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A smug/tg/ production

Divination, Shrines and You! A guide for the rest of us.

by anon

The combination of fortune telling and randomization have often been combined in the past. Randomizers such as decks of cards (Tarot), nature itself counting the numbers of birds in a flock (Ornithomancy), the distribution of frenzied strikes to the ground (Geomancy) and even with dice (I Ching and others). While in the ancient world they did not play role playing games, the use of randomness to determine fortunes was common. The practice as it originated in Greece and Persia can be called Astragalomancy, named after the astragali or the foot bone dice of ancient Greece or sometimes

Cubomancy which is still a reference to bones or cut bones aka dice. While many cultures had random divination, we will be focusing on a dice-based method that would not seem out of place in Greece.

In ancient Greece the astragali or knuckle bone dice were fairly common and indeed even today in some areas those bones are still used as dice and toys, either actual knuckle bones or wood carved in the shape. The astragali are roughly cube shaped but rounded on two edges, giving four faces to the die labeled 1 (or often called chain), 3, 4 and 6. During divination five astragali were thrown and then compared to a table or oracle to determine the fortune in a method that most Dungeons and Dragons players would recognize.

Result

- 3 Zeus in Heaven has blessed you for your hard work as long as you keep at it. The only true burden here would be giving up before you complete your work. Do not neglect your Friends and Lovers, but work hard and be proud. (+1 to Saves.)
- 4 Fiery Athena has blessed you with Passion, Grace and Eloquence. She will part the way before you as long as you use those gifts. By avoiding Enmity and Animosity you will arrive and if you fall into trouble, the blue eyed goddess herself shall help you. (+1 to Reactions.)
- 5 The Fates Warning, the fates warn you! The business you are engaged in shall bring you ruin if you do not turn away from it. Your work shall weary you and bring you nothing, now is the time to leave, flee, travel. Do not pursue this. (Move 10 additional feet when withdrawing.)
- 6 The Eagle of Zeus flies at your right hand, traveller. Travel and the traveller are good omens for you. Zeus in his greatest form shall aid you in your tasks. (+1 to your next roll.)
- 7 A Spirit of Oaths has noticed you. You have made a deal with yourself and with the unknown. It is better to follow vows and promises then renege. If you must renounce your bonds, pray to Demeter and Zeus to save you. (+1 to rolls to achieve your Oath.)
- 8 Poseidon's Indifference. Throwing seeds and writing letters in bottles into the sea are both equally pointless. Since you are a mortal, do not force the gods' attention, lest they harm you.
- 9 Nike blesses you, you shall be Victorious in your task. With luck and skill you shall be the victor in this Task, the Great Spirit blesses you. Your enemies will fear you and all shall be as you desire. (+1 to damage rolls.)
- 10 Hermes blesses you, you shall be skilled at words, fleet of foot, the bearer of good news. Your business shall turn to your ends and be favored, Illness shall be overturned and those who are far away from you shall return. (Increase your speed by 10" and +1 to Reactions.)
- 11 Asklepios tends to you. You are fortunate that the healer has given his care to you. The storms that you weather now shall pass and you shall find yourself in good standing, illness and sickness shall pass and you shall find yourself in good health. (+2 to all Saves vs Death and Poison.)
- 12 Fortune's Warning, Tyche the god of chance has given you a boon this day. Do not make haste to go, if it is impossible to go rather wait, Do not rush out mindlessly, you will only do damage to yourself. But if you wait patiently and wisely (+2 to a single roll of the players choice).
- 13 Ares' Curse, Do not go stranger! Terrible Ares has beset you with an impossible challenge, such as a man faced against a huge fiery lion. Do not Travel, beg not for guards, this Fortune is intractable, irredeemable and unavoidable. Your Charms of Protection are not strong enough, Ares wears the belt of the Wolves of Protection and even the Curse Breakers suffer Ares' Wrath. (No bonus, the next random encounter should trigger automatically or the GM should add a new challenging monster to the world.)
- 14 Demeter attends to you. You are well accounted for and regarded in your dealings, you shall have bountiful harvests, and a bountiful life. Health and blessings follow you, You are the example that your everyday man aspires to (Heal 1d6 damage and +1 to Reactions in town or at home.)
- 15 Aphrodite's Blessing, go where you please you shall find joy. Sail where ever you desire you shall return with a wife, Stride out and claim your fortune and when you have found everything you desire and put your mind to rest, praise Aphrodite and Hermes for their blessings. (+2 to reaction rolls.)
- 16 Fates Manifest, The time for heroism is nigh. Do not put your hand in a wolves mouth, lest it bite you, there are difficult and delicate tasks before you but you will succeed if you act with Wisdom, Skill and Heart! (+1 to Armor Class.)
- 17 Tyche who brings good things, watches over you. She saves you from grumblers. Your business at hand is worthy, press ahead! You will get away from difficulties, illness and failures! (+2 to all saves.)
- 18 Hephaestus grumbles. Your business is impossible, do not toil in vain. Do not turn over every stone as you are likely to find a scorpion. Fuss and Anger will not bring you luck, let them go. Do not make chains of your emotions, lest they bring you misfortune. (+2 to Saves vs Charms and Illusions.)

Divination has already been used in Dungeon and Dragons games. This is best seen in the original 1st edition Ravenloft module which uses Divination by Tarot or Card to both foreshadow and randomize the game to build atmosphere and ensure replayability. By tying certain objects or figures to the random results, you can subtly introduce NPC's, magic Items or themes into your game before the PC's actually encounter them. This lets you give the hints and clues that your players may need to continue and serve as warnings or encouragement for your players.

In the role playing game, our divinations will use 3d6, closely approximating the original results of the astragali. Remember, when dealing with the players a little showmanship goes a long way (as it does with any divination). Have the player (or the character if you hate fun) face a certain direction, give yourself time to ruminate in the reading. A few *Tuts* and *Ohhhhs* or *Ahhhhhhhs* go a long way to establish mood and tension before reading the results. In the table oracle results you'll find that there are no truly terrible misfortunes. Even the worst result like Ares' Curse is a warning not the delivery of a summary judgement. Like most fortune telling, no one pays for bad fortunes. This is advice you should follow when divining in your games. Bad news, is a warning, Good news is a blessing. If you make your fortunes implacable curses, your players will just avoid divination in your games.

I have included an example table here designed for RPG needs, but you can find more authentic oracle tables. If you did want to give this a more authentic Grecian flair you can roll four sided dice or six sided dice marked in the manner of Astragali (1, 3, 4, 6) and roll five dice. You will need to add 2 to the divination table (converting the 3-18 result to a 5-20 result). You can also find and use historically sourced oracle tables, I have based this list on one such table, but there were many (and some different means that you can use to generate fortunes from them). The fortunes included refer to Greek Gods as in the original oracles of ancient Greece. You should see those divine names as a stand-ins to help you understand which game pantheon or heroic figures you should use to replace them with. Remember that the oracles should refer to powerful figures that you want to emphasize (Dragons, Villains, Heroes, etc) regardless if they are good or bad.

Fortunes and Divine blessings last until Sundown.

Now, you might be asking yourself, 'that's nice but how do I use this?' well first you can have fortune tellers give fairly interesting and somewhat complex readings by having the players roll their 'Fortune' dice and then comparing it to the table and then adjusting the message to appeal to the player. Real fortune telling has large elements of cold reading and even a little pandering so feel free to customize the fortunes to make them seem more accurate to the characters questions. It was not unheard of for 'rerolls' to be allowed for a fee, there are some constants between both RPG's and Fortune Telling. Rerolls should be kept to a maximum of three total readings with the final reading being unavoidable. Second you can design your own fortune that ties into your adventure plans and when the party takes a divination, roll the dice as regular

but use your fixed result.

Alternatively you can introduce a variety of shrines in your world, Shrines in the real world served many purposes from sign posts, to offering places, to places of power or community. Shrines in an RPG world don't need to be as extensive as we think of often in Greek or Western religion. A small well worn statue of Zeus is just as good a place to pray to him as a hall. This works the same as the Fortune Teller, but you can either have the players roll their 'Prayer' dice or roll it yourself. This allows the player characters to interact 'with the divine' without having to deal with Fortune Tellers which can often feel like a scam or ruse (because they often were). This is something of a modern sensibility but if offering a prayer at an altar (or rolling dice at a chaotic altar) feels more authentic to your characters it's an easy way to incorporate the same idea.

If you make an offering (something notable to the players, at least 10gp generally, a gem, a few rations, something you found are all good examples of offerings. Skulls and blood, a random silver penny, someone else's possessions are all bad offerings unless praying to fell or awful, evil gods), at the GM's discretion you can retain the suggested bonus listed after each fortune until sundown, and remember that like with fortunes, offerings are random. And if the players insist (and make bigger more elaborate offerings) the result can be rerolled but should be fixed after three rolls.

So there are a few ways to encourage and incorporate fortune telling, shrines and some semi-authentic historical practices into your next game. I hope you and your players enjoy! 🎲



Thiric by anon

Hideout of Thiric the Goblin Wokan

by Dungeon Anon

A starting adventure for 1 or 2 1st level characters with little or no equipment. They are searching for a lost pig a farmer has told them has gone missing. The point of this dungeon is give players some weapons and equipment and a glimpse of the adventurer's life. The stats are made for B/X or any OSR based on it.

The dungeon is made from stone, with tunnels five feet wide and 8 foot high. Each room is damp as water has crept through the loose stones. The thief and goblin will try to take prisoners before killing. If this happens the party can try to escape or negotiate their way out, otherwise they'll be sold to slavers.

1 Entrance room

Room is lit by a torch the characters can use. A table and chair on the north side, a knife on the table and a short spear against the wall. Door south-west is stuck, $\times/6$ strength to open. Too much noise will bring the thief to investigate.

2 Dark hall

The room has an arched ceiling, 10 feet high down the center. Crates and barrels line the north and south walls. They are full of stale food and moldy clothing. All is usable but no sale value. The north door is just closed. Searching the crates will reveal a small bag of gems (375gp worth). A Giant rat is hiding in a barrel and will attack if any barrels are searched.

Giant rat 1HD (2hp) AC 7 1at D3 ML 8 (10xp)

Hallway

Door west is locked, requires tools to pick. Attempting to break it down will alert the inhabitants.

3 Bedroom

The doorless archway leads to a small bedroom. It's lit by a lamp on the table in the south-east corner (lamp, oil $\times 2$). Wooden gate to the west, stuck door check to open both. Sleeping on the bed is a human thief, he will wake on a hear noise check if characters aren't silent. His sword is against the wall and will require one round to grab when woken.

Kelp the thief 1HD (3hp) AC 6 1AT d8+2 ML 8 (10xp).

Leather armor, long sword, STR +2, thieves tools.

4 Kitchen and living space There is a fireplace with a low fire burning. There is a bag with (1000cp) coins that has a wire trap. If tripped, a net falls from the ceiling. Find trap check to find the wire, searching the ceiling will show the net. If party is trapped, roll for wandering monster. On a 1 The remaining inhabitants will come in 1d4 rds. If the cupboards are searched rations $\times 5$ and a bottle of wine will be found. Door south is just closed.

5 Antechamber

The room is eerily empty, and dark. If entered from the north-west door, sleep gas will fill the room in 1rd, pressure plate in the floor found on find traps check. Save vs poison or fall asleep (4d4 turns). If the trap is tripped the goblin from room six will attack. There is nothing else in the room. Passage south is a wooden gate that can be opened with a lever just inside room 6, or a strength check.

6 Wizard's bedroom

The bedroom and study of Thiric the goblin Wokan. Large bed, many tables and chairs, every thing is of poor value and worn out. An oil lamp lights the room (oil $\times 5$). The table next to the bed has the goblin's spell book. He won't try to kill the party, he'll cast sleep first and take them prisoner. If he can't cast his spell he'll try to flee.

Thiric, goblin spell caster 1HD (4hp) AC 9 1AT d4-1

ML 7 (15xp).

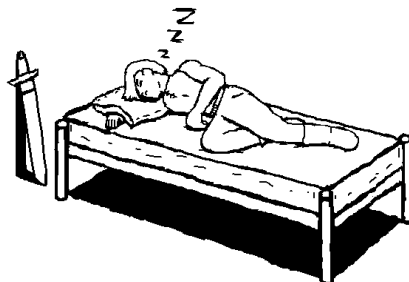
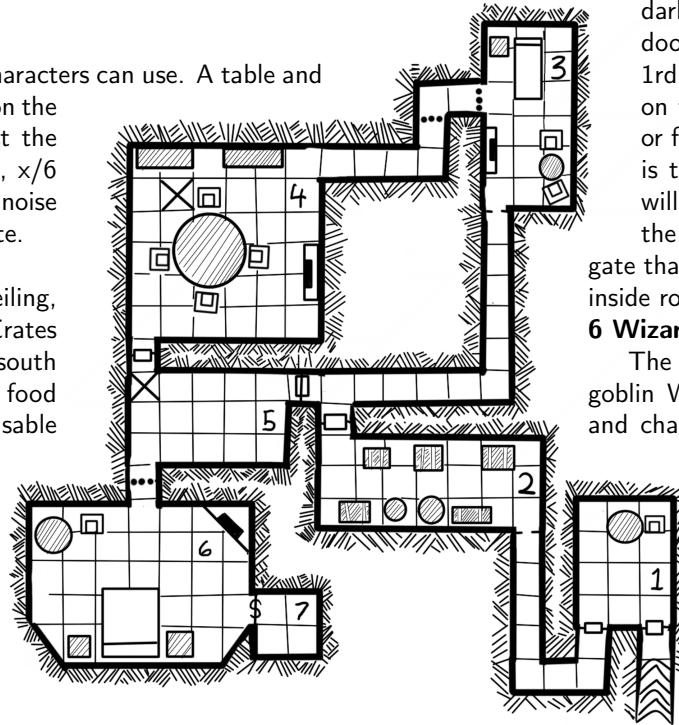
Dagger -1 from STR.

He has a note leading to next adventure/dungeon. A magic key that opens all doors, and glows when near the secret door.

Spells known: Magic missile, protect from evil/good, sleep.

7 Secret room

Contains the pig the party was searching for. If the players are kept prisoner for long they will be stashed here. 🐷



Kelp the Thief by anon

Menagerie: Introduction and Base Rules

by *Timmy Nogames*

This is Menagerie, a 28mm-scale skirmish wargame in which players take control of mighty wizards, the BEASTMASTERS, who engage in pitched battles with the aid of brutal war spirits. I first envisioned the idea sometime back in March as a Hordes-like /monster/ game where the player would control monster girls who were always one bad roll away from turning on the player and raping them. At the same time, I was thinking quite a lot about the lamentable state that Warmahordes found itself in, and I became resolved to create a mini-agnostic Hordes equivalent.

One of the first decisions I made for this game was to make it more complex. There are several lighter and easier to understand wargames out there, which is great. But from what I can see, the market is open for something with a little more meat on its bones. The end goal is to create a 'Monster Manual' of many different creatures big and small. As in D&D, Warmahordes, or Heroscape, these creatures will already come out of the box with their own stats and abilities, but players are encouraged to add on different rules (which will be called "keywords" in the rulebook) to customize them. Like phoenixes that deal earth damage or pygmy bears or a hydra made of construction cranes (had a dream about that, once). I want players to have a lot of fun with it.

I also want this to be a rowdy game. I want to resurrect Warmahordes' "PLAY LIKE YOU GOT A PAIR" attitude. Win big, lose big, play big. A competitive spirit is needed, but I don't want either tourneyfags or hugbox candyasses to think they are welcome to play this.

There should also be traditional armed forces allied with the beastmaster, as well as familiars and a vast library of spells to channel the beastmasters' phenomenal cosmic power. It should remain the players' prerogative to choose whether he wishes to use his monsters, allies, or spell power to achieve victory. All should be viable. Monsters will be able to fill support roles as well.

In fact, I do have some unique plans for army construction. Necromancer-style players will be able to field regular ally teams and give them the [Undead] keyword, which will cause them to start functioning like monsters. Or perhaps a player can create several lesser spirits that do nothing but power the beastmaster himself up, JoJo style. I would also like to have elemental playstyles as well, in the style of a particular character from Heroscape that I liked.

Monsters, spells, and certain keywords will be restricted by a "biome" option that must be chosen by the player when he begins listbuilding. In addition, monsters will also have a unique nature, which will determine how the monster reacts when it goes berserk. I would also like the nature to tie into other things as well. The player will frequently, but not always, have the option to choose natures when building their monster.

I am personally quite proud of the way the activation system works. It all came out stream-of-consciousness one day, but I do worry that it's been done already.

The activation system makes the game feel, to me at

least, like a TCG. The game is played with a standard French-suit deck of cards (with the jokers), and what the cards do will be determined by the context in which they are used. It should, hypothetically, keep options open for players and reduce the possibility of dead hands. Figures other than the beastmaster are activated by issuing cards to that figure as an order. Black cards let the figures move, and red cards let them attack. Higher numbered cards let the figure move faster, but may push it into a berserk state or morale break easier. Conversely, you can play lower cards if you can't afford that risk.

The initial monsters I am going to use will be basic animals. Beavers, wolves, bears, eagles, sabertooths, the majestic moose. I believe these were all pewter figures available from North Star. In particular, beavers will be support monsters. They will be cheap, small, weak. But there will also be a rule that the player will include a beaver lodge as a terrain piece (they'll have to make it themselves) which will provide useful benefits to the beastmaster. The moose will be stated like a brick shithouse, but can be easily spooked and difficult for the beastmaster to control. I will later work my way up to other fantastical and mythological critters.

Finally, as of this submission, Menagerie is incomplete. I wished to have been farther along than this, but life didn't cooperate. It might be technically playable if you try hard enough, maybe. It's missing far too many important features. Like stated monsters for one thing. I don't think the stat and damage system as it is now will work. That is going to be the very next thing I am going to look into. At the very least, for the next submission, I want to have that fixed and provide real stated monsters and beastmasters so the game can actually be played. The rules that I will present here are a "report card", so that you may get a good understanding of what I am aiming for with Menagerie. Eventually, I will teach myself LaTeX and assemble the rules into a proper PDF, but getting to 1.0 and balancing it comes first. Maybe I can even work up to physical printed versions one day.

This is definitely a very ambitious undertaking, but I hope you'll follow along with me and share your thoughts on the project.

TODO (in order of importance):

- Unfuck damage and stat system
- Actually give things stats
- Rules for berserk monsters
- Rules for how multiple-model units function and move, assume they work like Saga or Warcrow for the time being
- Morale and rallying (might have to tackle this with berserk rules)
- Allies
- Point costs for units
- Keywords for customizing figures
- Spells
- Familiars
- Things that happen when a Beastmaster gets KO'd; losing when the Beastmaster is KO'd is a bandaid
- More monsters

- All that 'setup' crap that I usually gloss over when reading a rulebook, other minor details

Questions to consider:

- I want to provide players the opportunity to have units of several monsters. This will become particularly important for elementalists or necromancers. But the way the damage system works right now is rather awkward when it comes to units, the whole blob shares core attributes and just gets knocked out all at once.
- I didn't want a whole bunch of different stats per unit, but I suppose with the way it is now, there are going to be more than six stats (3 core attributes x 2). Not sure if the system is very intuitive.
- Where should mana burn be placed in the turn; I want it placed where it can cause the most damage.
- Should mana have elemental types?
- Maybe all monsters should continuously generate mana?

Ideas:

- If elements are added, each suit will correspond to one particular element
- Elemental affinity can work, maybe certain amounts of mana the unit is attuned to don't count toward its overall total of mana
- Monsters that continuously generate mana
- Monsters that, when they go berserk, dump all of their mana into the Beastmaster
- And ones that work the opposite way by draining all of the BM's mana
- Spells will have a 'somatic' component as well as a mana cost, that is, a certain type of card that must be spent to cast it. Stronger spells need rarer cards, weaker or smaller scale spells may not have any somatic component at all
- Spell that 'steals' initiative
- Spells that allow the player to peek at opponent's hands or issued orders, discard cards
- Eater of Worlds: When it is KO'ed, it created two smaller EoW; the reason why I made the size stat the way it is is future-proofing

Types of Models

A 'Model' is an individual on the battlefield. A 'Unit' is a set of models; a 'Unit' can consist of one 'Model' or several 'Models'. Thus, when a rule refers to a 'Model', it is referring to an individual figure, and when a rule refers to a 'Unit', it is referring to every model in that 'Unit', no matter how big or small.

Beastmaster: The player's avatar on the battlefield, using powerful magic to summon spirits to their aid.

Familiars: Small monsters bound to the service of the Beastmaster. The Beastmaster can work his magic and enact his will through them. They are unique in that they are always considered to be part of the Beastmaster's Unit, despite not following the normal rules for one. (Coming Soon!)

Monsters: Deadly spirits given shape. They can come in all manner of shapes and sizes, from small animals to great and terrible dragons.

Allies: Other human (or humanoid) fighters working for the Beastmaster for one reason or another. Though lacking the raw physical and magical strength of a Monster, they can be deadly in their own right. Some "Beastmasters" may even opt to use them as their primary combat force.

Every single model in the game is given a size stat. All models of a given size must fit on the base widths given in the chart below; players are free to use whatever shape or size of base they wish for their models, however that base cannot be smaller than the base minimum listed, and cannot be larger than the base maximum listed. A model occupies a space from the bottom of its base to the height listed in the chart corresponding to its size stat, regardless of what the physical model may look or be shaped like. A model is considered to have line of sight to another model if it can draw an uninterrupted line from any part of its own volume to the volume of the other model, regardless of whether the physical figures can be seen.

Size	Base Min.	Base Max.	Height
1 Critter	10mm	15mm	20mm
2 Dwarfish	15mm	25mm	30mm
3 Human	25mm	30mm	40mm
4 Large	30mm	40mm	50mm
5 Giant	40mm	50mm	60mm
6 Titanic	50mm	60mm	80mm
7 Behemoth	60mm	80mm	100mm
8 World-breaking	80mm	100mm	*

* These figures in particular may just be given [Strange Profile] as a standard.

Keep an eye out for monsters with the [Strange Profile] keyword. These units do not follow the normal height conventions and instead list a unique height in their profile. This is to say, that model occupies a space from the bottom of its base to the height specified in the profile instead of the chart listed above.

The Stats

Every unit is given an array of three Core Attributes: Body, Mind, and Spirit. Each of these attributes are given in an X/Y format, the first number (Strength) being a rating of how well the unit can utilize that attribute when it is needed for a roll, and the second (Fortitude) being a rating of how much damage the unit can receive to that attribute. Attacks, casting magic, and using special abilities all use one of the three attributes. Attacks also deal damage to one of those three attributes. When a unit receives an amount of damage in one attribute equal to its fortitude, that attribute is then 'maxed out'. The unit then receives penalties to that attribute's strength (among other things), and will begin applying damage received to that attribute to other attributes instead. When a unit has all three attributes maxed out, it is 'knocked out', becoming immobile and unresponsive. The Beastmaster cannot issue orders to any unit that is knocked out.

When an attribute is maxed out:

Body damage is dealt to Mind.

Mind damage is dealt to Spirit.

Spirit damage is dealt to Body.

When two are maxed out, all damage is dealt to the remaining attribute.

After a unit has been knocked out, it will then continue to receive damage as normal. If a unit accumulates an amount of damage equal to twice its fortitude in any one stat, it perishes and is removed from the table.

If a player's Beastmaster is knocked out, he loses the game.

A Beastmaster does not immediately receive damage from an attack. Instead, the player is first forced to discard a number of cards equal to that damage, with any points of damage being dealt normally. In addition, if a game effect or rule would force the player to discard more cards than he has in hand, those remaining cards would then be dealt as damage to a core attribute. If the game effect or rule does not specify which core attribute is being damaged (such as during the mana burn step of upkeep), one is chosen at random.

Each unit has an armor rating that determines how difficult it is to damage it. Some units may have weaknesses or resistances to certain attributes that increase or decrease their armor temporarily.

Beastmasters and monsters have an 'Aura' stat. This determines how much mana that unit can handle. It is possible for the unit to have mana in excess of its aura stat, but doing so will cause damage and make monsters unstable and difficult to control.

Playing the Game

At the beginning of the game, each player rolls for initiative. Each player rolls a d6, and the player with the higher roll gets initiative for the first turn. At the beginning of each subsequent turn, initiative passes between players.

Each player draws cards from a standard 52-card French suit deck, known as the resource deck. Keep the jokers in.

Starting with initiative player, each player draws cards until they have 7 cards in hand.

The phases in a turn goes like this:

- Draw
- Upkeep
- Control
- Spell
- Brawl
- End

Draw: Starting from the second turn, each player, starting with initiative, draws cards from the resource deck until they meet their respective hand sizes.

Upkeep:

- **Mana Burn:** Each Beastmaster with mana in excess of their aura stat removes mana from their Beastmaster until the mana is equal to their aura. Then the Beastmaster must discard a number of cards from their hand equal to the amount of mana removed.
- Beginning-of-turn effects happen here.

Control:

- Starting with initiative, each player takes turns spending cards in their hand to issue orders to monsters or allies. Black cards (spades and clubs) are movement orders, and red cards (hearts and diamonds) are attack orders. The player does not need to specifically name what the order is being used for when the card is spent, but instead must decide that when the unit is activated for that order during the brawl phase.
- When the cards are spent, they are placed on the table face down, either next to the unit the orders have been issued to, or in a way that easily denotes which unit each order belongs to. These cards are not revealed until the brawl step. Jokers may be used to issue orders. In this case, the player secretly notes what type of order the card is being spent for, and reveals that when orders are revealed during the brawl phase. Players should pay particular attention to the aces. Aces will always activate before any other order if the player has initiative, and will always activate last if the player does not have initiative.

Spell: Starting with initiative, each player may then take turns spending cards to have their beastmasters perform actions. They may:

- Spend black cards (spades and clubs) to perform a movement order.
- Spend red cards (hearts or diamonds) to perform an attack order.
- Once per turn, spend a card to generate mana for the Beastmaster.
- Once per turn, leech 1 mana from a monster under your control.
- Spend mana and the appropriate card to cast a spell.
- Once per turn, discard 1 card and draw 1 card from the resource deck.

Players may spend as many cards as they wish as long as they have the cards in hand to do so, but they should also keep in mind that exhausting their hand may make their beastmaster more vulnerable to damage.

Brawl: All issued orders are revealed. Each unit is activated in turn based on the value of the card. If any jokers are revealed at this time, the player must also reveal what type of order it was spent on, and then roll 2d6. The joker has a numerical value of that roll for the rest of this brawl phase. Once again, pay attention to aces. Aces for players with initiative (shorthanded as A+) will activate first, and for players without initiative (shorthanded as a-) will activate last. A+ and royals are collectively known as honor cards. All honor cards activate before numeral cards. The joker is considered a numeral, so even if it rolled an exceptionally high result, honors will still activate before it. Kings beat Queens. Queens beat Jacks. So, the priority of orders goes:

A+ ► K ► Q ► J ► 10 ► 1 ► a-

All A+ orders activate first, then kings, then queens, then jacks, then each numeral starting from highest to lowest, then finally the a-.

Once all orders have been fulfilled, place each order card into the discard pile in the order of their activation.

End:

- (Mana Burn here?)
- Each player discards card until they meet each of their maximum hand sizes.
- End-of-turn effects happen here.

Black and Red

Movement orders may be used to move the figure. Each unit may move up to 4 inches. They may also activate an ability that is explicitly stated to be a move action.

Attack orders may be used to attack other models. The attacking unit may use any eligible attack at its disposal, but if it has nothing to attack, it idles instead. They may also activate any other ability that is explicitly stated to be an attack action.

Attacks:

Each attack states which core attribute is used for the attack. The attacking player rolls a number of d6s equal to that attribute's Strength. Each of those rolls is compared to the defender's armor rating. Any roll that exceeds the armor rating is a hit. The other rolls are discarded.

Then, using the same type of attribute used for the attack, the defending player rolls a number of d6s equal to the defending unit's Fortitude in that attribute. Each roll of a 1 or 2 cancels out a hit from the attacking player. Each hit remaining is dealt to the defender as damage in that attribute.

Control:

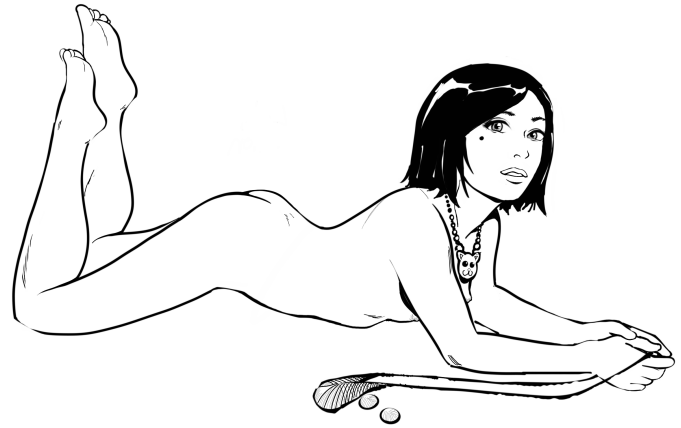
When activating an order issued to a monster, the player must check to see if it goes berserk. Take the number value of the card issued to the monster, and add to it the amount of mana that monster currently has, plus 1 if the mana is greater than the monster's aura, plus 1 for each maxed out core attribute, if any. Also add or subtract any additional modifiers from other game rules at this time. The player must then roll 3d6 against this number. The monster remains under the Beastmaster's control if the player can roll equal to or greater than this total, but the monster will go berserk if the player rolls under this total.

For the purposes of making control checks only, the honor cards are assigned a numerical value:

A+: 10
K: 13
Q: 12
J: 11
a-: 1

When making a control check, the player may spend cards to reduce the total he must roll against. He may spend any number of cards to reduce the total by 1 per card. In addition, he will receive a bonus multiplier for spending cards of the same suit. In this case, each card will reduce the total by the number of cards in that suit that were spent. For example, if a player were to spend 3 cards, 1 club and 2 hearts, to reduce

that total, each of those heart cards will then reduce the total by 2. For spending those cards, that player will have reduced the total by 5. If he spent an additional club, he would reduce the total by 8. If he spent an additional heart, he would reduce the total by 10. If he spent an additional spade or diamond, he would reduce the total by 6. ♠



Slinger by Lolianon

Random Intrigue Tables

by Cognate

Sometimes as a GM you need to weave a web of hidden motivations and secret plots for your party to blunder into. Whether it's in the golden court of Emperor Imbecilius V, or in the neon underbelly of New Kowloon, these random tables should be able to help you come up with enough hidden agendas to entangle your players and NPCs alike.

For each of the characters that need an agenda, roll once on each of these three tables. They are fairly vague, so you'll need to work out exactly what the plot looks like in the context of your setting. Let's look at the tables, then work through some examples:

	Goal	Motive	Approach
1	Peace	Pride	Deception
2	Conflict	Loyalty	Physical Force
3	Money	Love	Connections
4	Power	Duty	Magic/Tech/Special
5	Humiliate	Passion	Money
6	Impress	Fear	Manipulation
7	Protect	Greed	
8	Harm	Personal Belief	
9	Betray	Group Belief	
10	Macguffin	Revenge	

Let's say we are in the court of the aforementioned Emperor Imbecilius. His Imperial Majesty is quite senile and is of no account, but a number of courtly figures cluster around the throne competing for power. Let's say we have the Imperial heir and nephew Alexius, General Andricus, First Consort

Dulcea, and finally the Chamberlain and Chief Eunuch Nepo. First we'll roll 2d10 and a d6 for each:

	Goal	Motive	Approach
Alexius	2	1	1
Andricus	9	4	6
Dulcea	5	3	5
Nepo	6	7	3

Let's look at Alexius. He wants to bring about a conflict due to his pride, and he wants to use deception to do so. Clearly he's looking to start a war with the neighbouring kingdom of Nemed, and use the prestige of conquest to bolster his reputation and legitimacy. Perhaps he's orchestrating a false flag to gain a cassus belli?

Andricus next. He wants to betray someone due to his sense of duty. He plans to do so using manipulation, which can include blackmail and other coercive techniques. Maybe he's caught wind of Alexius's hawkish plans, but knows that another war would destabilize the already tottering empire. For the sake of the empire, he needs to dig up enough dirt on Alexius to force him to abdicate his claim.

Dulcea wants to humiliate someone out of love for someone else. She knows her dashing young nephew (and lover) Alexius dislikes the Nemedians, so she's going to be as insufferable as she possibly can towards the Nemedian ambassador, who will be arriving soon. She's going to make the official banquet end in disaster, and she has full access to the imperial purse to help her do so.

Nepo wants to impress someone out of greed, and will use his vast network of connections to do so. Perhaps he wishes to leave a good impression on the Nemedian delegation. After all, they control valuable trade routes, and whoever they choose to trade with will profit greatly. Good thing Nepo has a favour to call in from a dealer of particularly rare and delightful narcotics.

So, we've quickly set up a tangle of plots for our PCs to get involved with. Maybe the players are the patsies that Alexius has hired to start a war. Maybe they're Nepo's fixers or Andricus's spies. Wherever they fit in, you can be sure that things will get messy when the plots start to unravel.

I hope most of the table entries make sense, but here are a few clarifications:

Macguffin is a unique item, person or location that is important for over-arching plot reasons. The plotter wants to obtain or control it.

Loyalty is alignment to a particular person the plotter follows or to a group or faction they belong to.

Duty is following a rule or principle associated with a job or position.

Passion is due to a personal interest or hobby, or just for the sheer hell of it.

Personal Belief is following a personal rule or principle.

Group Belief is following the rule or principle of a group, such as a religion, knightly order or cult.

Magic/Tech/Special could be anything, but try to use the unique features of the setting. For a cyberpunk setting, this

could be AI or nanomachines. For a fantasy setting this could be wizardry or demon summoning. For a space opera setting, this could be an experimental warp drive or a precursor artifact. 🗡️

The Dream

by anon

And the speaking mouths bellowed forth, from the great and towering beast built of the city's buildings: "...that you shall pay for your forefather's mistakes, and for his forefather's, and for his, and that the price shall be in great blood and flesh and bone, so that when the rivers flow they flow with sanguine taint..."

And so it was that from even this two miles' distance from the city upon our hill one may glimpse that leviathan, its great face made of angered city bricks and former homes, smashed together with a combination of sinew and tissue, its shape of a lumbering spider with far too many legs and but a bloody human skull for its body, for it rose far above the city lines and waded through its carcass like one might walk through the tides.

And from the gates of the city outpoured its residents, now lost to panic and helpless before this demon's might; but less than half of those who fled still yet appeared to be human, and those who were not had vicious glee in their eyes, such that as they were passed by children and women unpossessed by their own changes they would lash out with twisting and warping limbs, and cut them down where they stood, and then in the frenzy devour them in the middle of the road, or graft their own limbs onto their corpses; and this led to a great many blockages as the citizens tripped and stumbled and ran between and around their friends and family, each in the process of being devoured or changed—the magnitude of the agony made plain by their screams, for it filled all the neighboring fields with that siren of terror.

Perhaps it is an omen. Perhaps, history. An apocalypse to come, or a metaphor for treason. 🗡️



Lich in Tophat by jipowap

The Jester

by anon

This class is designed for OSR style systems.

Hit Dice: As Cleric, or d6

Saves: As Thief, or most Thief-like class

Attack: +1 every odd-numbered Level

The Jester is the fool who touches the Court, the Commons, and the Kami at once. No aristocrat may touch him; the plebian loves him; the gods dance and sing to the Jester's songs as lightly as the people. He ferries news between the three worlds, their sole common messenger; he serves as a walking warning for all who pay heed; he entertains, wherever he can, whenever he can, to keep the peace and to broach those critical matters which others in the realm cannot.

Jesters are the spirit-managers and itinerant couriers of their native realm. They serve as renowned entertainers—all the better for dealing with the decadent Court and the fickle fairy gods of the forests and shrines. They bear an Imperial immunity to make the angriest noble hesitate, but often see punishment from gods and men regardless.

Features

Divination The Jester may Save to discern the means of pleasing a spirit; most typically, a kind of sacrifice or labor carried out for them. The definition of 'spirit' includes:

- Diseases (attracted to mania, lethargy, etc.);
- The *kami* residing in objects (attracted to qualities that are akin to themselves);
- The Upper Gods (attracted to their domains, desires, precepts, etc.);
- The hearts of men (mostly self-explanatory).

If he performs a satisfactory *absurdity* (a work, feat, prank, or favor, particularly of a comical or ironic nature) to meet the interests of a spirit, the spirit is *obligated* to perform a favor within their power for the Jester. If it's for any reason doubtful that his absurdity was adequate, he must Save for it to be adequate.

Poisoned Power If the Jester ever holds *any* direct political power, the Commons will come to despise him, the Kami will laugh at and curse him, and the Court will retract its protections.

Diplomatic Immunity The Jester possesses *diplomatic immunity* where gods and men alike are concerned. If anyone harms him, the assailant must Save or eventually suffer a karmic fate by the same order of magnitude that they harmed him by. If the Jester harms someone in a manner more direct than transferring information, he loses his protections from repercussion.

Entertainer The Jester may add one half his Level, rounded down, as a positive modifier to any check made to entertain or beguile, as well as to checks and saves made to avoid a disaster of etiquette.

Exposure The Jester and his guests may get into any social event in his native realm, no questions asked. He will be expected to perform, provide news, or record and spread events. A poor performance may bring punishment. 🗡️

Factions for Fags

by anon

Hey, cocksucker. I hear you've been running a sandbox game without any systemic method for simulating factional activity. Well, I can't fucking blame you! There ain't shit out there to help you do it! If you cracked open *Worlds Without Number* or *An Echo, Resounding* lately, you might have been initially wowed and then disappointed! Most faction systems are miserably overbearing, loaded down with so much mechanical cruft and bookkeeping that it's impossible to keep track of more than a couple of living agents. And if you want a real living world, you're gonna want a few dozen at least.

I've been tinkering and borrowing shit from people for years, and now I've got something that might help resolve this conundrum.

Assumptions

We assume the following in these rules:

- That your system is of an **Old School Renaissance** tradition, and therefore possesses a roll-under **d20** mechanic as its core resolution mechanic, referred to as **Ability Checks**;
- That you are comfortable with the use of **stacking advantage & disadvantage** upon those d20 checks;
- That you have **Levels** or an equivalent mechanism by which you might determine the relative strength of creatures;
- That you have a **Morale** score measured from 2–12 to determine loyalty & fearfulness.

Factions

Factions are characters that represent *groups of characters* coordinating under a **Leader** with **Agendas**, usually to achieve one or more **Goals**. They are composed of two kinds of **Members**, called **Supporters** (enablers & suppliers) occupying a **Capitol** (the Faction's home base or equivalent source of supply), and **Soldiers** (active participants & laborers) who form the actual Faction itself. Characters can be part of any number of Factions.

Factions can make Ability Checks and are usually working on a Goal. They delegate most activities to **Subfactions** (subordinate Factions); each Subfaction being in turn led by a Leader who is a **Retainer** of their **Liege** (their overlord Faction's Leader).

Population

A Faction's **Population** score is equal to the number of Soldiers (not Supporters, just Soldiers) the Faction controls, as measured on the table on the next page. Each point of Population doubles the number of Soldiers represented in a Faction as well as the minimum time per planned, coordinated action taken. Larger Factions are slower to react.

Faction population table

Population Score	# of Soldiers	Req. Supporter Population	Faction Size	Capitol Size
0	1	8	Single person	Cottage & garden
1	2	16		
2	4	32	Party of 4 PCs	Extended family
3	8	64		
4	16	128	Local gang	Rural hamlet
5	32	250		
6	64	500	Platoon	Typical village
7	128	1,000		
8	250	2,000	Company	Small town
9	500	4,000		
10	1,000	8,000	Battalion	Large town
11	2,000	16,000		
12	4,000	32,000	Brigade	Typical city
13	8,000	64,000		
14	16,000	128,000	Division	Metropolis
15	32,000	250,000		
16	64,000	500,000	Corps	Megalopolis
17	128,000	1,000,000		
18	256,000	2,000,000	Imperial Army	World capitol

Inherited Features A Faction inherits features, special abilities, ability scores, and other functions from its Members. Any action the Faction takes may benefit from its Members' features. The GM has the authority to determine the threshold for adoption required for a Faction to benefit from any given feature.

If any feature is required for a Faction to participate in your game system (i.e. testing ability scores in ability checks), the Faction is assumed to have the averaged value of all of its Members, or else borrows its Leader's attributes if appropriate.

For example, a Faction consisting of a company of 128 amphibious Frogmen would be freely able to submerge itself & fight underwater. If just a single member was Human, however, the GM may rule that it cannot do so without first splitting off its Human member & leaving them behind.

Traits

Factions may gain collective benefits (called Traits) from being together that individual Members do not display; for example, a highly motivated & fanatical Faction might receive a bonus to its loyalty or Saves.

The primary emergent Trait that Factions benefit from is their Population score. For every point of Population that a Faction has beyond what is required for a given action, it gains an additional stacking advantage (i.e. when attacking, Factions gain 1 advantage per point by which their Population score exceeds their target's Population score).

Leaders & Morale

A Faction's **Leader** is a notable, memorable character whose orders determine a Faction's Goal.

Morale is the Faction's loyalty to their Liege. It is equal to and in fact is the Faction Leader's Morale score. A Leader's Morale may change & shift to reflect the Morale of their entire Faction. A sovereign Faction's Morale indicates loyalty to their Leader's Agendas and other ideals.

Agendas

Faction Leaders have **Agendas**, which is a (usually) short, evocative description indicating their personal broad-strokes desires, ideals, and ideology.

Subfactions & Lieges

Factions always have **Subfactions**; the question is whether they're ambitious or driven enough to be independent actors. Those that *are* are treated as fully-fledged Factions in their own right. A Subfaction's Leader is always a Retainer of their overlord Faction's Leader, who is called their **Liege**.

Like any Retainer, Subfaction Leaders are not perfectly loyal to their Lieges. They are subject to regular rules regarding Retainer behavior. A Subfaction Leader who attempts to leave their Liege & has the power to do so may try to take his Subfaction with him.

Goals & Actions

Factions *a/ways* have a Goal they're working on based on their Leader's agenda. If they don't, they're not worth tracking as

a Faction. The most common Faction Goals are:

Conquer: Make a target Faction subordinate, or gut its leadership & replace them with a new & compliant Subfaction.

Delegate: Create a new Subfaction. The Leader may make one of their Retainers its Leader; otherwise, he may gain a new Retainer by recruiting someone from the Subfaction's constituency as its Leader.

Supplant: Replace a target Faction as the controller of whatever Supporters or other assets the target has.

Destroy: Completely annihilate a target Faction—usually as revenge.

Improvement: Create a positive Trait to gain an advantage, or eliminate a penalty/obstacle that's preventing higher aims from being achieved.

Reconnaissance: Identify another Faction's true Goal(s), or a Leader's hidden agenda(s).

Independence: Break away from an unsatisfactory Liege.

Any action (including Goals) taken *by* or *against* a Faction has a minimum duration equal to that Faction's Population score's Minimum Time to Act, as per the adjacent table. The *only* exceptions are actions that have been extensively drilled upon, which is the reason why army units are capable of marching & organizing at greater speeds.

Population Score	Min. Time to Take Action
0	1 Action
1	1 Round
2	2 Rounds
3	4 Rounds
4	1 minute
5	2 minutes
6	4 minutes
7	8 minutes
8	15 minutes
9	30 minutes
10	1 hour
11	2 hours
12	4 hours
13	8 hours
14	16 hours
15	32 hours
16	2½ days
17	5 days
18	10 days

For example, a POP 18 empire whose Capitol Supporter population is in the millions may never take *any* action that takes less than 10 days (18 LU Time) to organize. Size is a detriment to speed! Almost all larger Factions necessarily employ smaller Subfactions to fight on smaller scales for them.

A Leader can change his Faction's Goal at any time. A Leader may also ask his Retainers who lead Subfactions to change their Goals. The targeted Retainers must test Morale:

- On a *pass*, they'll change their Goal, *but* if their Liege's newly-imposed Goal is directly opposed to the Subfaction Leader's Agendas or current Goal, the Subfaction's Morale is reduced by 1;
- On a *failure*, they refuse to change their Goal & their Morale is reduced by 1.

Growing & Shrinking Factions

Factions lose 1 Population when their Soldiers halve in number. They *gain* +1 Population when:

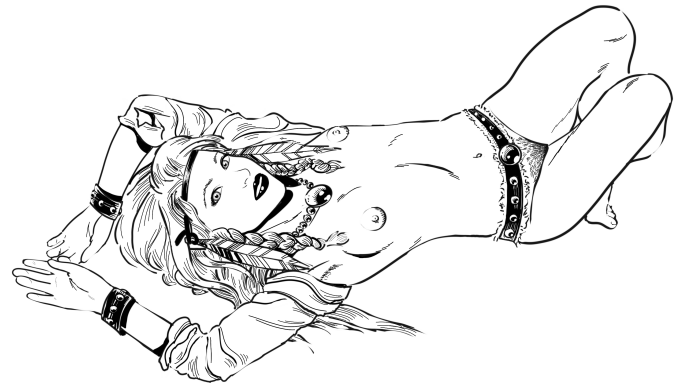
- Their Soldiers double in number;
- They conquer or vassalize a Faction of equal Population;
- They spend 8 years in a relatively stable & prosperous condition.

If a Faction manages to seize control over a Faction of *greater* Population, their own Population increases to match the conquered Faction—make sure to account for any who died during the transition.

The Party is a Faction

The players' party is technically also a Faction, as they're an organized group of characters working towards various Agendas that their Leader(s) have decided upon. Therefore, it is generally the case that when the party must accomplish collective tasks or be judged on collective merits, they are treated as a Faction, and all applicable Faction rules apply to the party.

Since Factions are free to pick their own Leaders for any reason, the party is similarly free to change its Leader when a different Leader would better suit their interests. Despite this, reasonable restrictions may be imposed by the GM—for example, if a particular other character or Faction has been perceiving a certain member of the party as being the party's Leader, it is unlikely that the party will be able to change their minds about that fact.



Barbarian by Lolianon

Events & Goals

Every so often, the GM does an **Event Check** to determine worldly events based on the activities of world actors. The default **Event Check Interval** is once per week. During such a check, the progress of every actor's **Goal** is checked for, events occur based on which Goals progress, and new Factions may arise during times of quiet.

If the campaign is played on a timescale (i.e. dynastic timespans) that is disfavorable to weekly Event Checks, the GM may check for events once per month, season, or year instead. The *minimum time* a Goal can take should be raised to match the increased scale.

Goals

Extended actions or efforts that would take 1 or more Event Check Intervals (by default, 1 week or longer) to complete may be handled as a **Goal** by the GM.

A Goal has a **Progress** score from 1 to 20, and a **label** briefly describing the immediate tangible objective that the actor is working to accomplish. Its initial % value is set based on the expected length of time until the task is completed, as measured in multiples of the Event Check Interval—by default, this is weeks.

For example, a duke seeking to overthrow his rival neighbor through conquest may have *Conquer My Vile Neighbor* 5 as his personal or factional Goal. Measured in the default weekly interval, an initial Progress of 5 suggests he can complete the job in as little as 2 months.

Expected Duration	Duration in Event Check Intervals	Starting Progress
1 week	1	15
2 weeks	2	11
1 month	4	8
2 months	8	5
1 season	12	4
2 seasons	24	2

When to Use Goals Goals are best used for tasks with variable completion time that may generate visible progress in the form of Events along the way.

Very Long Goals Goals that would take longer than 24 intervals to complete must be broken down into smaller piecemeal Goals or else risk excessive drift from schedule.

Minor Interim Tasks While working on a Goal, actors may perform minor tasks in their free time that would not interfere with their progress. For example, a magician working on a magical potion could take his weekends off to go adventuring—but no more than that without ruining his Goal! When in doubt, ask if a Faction's characters has at least a 40-hour workweek dedicated to the task.

Running Event Checks

At every Event Check Interval, the GM rolls 1d20 against the Goal Progress of every character & Faction:

- If the roll is *greater than* the Goal's Progress, nothing happens.
- If the result is *equal to or less than* the Goal Progress, the Goal is said to **tick**—the actor does something dramatic and news-worthy over the next week that moves them further towards achieving their Goal, and then increases their Goal Progress by the amount rolled on the d20.

If anyone's Goal Progress reaches 20 or more, they achieve their Goal sometime during the next week, *completely* and *exactly* as desired. This triggers two additional effects:

- Any Retainer (including Subfactions) under that actor whose interests are *benefited* by their Liege's Goal being achieved *gains* 1 Morale, while any Retainer whose interests are *harmed* by their Liege's Goal being achieved *loses* 1 Morale.
- If the actor is a Faction, they *immediately* develop a new Goal.

Sovereign Factions always choose a self-interested Goal based on their Leaders' agendas, but if the Faction is a Subfaction, it must first Save:

- On a *pass*, the Faction is honorable, and their new Goal must *also* benefit its Liege—PCs may defy this, but lose 1 Honor for doing so.
- On a *failure*, the new Goal is *entirely* self-interested.

News & Rumors

Every single time a Goal ticks, news of the activity reaches the players *somehow*. Doesn't matter if it's distorted into a weird rumor, overheard at a bar, screamed by the town crier, or observed in the form of marching troops; they hear about what's going on. Even if the Goal is secretive, that just means that the Events are esoteric and not easily interpreted or tied back to the Goal being pursued.

New Factions

If an Event Check passes with no Goals ticking, a **new NPC Faction** rises at some point before the next Event Check, either in the form of a competent, Agenda-pursuing Leader seizing control of an otherwise directionless pre-existing Faction (whether sovereign or subordinate to any existing faction, whether under the PCs' Faction(s) or otherwise) or as a new Faction of Population 1d6 + 1 springing up, consisting of a small band of adventurers, entrepreneurs, brigands, magicians, pirates, undead, etc.

Demoralized Factions

A Faction that has all of its desires fulfilled or that is disrupted beyond the point of being able to form Agendas & pursue Goals is no longer handled as a Faction. Contented hobbits do not change the world.

Special Goal Rules

Opposed Goals If an actor starts a Goal in direct opposition to another Goal featuring hostile interference (i.e. two Factions who are *mutually* trying to conquer or sabotage each other, or two lords who are diplomatically competing to marry the same princess), each Faction may perform an *attack check* against their opposition whenever the opposition's Goal ticks; any relevant Traits or other modifiers may be invoked for dis/advantage by either party; each & every single point of Population a Faction has over its target *usually* counts as a separate advantage. If the attack *succeeds*, the Goal makes no progress (& the event that occurs is altered by the nature of this competition).

If the success of one Goal precludes victory in any opposition's Goal, the opposition's Goal fails (as below).

A new Goal in opposition to an ongoing Goal can have a different expected duration. The only law is that the competing Goal's expected duration be accurate to the narrative fiction.

Sabotaging Goals Through Action If an actor (i.e. the party) takes in-game action *outside* of the Goal system to sabotage someone's Goal & achieves a:

- *Minor success*, the victim's Goal Progress is reduced by 1d4.
- *Substantial/significant success*, the victim's Goal Progress is reduced by 1d4 and then afterwards halved, rounded down.
- *Complete denial of the Goal*, the victim's Goal fails.

If continuing with a Goal is no longer a feasible option (generally due to being reduced to an unrealistically low Progress, i.e. 2 or less), a Faction usually starts a new Goal that in some way involves getting revenge upon their assailant.

Secret Goals The players (& other characters) are not aware of a given Faction's true Goal(s) by default. Some Factions may not be working towards what they publicly pretend to be working towards.

Closing Notes

The intro is a lot ruder than I am normally! Even this whole article is titled stupidly. Anyways, I have a beef over sandbox games with poor support for the so-called living world. This is a basic system that can be used to produce a large number of Factions and monitor their activities as they seek to act in the world. A basic Faction in total might look like this:

- **Cathedral of Saint Mary & Her Many Knights:** Population 7, Morale 6.
 - *Destroy the trespassing goblin army:* Progress (of 20): 7
 - **Traits:** Holy Anti-Evil Cathedral Grounds.
- **Goblin Army:** Population 6, Morale 4
 - *Pillage the Barony:* Progress (of 20): 11
 - **Traits:** Siege Ogres, Goblin Mud Magicians

Do you think you could run down a list of 24 of those Factions once per in-game or out-of-game week, roll 1d20 against their score, note the worldly changes, maybe compare to the Faction they're attacking, and move on? It takes like 20 minutes. I compare this to a system like Worlds Without Number, where its factions are built with such complexity I think you'd die as a GM trying to make it work.

We don't care about anything except how much manpower and force the faction can leverage. Money is a proxy for moving people. The Capitol population excludes all non-capitol membership; the Roman Republic would be a Population 18 faction because Rome itself never breached 1,000,000 members. The other so many millions and millions of people are implicit in the existence of the Supporters of Rome. To represent them, create Subfactions.

There are no implicit rules for disloyalty or insubordination. My assumption is that Factions whose Leaders' Morale falls to 2 will not stay subordinate for long, but Leaders are not usually stupid and will likely time a breakaway effort for a politically opportune moment. The system ought to create intrigue, if the most relevant Factions to the players are part of a political system. 🗡️

The Bard

by anon

This class is designed for Lamentations of the Flame Princess, and other OSR style systems.

+1 AB

3 + CHA Mod in Perform skill

1d6 Hit Die

Saves as Specialist

Skills

Perform The bard puts on a masterpiece performance that stirs powerful emotions in those able to enjoy it.

To use *perform*, a masterpiece must be chosen to activate its effects. While the bard is performing, all effects of the chosen masterpiece are applied to non-hostile humanoids that are not deaf and are within earshot. While not in combat, it is assumed the bard is capable of performing his masterpiece without a skill check. A performance lasts until the bard chooses to end it, changes masterpieces, takes damage, or uses another action, such as attacking, making a skill check, picking up an object, going to sleep, etc. While in combat a perform skill check must be passed during the bard's initiative sequence every round if they wish to continue under such stressful circumstances. A character must forfeit their action to begin or continue a performance, excluding movement. The referee is encouraged to use their discretion when deciding if a performance is or isn't interrupted.

Because the performance needs to be loud to be effective, this skill provokes a random encounter roll by the referee once every thirty minutes if in a dangerous area, such as a dungeon, or every 8 hours if traveling. Entities that appear due to this

encounter check, or that the party encounters while the bard is performing, have no chance of being surprised.

Abilities

Throw Voice The bard uses ventriloquism to project their voice behind a target prompting a surprise check against their base surprise chance. If successful, the target's AC is treated as the surprised value until the next time they act or are attacked. This skill will not fool the same enemy twice.

Tumble Once a round, a bard may choose to forfeit their normal round actions, such as using items, performing, or attacking, to execute a dodge maneuver. To accomplish a tumble the actor declares the tumble and then must move five feet in a direction of their choosing. If such a move is not possible, a tumble cannot be declared. A bonus of +2 AC will be applied to the bard from the start of the movement until the next round. A tumble may be declared at any point during a round, even out of initiative sequence, provided the one declaring it has not yet acted. The full movement of the character may still be used during their normal initiative sequence in a round in which they declare a tumble. The bard must be unencumbered to perform a tumble.

Masterpieces

Masterpieces are what separates the bard from your average wandering minstrel. These works were created with such strong vision that, in the hands of a master, they can ease the spirits of weary travelers and bolster an adventurer's strength and resolve. A player bard begins their journey at level 1 having just completed their first masterpiece. To craft a masterpiece, the player must choose a title as well as a number of plot threads to add to it according to their level chart, with each thread being chosen once unless otherwise noted. A masterpiece cannot be revised later, so the choice should be made carefully! The one crafting the masterpiece must spend

a number of days equal to the number of plot threads chosen \times 3d6 days perfecting their opus. Each day spent costs 20 silver (or gold depending on your system) as the creator gives in to their inspired whims. As bards are masters of oral history, masterpieces need not be carried in writing by the bard to be performed, though a written copy of each masterpiece should be kept by the player and referee for reference.

Plot Threads

To the witnesses of a bard's performance, these moments in the story stand out as the most memorable and evocative. A level 1 bard knows one plot thread chosen by the player. Bards are constantly thinking of new story hooks and clever ways to deliver them, as such, players of a bard may choose a free plot thread to learn every level. New plot threads with effects not listed here can be approved at the referee's discretion.

Call to Adventure An inspiring speech at the start of the day leaves a lasting impression on the party. Once during a rest of 8 or more hours, the bard can choose one plot thread from this masterpiece to activate for the next 24 hours, or the next rest, whichever comes first. The boon applied from this thread does not stack with identical boosts from a live performance.

Refusal of the Call Rate of excavation, ship and vehicle repair, and other construction task speed doubled.

The Road of Trials Distance traveled by rowing, walking or marching improved by 20a whole number). In addition, damage incurred by a forced march is reduced to 1d4.

Supernatural Aid If a source of damage would bring an ally to -3 HP, they are brought to -2 HP instead.

Allies and Enemies All NPCs working with the player have their morale improved by +1. Can be chosen twice.

Belly of the Whale Reload rate of siege engines, ship and vehicle weapons improved by 1 round.

Level	Experience Points	Hit Points	Paralyze	Poison	Breath Weapon	Magical Device	Magic	Plot Threads per Masterpiece
1		1d6	14	16	15	14	14	1
2	1750	+1d6	14	16	15	14	14	2
3	3500	+1d6	14	16	15	14	14	2
4	7000	+1d6	14	16	15	14	14	3
5	14000	+1d6	11	12	14	13	12	3
6	28000	+1d6	11	12	14	13	12	3
7	56000	+1d6	11	12	14	13	12	4
8	112000	+1d6	11	12	14	13	12	4
9	224000	+1d6	9	10	12	11	10	4
10	336000	+2*	9	10	12	11	10	4
11	448000	+2*	9	10	12	11	10	5
12	560000	+2*	9	10	12	11	10	5
13	672000	+2*	7	8	10	9	8	5
14	784000	+2*	7	8	10	9	8	5
15	896000	+2*	7	8	10	9	8	5
16	+112000/level	+2*/level	6	7	9	8	7	6

The Ultimate Boon Improves one ability modifier, chosen when the masterpiece is written, by +1.

Rescue from Without Improves all savings throws by +1. Can be chosen twice.

Death When an ally successfully strikes an enemy, they may roll 1d4 and add that value to their damage roll. If they do, they must subtract that same value from their melee and ranged AC until their next initiative sequence.

Rebirth When an ally's health is recovered by magical means, they may roll 1d4 and add that value to their health. If they do, they must subtract that same value from their Attack Bonus for one hour.

Master of the Two Worlds Gain +1 to a skill check. Skill must be chosen when the masterpiece is written. This plot thread can be included multiple times, once for each separate skill chosen up to the masterpiece's limit.

Voice from Beyond Throw Voice can be used without interrupting the performance.

Revelry of the Dying Black humor and dark beer help to ease the group's dread and allows them to rest easy. Everyone that listens to the bard's performance during a rest of 8 hours or more recovers health as if they had rested all day in a comfortable bed instead of the normal rate. 🍷

Invasive

by jipowap

In my roving of gardening information I have found a great swelling of discontent on the label of certain plants as "invasive". This label is applied to things that are foreign to the locale, dangerous, quick spreading, destructive to manmade terrain, or simply unsightly. Just one of those. This means many native and important plants enter gardening books and home gardening web pages as something to be exterminated.

Granted there are plants that fit the narrower definition that should see removal, a great bulk now fill niches that were barren, or under utilized. How many times I have seen a dry hillside fill with dandelions, clover, sorrel and english plantain! Of Europe, one and all, but nothing native would venture the desertlike glacial silt baking in the sun. How often a person will find a steep slope littered with Hungarian lilacs or Chinese day lilies. The disturbed soils of the world are now churned and settled by legion of Japanese knotweed and Mississippian honeylocusts, much to the frustration of man. Oriental false bittersweet has hybridized with its American cousin, and much like the fern you can see a gradient of hybrids between their preferred environments.

The myth of alien species universally overcrowding natives was seemingly born of an allegory between white man and red native, and has been scientifically proven to the opposite in many a study. Where foreign plants have naturalized or gone feral has seen a positive boost in biodiversity and native plant numbers.

Where this applies to /tg/ would be in one's worldbuilding. Say you have separate realms that come together, space or magic it matters not. Biodiversity shall increase. Flora

will multiply. It is rare that things are one sided in this regard. Only larger animals buck this trend and not tolerate niche sharing. Case in point, North and South American connecting, leading to the extinction of most megafauna or the South. 🦖



Lilacs and Day by jipowap

The Golden Shore I Must Reach

by Albatrossus

A hall of passions. A unification of systems. A war waged at every scale. Warriors, poets, priests and a king reigning justly or otherwise. I do not want to do a game of Warhammer halfheartedly. I do not want to pursue it merely to its fullest. If it ought be done at all, it best be done well. I need *PLVS VLTRA*.

In a distant time of greater leisure, perhaps retirement at the rate this economy goes, I wish to own a lodge of sorts. Let me draw you a mental diagram: A kitchen, meager and practical, near the entrance and perhaps split by the entrance hall. Central to all a greater hall, filled with strong tables of various heights. Smaller halls and cloisters beside, for private affairs. At the point furthest from the entrance the great-room descends to basement level. An amphitheater, for finales or performances. The rest of the basement being for storage and backstage. What attic space there is is entirely devoted to 3D printing in a climate controlled environment. The layout is so.

As for material, it is a purpose built building and not a rental. A community center made for an age. Thusly: No false ceiling, nor vinyl siding. It must be brick or stone and filled with the kind of wood that a Home Depot has never known. The hall flooring is preferably a hardwood, transitioning to a high grade of cement in the theater. Generally I wish to avoid any material that speaks of cheapness or indus-

trial production, and so the kitchen counters must be stone or metal. No popup tables. The setting is so.

All of that to set the stage for the “long” campaign. The walls are a mottling of dry erase, corkboard, and projectors. One space for listed armies and nominal strengths. One map for the sector, fleet movements and forces. One to three maps for planetary campaigns. One map for whichever city is the primary point of conflict. Preferably I’d like every level of conflict to be playable, at once, and affect the outcome of each other, say:

The outcome of a combat patrol determining the terrain and objectives of a 2k regular match. The regular match turning the outcome of an Epic battle. In orbit a Boarding Action/Space Hulk decides a ship loss in a BFG game, and so results in which side of the planetary forces get reinforcements and orbital strikes. All together it could play out as so:

The Sable Swords battlebarge Unyielding Harvest just failed to repel the boarding action of WAAAGH Greyskull. The battlebarge thus loses its main engines and could not advance during its BFG turn. The Astartes forces were routed and retreated to system’s edge awaiting reinforcements, allowing WAAAGH Greyskull air supremacy and uncontested troop landing. On the inhabited world Yuria 4 all Imperial forces must beat a hasty retreat to the hive spires as anything outside the void shields becomes flat from the Rocks impacting the surface.

Had the Unyielding Harvest been successful in its defense the space fight may have been a draw or better, resulting in contested airspace. A much smaller force of orks would have landed on only one side of Yuria 4, and battles could contain them far outside the cities. Being outside the hives gives better odds for the defenders, more easily fielding tanks and massed infantry. Less combat patrols, far more Epic and Apocalypse matches.

This is the reflexive narrative I wish to see. A web of potential outcomes far outstripping any predictive mapping by its sheer shades of outcomes and volume of choices. I want conclaves of players to form grand strategies just as their Chapter Masters and Archons would, and perhaps attempt to spy upon these meetings of others for tidbits to subvert. Much as Eve Online, with its nulsec corporate sagas, I want things to get ‘real’ to a degree.

I want war in the macro, the micro, the maximum, the mininum, the massive and the midget. What’s more I want it in detail and “lore accurate”. Perhaps a d100 system would give the necessary granularity. Hexing the board and infantry placement would reduce the vagueness of movement and line of sight. 3D printing would forego any price complaints about fielding hoard armies as proper hoards. A battalion of IG defending a pivotal void shield generator really should be a whole thousand or so models. Massed fire of a thousand flashlights should be a blast template at that point. I want WAR, not a corporate streamlined “FAQ if we feel like it” fomo charade.

Perhaps I would commission at the end, if money were not an issue, something akin to the Sistine Chapel’s mural. Let me paint a mental image of what such could be: The Emperor resplendent on his throne in the central, one hand

holding his flaming sword pointed South and one hand raised in golden aura toward his loyal sons. Inverted, the traitor primarchs bare their signature weapons toward him. Central to them is Horus, poised for battle, but his eyes closed and his face downturned. To the East, a myriad of xenos, Votann included, headed by the many handed Tau goddess. To the West, Necron lords holding gods in tesseracts in their palms, commanded by the Silent King. To the North, Aeldarii split into for factions; West as Commoragh Archons with Asrubel, East as aspect shrines with Asurmen, North of Exodites & Harlequins with two faceless leaders dancing, South for the Ynnari with Yvraine positioned near to Guilliman. Surrounded this would be a ring of Orks divvied by clans, and surrounding them would be a ring of Tyranids of all manner of hive fleet, a Hive Tyrant and Ghazgul facing each other. Very expensive.

So would be my monument to our ‘future to come’. A temple to the only worldly king worthy of fealty, the Emperor of Mankind. The sword to the churches’ crown, after a fashion. A secular anchor of “what is necessary” contrasting the Bible’s “what is just”. A sign I shall hang from the entrance, the tagline, motto, a warning.

Our greatest fear should not be of failure, but of succeeding at something that doesn’t really matter.

—D.L. Moody

Something something, the duality of man, &cetera. 🖱



Trog by anon

