

2ND EDITION

FANTASY AGE

CORE RULEBOOK



STEVE KENSON, CHRIS PRAMAS,
MALCOLM SHEPPARD, AND OWEN K.C. STEPHENS



Leap into sword & sorcery RPG adventures with the *Fantasy AGE Core Rulebook*! Powered by the popular Adventure Game Engine, *Fantasy AGE* 2nd Edition is easy to learn, fun to play, and welcoming to new roleplayers. The *Fantasy AGE Core Rulebook* includes these features:

- **SIMPLE CHARACTER CREATION:** Pick an ancestry (such as draak, dwarf, goblin, or wildfolk), pick a class (envoy, mage, rogue, or warrior), pick a specialization (such as duelist, diplomat, pirate, and sword mage), and jump into the action.
- **HEROIC STUNTS:** The heart of the game is the stunt system, which brings dynamism and drama to the table. Roll doubles on 3d6 to pull off unexpected moves in combat, cast more potent spells, perform amazing feats of physical and mental prowess, or even cut a rival down to size with a few clever words.
- **MIGHTY MAGIC:** Spell casters learn arcana, which are themed groups of spells. Mixing and matching the 19 arcana gives the mage class a huge amount of flexibility. To get started, choose two arcana like Beast, Cold, Death, Earth, Fate, Fire, Healing, Protection, Mind, and Shadow.
- **GAME MASTER GUIDANCE:** If you are new to RPGs or have never GMed before, the *Core Rulebook* breaks it all down for you. Not just GM advice but practicalities as well. There's guidance for each of the GM's four roles: Game Planner, Game Host, Game Runner, and Game Moderator.
- **CUSTOMIZABLE RULES:** The GM can use optional rules for the campaign to better reflect the setting. Choices include the twin systems of **Peril** and **Daring**, which allow for dramatic swings from disadvantage to advantage as the tension builds. **Horror** rules can give the campaign a sinister turn. The **Fortune** system turns Health into a combination of resilience and luck that can influence outcomes.
- **THE STRANGER SHORES:** The *Core Rulebook* introduces a campaign setting of its own called **Stranger Shores**. Brave the Deeps, which have been the doom of many a ship. Sail with a Mystic Navigator to travel to distant lands.
- **BREAKWATER BAY:** Enter the Stranger Shores with **Breakwater Bay**, a starting adventure area to kick off your campaign. The book includes *Set Sail for Breakwater Bay*, a complete adventure.
- **SO MUCH MORE:** You'll also find character talents, challenging monsters, chase rules, magic items, relationships and bonds, and more. This is the complete package.

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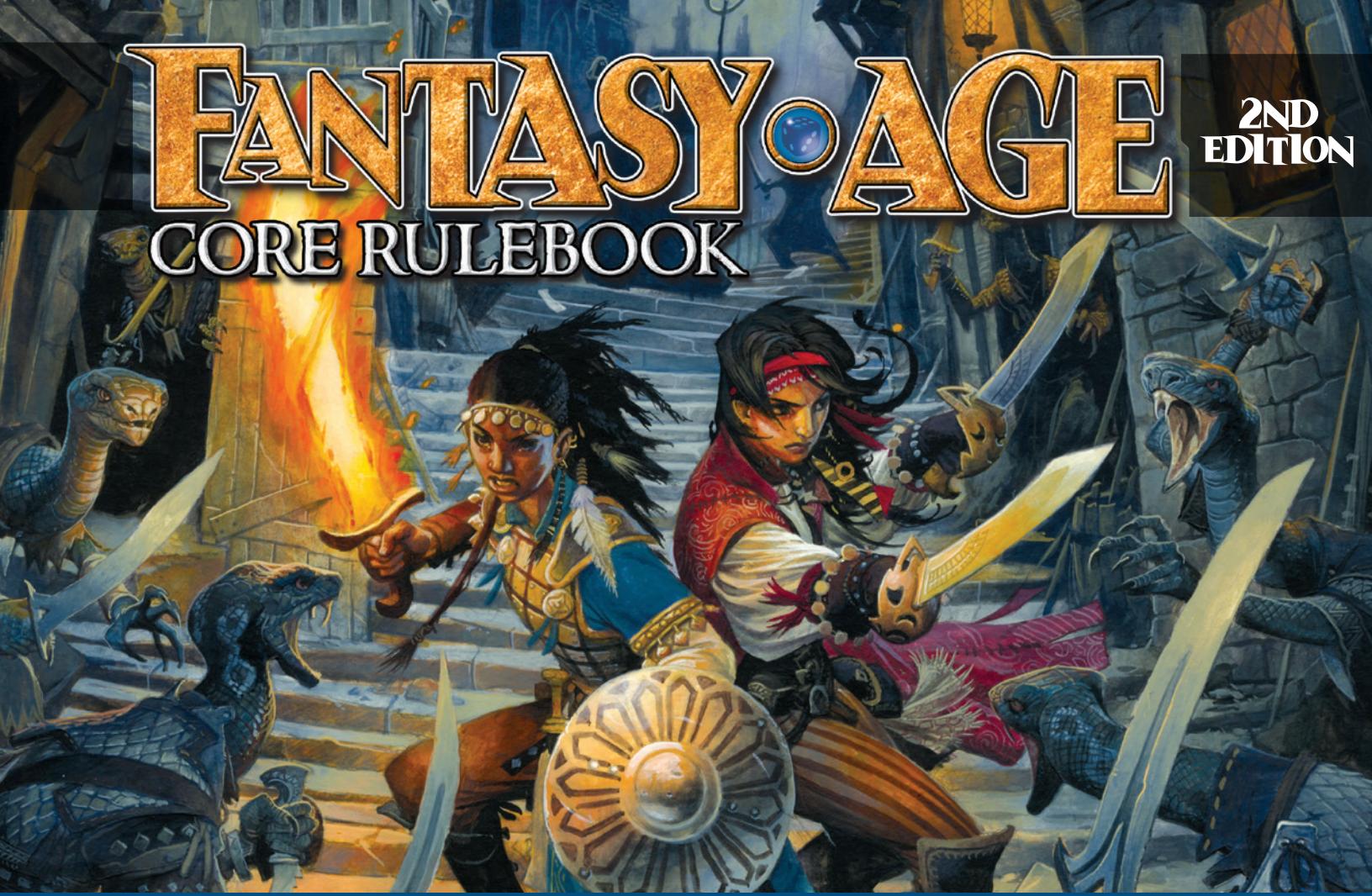


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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CREDITS.....	1	Attack Rolls & circumstance ..	52	Unarmed Style.....	81	Beast Arcana.....	119
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	2	Conditions	53	Weapon and Shield Style.....	81	Cold Arcana	121
FOREWORD	3	Common Conditions	54	Weapon Training.....	81	Death Arcana	123
INTRODUCTION.....	4	Defeat and Death	56	Wildfolk Secrets.....	81	Divination Arcana	125
PLAYER'S SECTION		Attacking Objects.....	57	SPECIALIZATIONS	82	Earth Arcana	127
1: CHARACTER CREATION		Combat Stunts	57	Arcane Disciple	82	Enchantment Arcana	128
MAKING A CHARACTER		SPECIAL SITUATIONS		Arcane Scholar.....	82	Fate Arcana.....	130
IN 9 EASY STEPS		IN COMBAT.....	58	Aristocrat	83	Fire Arcana	131
CHARACTER CONCEPT		Grenades	58	Aspect Warrior	83	Healing Arcana.....	133
ABILITIES.....		Miniatures, Battle Maps, and		Assassin.....	84	Heroic Arcana.....	134
Determining Abilities.....		Virtual tabletops	59	Bard	84	Illusion Arcana	135
Ability Focuses.....		Vehicles, Mounts, & Combat ..	61	Berserker	84	Lightning Arcana.....	137
ANCESTRY		Flying Combatants	61	Champion	85	Mind Arcana	138
Ancestry Benefits.....		Minor Actions	62	Crime Lord	85	Power Arcana	140
Draak		Major Actions	62	Diplomat	86	Protection Arcana	142
Dwarf		Healing and Recovering	62	Duelist	86	Shadow Arcana	143
Elf		EXPLORATION ENCOUNTERS.....	64	Elementalist	86	Water Arcana	144
Gnome		Investigations	64	Gladiator	87	Wood Arcana	146
Goblin		SOCIAL ENCOUNTERS.....	66	Guardian	87	MINOR ARCANA	148
Halfling		Impressions and Attitudes	66	Heritage Specializations	88	Learning Minor Arcana	148
Human		Interactions	67	Holy Warrior	90	Casting Minor Arcana	148
Orc		3: CHARACTER OPTIONS	69	Hunter	90	Sample Minor Arcana.....	148
Wildfolk		ABILITY FOCUSES	69	Knight	90	6: STUNTS.....	149
BACKGROUNDS.....		Double Focuses	71	Mage Hunter	91	GENERATING	
Social Class Descriptions		Optional: Trade Focuses	71	Mariner and Pirate	91	STUNT POINTS	149
Background Descriptions		TALENTS.....	72	Marked	92	Spending Stunt Points	149
CLASSES		Stacking Talent Benefits	72	Miracle Worker	93	Narrating Stunts	150
Class Descriptions		Talent Entry Format	72	Mystic Navigator	93	GENERAL	
Gaining Levels		Talent Name	72	Necromancer	94	STUNT SYSTEMS.....	151
Level Advancement		Alchemical Explosives	72	Razor	94	Stunt Duration	151
Envoy		Animal Training	73	Sharpshooter	95	Other Stunt Considerations	151
Mage		Arcane Training	73	Skald	95	BASIC STUNTS	152
Rogue		Archery Style	73	Spy	96	CLASS STUNTS	155
Warrior		Armor Training	73	Sword Mage	96	Envoy Stunts	155
EQUIPMENT		Carousing	74	4: EQUIPMENT	97	Mage Stunts	156
Starting Wealth		Chirurgy	74	CURRENCY	97	Rogue Stunts	157
DEFENSE AND SPEED		Command	74	WEAPONS	97	Warrior Stunts	158
NAMES		Contacts	74	ARMOR & SHIELDS	101	GAME MASTER'S SECTION	
GOALS AND TIES		Draak Secrets	74	GRENADES	103	7: THE GAME MASTER	160
Goals		Dual Weapon Style	74	TRAVELING & ADVENTURING	103	GAME PLANNER	160
Ties		Dwarven Secrets	75	CARRYING & STORAGE	105	GAME HOST	166
2: BASIC RULES		Elven Secrets	75	TOOLS	106	GAME RUNNER	169
THE BASICS OF PLAY		Firearms Style	75	CLOTHES & FASHION	108	GAME MODERATOR	175
Your Character Sheet and Other Essentials		Gnome Secrets	75	TRADE GOODS & RAW MATERIALS	109	PERSONAL CHALLENGES	175
Playing Adventures		Goblin Secrets	76	PROFESSIONAL GEAR	110	Rewards	175
Acting in Character		Great Endurance	76	HOME & HEARTH	110	Challenges and Consent	176
THE CORE SYSTEM: ABILITY TESTS		Halfling Secrets	76	FOOD & LODGING	111	Challenges in Play	176
Types of Targets		Horsemanship	76	BEASTS, TACK, & HARNESS	112	RELATIONSHIPS	176
Modifying Dice Rolls		Human Secrets	76	5: MAGIC	113	Relationship Ranks	176
Tests and Time		Inspire	76	ARCANA &		Relationship Bond	177
Degrees of Success		Intrigue	77	SPELL TALENTS	113	Relationship Intensity	178
Types of Tests		Linguistics	77	Arcana Focuses	114	Relationship Stunt Points	178
MEASURING TIME		Lore	77	LEARNING SPELLS	114	Unusual Relationships	178
Working with Time		Mighty Thews	78	Learning New Spells	114	Changing Relationships	178
ACTION TIME		Mixed Weapon Style	78	MAGIC POINTS	114	8: MASTERING THE RULES	179
Actions		Mounted Combat Style	78	CASTING SPELLS	114	INVOKING THE RULES	179
Major Actions		Observation	78	Spellcasting in Detail	115	MASTERING ABILITY TESTS	180
Minor Actions		Oratory	78	Spellpower	115	Complex Tests	181
Variable Actions		Orc Secrets	79	SPELL STUNTS	116	Cooperation	183
COMBAT		Performance	79	Divine Magic	116	Using the Rules Together	184
Movement		Pole Weapon Style	79	Divine Disciples	116	SPECIAL SITUATIONS	
Making Attacks		Quick Reflexes	79	Divine Stunts	116	IN COMBAT	185
Inflicting Damage		Scouting	79	Crisis of Faith	117	Major and Minor NPCs	185
Using Defense		Single Weapon Style	80	SPELL FORMAT	118	Extras	185
Using Cover		Thievery	80	ARCANA & SPELLS	118		
		Thrown Weapon Style	80	Air Arcana	118		
		Two-Hander Style	80				

FOREWORD

Welcome to *Fantasy AGE* 2nd Edition! If you are new to the game, this Core Rulebook and three 6-sided dice are all you need to get started. With *Fantasy AGE*, you and your friends can embark on exciting roleplaying adventures on a myriad of worlds. From the beginning, *Fantasy AGE* was designed to be a flexible game that you could use with the setting of your choice, be it from your favorite novels, a published campaign setting, or a world of your own design. Green Ronin does offer settings and adventure material, like Breakwater Bay in this book and *Freeport: The City of Adventure*, but you and your friends can take your campaign anywhere you want to go.

The story of *Fantasy AGE* begins in 2008 with our licensed *Dragon Age* RPG. When we made that deal with BioWare, I thought it was a great opportunity to show video gamers the coolness of tabletop RPGs. With that in mind, I designed a new system that I hoped would be easy to learn and fun to play. We dubbed it the Adventure Game Engine (or AGE for short). *Dragon Age* was a big hit for Green Ronin and it didn't take long for folks to ask us if we were planning any more AGE RPGs. In particular, people wanted a more general fantasy game that wasn't tied to the world of Thedas. We released the *Fantasy AGE Basic Rulebook* in 2015 and that also proved a successful line for us. From there we developed a whole series of AGE games, modifying and adding to the system to better represent different genres and properties. Now, it's become our house system, powering *The Expanse*, *Blue Rose*, *Modern AGE*, *Cthulhu Awakens*, and *Fifth Season* RPGs.

When we started working on the *Fantasy AGE Core Rulebook*, our plan was to make more of a revised rulebook than a new edition. Combine the *Basic Rulebook* and the *Fantasy AGE Companion*, add some new material, and polish it up. Easy, right? Well, no. It was more reminiscent of Hercules trying to defeat the Lernaean Hydra. Cut off one head and two more grow in its place! Last year it became clear that the *Core Rulebook* was more than a revised edition so we officially dubbed it 2nd Edition. We haven't changed the core system (you can, for example, use NPC and monster stats blocks from 1st Edition books without difficulty), but we've expanded the game, added many new options, and tightened up the rules.

The last 15 years have been quite a journey for me, the AGE system, and Green Ronin. I hope the hard work of the creative team translates to fun times on your game table. I'd like to thank everyone who worked to make *Fantasy AGE 2nd Edition* a reality, with particular thanks to Malcolm Sheppard, Steve Kenson, Owen K.C. Stephens, and Ian Lemke for their design and development work. Now the game is yours. Have at it!

Chris Pramas
March, 2023

Surprise	186	Fortune and Damage.....	198	Ogre.....	222	The Town and Its People	248
Morale.....	186	Fortune and Luck	199	Selkie	223	Places of Note	250
CHASES	186	Recovering Fortune.....	199	Serpentfolk	224	EXPLORING KASSA ISLE	252
Chase Tests	186	Fortune and NPCs.....	199	Spectre.....	225	Places of Note	252
Tracking the Chase.....	187	9: ADVERSARIES	200	Walking Corpses	226	BEYOND THE ISLE.....	256
Relative Speed	187	STATISTICS FORMAT	200	CUSTOMIZING CREATURES.....	226	The Companions.....	256
Complications.....	187	BEEFING UP ADVERSARIES	201	10: REWARDS.....	229	The Trade Ports	256
Planning a Chase	187	Other NPCs	202	LEVEL ADVANCEMENT.....	229	Inmyrk	257
Chase Stunts.....	188	Zeroes.....	202	Level Rewards.....	229	TALES FROM THE DRIFIWOOD.....	258
Crashes	188	Major NPCs, Minor NPCs, and Extras	202	Experience Points	230	SET SAIL FOR BREAKWATER BAY!	259
Collisions.....	189	FOLK	202	REPUTATION	232	INTRODUCTION.....	259
HAZARDS	190	BEASTS	207	Honorifics	232	ADVENTURE SUMMARY.....	259
Horror.....	191	MONSTERS.....	212	TREASURE	234	PLAYERS' INTRODUCTION.....	261
The Horror Test	191	Boneless One.....	212	MAGIC ITEMS.....	234	Scene 1: We're Going Away to Leave You Now	261
Horror Test Results	192	Burrower	213	Rarity of Magic Items	234	Scene 2: Uninvited Guests ...	264
Lost to Horror	193	Demon, Soldier.....	214	Magic Item Benefits	234	Scene 3: Blow the Man Down	266
Peril.....	194	Dragon.....	214	Using Magic Items	236	Scene 4: Sugar in the Hold ...	269
The Peril Pool.....	194	Deepdread	214	Temporary Magic Items.....	236	Conclusion	272
Activating Peril	194	Elementals	216	Permanent Magic Items.....	238	ALLIES & ADVERSARIES.....	273
Designing Your Own Effects	195	Ghoul	218	ARTIFACTS	240	GLOSSARY	275
Picking & Describing Effects	195	Giant	218	Locked Artifacts	240	INDEX	277
The Story within the Peril	195	Giant Spider	218	Tiered Artifacts	241	PERIL & DARING TRACKERS	283
Daring.....	196	Gnarlwalker	220	Artifact Powers	241	INITIATIVE AND QUICK REFERENCE CARDS	284
The Daring Pool	196	Griffon	221	Cursed Artifacts	244	CHARACTER SHEET	286
Tracking Daring with Dice....	196	Knifehound	221	Sample Artifacts	246		
Active Dice and Using the Daring Pool	197	Manticore	222				
Fortune.....	198	Medusa	222				
Fortune Advancements.....	198						



INTRODUCTION

Welcome to *Fantasy AGE*, a roleplaying game that lets you be the hero in your own sword & sorcery adventures. In *Fantasy AGE* you and your friends take on the personas of warriors, mages, councilors, and rogues in a fantastical world and try to gain fame by overcoming sinister foes and deadly challenges. Facing down a murderous ogre in ancient cursed ruins, engaging in a duel of wits with a haughty noble, or uncovering the secrets of lost civilizations are all possible. Your character may win renown or you may die alone in the trackless wilderness. Whatever your fate, your story is your own to tell. In *Fantasy AGE*, you make the choices and try to survive the consequences.

WHAT IS A ROLEPLAYING GAME?

Fantasy AGE is what's known as a tabletop roleplaying game (RPG), so named because you usually play while sitting around a table with your friends (though it's also possible to play online with a virtual tabletop or just using your preferred voice chat option). The action is similar to computer role-playing games. You will play a character who goes on exciting and dangerous adventures in a fantasy world. The difference is that you do it all with your imagination instead of a computer deciding what you can attempt and how those efforts turn out.

One person takes the role of Game Master (GM). The GM presents the story and acts as a referee. Those remaining are the players. Each player makes a character and roleplays them in the ensuing adventures. This relationship should not be adversarial, the GM and players work together to create an enjoyable experience for everyone. If you don't grasp how this works, don't worry. Keep reading, and by the time you finish the introduction, you should understand the basics of tabletop roleplaying and the *Fantasy AGE* RPG.

GETTING STARTED

The first thing you need is a group of friends to play with, and one of you must take on the role of Game Master, or GM. While you can play with as small a group as one GM and one player, the game works best with one GM and three to five players. It is possible to play with more players, but that can slow down the pace of the game.

The GM has a key position, so try to make sure that he or she really wants the job. Running a game is fun, but it's a different experience than playing. The second half of this book (starting with **CHAPTER 7: THE GAME MASTER**), explains the GM's role in detail. The GM (and only the GM) should read that part of the book. If you are a player, you should only read the first half of the book (Chapters 1–6).

Once you've settled on a GM, everyone else needs to make characters, known as PCs or Player Characters. In *Fantasy AGE*, your character has the potential to become a great hero, but begins as just another hungry adventurer scrabbling for glory. You do not get to start play as a renowned knight or master mage. Those are positions that must be earned, and that's what playing the game is all about.

WHAT'S DIFFERENT IN FANTASY AGE 2ND EDITION?

Experienced *Fantasy AGE* players and GMs will be wondering what is different between 1st Edition (the *Basic Rulebook* and its supplements) and 2nd edition. There are many small changes throughout, but here are the notable ones.

- In 1st edition, you could play a mage, rogue, or warrior. Now you have a fourth option, the envoy, whose expertise is social situations and group dynamics.
- Player Characters can now take their first Specialization at level 1 instead of level 4.
- Class advancement has been revised to allow Defense improvements and increased damage output as characters gain levels.
- New ancestry talents and heritage specializations let you further define your character's origins.
- The game now includes conditions, such as Fatigued and Stunned, that standardize certain rules effects. Some of these are called Defeat Conditions. Now, when a character or creature drops to 0 Health, the victor can choose what happens to their opponent. They can be knocked unconscious, captured, rendered helpless, etc., so not every fight is lethal.
- Each class now has its own stunt list, and you gain these stunts individually as you go up in level. Basic stunts are those anyone can use.
- Mages can now "push" a spell on a failed spellcasting test to successfully cast it anyway, and only lose half their Magic Points should they opt to have the spell fizzle out regardless.
- In talents and specializations, the Journeyman degree is now called Expert, so the three degrees are Novice, Expert, and Master.
- Rules subsystems we developed for other AGE games have been revised for *Fantasy AGE* and offered as options. You can use the Fortune system from *The Expanse* instead of Health, for example. The Churn from *The Expanse* is offered as Daring here, and it's complemented by a new Peril system. There are also optional horror rules.
- The following talents and specializations have been renamed: Alchemy is now Alchemical Explosives, Arcane Dabbler is now Arcane Disciple, and Totem Warrior is now Aspect Warrior.
- The Drinking focus is now Tolerance. Slings was added as a focus because it's also a new weapon group.

Your character is your primary responsibility as a player in an RPG. This is your alter ego in the fantasy world where your adventures takes place. Over the course of many game sessions, your character grows and changes, but every hero needs a starting point. That is exactly what **CHAPTER 1: CHARACTER CREATION** provides, walking you through creating not only game stats—the abilities and corresponding numbers that tell you what your character is good at—but also a character concept, starting goals, and ties to other Player Characters. Once play begins, the portrayal and development of your character is all up to you. Playing your character, achieving goals, and navigating the perils of a fantasy world—this is the fun of playing an RPG.

PLAYING YOUR CHARACTER

Here are some basics on playing tabletop roleplaying games.

"WHAT DO YOU DO?"

When playing an RPG, that's the question you must ask yourself all the time. The Game Master will describes a situation, framing a scene for one or more of the Player Characters. It is then up to you to decide what your character does and why. You tell the GM what you want to do, as do the other players, and then you all work out what happens. Sometimes, you use dice to resolve actions. Other times, you simply interact with the other players and the characters portrayed by the GM, which are known as Non-Player Characters, or NPCs.

"WHO ARE YOU?"

This is the question to keep in mind when making decisions. When you create your character, you decide on some traits and goals as a starting point. You can then flesh out your PC, and there are two basic approaches to this. The first is to paint your character in a few broad strokes and then jump right in to playing. The intention here is to come up with details about your character during play, often by using the springboard of the current adventure to create touchstones to your character's past. This is a common storytelling technique and a perfectly valid approach if you don't want to spend a lot of time working on your character before starting play. The second approach is to come up with a lot of details and role-playing ideas before the first session. If you can come to the table with a good idea of who your character is before the first die is rolled, that can help get the game going.

However you approach your character, playing the game helps you refine your ideas. After you have played your character for a while, you should have a strong sense of personality and an intuitive sense of what your character would do in a particular situation. Of course, not all situations present easy choices. It is from difficult choices that tension and drama emerge.

ADVENTURE, CAMPAIGN, AND SETTING

An adventure is a discrete story and scenario in an RPG. You can think of it as a single novel or an episode of a TV show.

There may be several plot threads, but in the end it tells one story. The difference between a roleplaying adventure and a book or show is that you have authorship. The decisions made by you and your fellow players drive the story to its exciting conclusion.

A campaign is a series of interlinked adventures. If an adventure is a novel or TV show, a campaign is a series or a season. Some adventures may have self-contained plots, while others merge together to tell a larger story. During a campaign, the characters of the adventuring group earn experience points and gain levels. Over time they gain more powers and abilities, face greater challenges, and perhaps gain renown for their deeds. A full *Fantasy AGE* campaign will take characters from levels 1 through 20, and provide hundreds of hours of game-play and entertainment.

The game takes place in a fantasy world, though which one is up to your group. There are many worlds to choose from, or you can have the fun of making up your own. Since the world is where your campaign takes place, it is known in RPG parlance as a “campaign setting” or just setting for short. The GM can find out more about them in **CHAPTER 11: The Campaign Setting**.

EXAMPLE OF PLAY

What follows is an example of play with four characters. This should give you an idea of what a game of *Fantasy AGE* is like. You’ll note various points where the example refers to dice rolling and its results. You don’t need to worry about the particulars of that right now. Just follow along with the action and see how the GM uses the rolls to test the skill of the characters.

In this example Malcolm is the Game Master (GM). Kate is playing an elf Rogue named Najah, Nicole is playing a human Warrior named Brigitte, Troy is playing a draak Envoy named Hraz, and Chris is playing a gnome Mage named Varuker.

MALCOLM (GM): You’ve been traveling for several hours under the hot midday sun. The road passes through a small forest and for a few minutes at least you find some respite in the shade the trees provide. As you emerge on the other side of the forest, you see a caravan up ahead. It is not moving, but neither has it set up camp.

KATE (ROGUE): Do I see any guards around the caravan?

MALCOLM (GM): Make a Perception (Seeing) test and tell me your result.

KATE (ROGUE): [Rolls dice] I got a 13.

MALCOLM (GM): Good roll. Your eyes quickly adjust to the sunlight and you scan the caravan. You see many carts and wagons but no people. The only things moving are the draft animals and they seem restless.

NICOLE (WARRIOR): This doesn’t look good. I want to take a closer look.

MALCOLM (GM): Just you, or are you all going?

TROY (ENVOY): Let’s all go. If this is a trap, better to be together than separated.

KATE (ROGUE): Why don’t you three go straight up the road and I’ll swing around the right side and approach from there. I’ll try to move quietly, crouched down with my bow out.

NICOLE (WARRIOR): My two-handed axe is at the ready and I’m heading straight up the road.

CHRIS (MAGE): I stay behind the warrior and keep an eye on the woods as we advance. We don’t need any surprises from that direction.

TROY (ENVOY): And I stay behind the mage, and keep an eye out behind us.

MALCOLM (GM): You approach the caravan and no threats emerge. When you get close, you see the bodies. There are at least six corpses spread out around the carts. They look like a group of draak and dwarves.

NICOLE (WARRIOR): That seems strange.

TROY (ENVOY): Not really. Stories of draak and dwarves being at odds are greatly overstated. They often work together to buy and sell all over.

KATE (ROGUE): How did they die? Do I see any arrows sticking from the corpses?

CHRIS (MAGE): Or signs of fire or other magic attacks?

MALCOLM (GM): You can try to figure that out with a Perception (Seeing) test or an Intelligence (Healing) test.

CHRIS (MAGE): I have Healing, so I’ll try that... but with my famously bad luck I got a total of 9. Not a great roll.

KATE (ROGUE): I’m better at Perception so I’ll stick with that. [Rolls dice] Ha, I got a 15 this time.

MALCOLM (GM): You approach one of the corpses and look it over. The wounds were not made by weapons. The way the clothing and armor are torn, you’d guess claws. Big claws.

CHRIS (MAGE): Do the corpses smell?

MALCOLM (GM): Now that you are closer, yes, they do. The hot sun makes it worse by the minute, too.

TROY (ENVOY): So they’ve been dead for a while, which probably means the attack ended some time ago.

CHRIS (MAGE): I don’t see any creatures with claws in the area, so I’m going to move into the caravan and search for survivors.

NICOLE (WARRIOR): I’m going to climb on the one of the carts and use the vantage point to keep an eye on things.

MALCOLM (GM): Roll a Perception (Searching) test, Chris.

CHRIS (MAGE): [Rolls dice] I got a 9. Not a great roll.

MALCOLM (GM): No, not great. You find more bodies but no survivors.

NICOLE (WARRIOR): Maybe some of the merchants ran away. If I watched my friends get torn open like that, I might hoof it.

KATE (ROGUE): You could be right. I’ll look for tracks. That’s a Perception (Tracking) roll, right?

MALCOLM (GM): That’s correct.

KATE (ROGUE): I rolled an 11.

MALCOLM (GM): The tracks are confusing around the caravan. You can see many sets of prints, some dwarf and some from larger bipeds.

TROY (ENVOY): Bipeds with large claws. I don't like the sound of that.

MALCOLM (GM): You do find one set of dwarf prints leaving the scene though. Whoever it was seems to have been wounded, as there are drops of blood every few feet. The trail leads off the road and back toward the forest.

CHRIS (MAGE): Let's follow it.

KATE (ROGUE): Agreed. I will lead the way.

MALCOLM (GM): You follow the trail back into the woods. Maybe 30 feet from the edge you find a dwarf under a fallen log. He looks unconscious and wounded, but alive.

CHRIS (MAGE): No time to mess around. I approach the dwarf and cast my Healing Touch spell. I'm using 2 magic points.

MALCOLM (GM): Make your casting roll. As I recall, Heal has a Target Number of 10.

CHRIS (MAGE): It does indeed. [Rolls dice] And I got a 12. [Rolls dice again] He gets back 7 Health from the spell.

MALCOLM (GM): You touch the prone dwarf and the healing magic spreads from your hands. He's lost a lot of blood but the spell revitalizes him and he wakes up with a start.

TROY (ENVOY): I move up to stand by our mage, and say "Easy, friend. You're safe now."

MALCOLM (GM): The dwarf relaxes a bit and regards the four of you. "Thank you for helping me. Where are the rest of my kin? Or our guards?"

KATE (ROGUE): You are the only one we've found alive I'm afraid.

NICOLE (WARRIOR): Can you tell us what happened?

MALCOLM (GM): "It was the damn caravan master," says the dwarf. "He thought we could save time if we pulled up camp in the middle of the night. I argued with him but he wouldn't listen. I was worried when we passed into those woods but thought we were all right once we made it through. Then they came at us from the shadows – big brutes with claws as big as my head. After I saw three of the guards go down, I made a run for it. One of them caught me in the shoulder with a claw but I kept running. I made it to the woods and hid. After some time the screams and sounds of battle faded, then I passed out. Next thing I saw was you."

NICOLE (WARRIOR): The size makes me think ogres but that doesn't seem quite right.

CHRIS (MAGE): No, it doesn't. Ogres are not stealthy and they usually attack with weapons, not claws.

TROY (ENVOY): Monstrous bears, perhaps? But they wouldn't normally leave bipedal tracks. We've got a mystery on our hands.

KATE (ROGUE): As usual! So much for a sunny day of easy travel.

THE GROUP DYNAMIC

Much of this book is focused on teaching you the rules and how to make a character. It is important to remember that roleplaying is a group activity. There are two aspects to this: the adventuring group and the player group.

Your character is one member of the adventuring group (also known as a party). Each character in the group has individual goals, but there are also larger group goals. The characters may have their disagreements and even feuds, but for the game to go on they must remain together. The adventures themselves often assure this by their plot and structure, but a good group dynamic can help. This can start during character creation when everyone is settling on what they want to play. It's a smart idea, for example, to make sure you have at least one character of each class in the group. When working out ties and goals amongst the PCs, you can build in reasons for the characters to adventure together.

The people gaming with you make up the player group and that too has a dynamic. You and your friends are going to be spending a lot of time together, so you want a group of people who fundamentally get along. Roleplaying is meant to be fun for everyone, so be aware of tension around the table. Some players try to make the game all about them, hogging the spotlight and trying to insert themselves in every scene. Don't act that way; everyone deserves a chance to shine, so be ready to take a step back when someone has a good idea or is pursuing something important for their character.

If a game session didn't go well for some reason, talk about it afterwards. It won't do any good if everyone goes home to stew. Try to figure out where things went wrong and see if you can come up with solutions, so it doesn't happen again.

A common problem is a player who is unhappy with their character. Maybe the character doesn't fit into the group well, or maybe the player finds another class preferable after some play experience. This doesn't have to be a problem. It's perfectly fine for a player to make a new character of the same level and retire the old character. It is preferable to do that than to make a player continue to play a character they aren't having fun with.

BASIC GAME CONCEPTS

Before you delve into the rest of the book, here's a brief overview of the basic concepts of the game. You'll learn more about all of these things as you read on.

CHARACTERS

In the Fantasy AGE RPG you make a character who may be very much like you, or could be extremely different. In the creation process, you make choices that help define who and what that character is. You can play a human, or someone with a very different ancestry, such as such as draak, dwarf, elf, gnome, goblin, halfling, orc, or wildfolk. Your other most important choice is to pick one of four classes: Envoy, Mage, Rogue, or Warrior. The nine easy steps for creating a character are detailed on page 10, in **CHAPTER 1: CHARACTER CREATION**.

THE ADVENTURE GAME ENGINE

Fantasy AGE's rules system is known as the Adventure Game Engine (or AGE). It was originally designed for the *Dragon Age* RPG, also by Green Ronin Publishing. The AGE System now includes the multi-genre Modern AGE roleplaying game, *Blue Rose: The AGE Roleplaying Game of Romantic Fantasy*, the Mythos horror RPG *Cthulhu Awakens*, *The Expanse* roleplaying game, based on the novels by James S. A. Corey, and the *Fifth Season* RPG, based on the novels by N.K. Jemisin. If you learn *Fantasy AGE*, you can easily learn other AGE games, and even transfer rules and character options between them.



Your class defines the core of your character and determines the powers at your command. Your character begins at level 1 as an inexperienced adventurer. By surviving encounters and overcoming challenges, your PC gains experience points and rises in level. Your character may eventually make it to level 20 and become one of the mightiest heroes of the campaign setting. It won't be easy, though.

ABILITIES

Your character has nine abilities, such as Intelligence and Strength, and each one has a numeric rating, with 1 being average. When your character wants to do something, the GM may call for an ability test. This is a dice roll to determine success or failure, and it's the most common roll in the game. To make an ability test, you simply roll three six-sided dice (3d6), add the results together, and add the appropriate ability. This generates a test result, which you want to be as high as possible.

TEST RESULT = 3D6 + ABILITY

You may have to apply other bonuses or penalties, most commonly ability focuses that represent areas of special expertise. Once you determine your test result, the GM will let you know if it's a success or a failure and what happens.

Your character also has a Health rating. When damage is inflicted, this reduces Health. If it reaches 0, your character may die.

STUNTS

In an encounter, your character can perform stunts. When doubles are rolled on a successful attack roll or ability test, this generates "stunt points." You can then use these points to pull off a number of special maneuvers or actions. Stunts are common enough to help keep combat dynamic and fun. There are also exploration stunts, which impact groups traveling (especially through the unknown, ruins, or wilderness); social stunts, which come into play when interacting primarily through conversation and discussion; and spell stunts, which let Mages enhance their spells. Many stunts are available to any character, while other stunts are available for characters to select from their character class as they gain levels.

GAME DICE

Fantasy AGE only uses one type of dice: the six-sided die, also known as the d6. This is the most common die and it can be found in many classic boardgames if you need to scrounge for some. In general, dice are rolled four different ways in *Fantasy AGE*:

- **1d3:** Sometimes you need to generate a number from 1–3. In that case you roll a d6 but halve the result, so a roll of 1–2 = 1, a roll of 3–4 = 2, and a roll of 5–6 = 3.
- **1d6:** You roll a single die and simply read the result. Sometimes there is a modifier attached, such as "1d6 + 3." In that case, just add the modifier to the die roll. If you rolled a 2, for example, you'd add the modifier of 3 to get a result of 5.
- **2d6:** As above, but you roll two dice and add them together. If you rolled a 3 and a 6, for example, your result would be 9.
- **3d6:** As above, but you roll three dice and add them together. If you are making an ability test, you must ensure that two of the dice are one color and the third a different color. That third die is known as the Stunt Die, and it's important. The result of the Stunt Die can determine your level of success and allow you to perform stunts.

WHERE NEXT?

If you are a player, CHAPTERS 1–6 are for you. They provide the key information you need to know about the game. When you are ready to make a character, go to CHAPTER 1: CHARACTER CREATION. That will explain the process and get you going. If you are the Game Master, you should familiarize yourself with these chapters as well, as they contain the core rules of the game. You should then move on to CHAPTERS 7–12. They explain your unique and important role in a tabletop RPG and give you valuable advice and resources.

You are now ready to enter the world of *Fantasy AGE*. Game on and may fate protect you!

ADVENTURE AWAITS!

DRAAK

Standing five to seven feet tall, with builds ranging from slender and sinuous to broad-backed magnificence (it isn't uncommon to meet individuals weighing 500 pounds), draak are humanoid dragons. Like their kin, they bear snouted heads, piercing eyes, and scales the color of fire, liquid gold, polished onyx, or any other color ever seen on a dragon's hide.

Confidant and forceful, draak make excellent Warriors and Mages, especially since, unlike their larger kin, they're commonly driven by wanderlust and ambition. Outsiders sometimes call the draak "drakes" along with a host of other smaller dragon-like creatures, but draak view the term with anything from irritation to amusement. Nevertheless, the "corsair drakes" who raid the seas just beyond the docks of Breakwater Bay and Freeport represent a classic draak enterprise, combining a thirst for adventure with a draconic love of wealth.

There are almost as many stories about the origins of the draak as there are draak themselves—they love to tell epic creation myths that foreshadow the historical and prophesied glories of their people. In all the stories, draak are mighty Warriors

and workers of magic, and these claims, at least, are no exaggeration: when they pursue the arts of war and sorcery they often unlock legendary might. Between tales of the draak and their known aptitudes, it is no surprise communities variously revere or fear them. A draak might defend another peoples' settlement for a human lifetime, or might be known as a danger across generations, immortalized in epic tragedies.

DRAAK NAMES

FEMININE NAMES: Azzoria, Ellanaraz, Kolra, Nothka, Taneen, Sharlarrak, Ulrua

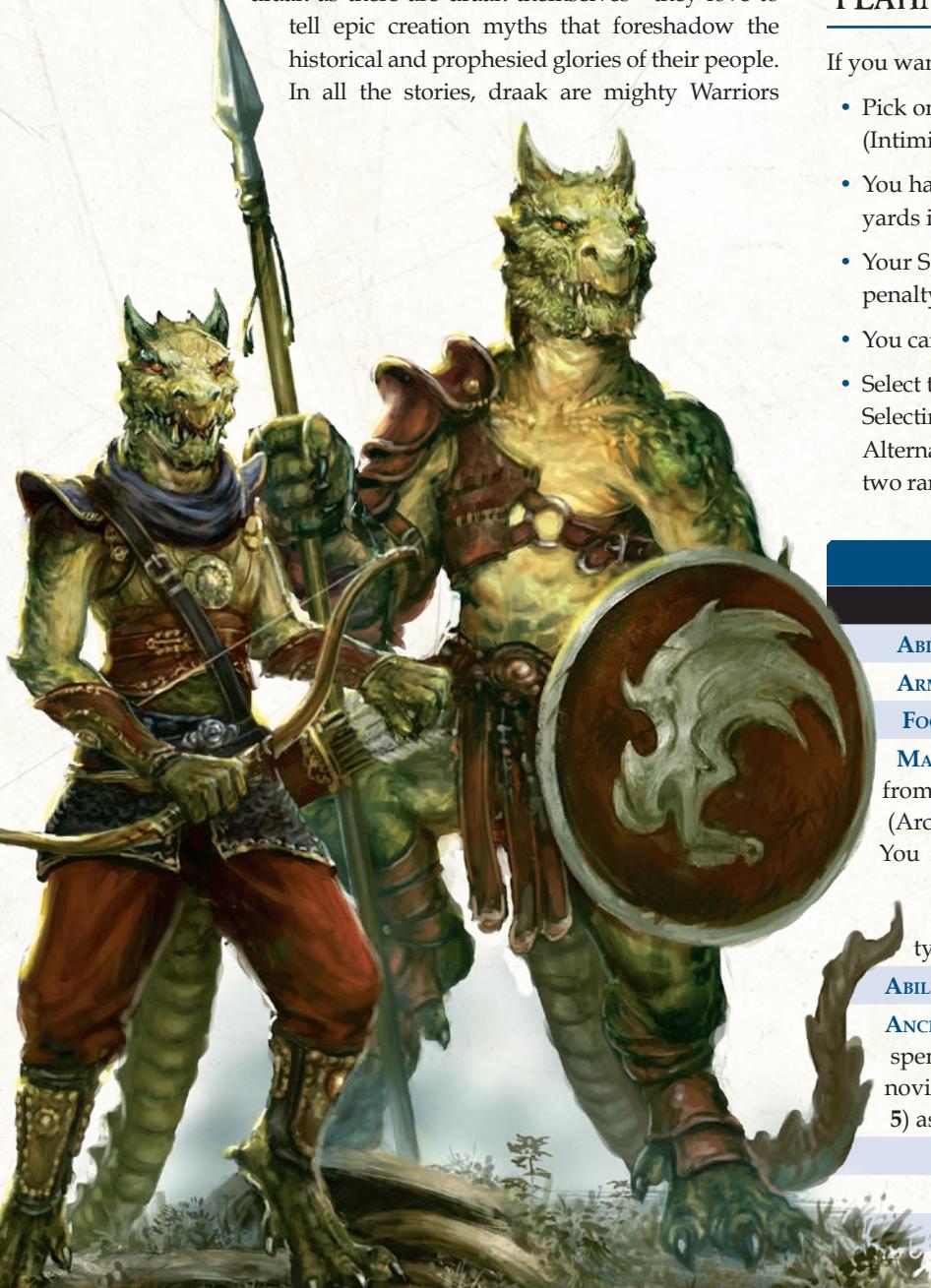
MASCULINE NAMES: Braal, Charrax, Flagrath, Garkath, Morgarro, Rastilak, Zarrian

FAMILY NAMES: Brightflame, Darktide, Lightningscorch, Frostfire, Stonescale, Whirlingdeath

PLAYING A DRAAK

If you want to play a draak, modify your character as follows:

- Pick one of the following ability focuses: Strength (Intimidation) or Willpower (Self-Discipline).
- You have Dark Sight, which allows you to see up to 20 yards in darkness without a light source.
- Your Speed is equal to $10 + \text{Dexterity}$ (minus armor penalty if applicable).
- You can speak and read Draak and the Common Tongue.
- Select two additional benefits from the **Draak** table. Selecting an ability increase counts as both your benefits. Alternatively, the GM may allow you to roll twice to gain two random benefits (roll 2d6 and add them together).



DRAAK		
BENEFIT	2D6	
ABILITY BONUS: +1 Constitution	2	
ARMORED: Your Armor Rating is increased by 2	3-4	
FOCUS: Constitution (Stamina)	5	
MAGICAL RESISTANCE: Choose one ability focus from among Constitution (Stamina), Intelligence (Arcane Lore), or Willpower (Self-Discipline). You may make tests using this ability + focus instead of the usual test to resist or reduce the effects of a spell. Once you choose the type of test, it cannot be changed later.	6	
ABILITY BONUS: +1 Intelligence	7-8	
ANCESTRY STUNT — FLAME BREATH: You may spend 4 stunt points to immediately cast the novice Fire Arcana spell <i>flame blast</i> (see CHAPTER 5) as a free action.	9	
FOCUS: Intelligence (Research)	10	
ABILITY BONUS: +1 Willpower	11	
ABILITY BONUS: +1 Strength	12	

DWARF

Most stories about the origins of dwarves are associated with stone, metal, and the deep places of the world. They say dwarves were carved from the stones of the mountains and hills by the gods, or sprang from great crystal caves or geodes in the depths, or were forged upon a divine anvil, providing their great endurance and kinship with metalwork.

Dwarves are known for their skill at arms and their talent as miners and builders. They call the hills, mountains, and underground cities home, but many dwarves are wanderers or merchants, responsible for bringing both trade and news back to their holdfasts. Dwarven enclaves are also common in many cities not built or controlled by dwarves.

Descendants of other ancestries often view dwarves as courageous and stalwart at best, or greedy and taciturn at worst. While not xenophobic, many dwarven settlements have a culture that can be gruff and exclusionary toward non-dwarves. However, once a dwarf considers someone a friend, they are loyal and kind forever after. Similarly, a dwarf who's been betrayed has a long memory, and will bear that grudge for centuries.

It's common for dwarves to be organized into clans of varying sizes, which are connected by a web of alliances to and rivalries with numerous other groups. Among these clans, the amount of responsibility an individual dwarf holds depends entirely on their standing. A young, but trustworthy dwarf could hold significantly more power than an older, more experienced family member who's proven unreliable.

Not as small as halflings, nor as tall as humans, adult dwarves range in height from four to five feet, but are generally stocky and solidly built. Dwarves are famous for their beards, which they can grow long and thick, and may be worn plaited, braided, in tails, or any number of other styles. Dwarves live two or three times as long as humans and remain vital and strong until the see their deathbeds.

DWARF NAMES

FEMININE NAMES: Ailine, Dara, Kalin, Klara, Mora, Telka, Ulma

MASCULINE NAMES: Bodag, Crag, Doffin, Hador, Gurt, Throrik, Warrik

CLAN NAMES: Bronzeblade, Highcliff, Ironshield, Rockhammer, Steelhelm, Stonebones

PLAYING A DWARF

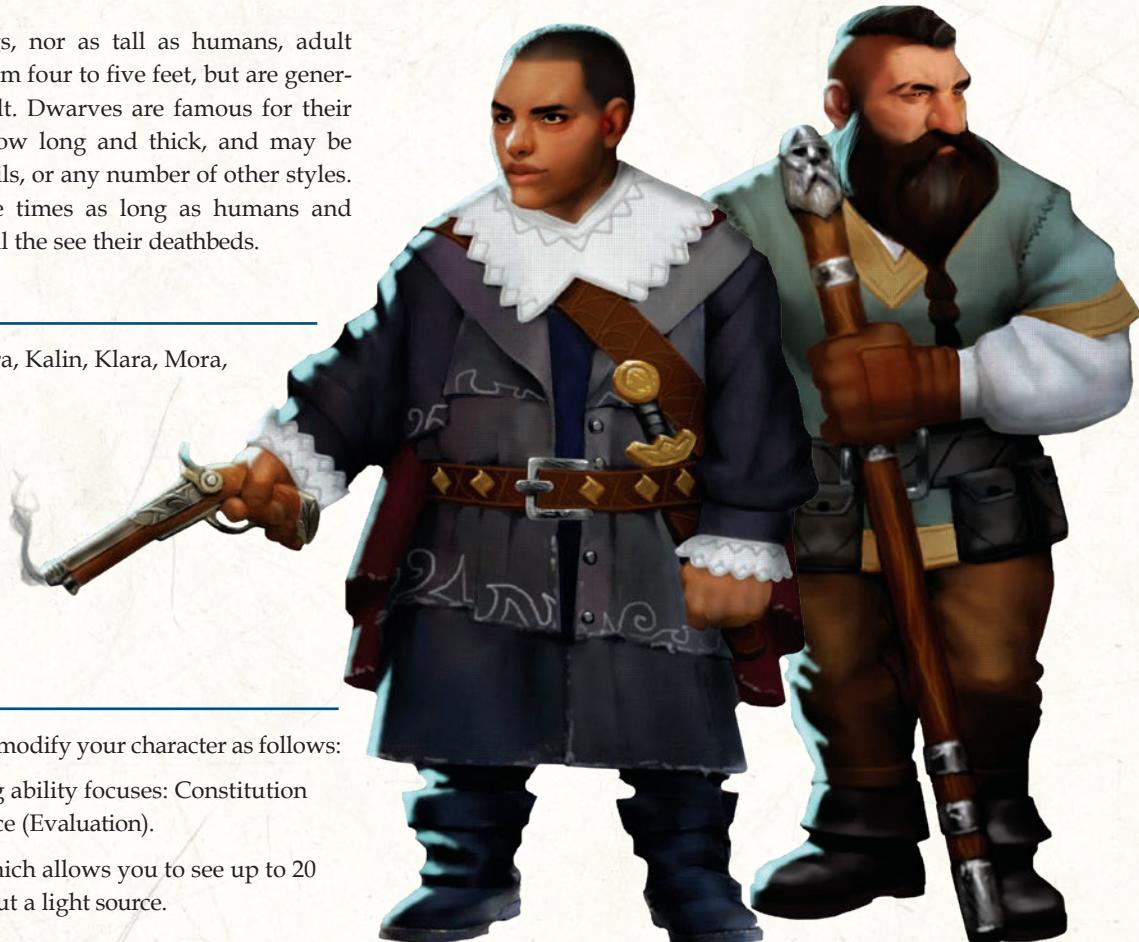
If you want to play a dwarf, modify your character as follows:

- Pick one of the following ability focuses: Constitution (Tolerance) or Intelligence (Evaluation).
- You have Dark Sight, which allows you to see up to 20 yards in darkness without a light source.

- Your Speed is equal to 8 + Dexterity (minus armor penalty if applicable).
- You can speak and read Dwarven and the Common Tongue.
- Select two additional benefits from the **Dwarf** table. Selecting an ability increase counts as both benefits. Alternatively, the GM may allow you to roll twice to gain two random benefits (roll 2d6 and add them together).

DWARF	
BENEFIT	2D6
ABILITY BONUS: +1 Willpower	2
FOCUS: Intelligence (Historical Lore)	3-4
STOUT: Your Speed is not reduced by armor penalties.	5
WEAPON GROUP: Axes*	6
ABILITY BONUS: +1 Fighting	7-8
FOCUS: Strength (Smithing)	9
FOCUS: Intelligence (Engineering)	10
ABILITY BONUS: +1 Constitution	11
ABILITY BONUS: +1 Strength	12

* If the class you choose provides this already, you can take the focus Fighting (Axes) instead.



ENVOY

An Envoy is a master of social situations, building or exploiting relationships and group interactions. The classic Envoy is an agent of a ruling court or council who both carries out the orders of their superiors and works to increase their own influence and rank. You can also use the Envoy to represent anyone who is primarily concerned with deals, diplomacy, leading, or deceiving others, from a noble captain of the guard to a scoundrel with a heart of gold or even a con artist.

As an Envoy, you aren't the best fighter in combat, and don't have the stealth and subterfuge a Rogue uses to pick off foes

from the shadows. You can still hold your own in a fight, especially if you can find weaker-willed targets to cow or bamboozle,



but the Envoy is much more in their element in social encounters. If you are playing an Envoy, you should expect to do a lot of the talking with patrons, friendly rivals, suspicious officials, and tight-fisted merchants.

PRIMARY ABILITIES: Communication, Fighting, Intelligence, and Willpower

SECONDARY ABILITIES: Accuracy, Constitution, Dexterity, Perception, and Strength

STARTING HEALTH: $25 + \text{Constitution} + 1d6$

WEAPON GROUPS: Any three of the following: Black Powder, Bludgeons, Bows, Brawling, Light Blades, Slings, or Spears

CLASS POWERS

Envoy's gain the following powers at the specified level.

LEVEL I

COORDINATE

You create opportunities for your allies. Whenever you generate stunt points from rolling doubles, you gain 1 SP that you can give to another character. Alternatively, you can give 2 of your SP from the Stunt Attack action (see

CHAPTER 2) to an ally. If you roll doubles on a Stunt Attack action, you gain +1 SP and can transfer 3 SP to an ally. Your ally must use the SP granted at the next available opportunity (their next turn in action time) or they lose them.

DAZZLE

Whether it is through charming patter, a dour glare, cutting remarks, or the performance of tricks and art, you can dazzle a foe, leaving them unable to concentrate on attacking you. As a minor action select one foe, who can hear you, to dazzle. If your Communication is greater than their Willpower, you gain a +1 bonus to Defense against their attacks until the beginning of your next turn.

SOCIAL CHAMELEON

You have two social classes, and two backgrounds. Determine your first social class and background normally. For your second social class and background, you may select any different social class and then select any background appropriate to that social class. You select a focus for each background, as normal (thus gaining one additional focus).

Select one social class and background that represent the circumstances you found yourself in as a child. The other represents a second society you successfully integrated yourself into, gaining a new social class and background by the time you were a young adult. For example, you may have been born into the life of a criminal but fought your way up to be seen as a dilettante. Or you might have been raised as a guilder but spent enough time with soldiers to be able to move comfortably among them.

When using backgrounds to determine starting wealth, use the higher of your two backgrounds.

SPECIALIZATION

You may pick one specialization allowed by your class (see **CHAPTER 3: CHARACTER OPTIONS**) and gain the Novice degree of its specialization talent. For this specialization, you do not need to meet any requirements listed other than allowed class. Specializations help you customize your character and give them a theme. The specializations available to Envoys are:

Arcane Disciple, Aristocrat, Bard, Champion, Crime Lord, Diplomat, Heritage (Divine, Fey, or Infernal), Knight, Mariner/Pirate, Marked, Mystic Navigator, Spy, Skald.

STARTING TALENTS

You become a Novice in two of the following talents: Animal Training, Carousing, Command, Contacts, Inspire, Intrigue, Linguistics, Lore, Oratory, Performance.

EVEN-NUMBERED LEVELS

At levels 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 14, 16, 18, and 20 you gain the following:

ABILITIES

You gain one ability advancement, which you must spend on a primary ability.

ADVANCEMENTS

You gain one stunt advancement and one talent advancement. At levels 6, 12, and 18, your stunt advancement can be to select a class stunt from another class (see **Class Stunts** in **CHAPTER 6: STUNTS**).

FOCUS

You gain one ability focus, chosen from your primary abilities.

ODD-NUMBERED LEVELS

At levels 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13, 15, 17, and 19 you gain the following:

ABILITIES

You gain one ability advancement, which you must spend on a secondary ability.

ADVANCEMENTS

You gain one specialization talent advancement.

FOCUS

You gain one ability focus, chosen from your secondary abilities.

LEVELS 4, 8, AND 12

NEW FOCUS

You learn a new focus of your choice.

LEVEL 4

DOUBLETALK

You are an expert in manipulating the direction of social interactions to your favor. Once during a social encounter,

you can attempt to direct the flow of events to your favor. This allows you to perform a basic social stunt for 2 SP less than usual, to a minimum cost of 0. You may choose to do this after making a check that generates SP, or when taking any other action. Unlike most reductions of stunt costs, if you lower the cost to 0 or less, you can perform the stunt even if you do not generate stunt points. You cannot use this ability during combat or exploration encounters, as the events are too chaotic to be subject to your subtle manipulations.

LEVEL 6

ADVANCEMENT

You gain one Defense advancement (+1 Defense).

DAMAGE BONUS

You may add your weapon focus (if you have one) when inflicting damage with a melee or ranged attack.

LEVEL 8

STUNNING REPARTEE

You can daze or distract opponents with carefully chosen and timed words that affect targets capable of understanding you. To use this power, take a major action and defeat the target in an opposed Communication (Deception or Persuasion) test versus their Willpower (Self-Discipline) roll. If you succeed, your target can only take a single minor action on their next turn (see the **Stunned** condition in **CHAPTER 2**).

LEVEL 11

ADVANCEMENT

You gain one Defense advancement (+1 Defense).

DAZZLE BONUS

Your bonus to Defense from Dazzle is now +2 rather than +1.

FOCUS BONUS

Your focuses now provide a +3 bonus instead of +2.

LEVEL 16

ADVANCEMENT

You gain one Defense advancement (+1 Defense).

STUNT DIE TO DAMAGE

You may add the value of the Stunt Die of your attack test when inflicting damage against a creature with a Willpower lower than your Communications.

LEVEL 20

EPIC ENVOY

Pick one type of stunt (combat, exploration, or social). You gain a +1 stunt point bonus when generating stunt points of that type.



6: STUNTS

Now that you know all the basic rules for playing the game, you can explore encounters and use the dice to help determine their outcomes. You're all set to brawl with enemies, solve mysteries, and sway hearts and minds. This chapter introduces a way to make those encounters more exciting and dynamic, called **stunts**. With stunts, a hero can win an argument or defeat a foe with style. You can perform maneuvers to give yourself or your teammates extra advantages to accomplish feats more complex than the basic rules cover. Most NPCs can also use stunts, so the GM can mix things up and make challenges more fun.

While **CHAPTER 2: BASIC RULES** covered combat stunts, you can use them in all forms of encounters. This chapter contains a full listing of the stunts you'll use in the game, with two exceptions. First, chase stunts, found in **CHAPTER 8: MASTERING THE RULES** along with the rules for chases, should be provided by the GM whenever relevant. Second, creature stunts, which are tailored to particular entities and can be found in their relevant game statistics.

GENERATING STUNT POINTS

To use stunts, you must generate stunt points (SP), which you can spend to pull off stunts of varying potency. You generate stunt points in the following ways:

- **Doubles:** When you're successful on an ability test and you roll doubles on any two of the dice (rolling the same

number on all three dice has no extra benefit) you generate a number of SP equal to the value shown on the Stunt Die.

- **STUNT ATTACK:** The Stunt Attack action (see **CHAPTER 2**) generates 2 SP on a success whether you roll doubles or not but does not cause damage or have other effects. If you roll doubles, you get these 2 SP or the number on the Stunt Die, whichever is higher.

Some optional rules, such as Relationships in Chapter 7, provide other ways to generate stunt points.

When the test is a simple test, as described in **CHAPTER 2**, it cannot generate stunt points with doubles, and it can't have stunt points spent to enhance its results. The test either achieves its base result or not, with no further complications. All tests prompted by stunt descriptions are simple tests as well, so a stunt that requires a roll cannot itself generate stunt points.

SPENDING STUNT POINTS

You can buy one or more stunts with a total cost equal to or less than your available SP. The stunts activate immediately, according to the rules listed for each individual stunt. Some of the rules for spending stunt points were covered in **CHAPTER 2**, but we'll restate, clarify, and expand them as follows.

KNOW THE STUNT

If your character doesn't have access to the stunt, you can't spend SP on it. Your character has access to stunts from the following sources.

TRUST YOURSELF

This chapter goes over the rules for stunts in a great deal of detail to clarify anything that might seem ambiguous at first glance. This isn't because stunts are complicated, but so simple in execution you may suspect something's missing. In practice, simply spending SP and following the stunt's description works in the vast majority of cases.

BASIC STUNTS

All characters and creatures can use basic stunts. Basic stunts exist for combat, exploration, and social actions.

ADVANCED STUNTS

At each even-numbered level you can gain an advanced stunt (see **CHAPTER 1: CHARACTER CREATION** for details). The most common advanced stunts are class stunts, available only to members of their character class. Class stunts are superior to basic stunts; they give members of each class distinct actions they can perform. In some campaigns there may also be other forms of advanced stunts available.

SITUATIONAL STUNTS

Spell stunts and chase stunts are examples of situational stunts, which apply to a narrower group of actions than most other stunts. Spell stunts can only be used while casting spells, and chase stunts can only be used by participants in a chase using the rules in **CHAPTER 8**. Some creatures in **CHAPTER 9: ADVERSARIES** have unique stunts reflecting their extraordinary abilities. Other situational stunts may come up in play as well, often tied to specific locations. For example, the GM might create a stunt to reflect swinging from place to place using vines, or ship's rigging, if these are nearby.

USE SP OR LOSE THEM

You must spend all the stunt points you gain from doubles and the Stunt Attack action immediately. Any unused SP are lost. SP from other sources, such as the Envoy's coordinate ability, can be spent on your first turn after gaining them, but after you have had a chance to buy stunts with them, the remainder vanish as well.

THE STUNT MUST FIT THE ACTION

Some stunts, such as spell stunts, are strictly linked to certain actions and situations. If a stunt has this characteristic it will either be noted in its stunt list or have brackets such as (Spells) to indicate such restrictions. Many stunts don't have these but are narrow in scope. For instance, you can't spend SP on Mighty Blow after a social action without a good explanation of how. The Game Master is the final judge of a stunt's restrictions.

THE STUNTS MUST TELL A STORY

Your stunts must represent actions and events in the game world—in other words, they must tell part of the story. For

instance, you'd be hard-pressed to use Sabotage to represent a life-or-death wrestling match. On the other hand, using stunts creatively is part of the fun and the GM should allow inventive justifications for particular stunts.

YOU CAN'T TAKE THE SAME STUNT TWICE

You can spend SP on multiple stunts, combining them to enhance a single action, but you can't spend SP on exactly the same stunt more than once. Some stunts have variable SP costs, and don't count as more than one stunt when you spend more SP for enhanced effects.

NARRATING STUNTS

Once you've decided which stunts to perform, narrate how your character did it. If your character performed multiple stunts at the same time, describe them all as part of or resulting from the action that generated the SP. For instance, if you make an attack, then perform the Skirmish and Knock Prone stunts, you might say, "I slide down the banister to kick him squarely in the chest, sending him flying across the room. He slams into the wall and lands in a heap."

STUNTS IN THE STORY: AN EXAMPLE

A baron hires the Rogue, Najah, to stop a local secret society from trying to oust him as their liege. Disguised as a wandering tinker, she infiltrates a meeting of the group at a local tavern, but she still doesn't know who, among those assembled, is the agitator behind the movement. The GM asks Najah's player to make a Communication (Investigation) test to try to figure it out as she talks to those present and observes their body language.

The GM secretly sets the target number for this test at 13. Najah has Communication 2 and possesses the Investigation focus. She rolls 4, 4, and 3, with the 3 being the Stunt Die result. Her total is thus 15, which exceeds the target number. The GM confirms that Najah was successful. Since doubles were rolled, the test generates stunt points equal to the Stunt Die result of 3.

Since this is out of action time, combat stunts are inappropriate. Najah can use social stunts, exploration stunts, or one of the Rogue stunts she knows, though many Rogue stunts don't necessarily apply to the task at hand. No matter the stunt she picks, she must explain how it works in the story, though the GM should be ready to provide suggestions if asked.

She considers using the Pay Attention basic social stunt to try to learn something else about the members of the secret society or the place where they are meeting, while also on the lookout for the ringleader. However, she needs to get back to the baron without being followed. Unfortunately, she's 1 SP short of Cover Your Tracks, which would be ideal.

In the end she spends 1 SP on the Impress basic social stunt targeting the person she convinced to let her into the meeting to make her subsequent actions easier, gaining a +1 bonus to her next social test directed at that individual, and 2 SP on the Wariness basic exploration stunt, providing +2 to rolls to avoid the negative consequences of her actions, such as shaking the tail of a suspicious rebel.

halved because the smoke makes it hard to see where to go. They could also leap from the window of their room but the distance and the fire on the lower floors makes this another major hazard that inflicts 4d6 penetrating damage. A successful TN 11 Dexterity (Acrobatics) test halves the damage. Do the PCs dash through the inn, potentially taking damage over several rounds but enjoying the protection of their armor, or do they make the jump to freedom and hope the penetrating damage isn't too bad?

THE RUSHING RIVER

A PC must swim across a rushing river to deliver a vital message. The river is swift and there are rocks beneath the surface that make the crossing more perilous. They must make an advanced test with a Success Threshold of 7 (see **Advanced Tests**). Each round the character must take a TN 13 Constitution (Swimming) test. If they succeed, the result of the Stunt Die counts toward the Success Threshold. If they fail, they take 2d6 damage from the rocks and/or inhaled water. They keep making tests until they make it across or are reduced to 0 Health.

OPTIONAL

HORROR

In some campaigns, fear and reality-distorting forces are as dangerous as physical wounds, if not more so. In Freeport, the pernicious influence of the Yellow Sign and the entities it represents start by breaking victims' perception of reality. Those who witness such terrors see afterimages of them, devise strange rituals to comfort themselves, or retreat into alternative realities of the mind. Mundane disturbances can also affect a character's relationship with reality. Grisly scenes, pursuit by slavering monsters—these can have persistent effects as well. All of these are sources of horror.

In game terms, horror is a type of hazard that affects the psyche more than the body. Horror causes fear or confusion, followed by the possibility of gaining **distortions**, depending on how well the character resists the shock of a horrific experience.

THE HORROR TEST

When the Game Master decides a horrific event has occurred, they call for a horror test for all who witness it. A horror test is a Willpower test, with both the focus used and the result of success or failure, depending on the nature of the horror—whether it's Unnatural, Revelatory, Threatening, or Vile. A given source of horror usually fits into more than one category, but the GM should still pick one that cleaves closest to the horror's nature, even if only by a hair's breadth.

A horror test's TN is based on the intensity of the situation as measured by the **Horror Tests** table or decided upon by the GM. However, the GM can always decide whether something calls for a horror test or not, even if it appears here as an example of a horrific event, to properly fit the mood of the campaign.

HORROR PARAMETERS

The horror rules in this section not only model the stresses of encountering bizarre creatures and phenomena, but the possible fallout from less exotic stresses, such as combat and disgusting environments. As GM, you must decide which phenomena triggers the horror rules, and which don't. For example, in a campaign where heroes take on the cults of unspeakable beings with swords in hand, you may rule that combat and scenes of carnage don't trigger these rules, but that foul beings from strange spheres and the reality twisting rites of certain mystics do.

The easiest way to customize this is to decide certain types of horrors from the four defined here—the Unnatural, the Revelatory, the Threatening, and the Vile—don't invoke these rules. In the example campaign above, where only the supernatural provokes horror, the Threatening and the Vile don't have any of the effects listed in this section, beyond ordinary fear and revulsion.

HORROR TESTS

TN	INTENSITY	EXAMPLE
9	Startling	Blood pooled around where a corpse was. (<i>Vile</i>)
11	Unnerving	The creaking walls appear to say, "Get Out." (<i>Unnatural</i>)
13	Disturbing	Having killed your companion, enemies now outnumber you 2 to 1 (<i>Threatening</i>)
15	Arduous	A shapeshifter has been impersonating someone you love (<i>Revelatory</i>)
17	Harrowing	Trapped in a chamber full of mutilated corpses (<i>Vile</i>)
19	Mind-Cracking	The archdemon that ends the world arrives (<i>Unnatural</i>)
21	Annihilating	Looking into Void, the Master of the Yellow Sign looks back (<i>Revelatory</i>)

THE UNNATURAL

WILLPOWER (COURAGE)

Disturbing supernatural phenomena such as dark magic and entities empowered by it.

HORROR TEST FAILURE: Confused

THE REVELATORY

WILLPOWER (FAITH)

Disturbing insights about oneself, one's society, the supernatural, or the nature of the cosmos itself.

HORROR TEST FAILURE: Confused

THE THREATENING

WILLPOWER (MORALE)

Situations that make characters feel powerless and in danger, such as disease, disaster, and overpowering enemies.

HORROR TEST FAILURE: Frightened

THE VILE

WILLPOWER (SELF-DISCIPLINE)

Scenes that evoke disgust or fear primarily due to their material forms. This is the category of charnel houses and torture chambers.

HORROR TEST FAILURE: Frightened



HORROR TEST RESULTS

If you succeed at a horror test, you may be rattled, but don't suffer its full effects. If you fail, you gain the condition noted for the horror type: Confused or Frightened. The condition's duration lasts for 2d6 rounds.

When the condition expires, you must make a second horror test to see if there are any lasting effects. If the source of the horror is no longer present, you gain a +1 bonus to this second test. Other circumstances can increase this bonus, up to a +3 or higher (or even automatic success if the GM chooses) if you defeated or eradicated the source of the horror. If you fail the test, you gain a distortion: a view of reality that most people would consider inaccurate, or a compulsion that might cause problems.

DISTORTIONS

Numerous forms of distortions exist. The **Sample Distortions** presented following provide a starting point. The Game Master picks a distortion to fit the horror that triggered it.

Distortions come in four degrees: transitory, short term, long term, and indefinite. This measures how long the distortion lasts, as follows:

- **1ST DEGREE—TRANSITORY DISTORTION:** The distortion's effects last for 1d6 hours.
- **2ND DEGREE—SHORT-TERM DISTORTION:** The distortion's effects last for 1d6 days.

- **3RD DEGREE—LONG TERM DISTORTION:** The distortion's effects last for 1d6 weeks.

- **4TH DEGREE—INDEFINITE DISTORTION:** The distortion lasts until removed.

When you first gain a distortion, it's transitory—1st degree. When the distortion finishes its duration, make a third horror test, this time with a flat +2 bonus. If you succeed the distortion passes. If you fail it merely becomes *permanent*, but dormant. It manifests again, for a duration based on its degree, whenever you encounter a horror of the same type or the GM feels a situation similar to the one which prompted the distortion comes up.

SAMPLE DISTORTIONS

ECCENTRIC

Your personality has changed. The old you? Submerged, too difficult to deal with, and perhaps even a danger to others. The new you? Well, that may be rough around the edges and given to odd habits, but you'll take anything to get away from who you once were.

MARKED

Whatever's behind the incident knows all about you. It or its agents follow you. They're planning something, and your days are numbered. You've seen glimpses and heard whispers of the plot against you. Why hasn't anyone else? You might surrender to your doom or load up with everything you need to fight.