Harm others

Η

Height (measurement for length and distance) 22

Initiative Category 77

Long Rest 81

$\mid \mathbf{M}$

Movement during Conflict **74** As an action **76**

Omen **30**

Opportunity 71

R

()

Recovery See Rest REM 88 Rest 81 Ritual (Spells & Techniques) 86

S

Short Rest 81 Skill Checks 68 Assistance See Bonds *As a group* **72** Consequence 71 Difficulty Modifier 69 In Conflict CREATE ADVANTAGE 75 HARM OTHERS 74 MOVE FAR 76 **Opportunity 71** Outcome 71 Skill and Approach combinations 68 Upgrading the outcome **72** Skills 46 Allocating Skills **50** Approach combinations **68** Categories **46** Random Skills table **51** Using Skills See Skill Checks Spells 57, 85 Base vs enhanced **86** Complexity 87 Full list 88

In Conflict **76**

Learning new instance or making custom Spell **87** Replenishing Spells **86** Short list at Hero Creation **58** Stand groun<u>d **74**</u>

Г

Ι

Techniques 57, 85 Base vs enhanced 86 Complexity 87 Full list 97 In Conflict 76 Learning new instances or making custom Techniques 87 Replenishing Techniques 86 Short list at Hero Creation 59 Threshold Number (TN) 68 Assist bonus See Bonds Difficulty Modifier 69 Summary 70 TIC 88 Time (In-story vs. Real-time) 22

Χ

XP 81 Bonus at Hero Creation 62 Spending XP 81



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