

COMPATIBLE WITH
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RPG**



No. 5

TALES from the SMOKING WYRM

Welcome back, victorious traveler! The Smoking Wyrn is always open to provide the nourishment and drink you crave and the company you do not expect! Please excuse the living exemplars of your favorite dishes—we have a master of beasts in the house tonight. Can I offer you a small refreshment to cleanse the pallet before you decide on your nightly diversion?

As a diversion, perhaps you would care to watch or participate in a friendly sword duel on our patio? I am told these sword masters have both the heart and discipline necessary to pull off the most daring of moves and can cut down even an experienced foe. I think it will prove delightful to survey and pair nicely with our newest Valdarian port.

No? Then perhaps you care for something more informative? There are esoteric disciples gathering in the round room to discuss their delving into idols of power. Some may mutter frightful words—but worry not, that is but a nervous tick. Be careful with your head though, lest Mother Hydra sees you and wishes to know what is inside.

I see you bring with you emblems of the Dweller at the Core—have you asked around for his dao? I fear there are requests for mighty deeds to be carried out in that earthly being's name, but worry not—I am sure these do not require your efforts until the morn!

As ever, Willhomeena Cullpepper is using her customary space to work through the day's plant collecting. She tells me that she has some powerful herbals for stopping blood loss and reversing poisons!

*Is that the tongue of a toad you hang on your neck as a keepsake?
Oh, how lucky for you...*



TALES FROM THE SMOKING WYRM

No. 5



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QUISQUIS QUEM TETIGERIT,
SIT ILLI LOTA MANUS.

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Beastmaster

SETH

How is it that you come to travel with these animals?

DARR

They are my friends. I have always been told that my ability with animals was uncommon. I see through their eyes; they see through mine. They know my thoughts; I know theirs. We depend on each other.

—*The Beastmaster, 1982*

Throughout time, there have been people skilled at bonding with animals. Some few spend enough time with these companions that they can command them in special tasks and even take them into war. The beastmaster is adept at working with animals in a synergistic partnership to accomplish things they cannot tackle on their own. These individuals are found not only on battlefields but also on farms, in cities, and often in religious organizations that venerate animals.

While most beastmasters work with domesticated animals (cats, dogs, horses, and the like), many work with undomesticated animals just as well. Such relationships should be a compromise between the judge and player; they should agree as to what is a particular beastmaster's affinity. Each beastmaster is unique in their relationships—you never know what animals they will form a coalition with.

It is never clear whether the connection between the beastmaster and their cohort is natural, mystical, or personality-based, and it does not need to be elucidated in any particular manner at all unless the player wishes to do so. Regardless of the connection, it has a profound influence on the life of the beastmaster.

The term *beastmaster* is a misnomer. The reality is that the beastmaster and beast relationship should be mutualistic in every sense—the animals should benefit as does the character. Those characters who seek to subjugate or dominate, and who have ill intentions toward the animals they form empathic bonds with are not likely to have longed careers, and judges are encouraged to shorten them using the animals betrayed by the character.

Beastmasters who roleplay their relationships with their beasts should be rewarded with additional small animal affectations: vermin hunted in the night appear at the edge of the beastmaster's sleeping kit in the morning, animals hide the beastmaster's kit so others can't find it, etc.

Hit Points: A beastmaster gains 1d8 hit points at each level.

Weapon Training: The beastmaster favors weapons that can either be used up close (usually as defense) or in combination with the beasts at a distance. The beastmaster is trained in the use of these weapons: blowgun, bullwhip, catchpole, club, crossbow, dagger, dart, polearm, hand axe, shortbow, short sword, sling, spear, and staff.

Alignment: Beastmasters can follow any alignment. Lawful beastmasters breed and train their animals for the good of society, such as training cats or dogs to hunt down rats in the sewers, otters to fish for the tribe, or even roosters as night watch patrols. Neutral beastmasters usually live in the wild, preferring the company of their beasts to civilization. In these situations, the beastmaster and animals often form more of a cooperative and work together to accomplish tasks as equals instead of the beastmaster purposefully training the animals to perform tasks. Chaotic beastmasters breed their animals to plague their opponents or sell their services to the highest bidder. Examples include ferret thieves, alarm monkeys, or bee swarms that remove unwanted visitors from the beastmaster's home.

Mighty Beast: The beastmaster can use their deed die to command and control beasts while also making a standard action, or to perform synergistic deeds with their animals—but animals must be integral in



the deed description for this to work. The Mighty Beast die adds to the attack as a bonus in the same fashion as a warrior's, but the only deeds the die can be used for directly involve working with animals to accomplish the task at hand. The beastmaster can control up to twice their level + personality bonus in hit dice of creatures, while the number of beasts they can command is equal to their beast die roll result, with a minimum result of 3 required for any success. The synergy of the added beast die to the beastmaster's attack only applies to the beastmaster, not to the beasts they employ in the attack. If those creatures are attacking on their own as part of the synergy of the deed, then they roll their own action die for that attack and resolve as normal. The fact they are coordinating is what gives the beastmaster the deed die as a bonus.

Some examples of commands that can be given:

- **Attack.** Attack a foe.
- **Bring to Ground.** Drag a foe to the ground and hold them in place.
- **Chase and Pounce.** Run down a foe and pounce on them.
- **Scent.** Track a foe based on scent.
- **Flush.** Scare a foe out of hiding.
- **Distract.** Reduce effectiveness of a foe by harassing them.
- **Clean wound.** Lick wounds to recover the body.
- **Retrieve.** Fetch and return something.
- **Guard.** Watch over something and provide alerts.

Beasts are trained to respond to verbal or visual cues which must be established prior to the event through roleplaying. If this cue is disrupted, the die is foiled automatically. In situations where the beastmaster does not command as many animals as are present, those additional animals act of their own volition and fall under the judge's control. Beware the party member who is disliked by these beasts in such a situation!

Animals that die in the service of the beastmaster evoke an emotional response that must be redressed. The beastmaster must succeed at a DC 14 Will save to not immediately exact revenge for their slain companion in a belligerent and reckless manner. On a success, the beastmaster can spend as much time as they like plotting their revenge, but the revenge will come.

If the beastmaster dies, then their beasts will react in a random fashion. Roll 1d5: (1–3) The beast becomes enraged and attacks the individual who killed the beastmaster; (4) The beast is overcome with fear and flees immediately; (5) The beast freezes for 1d3 rounds, then runs from the scene. However, they will secretly watch the individual who killed the beastmaster and will hunt them down and strike at an opportune moment. Sleeping makes the target especially vulnerable in this instance.

Signature Animal: At first level, the beastmaster chooses a signature animal type. The beastmaster shares an especially developed empathic rapport with this animal type, usually as a result of growing up with the animal or spending long periods of time with this type of animal. The beastmaster and animal

type can communicate surprisingly subtle emotional and intellectual ideas with looks, gestures, smells, or even sounds. Both beastmaster and animal can tell what each other is feeling and thinking as long as they are within sensory range of each other, depending on the form of communication. This emotional rapport takes time to establish—hours, even days or weeks, depending on how distrusting the animal is. If pressed for time, the beastmaster can spend permanent Luck in order to press the rapport, with 1 Luck per animal thus bonded required.

Animal type is intentionally a loose term here and should be negotiated with the judge. Examples might include: all domesticated animals, which would include domestic cats but not undomesticated tigers; or all cats, which would exclude dogs; or all dogs, which would include other canids, such as wolves.

Animal companions will travel with the beastmaster until there is a reason for them to part ways. Most often this involves the beastmaster moving into a realm that is inhospitable to the animal. For example, eagles are not often willing to enter caves and spelunk with their companions. The judge should provide opportunities for the beastmaster to befriend animals of their type. At a minimum, the beastmaster should begin with at least one animal companion that fits the beastmaster's stated type.

Animal Husbandry: The beastmaster knows how to calm, gain the trust of, and train animals. Any skill checks in this regard are made at the beastmaster's full action die. Further, the beastmaster can ride animals with the following mounted combat modifications: (1) they are trained in riding animals; (2) +2 bonus to AC; (3) if animal is their signature animal type, +1d.

Animal Wyrding: Using physical, vocal, or scent cues, the beastmaster convinces unallied beasts to do the beastmaster's bidding—including ceasing hostile activities toward them. This ability is similar in function to a *turn unholy* check, wherein the beastmaster rolls their action die and adds their beastmaster level, Personality, and Luck modifiers. A beast is in range if the beastmaster can communicate with it in some fashion, although the judge should feel free to impose penalties if open communication is hindered. The judge is the final arbiter of what constitutes a *beast* for this ability, but a good starting definition would include: a creature that can act on its own volition but does not have higher reasoning capabilities, such as the ability to think abstractly in a profound way not attached to the physical world around them. A chimpanzee is a beast under this definition, even though it can use tools to



collect ants to eat for protein and a little spicy extra in their meal.

Languages: Beastmasters automatically know Common and any additional languages as determined by their Int modifier. Further, beastmasters often incorporate animal sounds into their normal speech patterns, as they communicate with the animals around them at the same time.

Action Dice: A beastmaster uses their action dice for any normal action, including attacks and skill checks. If a beast is involved in this action, then they may add their beast deed die to that roll.

TABLE 1: BEASTMASTER ADVANCEMENT

LEVEL	BEAST (DEED DIE)†	CRIT DIE/ TABLE	ACTION DICE‡	REF	FORT	WILL
1	+d3	1d8 / III	1d20	+1	+1	+0
2	+d4	1d10 / III	1d20	+1	+1	+0
3	+d5	1d12 / III	1d20	+1	+2	+1
4	+d6	1d14 / III	1d20	+2	+2	+1
5	+d7	1d16 / III	1d20+1d14	+2	+3	+2
6	+d8	1d20 / III	1d20+1d16	+2	+4	+2
7	+d10+1	1d20 / III	1d20+1d20	+3	+4	+2
8	+d10+2	1d24 / III	1d20+1d20	+3	+5	+3
9	+d10+3	1d24 / III	1d20+1d20	+3	+5	+3
10	+d10+4	1d30 / III	1d20+1d20+1d14	+4	+6	+3

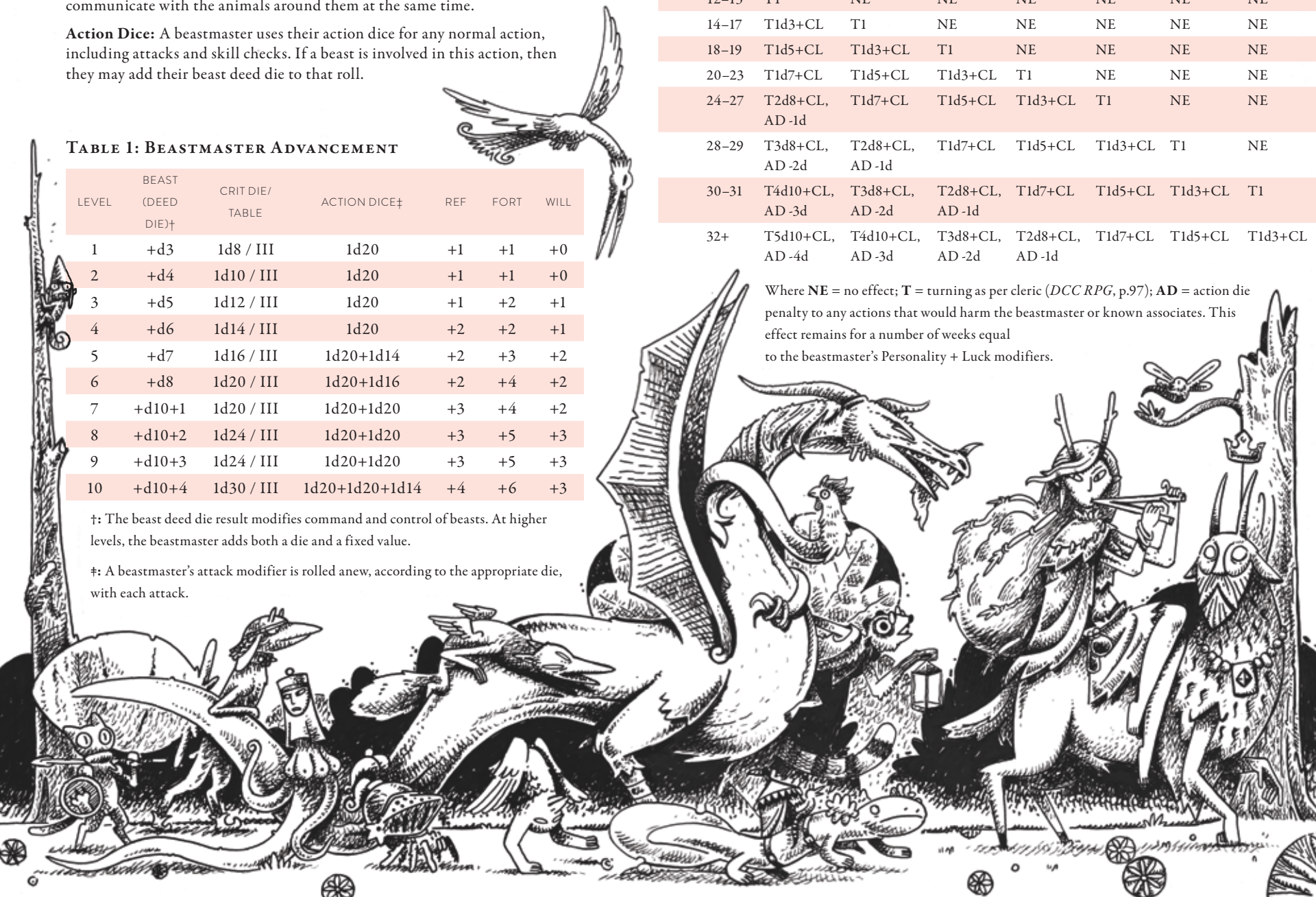
†: The beast deed die result modifies command and control of beasts. At higher levels, the beastmaster adds both a die and a fixed value.

‡: A beastmaster's attack modifier is rolled anew, according to the appropriate die, with each attack.

TABLE 2: ANIMAL WYRDING RESULTS

CHECK	1 HD	2 HD	3-4 HD	5-6 HD	7-8 HD	9-10 HD	11+ HD
1-11	NE	NE	NE	NE	NE	NE	NE
12-13	T1	NE	NE	NE	NE	NE	NE
14-17	T1d3+CL	T1	NE	NE	NE	NE	NE
18-19	T1d5+CL	T1d3+CL	T1	NE	NE	NE	NE
20-23	T1d7+CL	T1d5+CL	T1d3+CL	T1	NE	NE	NE
24-27	T2d8+CL, AD-1d	T1d7+CL	T1d5+CL	T1d3+CL	T1	NE	NE
28-29	T3d8+CL, AD-2d	T2d8+CL, AD-1d	T1d7+CL	T1d5+CL	T1d3+CL	T1	NE
30-31	T4d10+CL, AD-3d	T3d8+CL, AD-2d	T2d8+CL, AD-1d	T1d7+CL	T1d5+CL	T1d3+CL	T1
32+	T5d10+CL, AD-4d	T4d10+CL, AD-3d	T3d8+CL, AD-2d	T2d8+CL, AD-1d	T1d7+CL	T1d5+CL	T1d3+CL

Where **NE** = no effect; **T** = turning as per cleric (*DCC RPG*, p.97); **AD** = action die penalty to any actions that would harm the beastmaster or known associates. This effect remains for a number of weeks equal to the beastmaster's Personality + Luck modifiers.



EXAMPLE MIGHTY BEAST DEED MANEUVERS

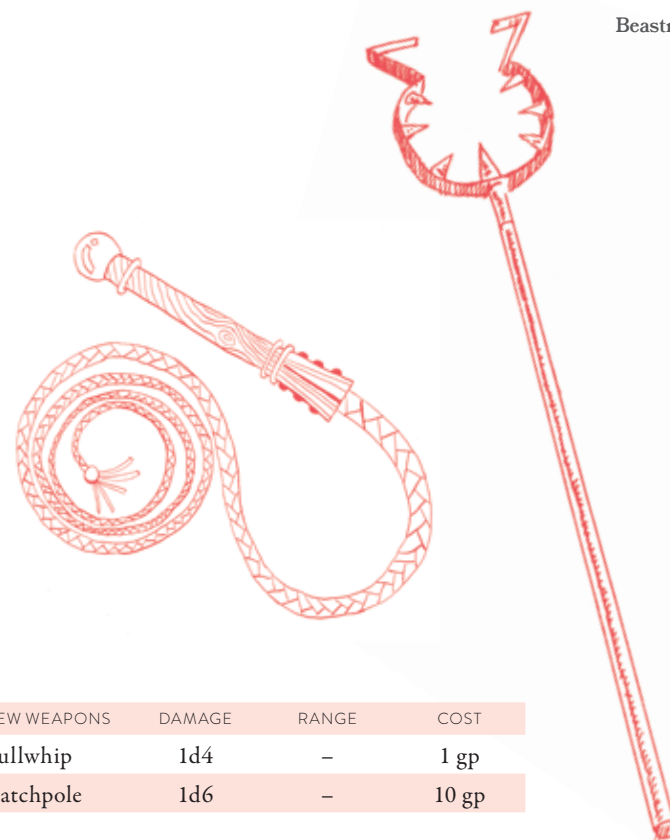
Beastmasters should use their beast deed die to elucidate and entertain the group of the actions they take to overcome obstacles with their beasts as part of using their beast deed die. Almost all of the types of deeds posited in the *DCC RPG* (p.89–92) make perfect sense when carried out by the beastmaster and their beast cohort: blinding attacks from eagle claws, disarming attacks as weasels bite the hands of enemies or carry off weapons, pushbacks as panthers maneuver opponents in ways against enemy favor, or trips and throws as cats trip opponents or elephants pick up opponents and fling them away. Even defensive maneuvers as animals position themselves to best provide cover for the beastmaster on a strategic withdrawal all make sense in this context.

Further, we suggest beastmaster players also gain inspiration from the “*Seven Mighty Deeds from the City of Sevenscore Thousand Smokes*” article found in the *Goodman Games Yearbook 8* (p.19–22). This article introduces tandem deeds—deeds designed to help those who can also perform deeds, or who can perform some other special ability, such as backstab. It is possible for the beastmaster to direct their animals to assist other characters in this manner, and we see that tandem deeds like **Bewilder and Backstab** make sense when directing an animal to make a feint at an enemy to increase a thief’s backstab. Likewise, **Back-to-Back Badasses** seems perfectly acceptable when pairing an animal with either the beastmaster or another party member. **Launch Ally** takes on special meaning if the creature launching the party member is an orangutan, as does **I Got You Bro!** when the hawk swoops down with claws outstretched and screeching at the top of its lungs to help out the wounded wizard by drawing off attackers. Beastmasters are encouraged to explore these options as well and enjoy working as a team to accomplish the goals of the moment! We provide one additional deed example for your consideration.

HARRY FOE

The beasts work together to continually harass the beastmaster’s foes. These opponents are so beaten down with the persistence of the attacks that they themselves have a hard time carrying out any of their intended actions.

DEED DIE	OUTCOME
3	Each opponent harried subtracts 1d from their action die. Requires at least 3 animals to harry each opponent thus distracted.
4	As above, but harried opponents subtract 2d.
5	As above, but harried opponents subtract 3d. For harried foes, any action die results of 1 result in two fumble effects, not one.
6	As above, but harried opponents subtract 4d.
7+	As above, but harried opponents subtract 5d. Requires at least 2 animals to harry each opponent.



NEW WEAPONS	DAMAGE	RANGE	COST
Bullwhip	1d4	–	1 gp
Catchpole	1d6	–	10 gp

Bullwhip: Made of braided leather and waxed for durability, a bullwhip is about 10' in length and confers +1d to disarm and trip maneuver mighty deeds. Bullwhips deal subdual damage but can still critical as normal; however, unscrupulous wielders have been known to weave bits of flint, glass, or metal into the fall to allow for lethal damage. On a fumble, in addition to the usual fumble results, the bullwhip deals its damage to the wielder and leaves a scar.

Catchpole: A polearm with a spring-loaded set of sharpened jaws, the catchpole is designed to catch and hold human-sized targets. With a successful attack against the target sans their armor bonus, the combatants begin grappling (*DCC RPG*, p.96), with the wielder of the catchpole gaining a +1d bonus. If the target is pinned, they are unable to reach the wielder due to the length of the weapon. Once grappled, the target is considered entangled (see **Table 4-1: Attack Roll Modifiers**, *DCC RPG*, p.78). Attacks against larger or smaller creatures are typically at -2d (larger creatures won't fit between the catchpole's jaws, and smaller creatures simply slip free).

Playtest Credits: Rick Hull for testing out the strengths and weaknesses of the beastmaster class. Larry Cosentino, Jacob Way, Ford Fitch, and Michael Cosentino for contributing healthy conversation and ideas to the class.

The True Power of Organizations in Roleplaying Games

“There is nothing so stupid or dangerous or painful that people won't eagerly do it, if by doing it they will make others believe they are better or stronger or more honorable. I have seen people poison themselves, destroy their children, abandon their mates, cut themselves off from the world, all so that others would think they were a better sort of person.”

—Jason Worthing, *The Worthing Chronicles*

“At the beginning of a full five-stage Tragedy, the central figure is always part of a community, a network of relationships, linked to other people by ties of loyalty, friendship, family or marriage. And one of the most important things which happens to such heroes and heroines as they embark on their tragic course is that they begin to break those bonds of loyalty, friendship and love (even if, initially, they may form other alliances). It is the very essence of Tragedy that the hero or heroine should become, step by step, separated from other people. Often they separate themselves in the most obvious, violent and final way possible, by causing other people's deaths.”

—Christopher Booker, *The Seven Basic Plots: Why We Tell Stories*

In the first part of this series, we explored the ways in which organizations have contributed to roleplaying games in the past, and how they could be structured for the DCC RPG. We ended with three short examples of how you can build minor organizations that can have big impact upon your games. DCC RPG is often thought of as the perfect one-shot game—often a highlight at conventions like Gen Con, where sessions are in such high demand they sell out within minutes of release. It is true that DCC RPG can be played in this manner—nice, one-shot adventures that play out like really developed boardgames, or beer and pretzel games that create an easy reason to socialize for a night, with little else beyond. There is nothing wrong with such games.

But DCC RPG can be used as a longer, larger format of entertainment—a true campaign. This can even be done stringing together the modules already released for DCC RPG, or it can come in the form of a true sandbox-style game that perhaps only dips into these published modules infrequently, if at all. Organizations are a useful tool to tie together pre-published modules, or to help facilitate character motivations in a sandbox-style game. With the Beggar King and the Order of Saint Stephen, we highlighted how simple ideas from the DCC RPG core rules can be used to flesh out useful, practical organizations—things that can shape a campaign in a very direct way, whether they are intended for players or not. In the New Londontown example, we explored how something as simple as the concept of citizenship to a group—in this case a city—can bestow real benefits upon a character, help define them, and provide

campaign ticklers and obstacles that characters must navigate.

In part two of this ongoing series, we present a very deeply developed organization: The School of the Tree. This organization allows characters to approximate some of the martial prowess of European sword schools. Since it is a fantasy contrivance, it borrows heavily from several such schools, while creating a gestalt identity that is uniquely its own. This idea of borrowing from real life and then augmenting it with fantasy elements of your own campaign world is an important concept, and one worth discussing further, but that is not the follow-through of this preamble. Instead, we prefer to discuss the use of organizations as powerful character-centric leverage tools for your campaign.

COMMUNITY VS. SOCIETY

A community is defined as a group of people living in the same place or having a particular characteristic in common. Communities include friends, family, and everything our sheltered characters know about life in a points-of-light-style campaign. The character's understanding of the world is necessarily limited, and it is challenged as they go forth and adventure. While the characters rarely set the stage for the set-pieces they encounter—they did not create the *Crypt of the Devil Lich*, or the lair of the *People of the Pit*, for example—the things that happen to the community because those antagonists are disturbed is often the result of the character's actions. These things could be good—defeating the evil in *Sailors on the Starless Sea* could help the whole community, while disturbing the nest of beastpeople and losing could destroy the village forever!

There is something to be said for utilizing the community to emphasize how different the characters become after adventuring for glory and gold—how does this change the community's view of the characters when they suddenly have a hoard of gold, ancient demon swords, and foul pacts with Sezrekan? The community is the judge's way to tighten the thumbscrews on the characters, while society is where those characters go for refuge and understanding by others who have experienced what they have.

Which brings us to society. In a broad sense, society is the same as community, but in a more operational sense—we define society as an organization formed for a particular purpose or activity. In this sense, society sits outside community—it is a broader level of social organization between, or instead of, communities. Certainly, communities create societies, but they only do so to allow societies to bridge communities. There is no need for a blacksmiths' guild if there is only one blacksmith and they never interact with anyone outside the community. The blacksmiths' guild exists to allow smiths to work together across communities, or perhaps, in spite of those communities. It also often exists to make sure that a rising tide lifts all boats—that blacksmiths across communities tied by common society all prosper together, instead of just individuals prospering and others faltering. In this way, society mitigates the often turbulent forces of stochastic change.

Societies are organizations that bring together like-minded individuals who would otherwise probably never meet, and allow them access to economic,

social, political, or academic advantages. The example organizations from the first part of our series introduced the idea of organizations, highlighted the various ways that characters could benefit, and outlined some requirements to become part of that society. Starting with part two of this series, we will explore these organizations in much greater depth, creating places where characters can rebuild their lives and truly blossom into who they want to be—expressions of themselves. And with that, we give you the School of the Tree.

THE SCHOOL OF THE TREE

The knight and the swordfighter are time-tested characters in fantasy RPGs. The warrior wielding their blade to slay hordes of monsters is a figure of admiration and inspiration for many. People want to be knights and warriors on noble quests to protect the downtrodden and the vulnerable. They want to uphold and be tested by the values of chivalry. It is no surprise that many chivalric orders and institutions exist—they offer fellowship and a sense of belonging to like-minded individuals.

At the same time, non-chivalric sword-fighting and fencing schools flourish, attracting aspiring swordfighters and people who want to hone their skills in the presence of masters and adepts. There are many sword-fighting academies that offer rigorous training regimes. However, there are legendary schools that are more sought-after by the aspirants. These schools are spoken about in breathless tones because they are that famous, that good. One such example is the School of the Tree.



The School of the Tree

*Young knight, learn to love God and honour noble women,
so grows your honour; practice chivalry and learn art which
adorns you and will glorify you in battle.*

—Johannes Liechtenauer

*What if custom is wrong? demanded the part of her that
believed in the code of chivalry. A knight must set things right.*
—Tamora Pierce, *Protector of the Small Quartet: First Test*

*Pokok dengan akar kuat ketawa ribut (A tree with strong roots
laughs at storms)*

—Malay saying

It is in the roots, not the branches, that a tree's greatest strength lies.
—Matshona Dhliwayo

A sword wields no strength unless the hand that holds it has courage.
—Legend of Zelda, *The Hero's Shade: Twilight Princess*

How the School of the Tree was founded is a mystery. Was it founded by an individual, a lady knight named Quiet, or a group of schoolmasters who broke away from an existing school? No one knows its origins for certain, spurring lively debate among academics. The School's actual location is a secret, but its emblem—a sword shaped like a tree—is a symbol many swordfighters seek to put on their shields or to brandish as an emblem of status before the eyes of admirers. Many claim to be part of the School of the Tree, but many also lie. Many more claim to have been part of the School and failed, dropping out of the School in disgrace. The School is only open to people who possess a true heart—one of courage and determination—and some experience in the art of sword-fighting and all things blade-related.

The School's motto is "Be rooted like a tree and you will grow strong." And indeed, the metaphor of the tree is further seen in the branches and roots of the organization: its Five Forms (schools of sword work) and three core values. The School's main specialty is the longsword. Students also learn the skills for hand-and-a-half and two-handed blades, like the montante and zweihänder.

ROOTS AND BRANCHES

In heraldry, the School is represented as a longsword in the form of a tree, with three distinct lines radiating from the tip of the pommel. These lines represent the core values of the School: Discipline, Heart, and Balance.

Likewise, there are branches along the blade, representing the Five Forms of sword work:

Lion represents the strength to guard.

Eagle symbolizes the decisiveness to strike.

Raven cunningly defends from the enemy's moves and strikes.

Kingfisher joins cunning with speed, incisively evading and striking without warning.

Wolf embodies intellectual mercy, prowling the battlefield, coldly evaluating their target's weakness, and then decisively striking to end conflict.

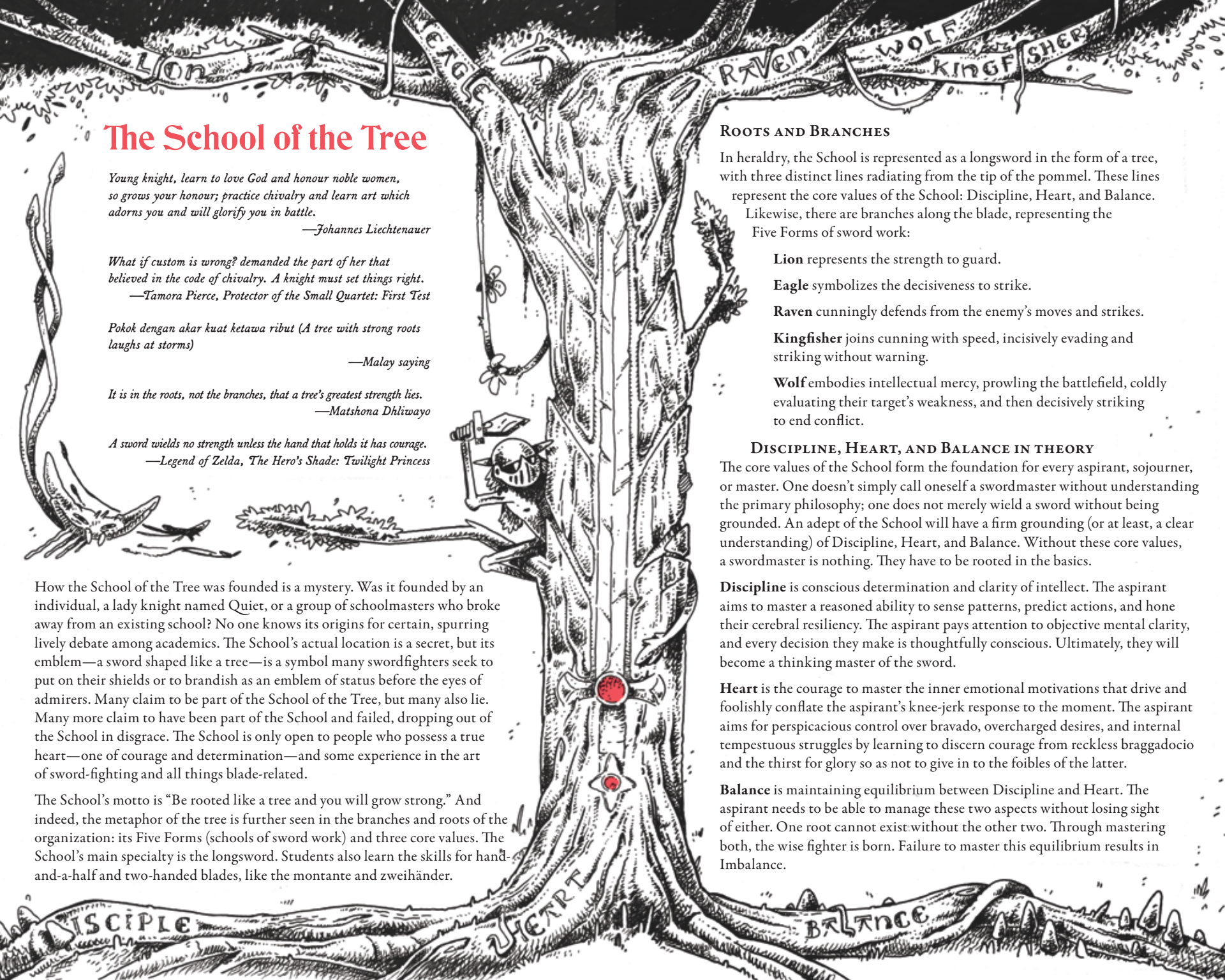
DISCIPLINE, HEART, AND BALANCE IN THEORY

The core values of the School form the foundation for every aspirant, sojourner, or master. One doesn't simply call oneself a swordmaster without understanding the primary philosophy; one does not merely wield a sword without being grounded. An adept of the School will have a firm grounding (or at least, a clear understanding) of Discipline, Heart, and Balance. Without these core values, a swordmaster is nothing. They have to be rooted in the basics.

Discipline is conscious determination and clarity of intellect. The aspirant aims to master a reasoned ability to sense patterns, predict actions, and hone their cerebral resiliency. The aspirant pays attention to objective mental clarity, and every decision they make is thoughtfully conscious. Ultimately, they will become a thinking master of the sword.

Heart is the courage to master the inner emotional motivations that drive and foolishly conflate the aspirant's knee-jerk response to the moment. The aspirant aims for perspicacious control over bravado, overcharged desires, and internal tempestuous struggles by learning to discern courage from reckless braggadocio and the thirst for glory so as not to give in to the foibles of the latter.

Balance is maintaining equilibrium between Discipline and Heart. The aspirant needs to be able to manage these two aspects without losing sight of either. One root cannot exist without the other two. Through mastering both, the wise fighter is born. Failure to master this equilibrium results in Imbalance.



THE TREE

Like a tree, the School has a structured organization, with a starting rank of aspirant, graduating to apprentice, then sojourner, and finally to master. Many graduates from the School feel so indebted and grateful that they stay on to mentor aspirants and supervise the next crop of students. The Marshal is the highest rank, purely organizational, and oversees the well-being of the School.

Aspirant: The novice or entry-level position in the School.

Apprentice: The aspirant graduates to this level after some training at the School.

Sojourner: More experienced than the apprentice, the sojourner still needs more training to become a fully-fledged swordfighter.

Master: The master is the level all aspire to. At this level, the master is an expert and a deadly fighter. They also serve as teachers and mentors.

Marshal: This is the highest School rank. The Marshal serves as an overseer and master of the School, keeping watch on its well-being and welfare, and can serve as a teacher if need be.

THE ENVIRONMENT

A tree flourishes in a healthy environment with an ideal climate and fertile soil. It is likewise rooted in its surroundings, its ecology. It is not alone; it is also connected to other trees in the forest. Hence the aspirant learns from other aspirants and adepts of the School. Senior students teach novices. Different School locations help one another and shelter students traveling along the roads. Every student, from aspirant forward, knows the towns in which the School has chantries of learning and respite. There is a strong sense of camaraderie and fellowship.

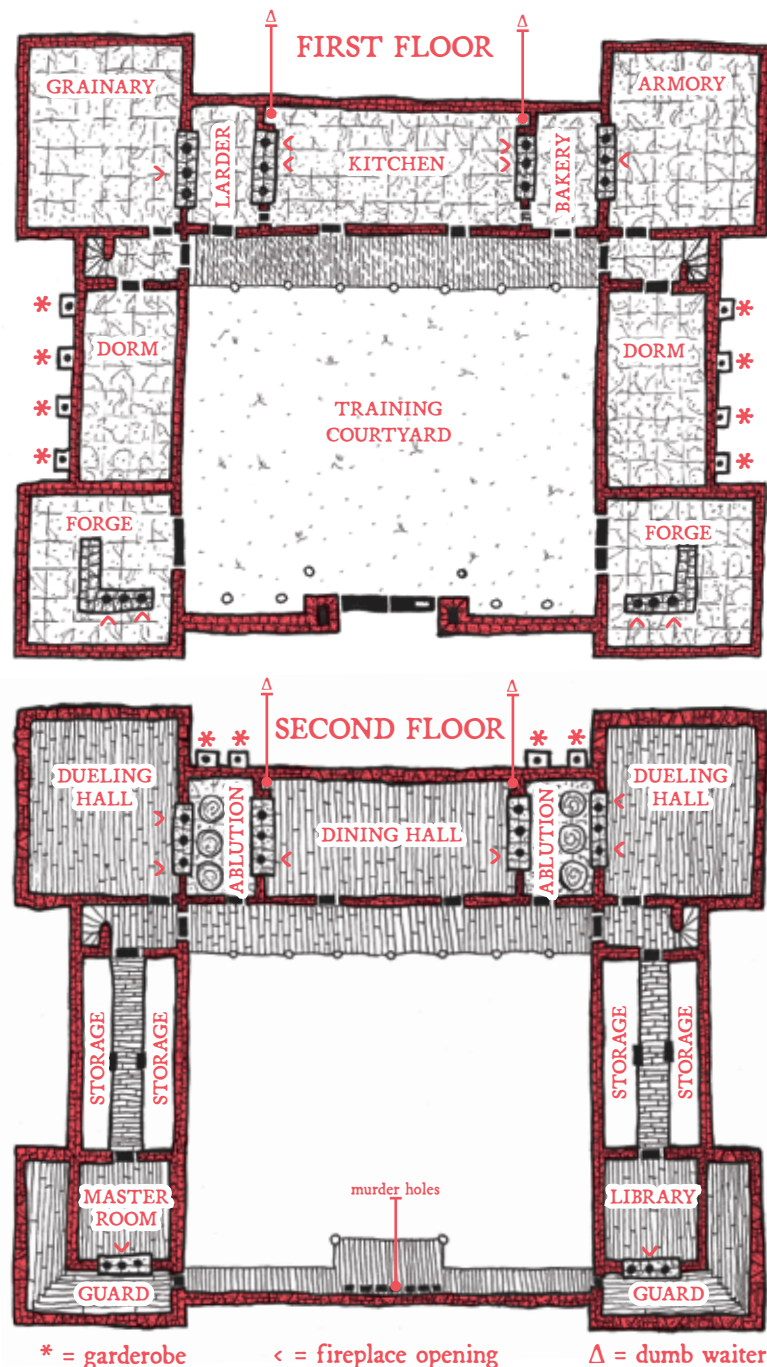
Goals: To master Discipline and Heart, and maintain Balance; to learn the Five Forms; to mentor aspirants.

Requirements: Entrance and advancement are predicated upon passing tests. These are normally a duel with a member of the School one rank higher than the applicant, where the applicant demonstrates their proficiency in hand-and-a-half or two-handed weapons. Additionally, for entrance a person trusted by the School must vouch that the applicant has fought in real combat and shown both Heart and Discipline. Rank advancement tests are discussed further under dueling.

Benefits: Aspirants who graduate from the School gain these benefits:

- Discipline deed die.
- Heart save.
- Balance rating. The character's drive to stabilize their actions via the teachings of the School.
- Shelter under the Tree. Graduates of the School may seek shelter at any School of the Tree location, regardless of their position in life.
- Weapons Mastery. All members are proficient in longsword, short sword, hand-and-a-half sword, and two-handed sword.

SCHOOL OF THE TREE MAP



DISCIPLINE, HEART, AND IMBALANCE IN PRACTICE

In theory, a swordfighter of the School is an adept who is able to balance both Discipline and Heart. In actual practice, the path is fraught with tension. Every swordfighter struggles between Discipline and Heart. Too often, clarity of intellect, technical proficiency, and controlled physical self-determination brought by walking the School's path are lost to the desire for glory, and joy in battle (the antithesis of courage) often clouds judgment. Many swordfighters crave martial deeds and glory so much so that they forget about their Discipline. In the rush for material gains and renown, many abandon their training.

As a result of this constant tug-of-war, the swordfighter will face setback after setback, failure after failure. Are their personal desires and wants more important than the clarity of their discipline and mind? Are they more enamored with material gain or with the siren call of fame? Have they confused courage with bluster and bravado? That is why the School of the Tree emphasizes so much parity between Discipline and Heart. Instructors reinforce daily this vital fact: aspirants will often meet adversity. Nothing is perfect. The heart is a wily and wild beast. Swordfighters are, after all, mortal. Even a bona fide swordfighter of the School may fall prey to worldly desires and forget their training. They easily forget who they are, what they have trained for. An aspirant acknowledges their imperfections and strives to remedy the situation by learning how to control their Discipline and Heart.

Discipline Deed Die: Practitioners of the School gain a Discipline deed die. Warriors who already have a deed die also gain the Discipline deed die and roll both but choose which die they will use for their actions that round. The Discipline deed die begins at 1d3 for aspirants and increases +1d for each level of mastery they attain in the School. When a character rolls their Discipline deed die, they also make a Heart save, where the DC is equal to the sum of all deed die rolled.

Heart Save: Practitioners of the School replace their Fortitude saving throw with a Heart saving throw. Whenever the rules call for a Fort save, they hereafter use Heart. Regardless of the practitioner's actual class, their Heart save modifier is equal to the Fortitude save modifier of a warrior of equal level. Heart saving throws encompass all the things a Fortitude save normally covers, as well as attempts by the character to control their own bravado, selfish desires, foolish ego, and impulsive actions irrespective of and independent from others. Heart saves focus on the intellectual pursuit of self-mastery and humility in life and the blade. Intelligence is the ability score that modifies Heart saves.

Imbalance: Practitioners of the School call on their training to keep them going throughout life—not just combat. Balance reflects their motivation to maintain their status quo no matter what hardship intercedes. The higher their sense of Imbalance, the more they must seek to regain equilibrium. A lower Imbalance rating reflects success at keeping stability between Discipline and Heart, while a higher Imbalance rating indicates a failure to keep oneself

in check. People with higher Imbalance ratings are more impetuous, less disciplined in controlling their Heart and Discipline. Imbalance acts much like but not exactly the same as cleric disapproval. For every action die where Discipline and Heart apply, Balance must be maintained, or Imbalance and suffering are the result.

The Imbalance rating begins at a 1 and can never be reduced below 1. Any failed Heart save requires a roll on the Imbalance Table. Failed Heart saves demonstrate a character succumbing to the inner conflict, and they add a temporary +1 to their Imbalance rating. Imbalance is returned to its base range the next day, although egregious decisions by the character can impose permanent increases to the base Imbalance rating—some stains are just too deep to easily wipe away. Roll 1d4 on the Imbalance table for every point of Imbalance. Results compound with any fumble results as well, if they apply.

Balance between Discipline and Heart are determined by the practitioner's actions. These play out like so:

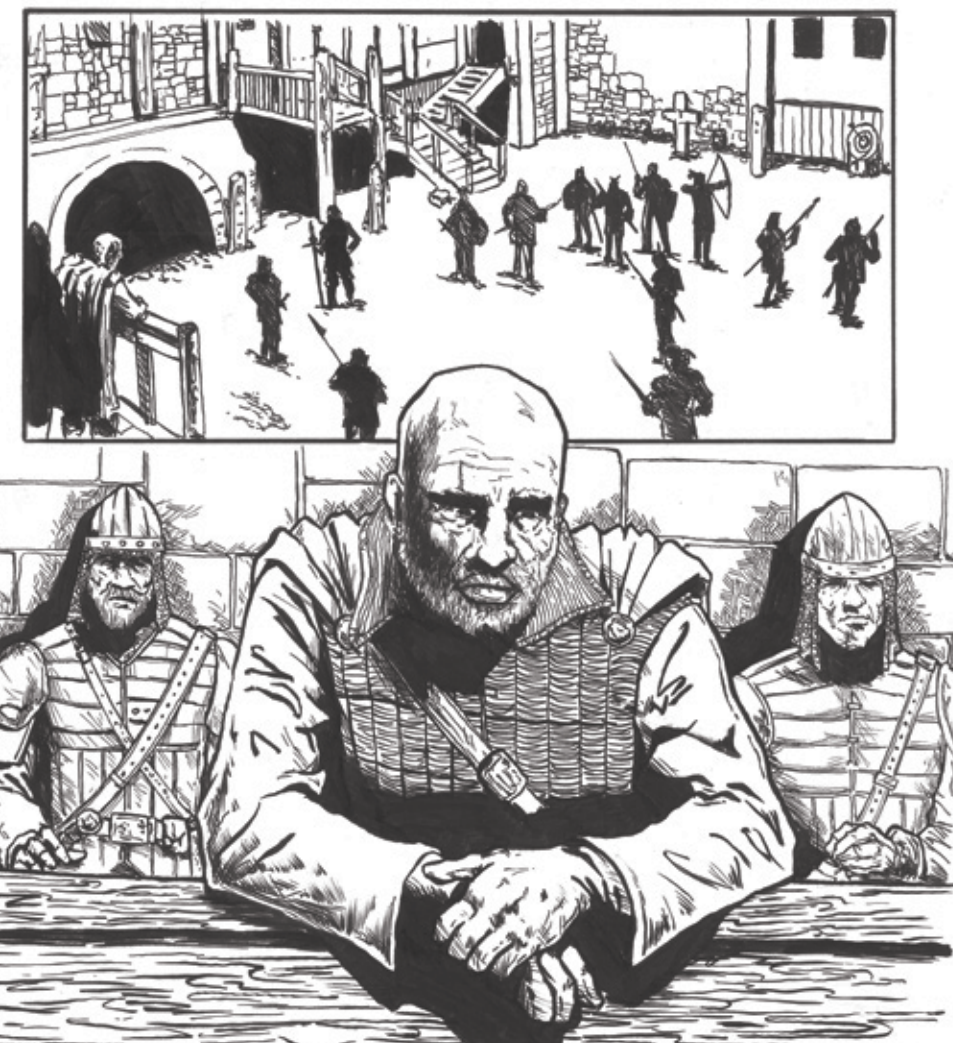
- **Each failed Discipline demonstration increases Imbalance.** The character demonstrates their Discipline by describing the mighty deeds the character performs with clinical attention to detail and outcome. Mighty deeds (DCC RPG, p.42) must be openly declared and narratively described in form and intent prior to gaining and rolling a deed die, and for those who practice the School, this is an absolute requirement. Failure to do this demonstrates the practitioner does not respect Discipline and acts rashly. This increases the Imbalance rating by 1 each time this happens.
- **Each failed Heart demonstration increases Imbalance.** Giving in to bravado, selfish desires, braggadocio, or not demonstrating courage likewise increase the Imbalance rating by 1 for each offense. Living up to your heart is a life skill, not just a combat skill. If you cannot control yourself in life, how can you ever hope to control yourself in combat? This ultimately comes down to roleplaying on the part of the player—and judges are encouraged to pay attention and impose Imbalance increases based upon player actions.
- **Deed trees specific to the School may impose Heart checks, penalties, and other disadvantages.** The back and forth between duelists of the School is meant to expose their opponents to their own inadequacies and confound those not of the School. Likewise, deliberately offensive insults are detrimental to duelists and invite +1 Imbalance rating to the taunter and a Heart save for the taunted. The more offensive the insult, the more penalties the check gains.
- **Imbalance above 10 results in a loss of ALL deed die for the day and the gaining of a permanent +1 to Imbalance rating.** To sway so far from the path is shameful in the least, and deeply disconcerting to the mental stability of a student of the School. This transgression will stain

them for a long time to come. A person who moves above 10 Imbalance during a duel is expected to concede or at the least forgo all attacks and only defend themselves.

- **In a duel, using weapons, including spells, outside the School's purview imposes an immediate Heart save and an Imbalance score increase.** Duels are about focusing on the School's teachings. Anything else interferes with this balancing act.
- **Killing someone with skills learned from the School when enduring a failed Imbalance check increases the permanent Imbalance rating by 1.** To abandon the teachings of the School, to sway so far outside the norms of training, and to take a life while in such conflict is a stain on the student's record. It is not so easily erased.

- **To kill another with weapons training outside the School's purview increases the permanent Imbalance rating by 1.** One does not sway from the path without grave consequences. The worse the deed, the graver the consequences: the person might be banished from the School and shunned forever. This does not mean a student of the School cannot kill—only that they do so in the ways in which they were trained by the School. Further, this only applies to direct confrontations with another individual in melee combat.

Therefore, a true swordfighter of the School is a very rare creature indeed. The master(s) and the Marshal are the most lethal fighters because they are the embodiment of the Balance and mastery of the Five Forms.



IMBALANCE TABLE

ROLL	RESULT
1	Why did they let you into the School? You falter and make a novice's mistake—your next attack is so unwieldy that while your strike may land, you do no damage.
2	Chaos erupts in your mind as you realize you have failed to rein in your Discipline. You step back from the fray to reassess, incurring a free attack from your opponent. The litany of Imbalance cannot help you.
3	You begin to doubt your ability to overcome your foe. Make a DC 13 Heart save or lose access to all abilities granted by the School for 1d4 rounds.
4	Your Discipline and Heart are not balanced. You suffer a -2 penalty to your attacks and AC is reduced by 2. In order to regain your focus, you must recite the litany of Imbalance until you overcome this failure, a task requiring at least 2d20 minutes of meditation.
5	Your movements are those of an untrained aspirant! You drop your weapon as you attempt to regain control. It skitters out of reach and under an obstacle. It will take 1d3 rounds to recover the blade, and until you do so, you are rattled and suffer a -1d penalty on all actions.
6	No matter how hard you try, you cannot keep your Discipline and Heart in Balance. All actions suffer a -1d penalty for the remainder of the day. You will need to practice meditative forms for at least 1d3 hours to regain your composure.
7	You have seriously underestimated your opponent's abilities. Your opponent gains +1d to their next attack and damage rolls.
8	Your blade breaks. Your Discipline is found wanting. You are a failure.
9	You and your opponent make contested Heart saves. The individual with the higher result gains a free strike against the other.
10	You falter in your practiced movements. Doing so trips up your coordination. Your Discipline deed die suffers a -1d penalty until you meditate and regain your composure. This requires 2d20 minutes of meditative form practice to accomplish.
11	You flail about, losing your equilibrium and becoming unsettled due to a miscalculation. Roll on the Fumble Table using 1d20 and apply the results.
12	Your careful calculations end up putting you squarely in the dust, sitting on your ass, your blade skittering away under an obstacle (1d4 rounds to recover). Roll on the Fumble Table using 1d20, apply the results to yourself, and your opponent gains a free strike against you in your prone position.
13	You have miscalculated and seriously undermined your ability to balance Discipline and Heart. You are at -1d for all actions this combat, and also reduce your deed die by -1d.

14	Is your foe mortal? No matter how well you coordinate your Discipline and Heart, they continue to act as if your attacks are mere scratches. Your opponent makes a DC 14 Fort save to reduce your damage by half and does not suffer damage from deed die.
15	Your ability to balance your Discipline and Heart is sorely taxed! Make a DC 17 Heart save. Failure reduces your action die by -2d for the remainder of the combat.
16	Your stomach sinks into your legs as you realize you have left yourself open to a devastating counterstrike. Your opponent makes a DC 13 Intelligence check to identify and take advantage of this opening. If they succeed, they gain an immediate attack roll at +1d.
17	Your mentor weeps in their grave as they witness the most ungracious attempt to control Discipline and Heart during this combat. Lose all deed dice for 1d4 rounds as you recite the litany of Imbalance and attempt to correct this horrible blunder.
18	Your opponent has you clearly outmatched in Discipline and Heart they are the better duelist. Every time you attack this opponent this combat, subtract the result of your opponent's deed die result from your attack roll. If your opponent does not have a deed die, then roll your own deed die and subtract that from your attack roll. If you break off to attack another opponent, then your current opponent gains a free attack against you—even if they have been dispatched to 0 hit points (consider it their parting gift).
19	You fail to rein in your Discipline and lose all control as you relentlessly attack with single-minded purpose, oblivious to all going on around you for the next 1d6 rounds. You lose all Agility bonuses to AC, and your AC is reduced by your current Imbalance rating, so deep are you into your passionate rage. Further, your ability to regulate your Discipline is lost, and you lose all deed dice for as long as you suffer this Imbalance. You see red, and your strikes are focused solely on your current opponent for the entirety of this Imbalance. Even if they are dispatched and dead, you remain enraged and continue to hack at their body. If this is just a friendly duel, then you have surely shamed yourself and are not a worthy student of the School. Your base Imbalance rating is permanently increased by 1d3.
20+	Neither Heart nor Discipline could prepare you for this egregious miscalculation. You place yourself in a critical position, open for a potentially deadly strike. Your opponent makes a DC 10 Intelligence check to identify the opportunity and strike. If they succeed, your opponent gains a bonus on the attack roll equal to your current Imbalance rating with an automatic critical with a maximum result according to their Critical die. If the roll results in a critical, they gain both critical results (the auto max and rolled result).

DUELING

Advancement in this martial art is only possible through constant application of training. For the School of the Tree, this comes in the form of dueling. Official duels are closely supervised affairs in the School. The matches are conducted in a controlled environment, with the pupils' trainers and trained swordfighters on hand to judge the combats. The difficulty level of the duel is based on rank: the higher the rank, the harder the duel. For training, aspirants find themselves dueling against fellow aspirants, and so forth. For advancement, the prospect fights someone one rank higher—aspirants duel apprentices, apprentices duel journeymen, and so on.

There is a negative side to dueling, though, and duels outside of the sanctioned advancement events do occur. After all, the School is training individuals with an aptitude for war—these duelists eventually make their way to the battlefields, courtrooms, and civil unrests the world over. In fact, when in combat, unless two practitioners of the School directly confront one another, these niceties are not expected to be adhered to.

Before every duel, students prepare themselves mentally. Are they ready? Are they centered? Have they truly mastered the Disciplines? Duels follow a specified formula. There is the mental and the physical battle, and the duel can be lost before even a move is made—although many will force matters of the Heart and try to confront failure with physical confrontation, losing control in the process.

1. Opponents meet on the practice floor, respectfully greet each other, and salute with sword held vertically before their face.
2. Opponents evaluate the other's skill in relation to their own, gauging mood and body language for clues as to their strengths and weaknesses. Each opponent makes a DC 13 Intelligence check, as if making an attack roll with the weapon in hand. Prior to the roll, individuals may ask for one piece of information about their opponent from this list: 1) their AC; 2) their deed die sizes; 3) their Heart save modifier; 4) their Imbalance rating; or 5) their Agility score. They may voluntarily increase their target DC by 2 for each additional piece of information they desire. Rolling under your Imbalance rating at this time means the individual misreads the signs: the opponent artificially inflates their own scores by the amount they rolled for their deed die, thus feeding you misinformation.
3. At this time, either opponent may admit their foe is better prepared and concede the match. This is highly honorable, since it is a good showing of your Balance to be able to judge your better and step aside. However, for advancement purposes, conceding is considered neither a pass nor fail.
4. Should the duel continue, individuals choose the form that will best defend and attack the opponent. This is where the aspirant applies what they have learned in the School. They bring the Five Forms to the fore and ready themselves.

5. Committed, opponents roll their initiative and action dice as normal, and clash. The intent is not to harm the other individual, but to score a touch. Because of this, all damage is considered subdual damage—although critical hits can still maim an opponent. Getting three touches wins the duel. These duels are so intense that for each subsequent round, each duelist's Imbalance rating increases by 2 automatically, then resets at the end of the duel. If a touch has been scored on you, add another 2 to your Imbalance rating for the duration of the duel.

The line judge and referee step in when the encounter grows too intense, when the counters have the potential to turn the duel into a wrestling match. The line judge yells for all to hold, and all action stops immediately.

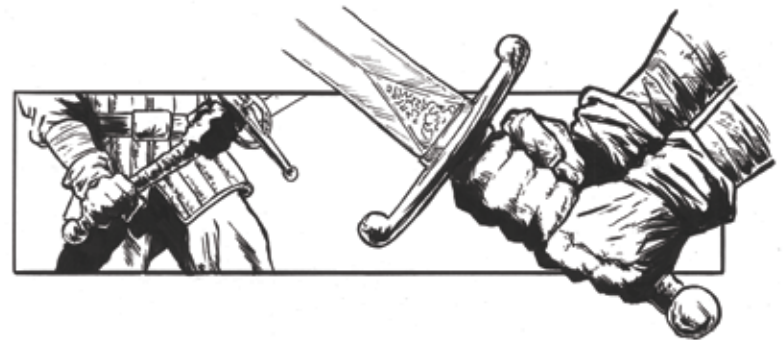
Fatalities very rarely happen during duels. The School prides itself on this fact. Dueling, after all, is performed in a safe environment, as the masters insist. Rarely does the Marshal have to step in to intervene.

RANK ADVANCEMENT

Rank advancement for the School of the Tree occurs outside the normal experience channel. Advancement is tied to winning a duel against an opponent at least one rank higher than themselves. While students can request such a duel at any time, it is the Marshal who determines who the student will fight. Marshals evaluate students while they practice and will judge them worthy for an advancement duel on the following condition: the student must have failed a number of duels equal to their rank and passed a number of duels equal to one higher than their current rank. If the student has not achieved these conditions, the Marshal will not allow a duel of advancement to go forward. For this purpose, each rank counts as a single point. For example, movement from aspirant to apprentice requires the aspirant to have failed at 1 duel and won 2 duels before they request their advancement duel. Movement from sojourner to master requires the sojourner to have failed at 3 duels and won 4 duels, etc.

THE FIVE FORMS

The Five Forms represent a critical training construct of the School. Each form focuses on a different way to engage the opponent. These are designed to be used on opponents who have been equally trained, and thus to the untrained opponent, the use of these forms is even more devastating. Notes on how this plays out are in the preamble to each form.



LION

A lion sleeps in the heart of every brave individual.

—*Turkish proverb*

The Lion contains the guards, with the three basic ones being the growl, the roar, and the claw. Against opponents who possess no Imbalance rating, double the Imbalance rating modifier and apply it as a negative modifier to a DC [damage done] Will save. Failure indicates they are so taken aback by your ferocity they are grappled by you automatically. You may withdraw from this grapple at no penalty.

ROLL RESULT

- 3 **Lion stands and growls.** Stalwart, you defend while cool and collected. Reduce your Imbalance by 4.
- 4 **Lion bares their claws.** Defense often requires offense: you press forward to unhinge your opponent's attacks with disciplined courage. Gain +3 AC until your next action and reduce your Imbalance rating by 2.
- 5 **Lion roars before the gate.** Your defense is so aggressive it unnerves your attacker, forcing them to make an immediate Imbalance check at +1 rating. You gain +4 AC until your next action and reduce your Imbalance rating by 4.
- 6 **Lion bares claws in defiance and growls.** Your defense unnerves your attacker, forcing them to make an immediate Imbalance check at +2. You gain +5 AC until your next action and reduce your Imbalance rating by 6.
- 7+ **Lion roars with claws made of steel.** Your aggressive defense intimidates your attacker, forcing them to make an immediate Imbalance check at +3. You gain +6 AC until your next action and reduce your Imbalance rating by 8.



EAGLE

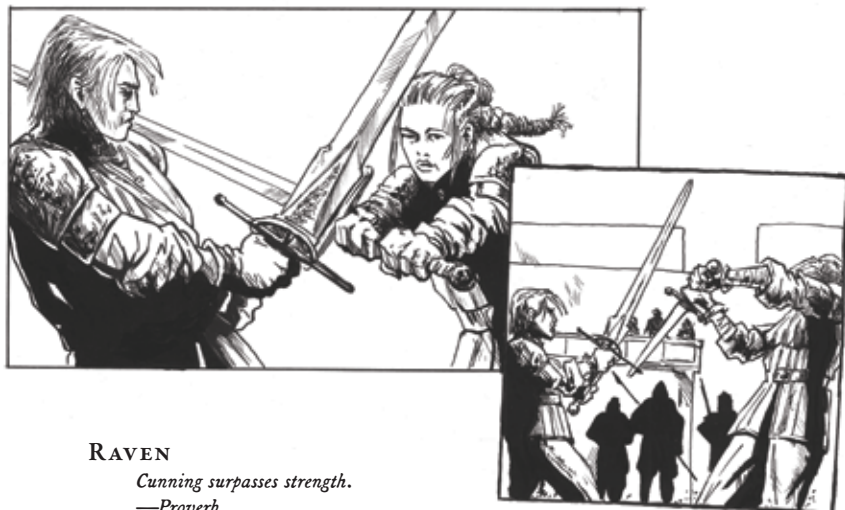
The sky belongs to eagles, even during storms.

—*Matshona Dhliwayo*

The Eagle contains the strikes, with the three basic ones being the talon, the strike, and the flight. Against someone neither trained in the School nor a warrior, use Crit Table II (DCC RPG, p.83) instead of Crit Table I (p.82), as indicated.

ROLL RESULT

- 3 **Eagle takes flight to strike.** Roll a 1d4 crit from Crit Table I and apply it to the attack. This is in addition to any other crit the character may gain.
- 4 **Eagle strikes with talons wide.** Increase crit die to 1d6.
- 5 **Eagle dives and strikes.** Increase crit die to 1d8.
- 6 **Eagle strikes with talon and pierces skin.** Increase crit die to 1d10.
- 7+ **Eagle strikes with talon and leaves prey shaken.** Increase crit die to 1d12.



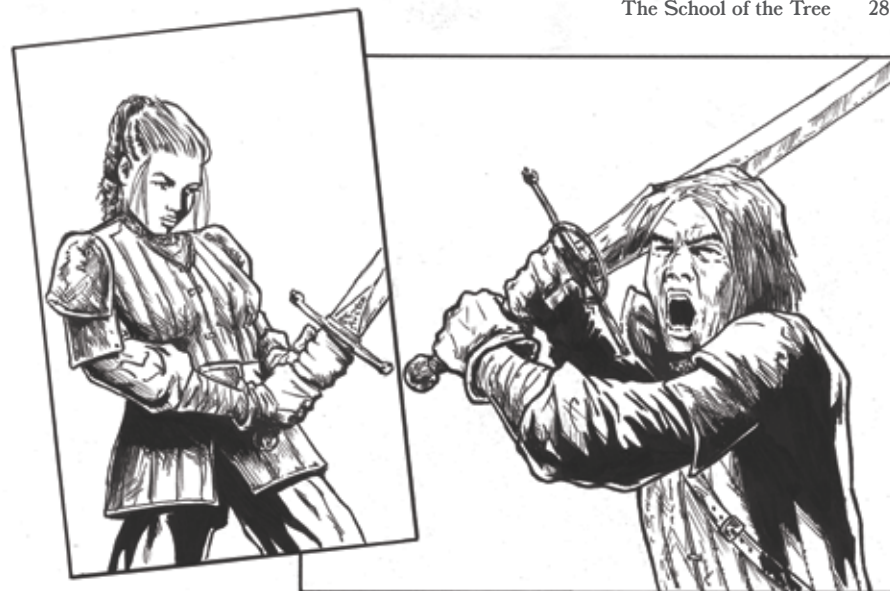
RAVEN

Cunning surpasses strength.
—Proverb

The Raven contains the counters, with the three basic ones being the play, the pretense, and the dance. Against opponents who possess no Imbalance rating, double the Imbalance rating modifier and apply it as a negative modifier to a Reflex save. Failure indicates they are so stunned by your cunning that they step back, fall prone, and invoke a withdrawal attack from you in the process.

ROLL RESULT

- 3 **Raven blocks opponent with pretense.** For the next round, in addition to your normal attacks, your deed die reduces your opponent's attack rolls against you by the same amount.
- 4 **Raven plays with prey.** For the next round, in addition to your normal attacks, your deed die reduces your opponent's next deed die rolls against you by the same amount.
- 5 **Raven plays with prey, laughing.** For the next round, in addition to your normal attacks, your deed die reduces your opponent's next deed die rolls against you by the same amount. You also force an immediate Imbalance check from your opponent in the process.
- 6 **Raven plays with prey, never staying still.** For the next round, in addition to your normal attacks, your deed die reduces your opponent's next deed die rolls against you by double the same amount. You also force an immediate Imbalance check at +2 from your opponent. Your moves confound your attacker, causing them anguish.
- 7+ **Raven plays with prey, dancing in circles.** For the next round, in addition to your normal attacks, your deed die reduces your opponent's next deed die rolls against you by double the same amount. You also force an immediate Imbalance check at +4 from your opponent. You taunt them with every motion, and your attacker falls victim to these provocations.



KINGFISHER

All good things come to those who wait.
—Proverb

The Kingfisher contains the evasive moves, with the three basic ones being the dive, the swerve and the pierce.

ROLL RESULT

- 3 **Kingfisher swerves.** Increase your Initiative for the rest of the combat by +2d4. If you already have the higher initiative, increase your AC for the next 1d3 rounds by +2.
- 4 **Kingfisher dives.** Increase your Initiative for the rest of the combat by +2d6, or your AC for the next 1d3 rounds by +4.
- 5 **Kingfisher swerves and pierces the fish.** Increase your Initiative by +2d7, or your AC for the next 1d3 rounds by +4. Also gain an attack sans deed die.
- 6 **Kingfisher swerves with a flash of wing.** Increase your Initiative by +2d7, or your AC for the next 1d3 rounds by +4. Also gain an attack sans deed die, *or* you may leave melee without provoking a withdrawal attack.
- 7+ **Kingfisher swerves, pierces, and flies away.** Increase your Initiative by +2d7, or your AC for the next 1d3 rounds by +4. Also gain an attack sans deed die *and* leave melee this round (if you desire) without provoking a withdrawal attack. Further, if your opponent attempts to re-engage, they find you are not where they think you are, and they cannot make a strike without an attack that can reach 10' or more.

WOLF

Be like the wolf; the wolf is relentless, never quits, and doesn't look back.

—Unknown

The Wolf contains the moves taught for dueling, with the three basic ones being the prowl, the meeting of predator and prey, and the bite.

ROLL RESULT

3 **Wolf prowls forth.** You observe your opponent, identifying their weakness. Increase your next deed die by +1d.

4 **Wolf prowls forth and spies prey.** You are cold and calculating in your attack, creating the maximum effect with the minimum of work on your part. Increase your next deed die by +1d and your next Heart save by +1d.

5 **Wolf prowls forth, chasing the scent.** You understand your prey and the need of the moment. Increase your next deed die by +2d and increase your next Heart save by +1d.

6 **Wolf prowls forth and bites prey without remorse.** You know how best to end this quickly with minimal suffering. Increase your next deed die by +2d and increase your next Heart save by +2d.

7+ **Wolf prowls forth, killing prey with vicious bite.** The moment is now. You set yourself up to strike with +3d to your next deed die and automatically succeed your next Heart save, as you walk the razor edge balance of Discipline and Heart.



LITERATURE

For inspiration, and to get a grasp of the mood of the School and what it represents, you might like to read Arthurian literature like Sir Gawain and the Green Knight or Le Morte d’Arthur, where knights struggle between their own desires and the noble values of chivalry. The knights want to better themselves, yet still fall prey to the lure of glory and personal demons.

If you are of a historical bent, you might like to read Fiore dei Liberi’s The Flower of Battle (Il Fior di Battaglia, Flos Duellatorum). This is a historical treatise used by many HEMA (Historical European Martial Arts) schools that have adopted Fiore’s philosophy, especially for late medieval Italian longsword fighting. Similarly, treatises by German swordmasters such as Johannes Liechtenauer are also a good place to start. These treatises have, in their own way, contributed to the concept and creation of the School of the Tree. If you are already in an HEMA school or academy, you have an inkling of what the School might be like, in spirit and in actual practice.

For visual and auditory inspiration, movies like Excalibur and A Knight’s Tale are recommended. Think late medieval or early Renaissance. Likewise, the Jedi in various Star Wars media might give you further insight into how a swordfighter of the School should behave in terms of demeanor and how they carry themselves—the School of the Tree swordfighters are known for their ice-cold calm and gallantry.

Of course, this cannot be a definitive list. What do you see in your mind when you meet a swordfighter of the School of the Tree?

ZWEIHÄNDER, GREAT, AND HAND-AND-A HALF SWORDS

WEAPONS	DAMAGE	RANGE	COST
Hand-and-a-half	1d8	–	10 gp
Greatsword	1d10	–	15 gp
Zweihänder	1d12		30 gp

Hand-and-a-half: Also called a longsword, at a basic level this blade is already detailed in the *DCC RPG*. This is an elegant weapon used by knights and fighters in duels or melee. At a basic level, this blade is effective at blocking, countering, and melee. It can be used to cut and slice an opponent very effectively.

Greatsword: Same as *DCC RPG* two-handed sword, but is the smallest weapon that can also be used as a polearm or halberd. You know the sword is a great sword and not a longsword if the following three things are true (for a human-sized creature): (1) you cannot draw the blade from a hip scabbard in one pull; (2) when holding the sword in standard stance, you can swing your wrist and the sword down and the tip of the blade touches the ground (a longsword will swing clear of the ground); (3) when holding the sword with one hand, you cannot extend your other hand far enough past the tip of the blade to make a grab maneuver and pull someone into the tip of the blade.

Zweihänder: Developed from longswords, but elongated for more specialized actions like those taught by the School of the Tree, this blade goes by many names: montante, claymore, flamberge. Regardless of its moniker, it is good for blocking, countering, and melee. It cuts and slices as the smaller blades do, but can also be seen on the battlefield being used as a polearm or halberd. This type of blade often has a place to hold it well out onto the blade itself to facilitate attacks not possible with long sword or smaller blades. In the hands of a trained individual, this sword can cut swaths through a regiment of soldiers.

ZWEIHÄNDER DEFENSE (GENERAL MIGHTY DEED)

The zweihänder (or a greatsword) is often used to defend a single high-value target against numerous other targets – even a mob of individuals or a swarm. Through the use of various sweeps and steps, the wielder can protect their ward from attacks coming from almost any side all at once. In truth, the hand-and-a-half sword also can use this defense, but shift the result to one category lower due to their limited reach.

ROLL	RESULT
3	Your sweeps and movements create a hole your ward can use to move through the crowd right behind you, and you both advance at half your move. Your ward gains +2 AC while you force back opponents. Neither of you are subject to withdrawal strikes due to your defensive sword work. If your ward moves out of this space, they lose this bonus and are subject to opportunistic withdrawal strikes from any opponents within reach.
4	As 3, but you can also deal damage to one opponent per action die as you move through the mob.
5	As 4, but your ward gains +3 AC. Further, you may move up to your full movement and still protect your ward in this manner.
6	As 5, but your ward gains +4 AC and you gain +1 AC.
7+	As 6, but you gain +2 AC and move your full movement +10' and still protect your ward.



Playtest Credits: Larry Cosentino, Jacob Way, Ford Fitch, Michael Cosentino & John Olszewski for testing out the strengths and weaknesses, healthy conversation, and ideas of the School of the Tree.

Ominous Idols

The statuette, idol, fetish, or whatever it was, had been captured some months before in the wooded swamps south of New Orleans during a raid on a supposed voodoo meeting; and so singular and hideous were the rites connected with it, that the police could not but realize that they had stumbled on a dark cult totally unknown to them...

—H. P. Lovecraft, “The Call of Cthulhu”

The divine is always abominable.

—Caitlin R. Kiernan, *Houses Under the Sea*

Throughout the works of the mythos utilizing Cthulhu directly, the one consistent image is that of the idol of Cthulhu, first introduced in H. P. Lovecraft’s “*The Call of Cthulhu*” (1928). In the first chapter of that story, the idol is described as “an octopus, a dragon, and a human caricature ... A pulpy, tentacled head surmounted a grotesque and scaly body with rudimentary wings ...” This is followed by the second chapter’s description of a thing “which seemed instinct with a fearsome and unnatural malignancy, was of a somewhat bloated corpulence, and squatted evilly on a rectangular block or pedestal covered with undecipherable characters.”

Cthulhu influences the sanity of those of “artistic talent” (which we define here as those with higher Personality than Intelligence). As their minds are overwhelmed by visions of “great Cyclopean cities of titan blocks and sky-flung monoliths, all dripping with green ooze and sinister with latent horror,” these individuals are driven to sculpt idols of that benthic god, infusing common elements—stone, wood, metal, or crystal—with the whelm of Cthulhu’s dream sending. Born out of the psychic anguish of the temporary righting of the stars that allows Cthulhu to mold the dreams of mortals, these idols carry out the whims of their likeness afterward, as the reverberations of Cthulhu’s call echo through reality. For our purposes, when an idol is encountered or created, it gains a purpose, a power level dependent upon how aligned the stars are, and either minor or major powers which those touched by Cthulhu (adherents or clerics) can take advantage of.

First, roll 1d4 for each property on **Table 1: Idol Material, Size, and Purpose** to identify the unique qualities of this particular idol. Then roll 1d12 on **Table 2: Idol Special Purpose**, which will reveal the idol’s goal. Next, see **Table 3: Idol Power Level** in order to determine the type of power that the idol can call forth. The idol’s power level can be resolved either by a simple 1d10 roll if the Judge is making up an idol from scratch, or as determined by the product of the artistic working of those influenced by the *Call of Cthulhu* (CoC) spell check result (see the Cthulhu clerics article in an upcoming issue of *Tales from the Smoking Wyrms*). Use the results from **table 3** to build the minor and major powers for the idol from **tables 4** and **5**, respectively. Where applicable, save DCs for powers are listed in the Outcome of **table 3**.

TABLE 1: IDOL MATERIAL, SIZE, AND POSE

1D4	IDOL MATERIAL	IDOL SIZE	IDOL POSE	PLINTH MATERIAL	PLINTH SIZE
1	wood	less than 1'	standing	wood	less than 1'
2	stone	about 1'	sitting	stone	about 1'
3	metal	1–3'	reclined	metal	1–3'
4	ceramic	3'+	hovering	ceramic	3'+



TABLE 2: IDOL'S SPECIAL PURPOSE

1d12	Special Purpose
1	Purge the world of all paragons of law and chaos.
2	Slay one lawful creature for every chaotic creature, and vice versa.
3	Deliver the idol to some location at a certain time to further some otherworldly master plan.
4	Prepare the world for the return of the Old Ones.
5	Seek the Void.
6	Return to R'lyeh.
7	Seek Mother Hydra.
8	Slay enemies of the Old Ones.
9	Summon a star-spawn.
10	Sacrifice sentient creatures to Cthulhu.
11	Undermine Leviathan.
12	Seek out the Fisherman.

TABLE 3: IDOL POWER LEVEL

ROLL	COC RESULT †	POWERS		OUTCOME
		MINOR	MAJOR	
1-4	18-23	1		A Trifle: Created when the sun aligned with two other celestial items. (DC 13)
5-7	24-31	2	1	Minor: Created as new stars were birthed from a nebula overhead. (minor: DC 15, major: DC 18)
8-9	32-35	3	2	Major: Created when the stars eased the passage from one crystal sphere to another. (minor: DC 18, major: DC 22)
10	36+	4	3	Greater: Created when the sister star of this world was destroyed. (minor: DC 22, major: DC 27)

†: The COC result will become useful when paired with an article to come in a future issue. Please ignore this column if you are only using only this article in your game.



TABLE 4: IDOL MINOR POWERS

1D10	MINOR POWER
	Madness! Bestow Lovecraftian corruption on all who see the idol if they fail a Will save equal to the CoC result. Choose a madness from either “M is for Madness” (<i>The Cthulhu Alphabet</i> , p.44), or “50 Lovecraftian Insanities” (<i>Fifty Fantastic Functions for the D50</i> , p.51). Alternatively, make one up.
1	
2	Convincing undulations. Increase wielder’s influence rolls by two +2d when they proffer the idol to bolster their statements.
3	Mesmerizing green glow emanates from the idol. On a failed Will save, the individual enters a dreaming state for 1d6 rounds—Roll on “K is for Kingsport” (<i>The Cthulhu Alphabet</i> , p.40) for specific dream, or make up dream of R’lyeh.
4	Sacrifice a sentient being for fleeting Luck. The positive modifier to Luck depends on the hit die of the creature sacrificed, on a one-to-one exchange. (See <i>DCC Lankmar: Compendium of Secret Knowledge</i> for an explanation of fleeting Luck. We offer a short description later in this issue.)



5	Resistance to Law and Chaos magic. Gain +2d when rolling saving throws against magic cast by a lawful or chaotic source.
6	Resistance to Law and Chaos non-magical attacks. Ignore 1d5 points of damage from such attacks.
7	Spell magnifier. Cast spells at +1 caster level.
8	Petrifying ray. A creature struck by the ray must make a DC 15 Fort save or be permanently turned to stone. The resulting stone is a greenish, glowing basalt.
9	Phantasm tentacles. The idol’s visage is terrifying. All who gaze upon it must make a Will save or flee in terror for 1d4 turns. If possible, apply one effect from “T is for Tentacles” (<i>The Cthulhu Alphabet</i> , p.78) as well.
10	Spellburn reservoir. Holds up to 1d7 points; is replenished with a sacrifice at the next moonrise. Cannot be increased beyond the rolled bonus in any way.



TABLE 5: IDOL MAJOR POWERS

1D12	MAJOR POWER
1	Binding ray. Can bind any creature seen as unholy to Cthulhu. Roll a turn unholy check as if the wielder were a cleric of 5th level, including bonuses. Apply those results.
2	Halfling slayer. All halflings within sight of the idol must make a Fort save or die. On success, a target is immune to this effect for 24 hours.
3	Chaos slayer. All chaotic mortal beings within line of sight of the idol must make a Fort save or die. On success, a target is immune to this effect for 24 hours.
4	Law slayer. All lawful mortal beings within line of sight of the idol must make a Fort save or die. On success, a target is immune to this effect for 24 hours.
5	Turning adept. Turn unholy checks are made by the wielder as if they were 3 levels higher than normal.
6	Cthulhu's beneficence. Lay on hands at +2d for neutral creatures, and at -2d for non-neutral creatures—if this results in less than a d4, inflicts 2d6 damage instead.

- 7
- Call of the shoggoth. Summon a shoggoth (roll 1d3 for size, and consult the shoggoth size table in *Tales from the Smoking Wyrms* #2). If you are a wizard or priest of Cthulhu, this shoggoth becomes your familiar, consuming any current familiar you had and absorbing the previous familiar's powers in addition to the normal powers a shoggoth possesses.
- 8
- Call of the star-spawn. Summon a star-spawn (roll 1d6 for size, consult star-spawn size table in an upcoming issue of *Tales from the Smoking Wyrms* or *Weird Frontiers*, p. 755). If this results in a star-spawn with more hit dice than you have, you may not summon again until tomorrow.
- 9
- Bride of Dagon. You are offered the opportunity to enter into the patronage of Dagon. Declining comes at a steep price, as you will be branded an enemy of Dagon and Cthulhu and hunted by their adherents. Failure on the patron roll strikes you dead, draining your soul into the idol, which adds a minor power if you are level 1–5, or a major power if you are level 5+. As you die, your body withers and stinks of extremely rotten fish.
- 10
- Groom of Mother Hydra. You are offered the opportunity to enter into the patronage of Mother Hydra. Declining comes at a steep price, as you will be branded an enemy of Mother Hydra and Cthulhu and hunted by her adherents. Failure on the patron roll results in your head toppling off your torso as if cut by an invisible sword, hitting the ground but then traveling through it, as if the ground was immaterial. Foul, briny water sloshes up from the site your head hit and traveled through, and those around you hear the keening of deep water echoes. As blood gushes from your neck wound, adherents of Mother Hydra around the world can hear you begin to tell your life's tale as a gentle susurrant in the back of their minds, comforting them.
- 11
- Pawn of Cthulhu. You are offered the opportunity to enter into the patronage under Cthulhu. Declining comes at a steep price, as you will be branded an enemy of Cthulhu and hunted by its adherents on sight. Failure on the patron roll results in the permanent loss of 3d8 Personality and nightly visions that disturb a peaceful night's sleep if you fail a DC 13 Will save. Accepting means you roll on *invoke patron* as caster to see how powerful the connection is. At the same time, the Judge also rolls *invoke patron*—if you both roll in the same success threshold, then the stars are right, and your patronage is as if 2 thresholds higher. If you roll the exact same result, then the stars are perfect, and your patronage is as if a 32+ result. Further, roll on “Seven Warped Worshippers” (*The Cthulhu Alphabet*, p.96), and gain these as followers of your and Cthulhu's cause.
- 12
- Roll again twice using 1d10, or pick two results.

CULLPEPPER'S HERBAL

Amaranthus

amaranthus retroflexus

Description: Also known as velvet-flower, the queen's tickler, or princess feather. Rising to almost three feet, the upper part is nearly leafless, comprised of a multibranched, dense inflorescence. Leaves are almost half a foot long with long petioles. Flowers are unisexual and appear as red to purple tufts. Velvet-flower has a knobby, tuber-like root that runs perpendicular to the shoot.

Where to find: Domesticated and used as an ornamental. Otherwise found in wasteland, rubbish heaps, or other spoilage sites.

Flowering time: Flowers from the height of summer until late fall fully up to the first hard frost. Dies back within days of this time.

Astrology: Deeply associated with Tammuz, the changeling moon.

BODILY VIRTUES

Shoots: The entire *amaranthus* family can be used to make excellent medicine. Shoots are dried and mellowed by beating, then woven while supple into astringent pads. These pads are placed over wounds to absorb blood and pus and to constrict the tissues to aid in mending.

Leaves: If fresh, can be rubbed on wounds to stanch blood flow and reduce overall sensation to the body

part in question (improves 'recovering the body' Luck checks by 1d). Fresh leaves wilt within a day and are useless thereafter, and dried leaves seem to have no restorative properties.

Flowers: Velvet-flower is known to stop all fluxes of blood from noses, menses, wounds, etc. Flowers are dried and then ground into a powder which is stable for up to a year if kept dry and out of the sun. This particulate can be modified into a decoction for diarrhea, dysentery, or abdominal or rectal bleeding, or it can be prepared as an unguent to halt ongoing trauma and blood loss from acids, bases, or electrical sources (ends ongoing damage in 1d3 rounds if resting). As a poultice, it can be used to ease the burden of buboes if applied for a full day (+1d to Fort saves for diseases that feature buboes).

Root: The root is a suprastringent, so effective that its potency often causes more harm than good. Extreme care must be taken to pair an effective dosage with powdered velvet-flower (DC 14 Intelligence check); a faulty mixture sends the patient into systemic shock (DC 16 Fort save or death). Success ends ongoing damage from all venoms or poisons (and heals back 1d3 points of whichever stat was damaged by the poison—hit points, Stamina, Strength, etc.).





Anemone

anemone nemorosa

Description: Glabrous of stalk and rising up to about a foot tall, anemone has one or two basal leaves and three trilobate stem leaves that occur about two-thirds of the way up the stalk. Flowers are white, sometimes tinged pink, with six or seven sepals.

Where to find: Mostly found in temperate woodlands with open forest floors. Also found in the shade of rocky outcroppings. Loves waterlogged, mossy areas. Sometimes found in hedges.

Flowering time: Flowers in spring, ending before the onset of the heat of summer.

Astrology: Largely aligned with Maldomini, it is said that if found in the shade, it is more under the control of Legethos. If this is the case, the virtues of the flowers are fleeting in all but halflings, who, being the shadiest of creatures, benefit more fully from the length of time that these flowers can heal established wounds.

BODILY VIRTUES

Shoots: Cut anemone fresh from the root, which is left to regrow, then mix with a healthy dose of salted salamander slug and saliva from a suckling pig and lay aside for half a day. Pulp this mixture and blend with clarified butter to make an ointment.

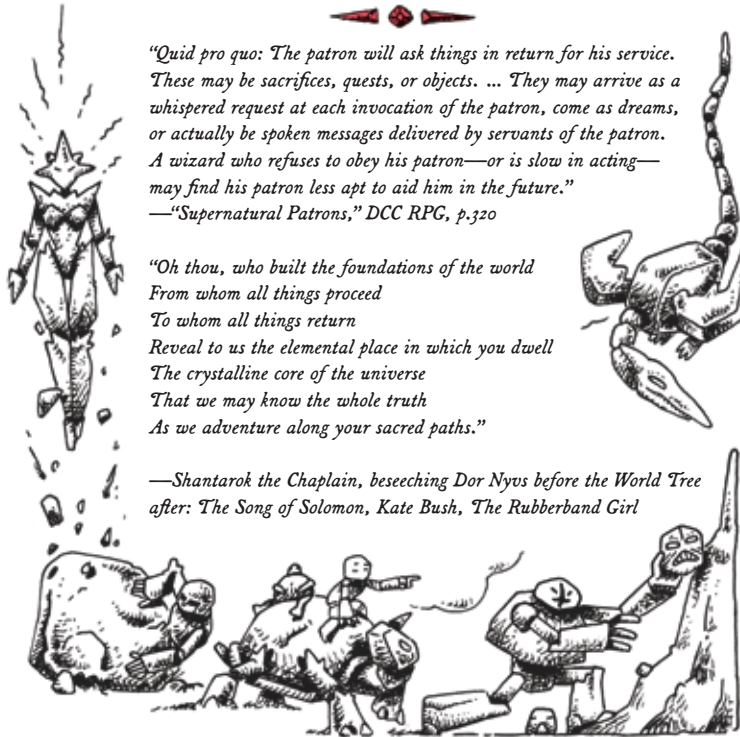
Placed liberally on the eyelids, this will cure inflammation of the eyes and allow the wearer to see clearly through malicious illusions and mental infirmities (+2d to relevant saving throws).

Leaves: Boiled fresh, the decoction when imbibed opens the nasal passages and clears lungs of even the worst venoms and poisonous paralytics (+1d to Fort saves against such creatures' paralysis attacks). Especially useful against giant bilobus spiders, feckless boomerang spiders, and tarantulas (+2d to Fort saves against such creatures' venom).

Flowers: Steeped in astringent water and then strained through cheesecloth, this potent effluent should then be added to the refined fat of any three-toed ungulate. Added as a salve to cleaned wounds, it promotes speedy recovery, especially from serious skin abrasions or established dermatitis (doubles Stamina bonuses for a day after application). Prevents infection in endemically filthy locales.

Root: If exposed to air during the presence of Legethos, creates a potent soporific when dried, powderized, added to liquid and then vaporized (inflicts -3d penalty on saves against effects which cause sleep or unconsciousness).

Patron Missions: Dor Nyvs



"Quid pro quo: The patron will ask things in return for his service. These may be sacrifices, quests, or objects. ... They may arrive as a whispered request at each invocation of the patron, come as dreams, or actually be spoken messages delivered by servants of the patron. A wizard who refuses to obey his patron—or is slow in acting—may find his patron less apt to aid him in the future."
—*"Supernatural Patrons," DCC RPG, p.320*

*"Oh thou, who built the foundations of the world
From whom all things proceed
To whom all things return
Reveal to us the elemental place in which you dwell
The crystalline core of the universe
That we may know the whole truth
As we adventure along your sacred paths."*

—Shantarok the Chaplain, beseeching Dor Nyvs before the World Tree
after: *The Song of Solomon, Kate Bush, The Rubberband Girl*

INTRODUCTION

The patron rules are perhaps one of the most iconic and fun elements of *DCC RPG*. However, during traditional modules and campaigns, it is often hard (or even disruptive) to create side quests for characters on behalf of their patrons. We present you with ideas, or jumping-off points, for patron missions. These could be used during either normal adventures or as part of an extended campaign. They are presented as the germ of an idea, a spark which the judge should feel free to modify as they desire. This initial set of missions are affiliated with Dor Nyvs, a patron first detailed in *Tales from the Smoking Wyrms* 3.



THE MISSIONS (1d7)



Little Dweller. You find a small geode in the course of the adventure and feel an instant connection with it, as if it pertains to the Dweller at the Core, and you feel an overwhelming sense that it needs protection. If you decide to render aid, then you must protect it for 1d3+4 days, all while other elemental creatures come to inflict harm upon it (if elementals from *DCC RPG*, p.411 are too powerful, a judge should just pick a monster

of their choice and give it an elemental trait: earth creatures have +4 AC and break any weapon that rolls minimum damage against them; air creatures can fly and suffer no damage on a successful Ref save; fire creatures set their prey on fire if they roll maximum damage; and water creatures can engulf one target as a water elemental). After the first day, the geode reveals two small rocky legs and starts following you on its own. After the second day, it sprouts two arms and starts to ask for crystals and metals to eat (absorb). The geode uses its small hands to make its intent clear to the caster and acts quite stubborn and entitled. At four days, it has grown to twice its original size. If still protected during this entire time, it will speak through tremors and vibrations. At the end of its "apprenticeship" with a Dor Nyvs adherent, it will thank its "soft-kin" and disappear, sinking into the depths of the earth. The geode never attacks or helps in its defense, but has AC 18, and 5 hit points for each day it must remain at the character's side.



Gold Eater. Dor Nyvs appears in your dreams and demands that you eat all the gold they can. You gain the ability to eat gold (and only gold) and must devour a thousand gold pieces (or the equivalent value in gold objects or ore). After accomplishing this feat, at some point in the future, you awaken to find a living copy of yourself at your side, made entirely of gold. The Golden One will thank you, its progenitor, by helping you for

2d4 encounters. After that, a strong vibration will be felt by the entire party. The ground starts to ripple as a statuesque man of obsidian and calcite, richly dressed, emerges to fetch the Golden One. The giant—actually an ancient dao—thanks you before leaving. As a side-effect of accomplishing this task, your tongue turns to living gold and can now taste the soundness of a natural or constructed earthen structure on a DC 12 Intelligence check.

Golden One: Init +0; Atk slam +6 melee (1d6+4); AC 16; HD 6d8+12; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP earth elemental traits; SV Fort +6, Ref +2, Will +6; AL same as PC.





Fresh Recruits. Dor Nyvs manifests as a mouth in a wall close to you, ordering you to a stone circle atop a nearby hill. You must move the stones in a certain order before the next sunrise, while chanting mysterious words of power impressed into your thoughts and imbued into your heart. If you manage this feat of engineering (whether through magic, with the help of at least two individuals with ogre-like Strength, or with twenty or more hirelings), the cromlech animates as a new servant of the Dweller at the Core, then moves to confront a servant of one of Dor Nyvs's rivals: an archomental of fire, Tas Byghan, the Fire Father, the Conflagration that Eternally Consumes. As a side-effect of accomplishing this task, your heart remains permeated with earth magic and the next 1d3 critical hits against you have no effect.



Old Rivals. You are instructed to exact vengeance upon the water archomental Kēfir āl Dhowr, the Wellspring that Crushes Souls, for acts that occurred in centuries past. You must go without hesitation to the center of a nearby village and enact *invoke patron* over an almost imperceptible crack in the ground. Success will trigger a powerful earthquake that drains the local lake in a matter of minutes. The residents of the village will no doubt be *very* displeased at the loss of their source of water. Discretion being the better part of valor, it might be best to quickly abscond, but you will at least find solace in knowing that Dor Nyvs is pleased. This *will* attract the attention of those who follow Kēfir āl Dhowr.



Tutelage. Dor Nyvs sends one of his Children and instructs you to guide and teach them about the other “vile” archomental that afflict your world. This Child is actually a very young dao, who has never seen the material prime plane and is still developing its magic powers. It appears as beautiful youth made of obsidian striped with with emerald. Its eyes are solid gold. It is quite strong but completely unaware of this strength. It will ignore things made of flesh (irrelevant) or stone/metal (friends) but will take time to “attack” rival elemental expressions of surprisingly small nature: campfires, wells, windmills, etc. It triggers small earthquakes or landslides when doing so. If the character survives this ordeal for 2d4 encounters without provoking the Child, the dao will be satisfied and disappear, diving into the earth below, but not before leaving behind a single gem as a token of gratitude (valued at 2d4×100 gp, or can be used for 2d4 points of spellburn by an adherent of Dor Nyvs).

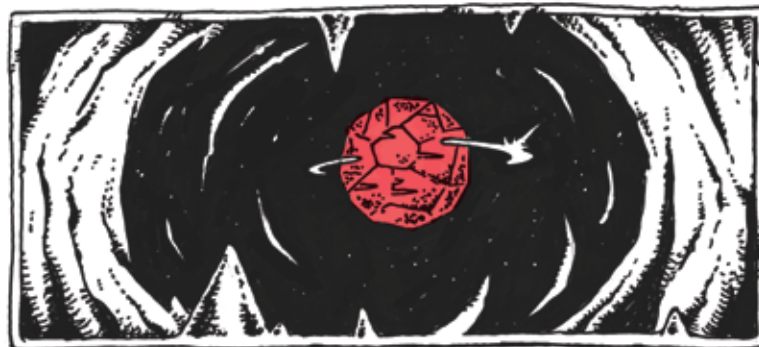


Mountain's Heart. As a mortal and irrelevant servant of Dor Nyvs, you are instructed by a dao to bear an artifact, the Heart of the Mountain. The dao emerges from a hill and takes the form of a djinn familiar, as outlined in *Tales from the Smoking Wyrms* 4. The Heart is a shining white gem the size of a closed fist and weighs heavily on the spirit of those who carry it. Due to its weird meta-elemental properties, your strength and mass are unaffected, but inanimate matter reacts as if you weigh a ton. Bare ground is left with deep indentations, wooden structures (chairs, stairs, floors) splinter and break, and stone structures (floors, cobblestones, etc.) will fracture or start to crumble under the concentrated burden. You must carry the Heart for 2d4 days.



Carry a Mountain. Dor Nyvs reveals itself in person to you as an animated face in a distant mountain. Although miles away, you can hear the rock-crushing speech of the Dweller in the Core as if it were in front of you. A rival archomental of Earth, Tommbroyw, Šeeper Between the Crevices, has made a move for power against Dor Nyvs's domain. This is represented by a series of earthquakes, landslides, and mudflows in the closest mountain range. Dor Nyvs asks you to hide and carry in your hand a mountain that holds special geomantic potential, a natural planar nexus.

The character will literally carry a mountain in their left hand, which must remain closed until the archomental finish their quarrel. If anything opens their left hand, a mountain will appear beneath them (not killing them but creating as much havoc as the judge allows). The good news is that an unarmed strike with the character's left fist now inflicts lethal damage of 1d12 (+Strength modifier) and will drive anything of ogre size or less 1d3×10 feet away. Any fumble roll by the player as their character carries the mountain means they open their left hand; the judge should warn the player of this risk. The character can also break things with their left hand as if possessing Strength 20 (the risk of a fumble remains). After 2d6 days, Dor Nyvs returns and requests the return of the mountain. Sometime later, the characters hear stories of a mountain completely disappearing and returning several days later.



Wyrms Tokens

Luck has been in the *DCC RPG* since the beginning. Every character class in the game has an ability that uses Luck in some way. Luck itself can be “burned” to add modifiers to a die roll, improving one’s chance of success. Unlike other ability scores, sacrificed Luck can’t be restored except by judge fiat—there are exceptions, of course, but when have thieves (or halflings) ever played by the rules? Thus, many players seem reluctant to sacrifice Luck.

ENTER “FLEETING LUCK”

The Lankhmar Boxed Set is *DCC RPG*’s take on the world of Nehwon, the setting of Fritz Leiber’s tales of Fafhrd and the Gray Mouser. Lankhmar introduces fleeting Luck in this manner (*Compendium of Secret Knowledge*, p.35):

The gods of Nehwon are capricious at best. The mortals scurrying about the world are little more than afterthoughts to the divine mind—as long as their prayers keep flowing! When they do take interest in the lives of mankind, it is often for entertainment. While one struggles to keep the gods pleased, one can hope to benefit from their benevolence. But displease the fickle Powers and his luck will turn faster than a Whore Street doxie’s heart.

To represent these shifting fortunes, DCC Lankhmar uses fleeting Luck—chance accrued Luck which can appear or vanish in the blink of an eye—or the roll of a die. Fleeting Luck is spent as normal Luck, but is far easier to earn.

The Fleeting Luck rule is simple: roll a natural 20—gain a point of *fleeting Luck*! Roll a natural 1—remove all the *fleeting Luck* from all the players at the table!

Fleeting Luck can be tracked in a way convenient for the judge and players. This can be marking it on one’s character sheet, or using physical items—beads, coins, poker chips, etc. Goodman Games has produced some beautiful poker chip tokens using Doug Kovacs Lankhmar Boxed Set artwork—and inspired the Smoking Wyrms crew to produce Luck tokens too!

WYRM TOKENS—LUCK WITH A TWIST

Normally Luck tokens fleeting Luck availability, but we wanted to add a little extra kick to the Wyrms’ tokens. To that end, we produced twenty unique Luck tokens, each with a special condition that the token can be redeemed for instead of the default bonus (i.e., spend 1 Luck, gain a +1 bump to a die roll). These conditions are outside the normal uses for which Luck can be spent, so they are truly an added benefit to the game.

Here is the complete list of our Luck tokens, with explanations as appropriate:

You Live: Whether avoiding bleeding out, succeeding at recovering the body, or coming back after some other instant death effect (e.g., poison), you are

now alive when you otherwise shouldn’t be. Try not to do that again.

Avoid a Trap or Spell Effect: *I pulled back from that pit trap at the last instant! I ducked behind that table to avoid the fireball!* This isn’t just automatically making a saving throw, but completely avoiding the effect. It is within reason for the judge to rule, however, that if an effect is ongoing (e.g., a *choking cloud* spell), then the character will be affected if they remain in the area.

Find a Needed Item: Need a piton? There’s one on your belt! Need some rope? Oh, look—there’s a coil tucked behind the bedroll on your backpack! These should only be mundane equipment the character needs at that moment (but does not have).

Spend Luck as a Thief: Spend the token to add a Luck die (as if a thief the same level as your character) to any die roll for which you could normally add Luck.

Roll a Mighty Deed as a Warrior: Spend the token to roll a Mighty Deed die (as if a warrior the same level as your character). Add the deed die to your attack roll (instead of your normal attack bonus), and just like a Mighty Deed, if the result is 3 or above, and the attack lands, the deed succeeds!

+/- 1d to a Roll: Increase or decrease a die you are about to roll by one dice chain step, whatever you decide is more advantageous.

Regain One Lost Spell: Wizards or elves regain a spell lost earlier as if never lost in the first place. As they don’t lose spells, clerics reduce their disapproval range by 1.

Re-roll One Die Roll: Action die, damage die, deed die, doesn’t matter!

Redirect Attack to Ally: If the ally is willing, and also within foe’s attack range, spend the token to redirect the attack to the ally. The foe’s attack roll does not change, but is now compared to your ally’s AC instead.

Double a Range: Anything that has a range can be doubled. For example: spend this Luck token and the range for a shortbow is 100/200/300 this one time. For a spell, only ranges are doubled, not areas of effect.

Fumble as if in No Armor: As if you’re wearing nothing but a smile! You still fumble, but the fumble die is reduced to a mere d4.

Choose Your Corruption: Though a caster can typically spend Luck to avoid corruption completely, sometimes it can’t be avoided (or you just want a little random weirdness in your life). On corruption rolls, or patron taint rolls when appropriate, you may choose to receive the actually rolled corruption, or the result one higher or lower than the rolled result. For example, if a failed casting of *color spray* resulted in a corruption roll of (4) Caster’s skin changes color, you could instead choose (3) Caster’s hair changes color; or (5–7) Minor corruption. If such a choice would send the PC to another table (e.g., from *color spray*’s custom table to the Minor Corruption table), they must accept the result on the subsequent table.

Re-roll Mercurial Magic: When casting a spell, you can spend this token to permanently change the spell's associated mercurial magic effect by re-rolling on Table 5-2: Mercurial Magic (*DCC RPG*, p.111) using the caster's current Luck modifier. In *DCC Lankmar*, This applies to spell stipulations.

Double Speed for 1d3 Rounds: Any one movement speed the character possesses ("normal" movement, swimming, tunneling, flying, etc.) is doubled for the rolled number of rounds.

Gain a Follower or Companion: Everyone needs a plucky little friend! A being you know is persuaded to act as a hench, retainer, follower, groupie, etc., without undue effort. Such followers will rarely be higher than level 0, and should otherwise follow the rules for Retainers, Hirelings, and Followers (*DCC RPG*, p.310).

Choose Disapproval: A cleric may adjust the result of their disapproval roll up or down one result on Table 5-7: Disapproval (*DCC RPG*, p.122; or appropriate deity custom disapproval table, if available). This does not otherwise alter the cleric's current disapproval rating.

Heightened Senses: For 1d3 turns, you possess the heightened senses of an elf (i.e., you gain a +4 bonus to detect secret doors, and you automatically check when within 10' of a secret door).

Underground Skills: For 1d3 turns, you possess the underground skills of a dwarf (i.e., you gain a bonus equal to your level to detect traps, slanting passages, etc.), and you are able to sniff out gold and gems.

Lay Hands on the Faithful: For whatever reason, your next lay on hands attempt is treated as if the recipient is the same alignment as you, and worships the same deity. Just try to pay the appropriate penance when you get back to your temple, m'kay?

Make Your Own Luck: Re-roll your birth augur, then make a Luck check. If you succeed at the check, you may choose which augur applies going forward (your original or the new one), but on a failure, you must accept the new augur.

LUCK SHOULD BE FLEETING ...

These tokens are not intended to replace other Luck tokens but rather to supplement them. We suggest that Wyrms tokens should be kept as a low percentage of the overall number of Luck tokens in use the Wyrms' home group uses a 5:1 ratio (i.e., five "plain" Luck tokens to each one of our custom Luck tokens). All the tokens are placed in a bag and mixed well, and at the start of the session, or whenever a player has rolled a natural 20, a random token is drawn. The token can then be spent as a "normal" Luck token, or the special rule can be invoked when appropriate (for example, using *You Live* when it is not your turn). Spent tokens, or those lost when someone at the table rolls a natural 1, then go back in the bag to (hopefully) be used again!



SEIZING THE INITIATIVE, THE LEGION DESCENDS FROM THE OVERLOOK AND ATTACKS!



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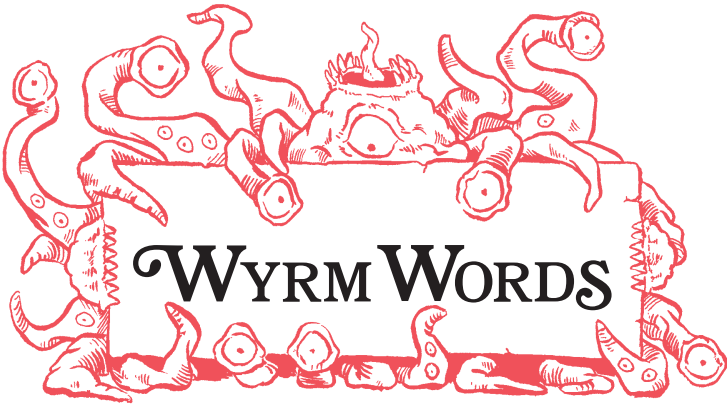
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- | | |
|------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. Elucidate | A. mutually advantaged symbiosis |
| 2. Misnomer | B. blood and tissue |
| 3. Mutualistic | C. flow or heap up abundantly |
| 4. Cyclopean | D. wailing in grief |
| 5. Whelm | E. wrong name or designation |
| 6. Keening | F. straps that guide an animal |
| 7. Susurration | G. strong or conflicting emotion |
| 8. Inflorescence | H. mineral lined rock cavity |
| 9. Petioles | I. old irregular block masonry |
| 10. Menses | J. boastful or arrogant behavior |
| 11. Buboes | K. complete flower head |
| 12. Glabrous | L. lovable, reliable |
| 13. Trilobate | M. whisper, murmur, or rustle |
| 14. Astringent | N. lover or mistress |
| 15. Ungulate | O. make clear or explain |
| 16. Tempestuous | P. a hoofed animal |
| 17. Braggadocio | Q. stalk between two structures |
| 18. Rein | R. having three lobes |
| 19. Stalwart | S. swollen lymph node in armpit |
| 20. Geode | T. free from hair or down |
| 21. Doxy | U. skin cells contraction |



ISSUE FOUR WORD SEARCH ANSWERS

- | | | | |
|-----------------|------------------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| 1. Biserrate | 9. Voracious | 17. Incarnation | 25. Manacles |
| 2. Truncate | 10. Dwemer | 18. Embrocament | 26. Embrocation |
| 3. Aquilifer | 11. Transmogrification | 19. Treatise | 27. Gill |
| 4. Umbel | 12. Philogistion | 20. Swath | 28. Pemmican |
| 5. Fusiform | 13. Hemophilic | 21. Ferage | 29. Variegated |
| 6. Agglutinated | 14. Xenodermic | 22. Square | 30. Sobriquet |
| 7. Nasuturing | 15. Replete | 23. Mendicant | 31. Preternatural |
| 8. Writting | 16. Derricht | 24. Rate | 32. Fetter |

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MENU

Beastmaster.....1

written by Trevor Stamper

Power of Organizations.....9

written by Trevor Stamper & Joyce Chng

School of the Tree.....13

written by Joyuce Chng & Trevor Stamper

Ominous Idols.....33

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Cullpepper's Herbal.....41

written by Trevor Stamper

Patron Missions: Dor Nyvs.....45

written by José Luiz F. Cardoso

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written by Brian Gilkison & Trevor Stamper

Onward Retainer.....52

created by Joel Phillips

Wyrms Words.....56

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