

WARHAMMER®

FANTASY ROLEPLAY™



GAME MASTER'S TOOLKIT™

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GAME MASTER'S TOOLKIT

A TOME OF RESOURCES & ADVENTURE SEEDS FOR GMs

TABLE OF CONTENTS

NEMESIS NPCs & ORGANISATIONS	4	ADVANCEMENT INSIGHTS	27
I Name Thee Nemesis	4	Non-Career Advances	27
Nemesis NPC Abilities	4	Stance Track	27
Types of Nemesis NPCs	5	Wounds	28
Nemesis Organisations	5	Party Sheets	28
EPISODE TEMPLATES	6	Insanities	28
The Basic Episode	7	Chicken, Egg	28
The Chase	8	SETTING THE SCENE	29
Meeting with the Reluctant Leader	9	An Introduction	30
Yer not Gettin' In	10	Using the Components	30
Hold the Line	11	Progress Tracker	31
The Trial	12	Location Cards and Ranges	31
A Ghost Story	13	Putting it All Together	32
The Cursed Item	14	Making Memories	33
The Rescue	15	Dynamism and Action	33
The Con Game	16	The Fantastic	33
Delicate Negotiations	17	Revisiting Old Haunts	33
The Delivery	18	REWARDS & INCENTIVES	34
MAKING PROGRESS	19	Why Give Rewards?	34
Public or Private	19	Fortune Points & Fortune Dice	34
Anonymous Tracks	19	How Much is too Much?	35
Track Types	20	Types of Rewards	35
Party Tension Meter	21	OPTIONAL RULES	37
Player Authority	23	Expanded Aggression & Cunning Options	37
Help or Hindrance	23	Preparing for Actions	37
Pacing the Progress	23	Sacrificing Actions	37
The Passage of Time	23	Risking Against Recharge	38
Character Action	23	Fortunate Circumstances	38
The Vagaries of Fate	23	Mutually Exclusive Character Options	38
Narrative Prompts	23	Rank-based Casting & Invocation	39
ENJOYING THE JOURNEY	24	Higher Lethality	39
Interpreting the Dice	24	MASTER INDEX	40
The Keeper of Secrets	25	GLOSSARY	44
Characteristics and Other Abstractions	25		

USING THE MATERIALS INCLUDED IN THIS TOOLKIT

In addition to this book, *The Game Master's Toolkit* includes a variety of new cards, sheets, and components for the Game Master and his players. Some of these resources supplement the content found in the *Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay* Core Set. Adding the new cards and components from *The Game Master's Toolkit* to your existing *Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay* game is easy.

The location and item cards can simply be added to the other cards of that type. They are new tools and options for GMs, to help them frame and develop exciting encounters for their players.

PUNCHBOARD

The punchboard components should be carefully removed from the frames. In addition to new creature and NPC standups, additional tracking tokens are included, letting the players track events and effects using the new tools provided in *The Game Master's Toolkit* with ease. The pieces can be added to your existing supply of tokens from *Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay*.



Among the new components introduced is a handy pre-built progress track. The track allows the GM to easily manage initiative or other events on the spur-of-the-moment. Additional puzzle fit tracking pieces can be attached to the pre-built track to customise the tracker in a number of different ways.

ITEM CARDS

There are several new item cards, which provide a handy reference when the GM decides to introduce these new, mysterious objects to the players. The GM should read over these item cards and place them nearby, so he can bring them into play when they are encountered in the course of his campaign. Some examples of how these items may be integrated into an adventure are included in the episode templates starting on page six.



LOCATION CARDS

The Game Master's Toolkit also features a number of new location cards, featuring some of the interesting places for characters to explore. The GM can add these location cards to the cards from the Core Set, or can keep these on hand to help set the scene for the episode archetypes provided in this booklet. Some examples of how these items may be integrated into an adventure are included in the episode templates starting on page six.



ORGANISATION SHEETS

Over the course of their adventures, the PCs may encounter a variety of different characters and organisations working against them. The goals, resources, stability, and influence of these organisations can be easily managed through the use of the full colour, double-sided Nemesis Organisation tracking sheets. Nemesis Organisations are discussed starting on page four.



SET ICON

The cards and sheets included with the *Game Master's Toolkit* are noted with a special set icon. This allows you to quickly identify the supplement materials when sorting, adding, or removing certain cards from your game experience.





CHAPTER ONE

NEMESIS NPCs & ORGANISATIONS

Some of the characters the adventurers will face over the course of a campaign are every bit as detailed and developed as the PCs are – with their own distinct personality traits, abilities, resources, motives, and goals.

When one of these fully fleshed out and developed NPCs is actively working against the PCs, it can really complicate the heroes' lives. A major NPC adversary that opposes the player characters is referred to as a Nemesis.

I NAME THEE NEMESIS

In broad terms, a Nemesis is a cut above the rank and file villains or “bad guys” the PCs generally face. A Nemesis may be the veteran warlord leading a host of enemy warriors in a bloody conflict to overtake a region. Or the cunning, unscrupulous politician manipulating and scheming from the Elector's council. The crazed doomsayer whipping the masses into a frenzy of anarchy and revolution could also be a Nemesis.

Regardless of how Nemesis NPCs manifest in your campaign, they provide a number of interesting options to a GM to help customise and craft a story that can challenge both a party's abilities and beliefs, as well as provide a tangible element – a distinct, evocative personality – to weave into the plot.

NEMESIS NPC ABILITIES

As mentioned earlier, a Nemesis stands out from other types of NPCs. There are a few special rules that apply to Nemesis NPCs.

STANCE METER

In addition to any other abilities they may have, each Nemesis has his own stance meter, allowing him to adjust and react to situations like a player characters.

STRESS & FATIGUE

Rather than stress and fatigue being converted directly into wounds like they are for standard NPCs or henchmen, a Nemesis suffers stress and fatigue, and thus can become distressed and fatigued, just like a player character.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

To help flesh a Nemesis out even more, a GM may wish to consider giving him a few distinct talents and action cards that help reinforce the Nemesis NPC's role and purpose. The GM can also adjust his Aggression, Cunning, and Expertise ratings to reflect a more seasoned, well-rounded, or experienced Nemesis.

TYPES OF NEMESIS NPCs

There are a lot of different ways to use Nemesis NPCs. A Nemesis can serve as the key adversary behind complex schemes, the obvious enemy that must be overcome to thwart impending doom, or the unassuming ally that turns on the player character's when the situation grows most dire.

When developing a Nemesis, the GM should consider his motives, goals, and how and why he opposes the heroes. Does the Nemesis know who the PCs are? Is he working against them personally, or do his purposes simply run counter to the goals of the party?

Here are just a few examples of how a Nemesis could be featured in a campaign.

THE FALLEN ALLY

Perhaps the most dangerous Nemesis is one who was once a friend. The Fallen Ally used to work with the PCs, but due to tragic events, betrayal, or corruption he now opposes them. The Fallen Ally may know the PCs well and use that knowledge against them.

THE GLORYHOUND

Misguided by a lust for glory, prestige, and fame, the Gloryhound opposes the PCs not directly out of avarice, but out of vanity, pride, and perhaps a little madness and corruption. Pride goeth before a fall, and even a relatively "pure" Gloryhound may soon become an unwitting agent of evil.

THE HERETIC

This vile heretic or apostate is gaining popularity, preying on the weak-willed, whipping up religious fervour, and looking to supplant the powers of an established cult. He may be a hero to the common people who feel oppressed by an existing religion, but he is an enemy to public order.

THE MASTERMIND

The Mastermind lurks in the shadows, pulling strings, manipulating politics, and using blackmail and minions to achieve his goals. He's a smart, clever opponent, always one step ahead, and has contingency plans for everything. Rather than directly influence events, he has his minions do his dirty work for him.

THE WARLORD

Whether a fearsome rebel leader or the chieftain of a violent marauder tribe, the Warlord is a ruthless and cunning battlefield commander who has the unquestioning support of his warriors. The Warlord is likely to be imposing and dangerous in his own right.

NEMESIS ORGANISATIONS

In addition to their individual roles, many Nemesis NPCs work within an organisation of some fashion, whether it is a diabolic Chaos Cult, and extreme political faction, or a group of jaded merchants seeking to profit off the misfortune of others.

As the PCs encounter the Nemesis NPC, uncover his plans, face off with his minions, or otherwise come into conflict with his organisation, they may slowly start to undermine the Nemesis NPC's support structure. If the PCs foil enough of the Nemesis

NPC's plans, the organisation's influence and stability may suffer, until the Nemesis NPC can no longer rely on or benefit from the organisation.

THE ORGANISATION TRACKING SHEET

The goals, resources, stability, and influence of these Nemesis organisations can be easily managed and represented through the use of organisation tracking sheets. Each sheet represents a possible organisation or support structure for a Nemesis NPC. When developing a Nemesis NPC, the GM should consider whether or not the Nemesis NPC should belong to or have access to such an organisation. He may wish to look over the available organisation sheets, or use one as the basis for his own creation.

At first glance, an organisation sheet looks similar to the party sheet the PCs use to help define and manage the type of party dynamic the characters have. The organisation sheet serves a very similar function with regard to the Nemesis NPC's resources and influence – how much he can rely on the organisation to help further his goals, or how well the organisation helps protect or shield his activities from prying eyes.

UNDERMINING STABILITY

Whenever the PCs manage to thwart the Nemesis or disrupt his activities, the GM advances the tracking token on the organisation's Stability track once space. When the tracking token reaches an event space, the corresponding effect listed on the sheet occurs.

Likewise, if in the GM's opinion the PCs fail to stop or counter the Nemesis NPC's plans at a critical time or the organisation's influence reaches out further, the GM may move the tracking token back a space on the track to reflect an improvement to the organisation's current stability.

If the tracking token reaches the end of the Stability track, the organisation's cohesion crumbles, and the Nemesis no longer has control over its resources or influence. Depending on the way the storyline unfolds and based on the GM's discretion, this may trigger a confrontation with the Nemesis, or force the Nemesis to change his plans in order to repair the damage the PCs have done.

ORGANISATION SHEETS

With the provided organisation sheets and tracking tokens, a GM can easily manage how the PCs' actions affect an organisation's resources and abilities.





CHAPTER TWO

EPISODE TEMPLATES

The episode structure for encounters in *Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay* provides the GM with flexibility, and a means to introduce a variety of different scenes for his players in an easy to manage format. To help the GM take advantage of the episode structure, *The Game Master's Toolkit* includes a number of detailed episode templates. Armed with these templates, a GM will always be ready for action.

The episode templates feature a consistent structure that allows a GM to quickly scan over the information, and adapt it for his own purposes and stories. Each template begins with a brief overview of the encounter being presented, then the entry provides the following information:

- ✦ **Act 1:** The events and action that form Act 1 of the episode. This may include the “setup,” or activity that occurs before the episode proper begins.
- ✦ **Act 2:** The events and action that form Act 2 of the episode. This may feature details of how to construct or use a progress tracker to help resolve the events during this act.
- ✦ **Act 3:** The events and action that form the third and final act of the episode. Details the conclusion of the episode, including multiple possible endings where appropriate.

- ✦ **Possible Complications:** The episodes presented here are serve as models or starting points. This section details a number of ideas for interesting variations to the proposed episode.

The rally step between each act provides the GM with a chance to consider how the character's actions from the previous act will influence the following act, as well as gives the PCs (and the players) an opportunity to take a quick step back and evaluate the situation.

The Basic Episode, on the following page, serves as the simplest example of a three act episode and is intended to serve as a primer for the three act concept. The episodes following are variations on the basic story structure, showing the breadth and flexibility of three act storytelling.

The episodes presented herein can serve as models for single encounters presented entirely in encounter mode or even for a series of linked encounters; the needs of the plot and pacing of each individual game may differ in that regard.

Alternatively, the GM may decide to develop an entire campaign story arc based on these episode templates, selecting location cards to help flesh out the scenes. By changing a few details here and there – such as enemies encountered or the environment in which the episode takes place – these episode templates can be used again and again.

THE BASIC EPISODE

Overview: Three-act storytelling follows some basic rules of structure, and three-act episodes in *Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay* are no exception. This basic episode is included to serve as a model for any three-act story element you choose to include in your game.

For our model episode, the PCs require the assistance of a powerful Celestial wizard, but he requires a service on the part of the PCs before he is willing to help them.

ACT 1: THE SETUP

The most important goal for Act 1 is to communicate to the PCs what their goal is and how to achieve it. Act 1 sets the stakes for the episode and outlines both the consequences of failure and the benefits of success.

Even in highly-structured encounters, Act 1 may often play out in story mode. Act 1 ends when the goals are identified and the PCs set out to accomplish them (or when the bad guys kick in the door and the PCs have no choice but to accomplish them!).

In our model episode, Act 1 details the initial meeting with the Celestial wizard, which may be dangerous in its own right. It ends when the wizard has outlined the task he requires the PCs to do (recover his scrying mirror from the skaven who stole it) and the PCs set off to accomplish it.

ACT 2: RISING ACTION

Often the bulk of the action occurs during this act. During Act 2, the PCs overcome various obstacles between them and their goal. In a dangerous and violent world such as the Old World, these obstacles often take the form of deadly foes or other hazards.

This act often provides a good opportunity to use a progress tracker, to monitor how close the PCs are to achieving their goal.

Gauging the length and complexity of Act 2 is not always easy. If Act 2 is too long, the story feels flat, and probably should have been broken into more acts. If Act 2 is too short, the climax feels abrupt. However, so long as the story has momentum and energy, and continues to build towards Act 3 in an exciting manner, you're probably doing it right. Act 2 ends when the goal is in sight, with just one final most-challenging-yet obstacle. Alternately, Act 2 can end when the goal is achieved.

In our model episode, Act 2 details the PCs locating and infiltrating the skaven lair. They sneak past the first group of guards, then fight a brief skirmish with a patrol, and finally enter the room where the mirror is stored to find themselves facing an enormous rat-ogre!

ACT 3: THE CLIMAX

This may be the shortest act, but it should also be the most exciting. The climax is the most intense challenge yet, the final obstacle, the big finish. The rising action of Act 2 has been leading to this the entire time. Often, this is the "boss fight."

In our model episode, this climax could be the final showdown with the grey seer who stole the mirror and his rat-ogre bodyguard.

POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS

Sometimes the payoff to Act 3 is not just a long-expected showdown. Sometimes the excitement and intensity revolves around the unexpected. This unexpected twist can be a supposed ally turning on the PCs, the desired goal having the opposite effect of what was expected, or a hidden threat not seen until too late. The very best twists could be predicted based on information presented earlier in the story, but weren't. Twists that are too far out of left field may be unexpected, but they can also feel arbitrary. Use them sparingly.

With the twist, Act 2 generally ends when the goal is apparently achieved. The PCs have a moment to bask in success... and then gasp at the sudden, shocking twist!

In our model episode, the twist comes when the PCs deliver the scrying mirror to the wizard... and he attacks them! In that case, Act 3 is their mighty battle. Or perhaps it's simpler than that: the PCs recover the mirror, as the tunnels collapse around them! In that case, Act 3 is a desperate flight through the skaven lair.

WRAPPING UP

After the climactic Act 3, there's usually some clean-up that needs to happen in the story. The PCs may have recovered the mirror, but they still have to deliver it to the wizard and receive their reward. This "downtime" lets the characters (and the players) recover from the intensity of the previous action and also lets you advance the story in a natural way. The consequences of the success or failure of the PCs in previous acts is explored during this time.

And when you're ready, a new Act 1 can begin...

ENCOUNTERS WITHIN ENCOUNTERS

The Basic Episode is a good overarching structure that can encompass numerous other episodes. The same three-act story structure that works for an encounter can also work for an adventure or even a campaign.

Any given act of this basic format can encapsulate a distinct three-act episode or even an entire adventure. It's also possible to add additional acts, either with slowly escalating rising action, or multiple "peaks and valleys" of climaxes, falling action, and rising action.

Here is an example combining other elements from other episode templates in this book:

- + Act 1: The party hears rumours about a Cult in the city that worships Slaanesh. Upon further investigation, they discover that Barthald, a nosey coachman, knows of secrets regarding the Cult.
- + Act 2: The PCs approach Barthald, who agrees to tell the PCs about the Cult, but first they have to take him to safety (such as *The Delivery* on page 16).
- + Act 3: While escorting Barthald from the city, the PCs are attacked in the woods. They have to defend the carriage until Barthald can navigate them out of the forest (such as *Hold the Line* on page 11).

THE CHASE

Overview: The characters spot a suspicious figure, a known villain, or a hideous beast – as the characters catch this entity’s attention, the pursuit is on. In this episode the PCs are being pursued by an opposing force, though it can be easily modified to feature the PCs as the pursuers (see the sidebar for details).

ACT 1: MOVE IT OR LOSE IT!

The characters are in a race against an opposing force. Whether it’s a squad of angry guards wanting to arrest them or an exposed servant of Chaos attempting to silence them, the characters’ role in the chase should be clearly defined during this act. There may be a short dialogue or a few accusations made before the chase begins. This part of the episode will most likely be carried out in story mode up until the PCs are made aware of their goal. Once the chase is ready to begin, there is a rally step. This rally step is a chance for players to decide on their course of action

ACT 2: WHICH WAY DID THEY GO?

In this act, the characters attempt to shake their pursuers. The tactical use of range increments can be abandoned here in favour of a progress tracker. The progress tracker can be used as a means of judging relative distance between the characters and their opponents, or the distance between victory and defeat. The progress tracker should have an event marker, or mid-point, and an equal number of spaces on either side; three or four progress spaces on either side is a good starting point. The GM can include more spaces on the track if he wishes the pursuers to have to gain more ground to catch their quarry.

The mid-point on the track can be used to indicate a crucial juncture in the chase. Do the characters split up while being pursued? Do they reach a fork in the road, forcing them to quickly choose a

SWITCHING ROLES

The possibilities for this template are numerous. To mix things up, the GM might consider swapping the characters’ role in the chase, from pursued to pursuer.

For example, instead of having the PCs pursued by a servant of Chaos, perhaps they spot a familiar foe in the form of a cloaked figure wielding a ceremonial dagger and they race after him. Their roles in the chase are now changed, racing after their opponent rather than fleeing.

This change could even be made in the middle of the episode. Using the same example, the PCs chase the cloaked figure into a secret Cult shrine at the end of Act 2. Suddenly the players are facing off against a vast number of angry Cultists and the pursuit begins again, only this time, the roles have been reversed.

route? This is where the progress tracker might even branch out in different directions, turning the chase into several different pursuits. The PCs can advance their token by taking short cuts, outthinking their pursuers, or with a clever use of skills. How far their token advances with a successful skill check should reflect their clever thinking.

ACT 3: END OF THE LINE

The chase comes to a close. If the characters managed to shake their pursuers, this act may actually transition into a new episode. If they did not shake their pursuers, or the pursuers catch the PCs, there are many possibilities for a final showdown.

If the PCs were being chased down by the city watch for a crime that they did not commit, the showdown might be a social encounter in which the players attempt to explain their innocence. If the exposed servant of Chaos managed to corner the players, they might have to fight their way out. The goal of the chase dictates the nature of the showdown.

POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS

The landscape is unfamiliar to the PCs (escaping from a prison, in a dark dungeon, fleeing a cursed temple); their opponent managed to get a head start (the chase is broken up into a series of small fights); the chase has multiple pursuers (the PCs chase the cloaked figure while the city guard chases the PCs, the PCs quarry splits up); the clock is ticking (the dungeon is collapsing, the PCs must shake their pursuers and reach a safe house before other are alerted).

ALTERNATE USES

The PCs are the ones doing the chasing. The chase is a matter of stealth, investigation, and following clues instead of hot pursuit. The Chase can be melded with The Delivery for some extra pressure!

CHASING AN ITEM

Why the target is being chased can have as much an impact on the resolution of the action as who is being chased. Perhaps the target has a mysterious item the other party is interested in, such as a tome of possibly daemonic nature. Having an important item at the centre of the action can provide additional incentive to track down an adversary or resolve the action as quickly as possible.



MEETING WITH THE RELUCTANT LEADER

Overview: The party knows of a dire threat approaching. The threat can be an army of beastmen or an unnatural storm brewing. They seek an audience with a powerful leader who can somehow help them.

ACT 1: TAKE US TO YOUR LEADER

With knowledge of the threat, the characters must secure a meeting with the powerful leader. This task could prove as simple as an exchange of dialogue with a local noble or as complex as a series of skill checks. In the latter case, use a relatively short progress tracker and advance it one space for each successful skill check made by a party member. The PCs should not be aware of it, but this episode is built on the assumption that they succeed in this first act.

The skill checks for this act vary depending on how the PCs go about securing their meeting. If they know who the leader is, then they might need to perform a series of Charm checks to convince the right people that their needs warrant a meeting with the leader. If they are in an unfamiliar area, one party member might attempt an Education check to recall the governor of the area while another performs a Folklore check to learn important names in the leader's court. Perhaps the PCs encounter a corrupt advisor who refuses them an audience with his lord, in which case they need to attempt Intimidate or Guile checks to convince him to do what they want.

ACT 2: BEND THE KNEE

The characters manage to secure their meeting with the leader and negotiations begin. The leader (or another opposing force present at the meeting) offers resistance, and the party must engage in social discourse to overcome that resistance in order to receive the help or support they need.

During this act, use a progress tracker with one token for the PCs and one for the opposing force, whatever it may be. Many of the same skill checks used in Act 1 may be used here to advance the players' token on the track. An Education check might allow one player to remember a time when beastmen threatened the leader's land in the past, while another player might use that knowledge in conjunction with the Charm skill to convince the leader that he cannot let such a thing happen again. However the players go about convincing the leader, a distinct Act 3 should be prepared for whichever token reaches the end of the track first.

ACT 3: THE FINAL WORD

This act plays out differently depending on which token reached the end of the track first. Did the PCs sway the leader? Did that pesky advisor spoil their plans? Do they receive the support they need or will they need to look elsewhere?

If the PCs are unable to achieve their goal, this act is a good time to present an alternative. If the leader refused to provide aid, perhaps another powerful noble present decides to aid the players. If the players were successful in convincing the leader, there might be a social exchange where the leader dismisses the rest of his court and shares information with the party in story mode.

HOME TURF?

Scenes where the party must meet with a leader can be resolved quite different based on where the meeting takes place. Is the meeting taking place on the party's home turf? In the leader's home? In some neutral territory? Adjusting the location and scenery of the meeting can keep this type of episode fresh and available to use over and over again.



POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS

The leader has a court of NPCs (a corrupt advisor, a nobleman already set against the players, an arrogant military leader); the leader is pre-disposed against the party (he sees the characters as rivals, the party damaged his reputation); the leader is secretly aligned against the party (possibly turning Act 3 into a fight); there is already another party of adventurers requesting a different sort of aid; the leader is easily insulted (he has the party arrested, accuses them of treason).

ALTERNATE USES

This template combines well with the Yer Not Gettin' In episode, which can be the entirety of Act 1. The "leader" need not be politically important, so long as he's important to the story.

ORDER IN THE COURT

To add more versatility to this episode, consider adding more NPCs to this meeting. These NPCs affect the course of events.

For example, use the corrupt advisor as a negative force against the players. As the advisor argues against the PCs, the leader might be less inclined to trust the party. Or perhaps there is a priest of Sigmar present who sides with the PCs if they can convince him that their cause is righteous.

Simply add additional tokens to the progress tracker to represent these NPCs and assign conditional modifiers that take effect if the players pass the necessary skill checks or interact with an NPC in a way to trigger his effect. For example, if the players' token beats the corrupt advisor's token to the mid-point of the track, the leader might dismiss the advisor in order to hear what the players have to say.

YER NOT GETTIN' IN

Overview: The PCs need to get someplace they aren't allowed. They have been trailing a scribe that they suspect is dealing in forbidden tomes of Chaos lore. Their search has brought them to the estate of Baron von Deidross, and they are not permitted through his gates.

ACT 1: KNOCK, KNOCK

The PCs face an opposing force, preventing them from getting where they want to go. In this case, the baron's guards refuse to let anyone into their master's estate without proper documentation. The documentation that is required could be a written invitation by von Deidross, proof of nobility, or a warrant issued by a higher authority.

This act should be pretty short, playing out mostly in story mode. A progress tracker probably won't be needed. Act 1 begins with the PCs aware of their goal and ends after the first roadblock they encounter. Either way, the PCs are forced to find their way through the opposition in order to reach their goal.

ACT 2: WHO GOES THERE

Now that the PCs know of their opposition, they must decide how to overcome it. Act 2 represents the PCs attempting to gain entry to the baron's library. This confrontation could be a series of social exchanges using the progress tracker with tokens representing the PCs' success and the opposing force's resistance. Or the progress tracker could be used to represent the PCs' investigation as they hunt for alternative means to enter the estate.

The length of the progress tracker reflects the difficulty of the task. If the players must talk their way past their guards, the progress tracker might be six spaces in length with two separate event spaces, one serving as a mid-point and one at the end of the track. The mid-point represents the guards letting slip that there is an al-

A TASK WITHIN A TASK

Sometimes it can be useful to incorporate a three-act episode into another. Modify the episodes to meet the needs of the encounter. In the case of The Meeting with a Reluctant Leader episode, the PCs need to meet with the leader, but guards stand in their way.

In this case, a shortened version of this encounter could be placed within a larger encompassing encounter as a transition scene. Depending on how the episode with the guards plays out, the PCs might have to switch their tactics for the overarching episode.

ternative means into the location (such as a written invitation that the party could acquire or forge) and the end of the track represents the PCs finding their way into where they want to go.

If the PCs must find a different way into the location, the tokens on the progress tracker can represent the different types of information the PCs receive – accurate and false leads. If the token representing accurate information reaches the final event marker, the PCs discover the location. If the token representing false or misleading information token reaches the event marker first, the PCs wind up at the wrong place. Once the players find out how to get in or where the location is, transition into Act 3.

ACT 3: THE PASSWORD IS...

This act represents the PCs somehow gaining access to the baron's estate. Were they able to convince the guards to let them pass? Do they have to complete an additional task to forge documentation? Were they caught trying to sneak into the estate? Perhaps the guards became hostile during Act 2 and the PCs are forced to take arms and fight their way in. If the guards remain vigilant but do not resort to violence, then the PCs might have to sneak their way in or resort to other illegal activities.

However they get in, the PCs have to continue their investigation of the baron's corrupt scribe without drawing too much attention. This could begin a new episode, or perhaps the PCs have to use similar tactics to get into the library. Perhaps the baron's library is heavily guarded and they must find a different means to gain access.

POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS

The guards have been previously warned of the PCs (their employer does not wish the PCs on his property); the PCs have to reach the location within a certain time (tracked by an additional token on the progress tracker); the PCs receive false information about the location; the PCs are arrested for illegal activity (beginning a new episode).

ALTERNATE USES

The PCs must find a hidden location, the PCs are responsible for guarding the baron's estate (reversing their role), the PCs need to enter an enemy location (stealth or violence are their only options).

COMPELLING ARGUMENTS

Perhaps the resistance can be overcome if the party can provide a compelling reason why they should be granted access to the estate. For example, they may come bearing an artefact the baron will be interested in, or perhaps an item they believe may belong to the baron or may otherwise be of interest. If they pique his curiosity, perhaps the baron will be more likely to meet with them.



HOLD THE LINE

Overview: The PCs are protecting a narrow valley against wave after wave of undead. If the PCs fail to hold the valley, the vampire lord's forces will reach the crypts where his Moon Ring lies. If the vampire recovers the ring, the sun will no longer pose a threat to him. The PCs succeed if they hold off the horde until dawn.

ACT 1: SEND IN THE TROOPS

The first wave attacks. This episode uses progress trackers to track the waves of enemies and the time remaining until daybreak. The progress tracker should be made long enough to encompass all three acts, with event spaces to represent the separate waves of enemies and the passing of time. One token represents time and another represents the advancing enemy forces. If the time token reaches the final event space before the enemy token, dawn comes and the undead must retreat.

The first act establishes what is at stake for the party should they fail to hold off the enemies. A priest of Sigmar and a witch hunter assign the PCs to hold the pass while they prepare a larger defence. If the PCs fail to hold off the undead, the vampire lord will reach the Moon Ring and become an unstoppable foe.

An additional token can be added to the tracker to represent the larger defence. Depending on the size of the vampire lord's army, the PCs might need more assistance to hold out until dawn. If the witch hunter went back to town to rally a militia, his token might be prevented from advancing if any undead break through the defence lines. When his token reaches the event space, reinforcements arrive to assist the PCs.

ACT 2: NO MERCY!

The second wave attacks. These enemies should be tougher or greater in number than the first wave. Dawn's faint light can be seen over the mountains during this act. The reinforcements might be in sight, or some of the enemy forces might begin retreating. Regardless, the fight rages on.

This act is a good time to introduce any additional factors that can hinder or help the party in their fight. Perhaps an avalanche occurs and the enemies are pressed back, giving the party a quick respite. Maybe an unnatural storm begins to brew, hiding the coming daylight. Additional factors can intensify the action and force the players to change their tactics. This act ends when victory is in sight, but just out of reach.

ACT 3: A LOST CAUSE

The final wave approaches, made up of the vampire lord and his elite troops. Dawn should be just over the horizon now. This act should be a battle that the PCs cannot win without some sort of assistance.

While most of this episode is fuelled by combat, Act 3 should contain additional challenges, such as skill checks.

For example, if the storm blocks out the rising sun, perhaps the PCs must retreat with the priest. They must barricade themselves in the town's church so the priest can perform a ritual to banish the storm. One party member must make a strength check to hold the doors

while the other party members gather materials needed for the ritual. The act will end when the PCs secure their escape or dawn banishes the undead to the shadows.

POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS

The enemies overwhelm the PCs (they are captured, the vampire recovers the Moon Ring), the PCs are unarmed (they must use cunning to defeat their foes, set traps, outwit them), the reinforcements betray the PCs.

ALTERNATIVE USES

The PCs have to defend a burning building, skaven are pouring from the sewers and the PCs must help the guards defend the city, the PCs have help the militia to break through a defensive line before enemy reinforcements arrive.

ALMOST DONE...

This episode hinges on the anticipation built by some delayed event. The event should have some bearing on the PCs' battle with the enemy, and it should create a fair amount of tension. It could be the evacuation of refugees, the arrival of reinforcements, or the completion of a ritual.

The delayed event is a reminder to the players that they aren't fighting to defeat their foes, they are fighting for the event to succeed. When devising a scenario for the delayed event, think of an event that builds excitement or tension. Perhaps they must hold the line while opening a door, destroying an idol, or performing some other task.



THE TRIAL

Overview: The party or a single PC is accused of committing heresy. They were caught carrying artefacts of Chaos within the city. A trial is declared to determine their guilt or innocence. The PCs must prove their innocence or face their punishment, which in the case of heresy, is death.

ACT 1: ACCUSATIONS FLY

This act establishes the nature of the trial and the punishment. Whatever force is against the players in the trial presents the case, introduces the evidence, and begins the accusations. The majority of this act will play out through a series of social exchanges and mental skill checks. If the PCs want to deny the accusations, they may have to use their Charm or Guile skill, depending on whether or not they are truly guilty of the crime.

A progress tracker can be used with a token representing the relative guilt or innocence of the PCs in the eyes of the judges – whomever they may be. The progress tracker should be made with an equal number of spaces divided by an event space (mid-point), one side representing innocence and the other guilt (use different colours for each side).

Place the PCs' token on the mid-point, unless the judges are initially biased. The track should have enough spaces on either side so that the PCs' token has room to move back and forth throughout the course of this episode. This act ends when the PCs are called to defend themselves.

ACT 2: OBJECTION

The PCs must prove their innocence, or perhaps simply escape their punishment. This act will be the PCs' chance to move their token on the progress tracker toward innocence. They can do this by arguing their case during the trial or by pleading for additional time to acquire evidence that may be used in their favour.



TRIAL BY COMBAT

Consider a trial taking place in a less civilised environment. Rather than facing a series of social challenges and the verdict of a judge, the PCs might be forced to survive a series of physical challenges in order to prove their innocence. If the players wind up in a foreign land, far from the Emperor's rule, they might face an unfamiliar judicial system.

The PCs might even have to fight for their lives, or face a worse punishment. In the same respect, the player could be offered a trial by combat as an alternative to a traditional trial. Simply tailor the trial to fit the play-style of the group.

If a single PC is the accused, perhaps he will be imprisoned until the remaining members of the party can produce the evidence. During the defence, the players may move their token by using appropriate skills to convince the judge that they are innocent.

If they were transporting the artefacts to a priest of Sigmar, for example, the accused PCs can attempt a Charm check to explain to the judge that they were only trying to destroy the artefacts. If the PC actually had no intention of destroying the artefacts, he would have to make a Guile check in order to deceive the judge into believing their lie.

An additional token may be added to the progress tracker to represent the judge's disposition, which will in turn affect how many challenge dice are added to the skill checks. This act concludes when either the PCs' token or the judge's token (if one is used) reaches the guilt or innocence end of the track. Alternatively, it may conclude when the PCs find the necessary evidence.

ACT 3: THE VERDICT

The trial reaches its conclusion. The judge might already have his mind made up, but surprise evidence might be presented in this act to swing that verdict in a new direction.

Perhaps the PCs burst into the trial with a subdued Cultist that confesses to owning the artefacts in question. Perhaps a friendly NPC waits to reveal some evidence until this act, narrowly saving the PCs.

If the PCs are declared innocent in the end, then they might agree to help the judge find the guilty party. If they were found guilty, they might have to attempt an escape from their punishment, be it prison or execution. The episode will end when the verdict is passed.

POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS

The evidence that proves the PCs' guilt/innocence is false, the judge is partial (doesn't care about justice, someone has to take the blame for the crime).

ALTERNATIVE USES

The PCs need to prove an NPC innocent or guilty, the trial can be less formal (such as a Witch Hunter's swift judgement), the PCs must unmask a corrupt judge during their own trial.

A GHOST STORY

Overview: The PCs encounter a haunting. They are passing through the town of Delburheim when they discover an old manor inhabited by a vengeful spirit. They soon discover that they must unravel the mystery of the haunting so they can banish the spirit.

ACT 1: A BUMP IN THE NIGHT

The people of Delburheim stay far from the old manor on the hill. The PCs are drawn to its mystery, and before long they discover a need for investigation. The first step is making sense of the apparition, possibly creating a series of tasks that the PCs must undertake. The PCs won't know this right away, but the spirit that haunts the manor is the ghost of Lady Cassida, a noblewoman killed by her ruthless husband.

If the investigation calls for a progress tracker, keep it short with one progress space for each clue or skill check needed to get to the bottom of things – perhaps one or two progress spaces, plus spaces equal to the number of PCs in the party.

A capable party member might attempt a Piety check to communicate with the spirit. If a priest of Sigmar is needed, the party might have to use their Charm skills to acquire his aid. Use whatever appropriate skills are needed based on the direction your players take the investigation. This act ends whenever the party realizes that they need to take some sort of action to stop the haunting.

ACT 2: FROM BEYOND THE GRAVE

The PCs must now secure the means necessary to banish the spirit. If skill checks are required, a longer progress tracker can be used during this act to represent a more complex undertaking.

If the spirit is seeking vengeance and the PCs are willing to carry out its revenge, a progress tracker of ten spaces can be used to represent the spirit's anger. Build a tracker with five green progress spaces and five red progress spaces, with an event space between the red and green pieces. The spirit's tracking token moves toward the end of the red track (anger) in its wrath. The PCs may attempt to avenge the spirit or resolve its angst, with their success moving the tracking token toward the end of the green track (contentment).

If the PCs manage to satisfy the spirit's need for revenge, transition into Act 3. If the PCs discover that the haunting is a result of a ritual summoning, the progress tracker will represent how close the party is to uncovering the persons responsible for the summoning. Event markers may be interspersed on the track to represent crucial moments in the investigation (they must combat Cultists or find a key element to undo the ritual). Whatever the method, the PCs should discover the clues needed to end the haunting. The act ends when the party has the means to end the haunting.

ACT 3: LAID TO REST

The party confronts the haunting. This act can be a simple social encounter or a complex ritual. If the party avenged the spirit, they need to present their proof in order to ease the spirit's rage. If they must banish the spirit by using a ritual, a series of skill checks could be made.

Once again, a progress tracker can be used to track the party's ritual and how close they are to banishing the spirit. However it is done, the act ends when the PCs manage to stop the haunting...but depending on how the PCs resolved the situation, they may have learned something about the restless spirit that leads them to investigate its life – leading to a whole new series of adventures.

POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS

The spirit seeks vengeance against an unlikely person (a powerful noble, a friendly NPC), a third party seeks to interfere with the party's investigation, an arrogant witch hunter steps in to take care of things his own way (probably making matters worse).

ALTERNATIVE USES

The haunting is in the form of daemonic possession, the haunting is on a much larger scale (an entire crypt filled with restless spirits, the whole town is haunted), the PCs must investigate the truth of the spirit's claims.

PURGE THE UNCLEAN

A haunting can appear in many forms, each form presenting different complications for the PCs. A good way to come up with different ideas for the haunting is to first consider what is actually haunted.

Is the prison haunted by former prisoners that died in their cells? Is the manor haunted by a noblewoman murdered by her husband? Is the crypt haunted by restless spirits because a necromancer raised their bodies from the grave? Alternatively, perhaps the haunted is a person rather than a location. Did the Cultist allow himself to be possessed by a daemon? Each situation presents the PCs with different obstacles to overcome.

THE CURSED ITEM

Overview: The party discovers a powerful dagger, tainted with Chaos. The weapon carries a curse that brings adverse effects to those who wield it. The party must rid themselves of the item or destroy it.

ACT 1: HIDDEN POWER

The PCs discover the weapon. It is a ceremonial dagger that subtly corrupts and explodes its wielder to Chaos magic. Its blade was forged of the purest silver, able to pierce the skin of a daemon. They come into possession of the weapon during this act.

In this situation, the party is seeking a known Cult in the region. The location of the Cult's temple is a closely guarded secret, but the PCs meet a stranger who is willing to help them. The stranger offers them a dagger that will magically lead them to the temple. What the party doesn't realize is that the stranger is the corrupted Witch Hunter Hogan and that the dagger is the final component needed to complete a ritual to summon a mighty daemon. The dagger will guide the wielder, but it will also afflict him with bloodlust. The ritual calls for an unknowing person to spill the blood of an innocent; the dagger forces the wielder to kill on behalf of the Cult.

Act 1 presents the PCs with general information about the item, and the act will conclude when they realize that there is more to the item than they were led to believe. Act 1 could end in a fight, where one of the PCs will be affected by the weapon's curse.

ACT 2: A GROWING BURDEN

The party realizes that the item needs to be destroyed, or they need to otherwise rid themselves of its curse. They might discover in this act that Hogan was once a witch hunter, but the dagger consumed him and he became a killer devoted to Chaos.

Use a progress tracker to represent the strength of the curse as it threatens to devour the possessing PC. The PCs might decide that the weapon needs to be destroyed. However, the weapon cannot be destroyed in a conventional fashion. Act 2 might consist of an

A BIG PROBLEM

As a way to expand on this encounter, the GM may find an opportunity over the course of a campaign to introduce a curse with a wider influence... perhaps the curse is not so easily confined to a sword or ancient tome.

The town well may be cursed, afflicting any who drink its water. Or a temple that has fallen into ruin has been cursed, and must be consecrated to lift the curse. Perhaps a family bloodline has been cursed for a dark secret they all share.

Investigating and finding ways to deal with larger scale curses can put an exciting twist on this type of encounter.

investigation or a race against time (or both) as the party scrambles to find the means of destroying the weapon before something terrible happens.

Perhaps the party still doesn't know the true nature of the cursed item. If so, the PCs spend Act 2 researching the item and unlocking its secrets. Perhaps they ignore the signs of the curse and proceed to seek the temple. In this case, the act might end in a battle.

ACT 3: THE UNMAKING

The curse must be broken. Now that the party knows of the curse, they must bring together whatever elements are needed to destroy the item. If the cursed weapon is draining a party member's sanity, Act 3 might culminate in a fight that pits the cursed character against the rest of the party.

If that happens, other party members might opt to use non-lethal attacks to knock out their afflicted companion. Act 3 represents the party somehow ridding themselves of the cursed item. This disposal can be done by physical force or a series of skill checks, or both. Perhaps one of the party members must perform a complex ritual while the rest of the party fights off Cultists.

If the PC wielding the dagger spills the blood of the innocent in the Cult's summoning circle, the daemon is released, beginning a battle. If the item is destroyed or the curse is otherwise lifted, the act ends. If the party fails to rid themselves of the cursed item, a new episode will begin in which they must continue their struggle with the curse.

POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS

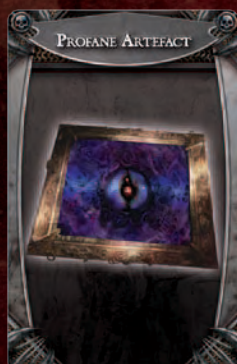
The item is more helpful than harmful (the party doesn't want to be rid of it); destroying the item has dire consequences (anyone under the curse will have a permanent insanity/critical wound); another source wants the item (they offer money or favours, they attack the party).

ALTERNATIVE USES

The PCs must aid a witch hunter in recovering the cursed weapon, a powerful leader is under the influence of a cursed amulet, the curse has a wider influence (a family bloodline, the water in a town's only well).

A PROFANE ARTEFACT

The Profane Artefact and Profane Weapon item cards work well with this template, representing just a few different items that can be cursed and cause all sorts of problems for a party. Not only will they need to learn how to deal with the item and its curse, but a particularly large or cumbersome item poses its own unique set of problems when trying to decide how to carry or dispose of the item.



THE RESCUE

Overview: The PCs discover that Beloric, a rogue wizard from the Amethyst Order, has taken up residence in an abandoned keep outside of Stelmont. He has been abducting travellers to experiment his dark arts on, and just recently Baron Elmore's daughter, Celia, has gone missing. The PCs are hired to rescue Celia.

ACT 1: THE PLAN

The PCs must gain access to Beloric's keep. This act may serve as a planning phase for the PCs. Winston Elmore explains that he has stayed on good terms with Beloric despite the rumours surrounding the wizard's keep, but when his daughter went missing, he decided to take action. He does not want to openly accuse the wizard, so he sends the PCs in his stead.

Beloric's keep is watched by his own personal guards (and probably a spell or two). The PCs must talk, fight, or sneak their way in. Whatever tactic they use, reward them for clever thinking. Also, keep in mind that the PCs are expected to succeed in this act. While a progress tracker isn't necessary when there isn't much chance of failure, use one if this act needs to have alternate outcomes.

For example, if the PCs fail to convince the guards to let them in through a series of skill checks, then they must resort to alternate means of gaining entrance to the location. This act ends when the PCs enter Beloric's keep.

ACT 2: IN AND OUT

The party discovers that Beloric is keeping Celia in the lower levels of his keep. A series of Thievery checks might be needed to open doors leading below. Or they might have to find a secret entrance to the lower levels. If the PCs stumble across Beloric himself, they might have to gain his trust or elude him somehow. Since Beloric is paranoid, the PCs might encounter one of his traps or puzzles.

A progress tracker will be very useful for this act. If stealth is of the utmost importance, make a long progress tracker with several event spaces on it. A Disturbance token represents how much attention the party is drawing to itself. Whenever the Disturbance token reaches an event marker, a patrol is sent to investigate. The PCs must either subdue or hide from the guards. Every subsequent event space reached sends additional guards, while the last event space results in the alarm being sounded.

The act ends when the PCs locate and secure Celia, or when the alarm sounds and they must fight or flee.

ACT 3: SOUND THE ALARM

Once they recover Celia, the party must leave the keep, which will prove more difficult than entering it did. Something should trigger resistance when the party secures the target. Either Celia was being closely watched and the alarm was raised or her cell was otherwise trapped.

Beloric might send his minions to apprehend the PCs. If the PCs discovered that Beloric was experimenting with necromancy, they might have to face some of his animated corpses. If they cross Beloric himself, the PCs will be in for a difficult fight.

ROOM FOR FAILURE

Many first acts are built on the assumption that the PCs will succeed in their initial tasks. This does not mean that failure is not an option. On the contrary, failures can produce even more options. In addition, a few failures can make success only that much sweeter in the end.

Use a progress tracker for the first act and plan for several outcomes according to the players' choices. If they decide to persuade the guards to let them through instead of sneaking past them, they will probably fail because the guards are stubborn.

After failing, the PCs will be forced to try other methods. Prior to the play session, set up the progress tracker and consider the different conclusions for Act 1. Allowing the PCs to fail in the first act and then seek alternate means will help the story come alive.

Whatever the case, the party must fight or run, or both. The episode ends when they escape the keep with Celia.

POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS

Celia is not where she was supposed to be, violence is not an option (Beloric knows the PCs were sent by Winston); violence is the only option (the guards are all undead); time is of the essence; Celia does not want to actually leave.

ALTERNATIVE USES

The PCs must break into a temple to assassinate a Cult leader, the PCs have to sneak into an orc encampment to rescue captured soldiers, the PCs must find a hidden cave to recover a fabled relic.



THE CON GAME

The PCs have a powerful enemy, one who has something they want. They could infiltrate his estate and steal the item, but that's just got no class. Plus, his guards are very heavily armed. For whatever reason, the PCs want to pull a scam. Of course, everything may not go according to their plan...

ACT 1: FINDING THE MARK

The PCs must first identify who they wish to pull the con off against and why. Is it the criminal underboss, who has several hundred gold crowns he's not letting his superiors know about? Is it the youngest son of a noble family with an embarrassing secret that the perfect scam will expose at just the right time?

The goals for the act are to identify the mark and the party's objective in scamming him. Savvy PCs may also gather as much information about the mark as possible. For example, if the mark is Fat Willy, the halfling smuggler, it might be helpful to know that he has a fondness for Bretonnian wine and loves the game of Black Emperor.

Observation and Intuition checks may be very valuable during this act, as well as Charm and Guile to wheedle some information out of well-placed individuals. This act probably plays out in story mode.

ACT 2: SETTING UP THE SCAM

Once they have their mark, the PCs must devise a cunning plan. Since it is the other players doing the planning, this act requires minimal preparation on the part of the GM. All the GM needs to know is the setting – all the characters and locations involved and how those characters are likely to respond. There's no need for a formal structure to this act – the PCs will be creating that structure as they go.

As they plan, the PCs will also need to lay the groundwork for their scam. If they're planning on getting Fat Willy to gamble his hidden ill-gotten gains on a rigged game of Black Emperor, they're going to need a place to play, a marked deck of cards, and probably some fine Bretonnian wine. Dealers may need to be bribed or blackmailed, and other players for the game lined up.

Again, this act is likely to play out in story mode – and be unusually chaotic. The GM should be prepared for his players to come up with just about anything!

ACT 3: PLAYING THE CON

Finally, the action. The PCs engage with the mark and run their scam. Playing out the scam may be one or more formally-structured encounters – use the plan devised by the PCs in act two as a framework to build the encounter around.

A progress tracker may be used to track the passage of time for a particularly intricate plan (“Okay, we need to get Fat Willy to pass beneath the Openheim Bridge just as the sun is shining through the spire of the Temple of Verena – that's the first event space.”). Or you may wish to employ a progress track just to manage the overall success or failure of the scheme itself.

NARRATIVE CONTROL

This episode is rather different from the others in that it puts the PCs in control of the action – they are the active force in this episode, rather than merely reacting to what the villains are doing.

Using the PCs as the impetus for the story may be intimidating – who knows what they're going to do!? However, it is certain to make the players feel more involved in the story. A GM who listens to his players will find that they will often write acts one and two for him, and leave him plenty of room to design a surprising and exciting act three. A very basic improvised three-act structure might be:

Act One: the players discuss their plan of action and decide on their own objectives. It's not even necessary for an NPC to be involved at this stage, although if nothing else adding one to the scene gives the GM a voice in the discussion.

Act Two: the plan unfolds, more or less as the PCs intend. The GM will add some minor complications (more guards than expected, the quarry takes a different route, etc.) and manage the opposing force, just as usual.

Act Three: the plan comes to a climax – a daring escape, a final battle with a dangerous foe, a public humiliation for a political enemy. Alternately, the plan might need to be abandoned entirely as a sudden and unexpected twist throws the PCs off balance.

Of course, the plan is unlikely to survive contact with the enemy intact, and the GM is encouraged to throw enough complications at the PCs to force them to improvise wildly.

POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS

The mark is trying to run a counter-scam; the stakes for failure are extremely high (possibly even fatal!); the mark is just playing along to see what the PCs have in store for him; someone else is trying to run a con on the mark at the same time, and the PC's scheme may run afoul of the separate con; the mark turns out to be entirely different from what the PCs thought – he is smarter than he looks, dumber than he looks, not who they originally thought he was, a Chaos worshipper.

ALTERNATE USES

The most obvious twist is to invert the whole structure and make the PCs the subject of the scam. The trick is that in this case, the PCs being identified as the mark and the scam being set up have to either happen “off camera” or must be disguised as something else – if the players realise that their characters are being set up for a scam, it will be almost impossible to fool them.

DELICATE NEGOTIATIONS

Two rival factions are poised to explode into violence. The PCs either have personal ties to both factions, or require the factions to present a united front to further the PC's long-term goals. It's hard to defend the town from an impending greenskin Waaagh! when the two noble families that call the town home are busy murdering each other.

ACT 1: THE FIRST PARTY

The PCs meet with the first party in the delicate negotiations – a son of the von Montag family. They learn the principal players in the drama (the heads of the von Montag and Kapfler families, as well as their sons and daughters) and the principal complaints being argued, but they learn all this information from a heavily biased source, who paints the von Montag family in the best possible light and the Kapflers as the worst kind of scum.

During this act, the players should become acquainted with the scope of the dispute, the consequences of its escalation, and should at least glean an idea of who to go to next. For example, the von Montag's favoured son, Rutger, vanished while attending a party hosted by Thibald Kapfler. The von Montags believe that Thibald and his family had him killed in retaliation for a minor trade dispute. The PCs have a sense of the dispute and a clue to follow to lead them into act two – in this case, Thibald Kapfler.

ACT 2: THE SECOND PARTY

Act two is in some ways a repeat of act one, only this time from the Kapfler point of view. Each specific complaint and issue is re-examined, and the other side of the story is explained.

Naturally, the von Montags suddenly don't look so wholesome, and the Kapflers do their best to endear themselves to the PCs, as well. For example, Rutger von Montag was thrown out of the Kapfler estate after making several lewd, drunken comments. And Johanna Kapfler, Thibald's young sister, has been missing since that night! The Kapflers blame the von Montags for her disappearance, although they're not certain if it was a murder or a kidnapping.

ACT 3: MUTUAL BENEFITS

Now that the PCs have heard the story from both sides, they must either choose a side and take steps to end the dispute (which may involve blackmail, assassination, or any number of other schemes), carefully negotiate a settlement agreeable to both sides, or discover the truth behind the dispute, which will settle the disagreement in its own right.

For example, clever PCs may get on the trail of Rutger von Montag and find that he and Johanna Kapfler have eloped and are living in a house on the edge of the district. Discovering them and returning them to their families may mend the dispute and allow the families to put aside their long feud.

While acts one and two are likely to play out in story mode, act three may take the form of a detailed social encounter.

THE CLASSICS

Astute readers will notice that the von Montag and Kapfler families, and the story of Rutger and Johanna, bear a similarity to a certain two households, both alike in dignity, from the works of a famous playwright. In fact, they are thinly veiled re-uses of the Montagues and Capulets from Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*.

Taking a classic story and putting a uniquely *Warhammer* spin on it is a great way to explore the setting. The truly devious can even use what the players know about the classic story to defy expectations and throw them for a loop. What if Johanna Kapfler really is unwilling, but Rutger von Montag is using the magic of Slaanesh to control her...?

POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS

Both sides are guilty of crimes against each other; one side is actually evil (a Chaos cult, harbouring a necromancer); both sides are actually evil and not to be trusted; members of the party have ties to different sides – with predictable results for party tension; both sides distrust the PCs and may unite against them; the hidden truth does not resolve the conflict – it makes things worse!

ALTERNATE USES

The PCs may have some item or power (probably political in nature, such as a trade contract or the favour of a noble patron) that is desirable to two or more factions. These factions each approach the PCs and do their best to ingratiate themselves and paint their rivals as undesirables.

ABSTRACTED LOCATIONS

This episode is a good opportunity to use location cards in a more extended, abstracted sense, even during story mode. Rather than depicting specific terrain or areas, locations can be used to represent the different areas where the PCs can interact with the various NPCs in the episode.

The PC standups can indicate who they are currently meeting with, and provide a clear sense of where the participants in the story are. Perhaps in your version, Rutger and Johanna are hiding in nearby caves while their families remain at their estates.



THE DELIVERY

Overview: The PCs encounter a broken-down merchant cart on the road. The merchant, Karl, pleads for the PCs to aid him in making a delivery. Karl has a suspicious package in the cart that he says must reach Marienburg as soon as possible. He will handsomely reward the PCs if they agree to deliver the package.

ACT 1: WHAT'S IN THE BOX?

The PCs acquire the item and receive instructions as to where to deliver it. The PCs might negotiate with Karl regarding their payment. A progress tracker can be used to determine how well the PCs haggle, with event spaces to represent their growing (or shrinking) payment for the job.

If the PCs are suspicious of Karl, they might offer to assist him in fixing his cart and then accompany him to Marienburg. This course of action would be wise, as the package contains a large amount of refined warpstone destined for a black market dealer in Marienburg. Karl wants to avoid delivering the package himself (with good reason), but reluctantly agrees to these terms should the PCs present them to him.

Once the PCs are in possession of the package, with knowledge of their destination, proceed to Act 2.

ACT 2: HANDLE WITH CARE

The PCs travel to Marienburg. This journey proves a tough one. The party will undoubtedly encounter obstacles on the road.

Use a progress tracker to represent the PCs' journey with plenty of event spaces to symbolise hazards, stops, or possible places of interest. If the party must travel through the woods to make their delivery, they might encounter bandits who are overly curious about the package they carry. Perhaps they stumble upon beastmen or get lost in the woods. They might encounter severe weather, forcing them to seek refuge.

This act should be littered with obstacles for the party to overcome before making their delivery. Whether this act plays out as a long journey broken up into various other episodes, or a shorter journey with more immediate obstacles, it ends when the PCs reach Marienburg.

ACT 3: IN THE RIGHT HANDS

The PCs deliver the item and collect their payment. This could be another social encounter in which the PCs haggle over their reward, or perhaps they are betrayed and this turns into a fight.

If they somehow lost the item during the delivery, the intended recipient might send the PCs to retrieve it. Or they might accuse the PCs of stealing it and order them to be arrested, that is if the recipient has some sort of authority. If the PCs don't know who they are delivering the package to, they might deliver it to the wrong person. If anyone discovers the warpstone, the PCs face dire consequences.

The PCs might simply have to deliver the item to a location and then return to Karl for their reward. If that is the case, the PCs might have to spend this act getting into the location and putting the object in the right place. For example, the dealer might be a member of a thieves' guild and he is not easily found.

THE MACGUFFIN

MacGuffin is a term used in fiction to define a plot element of some significant importance. It is not always important to the story for the exact nature of the MacGuffin to be defined. Similarly, the object the PCs are delivering does not need to be defined or identified.

In fact, it might add some mystery and intrigue if the PCs are kept unaware of what they carry. For example, a wounded Witch Hunter entrusts the PCs with a sealed document to be delivered to his captain. When they deliver it to the captain, they might be rewarded and then dismissed, leaving them very curious about the document. This way, the MacGuffin could fuel future episodes.

This toolkit includes several item cards that are ideal for use as a MacGuffin. The Locked Chest, Mysterious Flask, Forbidden Tome, and Dwarf Horn can all serve as the focus of an episode or even an entire adventure. For a plot that deals with cursed items, the Profane Artefact and Eldritch Weapon can also serve the same role.

By using an item card to represent the MacGuffin, the PCs attention can be focused on that item; they know it's important, because there's a card. Using a card can also clear up any confusion as to who has the MacGuffin when the Witch Hunter comes sniffing around...

POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS

The recipient is a fraud (an imposter in disguise); the warpstone is difficult to handle (large, awkward); the PCs don't know how to get to Marienburg; the PCs discover that the package is warpstone (they must decide to carry on or back out of the deal).

ALTERNATIVE USES

The PCs must deliver a prisoner from Point A to Point B, the PCs must deliver a cursed item (borrowing elements from the Cursed Item), the PCs must intercept a delivered item/person.

PLOT DRIVING ITEMS

Several of the included item cards lend themselves well to use as the MacGuffin – entire scenarios or campaigns can centre around discovering or identifying items like the Mysterious Flask, Dwarf Horn, Profane Artefact or Locked Chest. A magical item such as the Enchanted Shield could be the ultimate goal of a greater quest.





CHAPTER THREE

MAKING PROGRESS

The progress tracker is a versatile tool for streamlining or tracking a variety of different mechanical elements in your *Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay* game. It can also be used as a storytelling aide in its own right. Several uses are described in this chapter.

PUBLIC OR PRIVATE

The meaning of a progress tracker can be as apparent to the players as the GM wishes. Sometimes he will keep track entirely in secret, the players might not even know he is using a track. Sometimes he will place the track in full view and explain the entire thing to his players, letting them know the meaning of every space and token. Making the track public or private can mirror, to a degree, the characters' understanding of the situation.

If an expert cat burglar is keeping an eye on the PCs, and the players and PCs do not know they are even being followed, then it might make sense to keep that track completely secret. If the PCs need to build a raft before the tide comes in, then the progress of the raft and the height of the tide will be apparent, and that would be a situation where it would fit for the PCs to see exactly how things are progressing on the tracker. Having the progress tracker in full view can add an air of urgency, or tension, or expectation to the situation.

One very important factor to consider about having a tracker on view is that it draws the eye and it focuses attention. It is not just a measuring tool. As Schroedinger's Ratman testifies, you cannot measure a rat, without annoying that rat. If you decide torches need to be kept track of on an expedition into the darkness, then immediately the players will begin to think about their torches, and connected elements, like other supplies, and ways out.

If you wish to track what a wealthy merchant thinks of the PCs, then the players will immediately have a notion that what the merchant thinks is important to the plot and should be important to them. And in all likelihood they, will then try to impress him. Access to this meta-game knowledge is not necessarily a good thing or a bad thing, but the GM needs to consider its impact.

ANONYMOUS TRACKS

It need not be the case that only information that the players or PCs explicitly know should be represented by tracks in full view of everyone, or even that the players should know what a track is for. Sometimes it can be effective to lay a track on the table whose function may be a mystery.

Perhaps Wilhelm the roadwarden is creeping through a deserted cemetery in pursuit of a mysterious bone collector. Simply putting the track down when Wilhelm enters the cemetery will be enough





to add tension to the situation. Wilhelm and his player are entering the unknown, and the unknown track mirrors this. The player's suspicions might be aroused, but since Wilhelm is creeping about in a creepy place in the dead of night, that's only to be expected.

When Wilhelm attempts a tracking check and generates a bane, the GM adjusts one of the tracking tokens and immediately the tension ratchets up a notch. The player knows something is going to happen sooner or later. Can Wilhelm find the bone collector before the collector (or something else) finds him?

Similarly, the GM can add unattributed tokens to tracks. The PCs might think they know what is going on, and they have a clear idea of what a track is being used for, but adding a mystery token will let them know all is not as it seems and that some other unknown factor might be at work.

TRACK TYPES

The progress tracker can be constructed many different ways. Several examples are provided here.

THE LINE TRACK

The line is the simplest type of track, and is the most commonly used. It starts at one end and goes along until the other end. A good use of a line track might be to track an arduous journey. The GM could chart separately on the same track, for example, food, the cold, and the morale of the PCs' guide.

Once the food runs out, or the cold becomes unbearable, or the guide has had enough, then the PCs may suffer fatigue or stress or both, every day. If all three factors reach the end of the track, then the PCs are in big trouble.



In the episode template *Warned Off* from the previous chapter, Wilhelm the roadwarden might be investigating the activities of a well known crime lord.

Every time he pushes too hard, or says the wrong thing, or perhaps generates a bane in his interactions with underworld figures, these results turn the crime lord against Wilhelm, and the tracking token is advanced. When it reaches the first event space then Act I occurs. When it reaches the second, then Act II begins. If the Progress Track is visible, then Wilhelm's player may get an inkling that what he is doing is upsetting people.

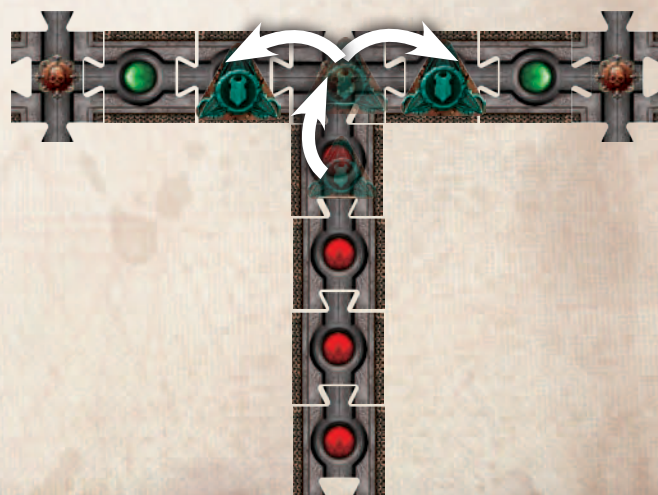
THE T TRACK

The defining characteristic of the T track is an event space which represents an important change, a vital decision, the moment of truth, or a significant turn of events. Any number of things could be worth mapping at the T junction, as long as the differentiation in the track is worthwhile. The two diverging tracks should be distinctly different.

For example, Wilhelm the roadwarden finds himself trudging through a hazardous bog. When he reaches the event space, that might represent two clear tracks heading off in opposite directions. Wilhelm must decide which way to go. Or, slightly more abstract, the intersection could simply represent the right way and the wrong way and the choice could be handled by a Nature Lore check. One branch of the T might represent heading towards the centre of the marsh, a much longer route with greater dangers.

A T could represent the first impressions given to a prospective patron. The patron might impulsively make up his mind about Wilhelm. If the patron sees Wilhelm favourably then the roadwarden will not have to work too hard at convincing him to pull out all the stops in his support for Wilhelm's endeavours. If the patron's initial impression is not good, then getting support from him will involve much more effort and persuasion.

Another use of the T-shaped progress track could be to represent a splitting of forces. If the party is chasing a pair of thieves, and the thieves split up, the party must also either split up or let one of the



thieves get away. This situation turns a single task into two separate, parallel tasks, with two separate sets of results for success or failure.

THE LADDER TRACK

This is a line track that goes up and down. It's not really any different from a line track, except the up and down orientation suggests a loss and gain, or a rise and fall, usually of the PCs' or their allies' well being. The simple change of perspective can show extra significance or hint at grave consequences.

For example, the PCs have bought some expensive Averlander brandy and are trying to sell it at the Wurstfest. The going rate for brandy is a bit less than they had hoped (everyone prefers beer with their sausage). They need to talk up the quality of their wares and promote the product better. The ladder shows whether this is working and the price is going up, or if their efforts are putting people off and the price is dropping further.

The ladder could offer a dramatic way to save someone from poisoning or disease. The GM sets a track with half a dozen spaces and starts a token at the top. The victim makes a Toughness check every hour. If he fails, the token slips one space down the ladder. If it reaches the bottom, the poor soul dies.

Visually tracking the ravages of the poison adds urgency to the quest for the antidote or cure. It does not matter that realistically the PCs would not know how the victim was getting on, or how close he is to death, or that his proximity to death could even be measured. If using the ladder is good for the story and makes an exiting backdrop to the action, that's what really matters.

THE TUG-OF-WAR TRACK

The tug-of-war progress track is similar to a line track except the tracking token starts in the middle. It moves back and forth to indicate which side is dominant, more relevant, or has the upper hand. If one side starts with an advantage, the token begins slightly to one side. The tug-of-war gives the impression of an ebb and flow, strike and counterstrike, rather than a race.



However, it should be noted that this sort of track may not result in a clear ending. A token getting to the last space on one side generally indicates a victory, but in a closely fought battle, this might take forever. A GM could use a tug-of-war track for an arm wrestle, or a battle of wits or an argument over a particularly contentious point.

For example, two initiates are hotly debating a subtle point of theology from the points of view of their respective cults. The Sigmarite announces that violence is inherent within the state, and should

therefore be encouraged. He rolls two successes and moves the token two spaces to the right. The Shallyan responds with a famous quote about mercy, and generates one success, moving the token back one space toward her side. The Sigmarite tsks at that and quotes Sigmar himself on the inevitability of destruction and rolls a success, pulling the token back toward his side. The side the tracking token currently rests on indicates which side is currently "winning" the argument or contest, which can influence how the scene or action resolves.

Often, the tug-of-war structure of a progress tracker is best used in a situation where absolute "success" and "failure" aren't the only factors influencing the outcome of an event. The end condition for the scene should be external to the progress tracker (due to the risk of stalemate) with the tracker merely determining conditions or helping provide context for how the action resolves.

For example, during a large-scale battle the characters struggle to evacuate a temple. The tug-of-war track indicates whether the temple defenders or the attacking goblins are winning the battle – while the goblins are winning, groups of goblins keep arriving on the scene, while the temple defenders are winning, the goblins do not appear.

In this example, the status of the tracker is relevant to the characters – they may wish to make Leadership checks or perform other actions to assist the temple defenders – but the end of the scene is when the temple is completely evacuated or the refugees all killed by the goblins, events which are likely being tracked or managed in a different way.

PARTY TENSION METER

The party tension meter is an example of a simple line track. Various factors affect the progress of the tracking token moving forwards and backwards along the line. The players can all see the progress and can react to it in character as they wish. The state of the track inspire roleplaying and the attitude of the PCs. Likewise, roleplaying actions may have consequences on the party's tension.

There are many ways to look at the party tension meter. It measures, in an abstract way, the difficulty the party is having, collectively, with each other over the course of an adventure. The sorts of things that should be measured depend on the player group and the PC party, and necessarily will be particular to the play style of the

WHO DOES IT SERVE?

Remember, the point of using a progress tracks is to help the GM tell the story, keep his players interested and engaged, and manage details of the adventure without a lot of book-keeping. Progress tracks can be used in various ways, as discussed throughout this chapter, to enhance the story and help it flow.

However, if the track is ever getting in the way of these goals, don't forget that the story should take precedence. No one will mind if the GM moves a bit off track, or skips over a few spaces at the right time, if the story is enhanced and everyone is having a good time.

USING THE PRE-BUILT TRACK

Included with this toolkit is a sturdy pre-built progress track the GM can use for a variety of actions and events. The pre-built track provides a solid baseline and general purpose track the GM can rely on in a pinch. The GM can also customise the track by adding other event and tracking spaces as desired.



Here are just a few examples of how the pre-built track can be adapted quickly to various tasks.

Goblin Morale: Advance the morale token when a goblin is slain or subjected to a Fear or similar effect. When the token reaches the middle event marker, the goblins begin to waver and suffer a misfortune die on all checks. When the token reaches the end of the track, the goblins break and run.

Negotiations: Advance the party token each time the PCs successfully influence their subject with a social skill or action. Advance the tracking token an additional space if the players use an interesting or strong argument. Meanwhile, advance a rival token every round, or faster for failed checks or Chaos Stars ✱. If the rival token reaches the end of the track first, the PCs have failed in their attempt to influence the subject. If the party token has reached the first event marker when this happens, then the subject makes a minor or incomplete concession – he won't give the PCs the Witch Hunter's box, for example, but perhaps he is willing to sell it to them. If the party token reaches the end of the track first, the subject complies with their request.

Back-and-Forth: Begin the token in the middle and move it back and forth in response to victories (successful skill checks in social encounters, or critical hits or defeated foes in combat encounters) for one side or the other. While the token is on a green space, the "green team" (perhaps the PC party) gains a bonus. While the token is on a red space, the "red team" (perhaps the PC's enemies) gains a similar bonus.

Time of Day: Advance the time token after each full encounter or period of extended activity or downtime the party engages in. When the time token reaches the first event space, it is mid-day. When the time token reaches the last event space, it's evening.

group. The tracking token can be moved by things as simple and straight forward as the PCs' socks getting wet, and as subtle and complex as the way the players go about planning a bank heist.

The tool is not designed to be a way for the GM to force players into playing how he wishes. Nor is it there to punish. It is there to mark the changing of circumstances and the readiness of the party, in a similar way to how things like wounds and fortune mark the readiness of an individual PC. It is there, however, for the GM to make the players aware of certain factors, especially in relation to game effects upon the party as a whole, and the PCs' and players' interaction with each other.

With this in mind, the tracking token can be moved along the party tension meter for a number of reasons. Having some party members fail a fear or terror test while others succeed could lead to increased tension. Having one PC regularly having to be rescued by the others could increase tension every time it happens. If several party members start to feel that one PC is not pulling his weight, that frustration could also contribute to party tension.

If a PC gets intimidated or flustered by an NPC, that might raise the tension. If a party member is arrested, or has a run-in with the watch, or is rude to his betters, or disrespects another's cult, the others might look on that disapprovingly... there are a number of interesting reasons why tension may increase.

There is also tension to be gained from temporary circumstances and surroundings. For example, getting caught in a heavy down-pour, getting cold and wet, being in a creepy location like a cemetery or catacombs, being in a very smart and sophisticated place while wearing soiled campaign garb, being in a really bad neighbourhood after dark, finding a sacred place has been desecrated or being in a temple of the dark gods, being in the presence of famous people – each of these situations may create anxiety and increase the overall party tension. The GM may wish to adopt the option that any ✱ rolled in an important party context, that has no other function, may warrant an increase in party tension.

PLAYER AUTHORITY

A group may decide that players, as well as the GM, may move tracking tokens on the progress track. This can be good for the party spirit, even if it sounds like it might have the opposite effect, as it shows trust in the group. The GM still has the last word on any tracker movement, however, but is open to the players' input.

One PC might insult another PC, the sort of thing that can happen a lot in a party. This insult can be put down to banter and camaraderie. However, if the player moves the tracking token up as he does so, then that is a sign that the PC's insult should be taken more seriously. Similarly, after a good joke, in or out of character, a player may move the tracking token down a notch, showing how the tension has relaxed, and that he appreciates the witticism.

If a player feels the atmosphere of the adventure or the way the characters have been interacting merits it, he may move the tracking token. Players in a party that has been trudging through a swamp for several hours, with no sign of what it has been searching for, may move the tracker ever upwards to demonstrate their characters' dissatisfaction with their predicament and increasing irascibility.

HELP OR HINDRANCE

The party tension meter can cause unhelpful things to happen to the party. As the token is pushed along the progress track, the party becomes disadvantaged. It is natural for a player to wish to avoid that happening. However, the meter is also a tool for measuring one aspect of the story, and in that respect, the players benefit from it.

Players should not run scared of the tension meter. They should never avoid playing out interesting scenes, or suppress their role-playing because they are concerned about the negative effects of the event spaces. Therefore, there is a difficult balance for the GM to find between inflicting the consequences of the tension meter and encouraging the sort of play that can enhance the game. The players should never feel like they are being punished because of the tension meter. Instead, they should be amused and inspired by the state of the meter. After all, this is Warhammer! A spike in party tension can be just as fun and memorable as a conspicuous scar, dramatically appropriate insanity, or difficult battle.

PACING THE PROGRESS

Perhaps the most important feature of the progress tracker is that the tracking tokens do, in fact, progress along the track. These tokens represent a wide variety of factors, as previously discussed, and an equally wide variety of triggers can cause them to move. Careful thought into what effects cause the tokens to move is just as important as any other considerations when it comes to using a progress track.

THE PASSAGE OF TIME

In many cases, tokens can advance for as simple a reason as the end of an encounter round. This practice is widely used when the progress tracker is monitoring a situation that proceeds at a fixed rate – for example, a building burning to the ground, or the gradual approach of enemy reinforcements. The token may also progress when the PCs waste time, such as when they roll delay ☹ symbols or spend time arguing instead of acting.

CHARACTER ACTION

Often the token progresses because of something the PCs or NPCs do directly. In a social encounter, it is possible that successful Charm or Guile checks advance the PCs' goals. Possibly the goblins fling torches on village huts, advancing their own agenda.

Tokens that move due to direct PC or NPC action give the players some "ownership" over the track, a direct way to influence the story. Care must be given, however, to balance the encounter such that the characters must do more than simply press the "token advance button" at every available opportunity. Perhaps only one PC has the relevant skill to attempt the check and the others must cover him. Perhaps each given tactic only works once.

THE VAGARIES OF FATE

Tracks that advance semi-randomly based on die results (usually Chaos Stars ✨) can be a fun way to add uncertainty to encounters. Everyone knows the mine will collapse eventually...but when!?

NARRATIVE PROMPTS

Sometimes the triggers for the progress trackers will be more abstract. Each clue the PCs discover may advance their token, or each strong argument they make to the burgomeister.

Even if the GM has a strong mechanical basis for advancing his tokens, it is good to remain flexible to be able to respond to player input. If an encounter uses a morale tracker for the goblins, declaring that the token advances for each goblin slain or critically wounded is a fine start. But if a PC makes good use of the Intimidate skill or wields fearsome magic, a savvy GM will also use those prompts to move the token.





CHAPTER FOUR

ENJOYING THE JOURNEY

A big part of the fun of roleplaying is the sense of immersion into another world and the feeling that everyone is sharing in that world. The vast and detailed background of the Warhammer world is a great asset in this respect, but it is the smaller, more mundane details that serve most to bring out the feeling of a shared experience. Just like the characters in the Warhammer world, and people in everyday life, the players in the game feel more affinity for a poor ex-merchant begging in tattered robes outside the ostentatious façade of the Grand Theatre, than for vast armies arrayed upon some distant battlefield, or an Emperor they may never meet.

A roleplaying game is a journey, and just like in real life, that journey can be worthwhile for its own sake. In the case of roleplaying games, the journey should be more important than the destination; it is largely why we play. If the GM and players take the trouble to explore seemingly unimportant details, it can add to the story, the sense of immersion, and the sense of reality. There is no need to rush through the game in search of a goal. The goal is to enjoy the game.

Just as in a movie, a great scene can stand on its own and be worthwhile for its own sake. Crashing in on an underworld figure and interrogating him can be important to the overall plot, but the scene also can be worthwhile for its own sake. It can say a lot about the characters, their enemies, the atmosphere of the setting, the tone of the game, and the themes of the story. If the scene goes

well it can end up a memorable one that players talk about for years afterwards. Any effort put into the scene becomes its own reward and contributes to a game that becomes even greater than the sum of its parts.

INTERPRETING THE DICE

One of the features of WFRP is a dice pool mechanic that allows players to see which aspects of the character and the environment contribute to a task resolution. And once the dice are rolled, players can see which of those aspects contributed to success or failure, or had other effects on the outcome of the task. This transparency is a powerful tool that can be used to bring extra detail and context to the game. It can also be easily ignored to no detriment, to suit the pace of the action.

When the pace of the game allows, looking into significant or interesting dice rolls to see which factors were decisive and working that into the narrative can be rewarding. For example, a close success containing a couple of righteous successes from expertise dice would show that the character's training was the deciding factor. His player would know that if the character had not put the time in to train that skill then it would have meant certain failure in that instance. A bad roll apart from some decisive successes on fortune dice might mean the overall success was due to dumb luck or the will of the gods.

The GM should take responsibility for interpreting his own dice rolls and contributing to the interpretation of his players' dice rolls. The way the dice fall can inspire additions to the plot and reveal nuances about NPCs that the GM might never otherwise have thought of. For example, a PC might survey a crowded market scene for where the assassin discarded his murder weapon. The GM might not have even considered whether the assassin would dispose of his poisoned dagger, but a successful roll, with boons or a comet, might perhaps convince the GM that the PC can see something glinting beneath the fishmonger's stall. An NPC who fails a fear check with no rolled successes at all might be given an appropriate phobia, on the fly. Or a PC who rolled four boons while trying to charm a free drink out of the barmaid might suddenly find he has a hopelessly devoted admirer.

FEEDBACK

The dice pool conveys information even without detailed analysis. A player will soon notice how generally good his expertise dice are, and will learn that training in skills is a very useful thing. He might notice that going too reckless too often leads to a quick accumulation of fatigue. "When I exert myself I get tired," might seem like stating the obvious, but it's not that obvious in many other roleplaying games.

The constant feedback from the dice can educate a player about when to vary his stances and when to add fortune dice – and is another aspect of the game that brings detail. This detail can be described explicitly, becoming part of the narrative when appropriate, or can be ignored or put in the background at other times. No one notices much if one time, when it didn't matter, the dice indicated that a character performed some action slowly and carefully. However in time-critical situations, the dice indicating a character is being overly cautious and taking up too much time is a great story detail – the sort of thing that defines a character's personality and how he is perceived by his colleagues. Even if the player does not take the time to explain what he gleans to the rest of the group, it is still grist for his own personal story, and may inform how he views and displays his character's personality.

THE KEEPER OF SECRETS

The player's dice pool usually contains information derived from both his PC and his NPC opponent's characteristics. Because of this, a player should often be able to get a good idea of an opponent's characteristics simply from the number of challenge dice the player must roll. The misfortune dice added to the pool can also be instructive. This transparency is often a good thing. Characters can get a good idea of someone's prowess from the way he fights, or get an impression of how charming he can be just from talking to him. But sometimes the dice pool can give away too much. Sometimes it contains information that the GM wants to keep from the player.

The GM might not want to let the PCs know how well they have searched a room for clues, so they won't know whether they have missed anything. Secrecy can be achieved by taking some of the challenge or misfortune dice from the pool and rolling these dice in secret, while the other dice are rolled in public.

For checks made by NPCs, the GM is at more liberty to roll them secretly. There could be any number of things that the PCs are not aware of and that the GM may wish to keep from them. The GM can roll the entire pool secretly or just enough of it to reflect the

fog of war. But *Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay* is a game that lends itself to open rolling and shared interpretations, so the GM should endeavour to roll in the open whenever possible.

Having said that, just because the players do not know something explicitly is not necessarily a reason to keep rolls secret. Adding dice to a pool for an unknown reason is an excellent way to give an impression of the situation without giving away unknowable details. For example, Willi the Roadwarden is fighting a walking corpse, which is attacking him determinedly and ignoring his colleagues. The GM adds three fortune dice to all its attacks for no reason that Willi's player can see, because the corpse is on a mission to get back the enchanted ring of Nehek that Willi unwittingly picked up earlier. The three white dice are more than a mechanic: they are also a clue.

CHARACTERISTICS AND OTHER ABSTRACTIONS

Roleplayers are very familiar with the idea of expressing their character's abilities in a few abstract statistics. Players and GMs should give some thought to what those characteristics actually mean in play. A high strength could mean the character is a hulking brute, or it could mean a small wiry fellow with the ability to apply his strength effectively. A high Fellowship could mean a confident and attractive person as much as it could mean a shy, retiring character that people might naturally take to. These are all details that get brought into the game at the discretion of the players. Using abstractions for characteristics is second nature to roleplayers, but players might find there are other abstractions in *Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay* that take a bit more thought.





ABSTRACT ABILITIES AND RESOLUTIONS

Many of the functions of actions, talents, career abilities, and wounds are expressed in game terms only. That is, only the effect on the mechanical nature of play is shown. Just like with interpreting dice pool results and rationalising characteristics these effects provide another opportunity to bring creativity to the game. Players can think about what the mechanic can mean in terms of the setting and the story and bring that to the roles they play.

For example, once per session, as a career ability, an Envoy gets to treat his Fellowship as one point higher than it is. This mechanic is simple to use, but the game can benefit from thinking through what this might mean from a roleplaying perspective. Is this benefit provided by some sort of training undergone by elves who aspire to be Envoys? Does it stem from a fanatical desire to serve the elf race, or a fear of failure?

Similarly, the Gang of Thugs party sheet gives a +1 damage bonus for a limited time. This could be played strictly for its mechanical benefit, or it can roleplayed whereby, on cue, all the characters revert to type and the party demonstrates exactly where they get their reputation from. That has to be more fun. The rule informs the roleplaying, and the roleplaying justifies the rule.

WFRP creatures have many special actions available to them, which when used can bring increased atmosphere to an encounter when the GM takes time to describe the ways the creatures act and attack and the uniqueness of their abilities. The action effects can also benefit from some thought and time. A wargor's Fearsome Charge action has the chance of causing the "rattled" effect. But if the GM makes an effort to describe just how fearsome the charge is, and goes into some detail of how the bloody attack is resolved, then he might get to rattle the players, too.

Some actions and abilities have names or text or descriptions that specify, to an extent, what is going on. Others leave the description much more up to interpretation and creativity. However, even when a description suggests one explanation for an effect, there is nothing to prevent the GM or players from making up some other narrative explanation that suits the mechanical outcome.

Action cards provide another fertile field for creativity. For example, a character might have acquired the Cut & Run action card, which allows him to attack and disengage from an enemy in a single action. If that character is a swift and nimble elf, perhaps his player describes the action in terms of a delicately-placed slash and a spinning retreat, using all the blazing speed of the elf's birthright. That same action card might be described very differently by a dwarf player, who views it as placing his hob-nailed boot on the foe's chest and shoving him bodily back. Signature moves and styles of fighting, as represented by action cards, are replete with opportunities to personalise and enhance the story.

Spells and blessings deserve special mention. Some of these special action cards include brief descriptions of their visual effects, but there's nothing preventing players from going into more depth, or even departing substantially from what's already there. Perhaps a particular bright wizard, inspired by the legend of the phoenix, favours birdlike imagery, and his Flameblast spell takes the form of a fiery bird streaking towards the target. Perhaps another bright wizard's Flaming Sword of Rhuin takes the form of the Key of Secrets, the rune of *Aqshy*. Priestly blessings can be differentiated the same way. Morr, for example, has two very different roles – that of the god of dreams and the god of the dead. Perhaps a particular Morrite priest chooses to favour Morr-as-Reaper while in reckless stance, and uses skulls and similar imagery in his descriptions of his blessings. That same priest might choose to favour Morr-as-Dreamer in conservative stance, and focus on black roses and ravens while doing so.

STANCES

Stances are an important and often used tool in WFRP and can contribute a lot to the playing and enjoyment of the game's characters. Though the two stances have clear and descriptive names, there are many ways of looking at what the stances actually mean in play. The players should take the time to think about what a stance says about a character in general and at a particular moment.

Reckless stance can indicate any sort of attitude where the character is pushing himself in order to achieve his goals more quickly or more emphatically. This stance could be due to anger, confidence, desperation, a desire for vengeance, enthusiasm, fanaticism, self-righteousness, stupidity, haste, a swashbuckling daemon-may-care attitude, etc.

Conservative stance indicates the character is taking his time to get things right, picking his moment and taking care. This stance could be due to reliability, patience, timidity, cowardice, carefulness, deliberation, a considered approach, taking time to observe an opponent, sheer stubbornness, etc.

Even characters who weigh heavily to one side of the stance track should think about varying their stances in response to their circumstances. One character might favour the conservative stance when using his bow, for example, but whenever he finds himself in melee, he loses his cool and drifts towards the red side. Similarly, a character who charges in and goes to maximum recklessness to sort out a bunch of goblins, is an entirely different character to one who charges in and goes to maximum recklessness to sort out the evening meal.

Players can even think about why their characters are adopting that stance. Is the reason natural inclination, how they were taught, expectation, duty, convention, anxiety, instinct, or tactical advantage? In the end, stances, talents, actions, and all the other various mechanical elements of *Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay* can serve as narrative prompts. If players let them, these elements can be sparks for the imagination and hooks for the plot.



CHAPTER FIVE

ADVANCEMENT INSIGHTS

It is the nature of the world that the lives of Warhammer characters can be nasty, brutal, and short. There's a certain amount of fun to be had playing against the odds, making heroic last stands, and suffering a glorious death. But it doesn't have to be like that. One of the more fulfilling aspects of a WFRP game can be keeping one's character alive as long as possible. The more difficult that is, then the greater the sense of achievement.

The main tool used in WFRP for governing advancement and character progression is the career system. The career sheets present the most economical ways for each type of character to spend advances. The majority of advances that a player will likely want to spend come from the list on the career sheet. But WFRP does offer the opportunity to acquire advancements outside a character's chosen career. These advances usually cost a premium, as described on page 37 of the *Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay* rule book.

NON-CAREER ADVANCES

The restrictions imposed by careers serve to focus a character on his function in society and the role that he should be best suited to. This focus helps a player find a place in the world for – and should help him roleplay – his character. Sometimes a character develops in directions not associated with his career. He finds himself using

skills and characteristics not listed on his career sheet. This divergence is covered easily by purchasing non-career advances for the character, or slightly more drastically, changing careers.

In exceptional circumstances, the GM may consider allowing non-career advances to be purchased at a normal advancement cost, as if they were in-career. If the GM feels that the purchase is heavily supported by the story, possibly even necessitated by what has been going on in the game, or that otherwise the player would be effectively penalised for following the story, he is certainly at liberty to waive part of the extra cost of non-career advancements.

STANCE TRACK

If a player wishes, and is playing his character in a suitable manner, the GM may consider allowing the player to purchase stances not available on his career sheet. For example, a Burgher frantically trying to stop some nefarious plot to destroy his town, who has been blundering into situations, confronting suspects bluntly, and getting involved in trouble in his mad dash to thwart the scheme, may find himself using the reckless stance frequently to reflect his mood and his roleplaying.



It is a reasonable request for his player to buy additional reckless stance pieces instead of the conservative ones listed on his career sheet. Of course, if a player just wants the advance to help him optimise some of his actions, that is a different matter.

Similarly, even during character generation, if a player has an idea for his character that would be enhanced by stances that do not come with his character's career, then the GM may allow the player to start with a stance array the player feels best reflects his planned character.

WOUNDS

The GM might wish to consider the optional rule that whenever a character is brought to zero wounds and survives, then he may purchase, a single non-career advance for an extra wound, at the cost of a single advance point. This special advance will reflect the extra resolve and hardiness that might reasonably come from experiencing such brushes with death. The GM may rule that a character must display a lurid scar to qualify for this advance.

PARTY SHEETS

Over the course of a campaign, the nature of the party, how it operates, and how its members see themselves are bound to change. The change may be caused by the group changing personnel, characters changing careers, or circumstances offering new opportunities and adventures.

At key points during the party's career, the party should have the opportunity to change its identity. The end of a given adventure is an obvious choice for an appropriate moment, but the death of a party member or the addition of a new member of the party are also important, significant events that can change the tenor of intra-party relationships. Other story-events may also suggest themselves, and it's possible that the players may think of sound justifications on their own. If all the party members agree, then they should be allowed to change the party sheet, for free, to one that better reflects their new group identity.

The GM might consider allowing the PCs to keep two party sheets if this accurately reflects a dual nature of the party's activities. In this case, the new party sheet is purchased at the cost of one advance for each character in the party (which of course requires the entire party to agree). The players should bear in mind which role they are playing at any time and nominate an active sheet appropriate to the scene they are currently in.

INSANITIES

The core rules offer several ways of getting rid of insanities, either temporarily or permanently. The GM may wish to allow both Discipline checks and advances to permanently remove an insanity. If a player opts to try to remove an insanity (and there's no reason why he needs to – playing insanities can be fun), every month he can make a Discipline check, at a difficulty equal to the severity of the insanity. If he succeeds, then he may spend an advance. Once he has spent as many advances as the severity of the insanity, then the character is cured.

The player can roleplay a gradual amelioration as he slowly recovers, and gains successes, or he can play a sudden recovery, perhaps caused by a short sharp shock in the game. Either way, his recovery

should come with the story. Roleplaying the insanity and the eventual recovery are exciting elements that should be part of the game and part of the story.

The dice rolls and successes accumulated, the spending of advances, and the roleplaying all feed off each other. If the GM feels the roleplaying of the recovery is good and fits the character's story arc, the GM might even waive an advance expenditure, or rule that the Discipline check for this month automatically succeeds.

CHICKEN, EGG

There are few strict rules for the spending of advances and the improvement of a character in WFRP. There is no explicit need for training to improve a characteristic and no need for teaching by a learned sage to learn a new skill. The rationalisation for a given advance can all be done depending on the situation, and on the fly during the game.

Is the character now stronger because he has been running around looking for cultists, or because he takes time out to lift weights (even though he's never mentioned doing this before), or because as a young man he's getting stronger naturally, or because that last fight he was in made him realise a better way of using his body? Is he more skilled in observation because he is now more aware of what shapes the dangers to Reikland life take, or because he is more nervously on the look out for trouble? All these decisions are up to the player and GM – or can be safely ignored, if desired.

In stories and films, sometimes a character reveals hidden talents the audience would never have guessed he had. This can be a way of looking at character development in a roleplaying game. If the GM wishes, he can allow his players to save their advances and spend them as the need arises in the game, at the spur of the moment. This can appear odd to some players, but it is simply a more story-oriented way of looking at the game.

For example, Wilhelm the roadwarden is dangling over the River Reik, hanging onto the cliff edge by his fingertips. A disciple of the Rose Tiara is standing over him, gloating. Wilhelm, who we've never seen swim before, leaps from the cliff and swims to safety.

In this example, Wilhelm doesn't really have the Swim specialisation. Wilhelm has several advances unused and his player looks to the character sheet to see if he can spend some to help Wilhelm get out of the situation. A GM could rule that the characteristics and skills, etc. on the sheet represent what Wilhelm is capable of at the moment. A GM could rule that if the player wants to improve his character then he must do it at some other time, between sessions, or when there is an opportunity for study and training.

On the other hand, the players may decide that in this story, there is more to Wilhelm than his character sheet shows. Just because Wilhelm has not been swimming in the game, does not mean he cannot swim. The GM may wish to let Wilhelm's player spend advances there and then to help Wilhelm escape his predicament, provided he can come up with an interesting in-story reason or justification.

One advantage of gaining advances as and when they are needed is that the player can be sure his new found ability will come in handy at a critical moment. Neither on-the-fly nor between-session advancement is better or worse than the other. Both are valid, depending on how the GM and players feel most comfortable viewing the game. The most important consideration is consistency in adjudicating advances. If Wilhelm can do it, so can the other players.



CHAPTER SIX

SETTING THE SCENE

Encounters are the basic building blocks of any campaign. Creating them is as simple as coming up with an idea for a scene, figuring out how the PCs get into it, and then narrating and adjudicating the interaction and outcome. However, there are a lot of factors in each of those steps, and a little thought and preparation can make everything much smoother to run and more enjoyable for your group to play.

The following sections explore the underlying details of a good encounter and illustrate how the *Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay* rules and components can turn even a typical scene into an exciting and memorable encounter players will remember for years to come.

Picture a typical ambush scenario where the heroes are hired to escort a caravan of wagons through the lonely woods south of Altdorf. It's drizzling rain when the caravan stops for rest in a clearing. Little do the heroes know that a band of goblins waits in the woodline for the unfortunate travellers.

In most games, the encounter might start something like this: "It's a rainy morning. You're escorting a wagon train away from Altdorf when you stop for a midday rest. As you park the caravan in a nearby clearing, you're ambushed by a band of goblins." The GM might then set up a map, allow the players to place miniatures or counters for their PCs, place the goblin attackers, and then run the combat.

This approach will instantly put your players into tactical mode. They'll place their character standups and begin to think in terms of game rules and tactics. Good players will make wise use of their environment and begin talking about how best to use their powers and abilities in the coming fight. This approach can be a lot of fun for tactically-minded players, but less tactically-inclined players may feel there's too much die-rolling and movement-measuring and not enough roleplaying and collective narration.

Another GM might take a more narrative approach:

"The road from Altdorf is peppered with dozens of rain-filled potholes. Wagon-tracks are the only other feature, deep and treacherous from years of use. The forest to either side of you is thick and green. Water drips from the heavy foliage, evidence of the recent storms. It's near twilight and you decide to halt for a brief rest. As you park the heavy wagons in a grassy clearing, you think only of the miserable journey ahead and the warm inn and cold ale you left behind. But your ruminations are interrupted by a whizzing sound and a cry of pain from the guard atop the lead wagon. You glance left and spy the beady eyes of a small, green-skinned creature revelling in its cruel malice."

The narrative approach is more evocative and pushes the players to get in-character. In this style group, precise tactics often take a back seat to heroic action or graphic descriptions of wild and desperate attacks. A drawback, however, is that the GM might not

always be able to string together such elegant prose. And if it's written ahead of time, care must be taken not to let the game turn into a story-session with the GM doing most of the talking. This approach may also frustrate those players who are looking for something a bit more "crunchy" or tactical.

Both approaches are fine and have worked for years in countless roleplaying games, but *Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay* adds an all new dimension that intrinsically creates more drama and excitement without losing tactical manoeuvring or bogging down in minutiae. GMs have access to an exciting new system that takes the best of the two traditional approaches and combines them into something new and exciting that allows tactics, narration, and the game itself to all work together.

AN INTRODUCTION

Let's start with the introductory narration of an encounter. In describing the setup, published products often provide pre-written narratives that attempt to capture the nuances of the world - the sound of the rain, the cold of the forest, or the miserable feeling and dog-wet smell of the adventurer's cloaks. When creating their own scenarios, many GMs follow this practice and write their own "canned text" as well.

Introductory narration is a good way to communicate the tone of an encounter and immerse the group in some details of the world, but it's important not to let such an introduction get too long. A

THE FIVE SENSES

The world of Warhammer is an evocative place. When you're setting up a scene, take a few moments to think about each of the five senses and see if you can easily work a few of them into your text. In our running example of the caravan, the GM knows it's a cool fall evening on the road south of Altdorf. It's been raining frequently, and it's near twilight when the scene takes place. Closing his eyes and using his imagination, he comes up with the following ideas for each of the five senses:

Sight: The dim light, rainwater dripping off the trees, mud puddles, the soaked canvas of the wagons, the miserable look in the travellers' eyes as they endure the cold and constant drizzle.

Sound: The squish of the wagons in the muck, the quiet snort of horses, the sound of distant thunder, the "thwip" of arrows (after the fight starts).

Taste: The salty taste of raindrops running into the character's mouth, the thought of warm food back at the inn in Altdorf, a swig of ale taken to fight off the cold.

Touch: The constant cold, wet cloth rubbing against the skin, the suction of the mud as it attempts to pull off the adventurers' boots, the heft of a weapon carried in-hand, the aggravation of a blister or recent injury rubbing against coarse clothing.

Smell: Wet horses, the earthy smell of the rain, a whiff of ozone from occasional distant lightning.

roleplaying game is not an appropriate venue for a dramatic reading. Players will likely pay attention to the first 10 to 30 seconds of canned text, but after that it starts to become narration rather than establishment. Other players want the "stage" as well, and if the GM is doing all the talking, they may begin to feel the game is less about making choices, solving mysteries, and roleplaying than it is about the GM's desire to perform.

Another way to establish a scene is to use the old writer's trick of "show, don't tell." To do that, the writer (or GM) needs to personalize the introduction to his particular party. An easy way to do this is to address each of the players in some way as the scene is set. This can be done by reading the canned text and then going into some short dialogue about how the environment affects the character, or the GM can re-summarize the canned text and work it directly into a more personalized narrative - like this:

"The road leading from Altdorf is covered in mud from the recent rain. Garak, you miss the warm inn and cold beer - even though it was an inferior brew concocted by human hands. Lambrek, you miss the hallowed halls of the Temple of Sigmar and the comfort it offered you after your recent loss. Ethelweis, you stare curiously at the trees in this human land. They are so different from the more vibrant flora of your own Athel Loren."

It's almost nightfall and the cold makes you hungry and tired. As the eyes of the team, Ethelweis spies a glade to the right that would make a good resting spot. But as the caravan starts across the wet grass, a solitary black shaft flies high into the air. It's a signal - for an ambush!"

Here the GM has personalized the scene and conveyed the same information as the prose-style narrative above. Hopefully, the other players not only paid more attention but also likely felt more of a personal connection to the world as well.

USING THE COMPONENTS

Now that the group knows what's about to happen, it's time to start gaming out the encounter. *Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay* provides a number of new GM resources that are different from other games, and it might take a little practice for the GM to understand how to use the components to their best effect.

Ideally, the GM wants to increase the tension without feeling like he is arbitrarily forcing outside mechanics on the scene. Give yourself time, and after a game session don't be afraid to let your players give you ideas to use in future encounters. They see things from an entirely different point of view and might have insights you won't think of sitting "behind the screen."

It's also important to note that just because the components are there doesn't mean you have to use them for every scenario. Trying to shoehorn the progress tracker into every scene, for example, wouldn't be fun for you or the players, and the progress tracker would quickly lose its novelty. Similarly, you won't have an appropriate location card for every scene in your game. That's fine. Use what you have when it makes sense and don't feel "pressured" to make use of these tools just because you have them. After you've got the hang of the system, you'll know when they're a help and when they're a hindrance.

PROGRESS TRACKER

We've discussed the progress tracker in detail elsewhere in the book, but don't forget about the progress tracker as a tool for increasing the excitement of an otherwise standard encounter as well. For example, imagine the heroes have been hired to protect a caravan and it's ambushed by a large force of goblins. Using the progress tracker allows you to narrate the actions of dozens of the greenskin attackers, caravan guards, and travellers while only focusing (and actually rolling dice for) those immediately involved in fighting the party.

GMs can stage epic events in this way, in this case perhaps describing the manic surge of a few goblin fanatics on one flank, and the desperate stand of the guards who hold them back. Gaming this out blow-by-blow would take attention away from the PCs, but using the progress tracker gives players all the tension and excitement of the fight quickly and easily without losing focus on those who matter most - the players and their characters.

For example, perhaps an encounter uses another of the game's components - the dice - to easily simulate the actions of the goblins not directly involved with the party and the caravan members. Maybe if the goblins generate two boons on an attack roll, they hit a caravan member and move their counter toward whatever victory condition set on the progress tracker. (Avoid linking such effects to when a character rolls something because it means the heroes can just stop attacking to prevent the bad result.)

This technique can add great tension to a scene. When the goblins score a hit on the caravan members, for example, perhaps one of the PCs will elect to take the hit instead. Doing so narratively protects a caravan member, and also has the game effect of preventing the progress tracker from moving toward the greenskins' victory.

LOCATION CARDS AND RANGES

Our encounter takes place in a grassy glen. One of the location cards in the *Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay* core set is the Forest Glade. The special rule for this card is that any characters further than long range are obscured by the trees and are not visible. That means the goblins can fire from the safety of long range and then retreat back into the obscurity of the forest (extreme range). It's a perfect site for their bloody ambush.

The location card also serves as a kind of abstract tactical map. When the fight begins, the adventurers are in one group touching the card because they are firmly in the centre of the glen. The caravan, perhaps represented by a token, is placed there as well.

The goblins are in three groups, at long range. They're relying on massed fire and not worrying too much that their individual shots have little effect on the PCs. Game-wise, this indiscriminate fire works because the goblins are really only counting on rolling the odd boons, which in this case we've decided means they've slain an NPC of the caravan and can advance their progress tracker one space toward victory. They'll concentrate on any heroes who rush to the forest edge to stop them, but are otherwise content to fill the sky with arrows and let the wicked shafts fall where they may.

After determining initiative, your heroes can now move and manoeuvre to bring their best weapons to bear. Players looking for the tactical challenge of less-abstract combat have the opportunity to act without the need for actual battle-maps, dozens of miniatures, wagon models, trees, and so on.

Here's an example of how the battle might go:

Garak the Troll Slayer: *"My axe does no good at this range. I scream an oath to my forefathers and charge these cowardly greenskins."*

Garak takes a Movement manoeuvre and reduces the range between himself and the goblins from long to medium. This ordinarily takes two manoeuvres, but the GM allows it since Garak isn't doing anything else on his turn and because he is thirsty for blood.

Ethelweis the Waywatcher: *"No goblin ambushes Orion's chosen! You said I saw them a moment before the attack—can I have drawn my bow? If so, I will boldly step forward and let fly an arrow from a true woodsman."*

The GM agrees that his description—and the Wood Elf's natural affinity for the forest—gives him a free action just prior to the ambush. He allows Ethelweis to draw his bow without spending his manoeuvre for the turn. Ethelweis increases his stance to reckless by one position, spends his manoeuvre to advance following Garak, and then fires his bow. One of the goblins is slain instantly.

Lambrek the Roadwarden: *"There are women and children on the last wagon. I'll move to protect it."*



THE RULE OF THREE

The Political Struggle uses the “rule of three” you’ll find used frequently in *Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay*. But why three? Why not two or fifty? Simply put, three is a very manageable number that translates easily to many different concepts, such as beginning, middle, end; left, centre, right; or light, medium, heavy. The rule of three also easily indicates a negative, neutral, or positive state.

That certainly doesn’t mean you’re limited to three of anything; it’s simply a mental convenience that’s very easy to keep track of for you and your players. In the aforementioned political struggle, having three points to address would also likely take up about the right amount of time the group should devote to the average persuasion check. This is all completely subjective, however.

For example, a rare session might revolve entirely around an extended political intrigue. In that case, it’s likely far more points would need to be made (though again, perhaps there are three particularly salient points that will be stressed and a number of lesser statements). It may also be that a discussion revolves around one important fact—though three pieces of “evidence” might be about the right number to prove it true.

Lambrek’s character remains on guard by the wagon, using the Guarded Position action. The GM decides that if any goblins approach the wagon, Lambrek gets to attack them first. He also decides that if the goblin harm a caravan member, Lambrek can take a wound instead (as discussed previously).

Everyone knows where their heroes are in relation to each other and the caravan, and their character stand-ups provide a clear visual picture of a very large battlefield. The location card also helps establish a mood and a feel to the scene, as well as providing special rules that make the landscape more interactive and dynamic.

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

The *Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay* system provides numerous ways to ratchet up the tension of any encounter. Figuring out how to do so simply takes a little thought and planning. Imagine the scene ahead of time—what the environment is like, the motivation of the adversaries, and what your players are likely to do. Take all the ideas that come to you and jot them down on paper. Choose a few you definitely want to happen and use the mechanics and components to help remind you and reinforce their effects.

In our continuing caravan example, the heroes are now charging into melee, firing arrows, or guarding a wagon full of women and children. The GM has already made a few notes about the encounter ahead of time so that he can quickly and easily remind himself of some of the highlights he wants to occur. For this fight, he’s noted the statistics of the antagonists and four distinct highlights he believes will make the encounter exciting:

Protecting the Caravan: Whenever the goblins roll two boons in this scene, members of the caravan are injured or killed. These casualties are tracked on the progress tracker. The heroes must defeat all of the goblins before the token on the progress tracker

reaches the end of the track. Should the PCs fail in this regard but survive the attack, the GM decides the caravan master angrily dismisses the “guards” from their duties.

The Mud: The goblins count on the mud making it more difficult for taller opponents to get to them and fight. Their low stature and the spiky bits they’ve added to their boots mean they ignore the mud. The heroes, however, must add two misfortune dice to any roll that involves fast movement or tricky manoeuvring. A Chaos Star on such a check means the character slips in the muck and falls—automatically failing at whatever task he was attempting and losing the remainder of his turn.

Foot Traps: The goblins dig shallow trenches just before their positions and filled them with cruel stakes. They won’t kill anyone, but they can inflict nasty injuries to what is often a very lightly armored part of any warrior’s body—the soles of his feet. The first character to move into close range with the goblins automatically suffers 6 damage (reduced by Toughness and soak value as normal). After that, characters can avoid the pit by making an **Easy (1d)** Agility check to leap over the now-obvious trap.

Wolf Rider Reinforcements: When the goblins roll their first boon, a trio of Wolf Riders arrive from the opposite side of the glade. They start at medium range and move into close range on their next action. (This also transitions the episode to a new act and triggers a rally step as the PCs take stock of this new information.)

A POLITICAL EXAMPLE

Below is another example of how a political encounter may be developed and how the GM can use the game’s components to enhance the group’s experience. Use these as ideas for your own encounters, mixing and matching as you see fit.

POLITICAL STRUGGLE

Political struggles revolve around trying to influence someone or something. That someone may be a king, a merchant, or an angry mob, but the players have to use their wits, skill, and guile to resolve this encounter rather than their blades.

Setting the Scene: What is the tone of the meeting? Is the meeting a formal debate, a tense standoff between rival houses, or the beginning of an uprising against a merciless tyrant? Describe the mood of the people the PCs must interact with, any support or dissension from onlookers, and whatever is known about the target’s temperament and motivations. Is the target truly neutral on the topic at hand? Is he playing to the crowd? Does he have a hidden agenda that must be ferreted out?

Location Card: The Audience Chamber works for debates that happen within the halls of an organised group, such as a noble house, a tradesman’s guild, or even a wealthy merchant.



The Progress Tracker: A typical scene might feature three spaces with a token for the heroes and another for the target at the left of the track. Players must roleplay their interaction with the subject. When the GM feels a PC has made a salient point, the player makes a Charm (or Guile or other appropriate skill) roll.

Success moves the heroes' token to the right, while a failure moves the target's token one space to the right. The first token represents the strength of the PCs argument, and the three spaces reflect the three salient points they must make to convince the target that they are correct.

The second token represents the target's patience or willingness to listen to the persuaders, and if this token reaches the end of the progress tracker before the heroes' token, his patience has run out. The negotiation has failed and the discussion is over. It may be restarted only when some new event occurs to restart talks. If the PCs' token reaches the end first, however, the discussion resolves in their favour and they have convinced the target and achieved their goals, the exact details of which are of course subject to the needs of the story and the decision of the GM.

MAKING MEMORIES

Scenes that grip the imaginations and engage the senses of the players are an excellent start to making encounters memorable. The next step is to make them subjects of conversation weeks or years later. There are a variety of techniques to achieve that, and much of the advice already delivered in this chapter will contribute directly to this goal. But there are a few more factors to consider as well, having to do less with how the scene is set and more with what sort of scene it is.

DYNAMISM AND ACTION

It can be surprising how profound an effect adding even one extra element to a scene can have. One adventure may feature a scene wherein the PCs are battling zombies in a creaking, run-down house. The moans of the zombies echoing in the cobweb-filled rooms, the groans of the old house as it settles on its foundation, the chill stuffiness of the air, and the concealing shadows all contribute to an evocative scene. But if the house starts to collapse or catches fire partway through the battle, the scene becomes significantly more dramatic and that much more memorable.

Adding dynamism to a scene needn't be complex. A progress tracker can be easily used to model mechanical effects if desired, or the mechanics can be ignored or de-emphasised as suits the needs of the story. While lighting the setting on fire is always fun, there are various more subtle ways of achieving a similar effect. Putting the scene on moving coaches or riverboats can be surprisingly effective. A sea coast or isthmus with the tide coming in. A forest with trees falling all around. A mountain pass during an avalanche. In a certain light, even a goblin horde or magical ritual (something that could be the centre of a scene in its own right) could be a abstract type of dynamic environmental effect.

Dynamic environments lend themselves most obviously to action scenes, including combat-heavy encounters, but there's no reason why they can't also be used to enhance social or diplomatic scenes. An impassioned plea for a lord to see reason is that much more impassioned if the city is burning down in the background, after all!

THE FANTASTIC

The Warhammer world is full of magic, wonder, danger, and all manner of fantastic elements. Fantastic settings can provide for memorable scenes. Whether it's the tower of a Celestial wizard, with pieces of stone suspended in mid-air by swirls of Azyr magic, or the aerie nest of a pair of griffons, characters in the Old World can go places that mere mortals in the real world can only dream of.

Mundane settings can also receive an injection of the fantastic. It's hard to get more mundane than a back alley in a city, but if that same back alley is lit by the sickly-green light of Morrslieb and the buildings themselves are mutating under the influence of the Chaos gods, the mundane has been left well behind.

REVISITING OLD HAUNTS

One way to ensure a location sticks in the players' minds is through repetition. By their third visit to the Schaffenberg Estate, the PCs will probably find the place familiar. They may even have favorite people or locations within the setting, places they like to return again and again.

Once this familiarity is established, of course, the trick is to change everything. What if on their next visit to the Schaffenberg Estate, the PCs find the west wing a twisted ruin and the people all gone? Suddenly the players' knowledge of the estate and its grounds is imperfect, but significant enough to play a major role in the scene.

Overuse of the same setting absent any changes can get monotonous. However, re-using and changing existing settings can be a potent way to engage the players in the game world and to enhance individual scenes.





CHAPTER SEVEN

REWARDS & INCENTIVES

Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay offers a number of ways to reward your players besides experience points and leveling. Primarily, this is done by giving out extra Fortune points and Fortune dice, but there are many other ways as well. This chapter will help you figure out what awards to give, when it's appropriate, and how much is too much (or too little).

WHY GIVE REWARDS?

Let's start with why give players these extra rewards at all? Primarily it's to incentivise actions that add to the fun for everyone. This "fun" may be in the form of a witty joke, a daring attack, or a clever plan that foils the enemy and aids the heroes. It might also be the "fun" of watching a character do something self-destructive simply because it's in character.

Certainly a more granular experience point system could do the same thing to some degree, but it wouldn't have the immediacy of giving a player a fortune die for a particularly clever attack, or giving the entire group a chance at a fortune point because they handled a challenge particularly well.

Experience points don't allow a character to prevent death when he's on his last legs or give him a little extra chance at performing some epic, all-out attack. Fortune points, dice, and other immedi-

ate boons grant players perks and advantages they can use directly and immediately. That adds to the pure fun and excitement of the game.

Rewards of all types encourage certain types of play without mandating it. For example, a Troll Slayer is faced with a difficult choice. He and his companions are exiting a skaven warren when he sees a member of the town watch being dragged down a side passage by two rat ogres. His party has already sustained terrible wounds and the town watchman is almost certainly dead anyway. But the Troll Slayer has an oath. He curses and barrels down the side passage to the watchman's rescue. The GM rewards the group with a fortune point for the Troll Slayer's resolve. This way, good roleplaying that makes life more difficult for the party gives them some sort of benefit as well.

FORTUNE POINTS & FORTUNE DICE

Fortune points and fortune dice are by far the most common rewards. But how are they different, and under what circumstances should each be awarded?

Fortune points provide less-immediate results. If the party defeats an important enemy, for example, you might add a fortune point to the party sheet. If a player makes a great joke that has everyone

in stitches (and isn't disrupting play), give the group a fortune point. This not only rewards the action, but makes the entire group appreciate the gift.

Fortune dice are for more immediate effects. They should only be given for specific actions that require a die roll. For example, a Troll Slayer heroically dives off a ledge to plant his axe firmly in the skull of a Chaos giant. The GM decides this epic leap is worth two fortune dice on this particular attack.

Fortune dice can be an immediate reward for good narrative and clever thinking. Saying "I attack the orc" is one thing. Saying "while the orc is distracted by the wizard's spell, I leap in to attack him while screaming my battle cry!" is quite another, and is behaviour you may want to reward at your table with a bonus fortune die.

Fortune dice also serve another purpose that might not be so obvious at first glance. Imagine again the Troll Slayer who wants to dive off a cliff and plant his axe in the skull of a Chaos giant walking below. One approach to resolving this is to have detailed rules on leaping attacks, wild swings, falling damage, flank attacks, attacks "of opportunity," and so on.

Or, with the easy addition of a couple of fortune dice, we can account for all the minutiae in one easy roll. (The GM may also add a misfortune die here as well—with banes meaning damage for the falling hero.) Literally pages of rules can be accounted for just by the addition of some fortune (and misfortune) dice and a little interpretation by the Game Master.

HOW MUCH IS TOO MUCH?

How often should you hand out rewards? There is no hard and fast rule or script for this, but the easy answer is "fairly often." Most rewards will have very temporary or specific effects that won't matter later on anyway, so it's hard to overdo it. If you see your players spending Fortune points on mundane rolls, then they likely aren't valuing them too highly. But otherwise, Fortune points are just a chance to do better and don't convey any guarantees, so err on the side of too many rather than too few.

You certainly want to watch for players who are gaming the system too hard, however. This changes the nature of the system from "reward" to "begging" and should be avoided. For example, a wood elf Waywatcher desperately needs to put down a beastman standing over his friend. The player describes an epic "dance of death" and attacks. You grant him a couple of extra fortune dice for the excellent description and heroic nature of his action.

What if the player then describes the same dance of death every time? Should he be awarded extra fortune dice every time he describes his action? No, of course not. If a player is clearly gaming the system rather than roleplaying his hero, a reward isn't appropriate.

This is a judgement call, of course. Rewards should also be somewhat relative. You might want to reward a typically quiet player who describes her attack with a little flourish rather than just rolling the dice and saying "I attack." This encourages her to come out of her shell and grab a little spotlight for herself. A gregarious player who does the same thing should not get such a reward however—at least not every time.

TYPES OF REWARDS

Fortune points and dice are by far the most common reward in *Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay*, but the game is deep enough to allow many other gifts as well. Following are more perks or advantages you might reward clever players with.

TANGIBLE REWARDS

These rewards are based on mechanics, components, and other defined elements of the game. Since they rely on and utilise elements the players are already familiar with, these rewards tend to provide a more tangible feel.

CHARACTERISTIC DICE

Though it should be rare, a GM might grant a player extra characteristic dice for a major, concrete advantage more powerful than a fortune die or two. Two or more allies working together to complete the same task (e.g. lift a heavy object) may add one or even more characteristic dice to a check.

CONDITION CARDS

Granting a positive condition card, such as *Invigorated*, or the temporary or early removal of a negative condition card, can be an excellent reward, especially when piety is involved.

EXPERIENCE POINTS

Rarely—such as after a gruelling session or the culmination of an adventure—you may want to give out a single extra experience point. Bear in mind, however, that doing so will directly impact the advancement curve of the game.





FATIGUE AND STRESS TOKENS

As with condition cards, fatigue and stress might be relieved as a reward for certain subjective actions. A drink of water from a clear spring in Athel Loren might relieve a point of stress or fatigue as long as it's still fresh and cool. Similarly, a rousing and inspirational speech might allow everyone in earshot to recover one stress or fatigue as well.

INITIATIVE

A good plan could allow the group to adjust their initial initiative roll, or even obviate the need for one. If the party successfully ambushes a band of Chaos marauders, for example, you might increase all their initiative results one level.

MANOEUVRES

Granting an occasional free manoeuvre is a good reward for a great roll with no other obvious effect. It might also be granted to a player who has prepared some action ahead of time that would normally require a second manoeuvre. Drawing a weapon is usually a manoeuvre, for example, but if the hero was truly expecting trouble, you might allow him to draw it for free.

PROGRESS TRACKER ADVANCEMENT

The progress tracker can be used in numerous situations. Sometimes you'll have it planned which actions can advance or reduce the tracker, but don't be afraid to think on the fly as well. Perhaps in a chase scene you've accounted for most of the obstacles, hazards, and actions along the way, but a player surprises you by using a shortcut he discovered in a previous encounter. It's entirely appropriate to reward the player by advancing the tracker an additional space or so for remembering his previous adventures in such detail.

RECHARGING ACTION OR TALENT CARDS

A chance to use a talent or action card more frequently or more rapidly than the card might otherwise recharge is valuable to players. If the characters are displaying ingenuity or teamwork to attempt to buy time or hasten the recharge of their cards, removing recharge tokens from key abilities is a suitable reward. Perhaps a character is using Leadership to exhort a comrade to fight harder or is sacrificing himself to save the wizard.

STANCE ADJUSTMENTS

You may allow a character to change his stance more rapidly when a dramatic event, such as the death of a friend or ally occurs. Imagine a knight who sees his friend ripped in half by the claws of a daemnette. His previous conservative approach to dealing with the thing might suddenly turn to blood-red fury. The key to this being a "reward" is that the stance change is wanted by the player.

INTANGIBLE REWARDS

In addition to the number of tangible rewards the GM may wish to use to incentivise and reward his players for roleplaying, there are a number of other rewards that can prove just as satisfying, despite the fact their specific effects are not as easily measured or gauged.

FRIENDS AND CONTACTS

Throughout their careers, the player characters are bound to encounter a host of non-player characters in a variety of capacities. From the barmaid who serves them ale to the merchant prince who hires them for a shady job, the PCs touch the lives of countless NPCs. Some of these NPCs may be in important positions or able to offer the PCs aid... depending on how the PCs have treated them, of course.

NARRATIVE CONTROL

Roleplaying games are cooperative storytelling. The GM is not the only player with a story to tell, and a degree of narrative control is a fine reward for a player who has an idea of where he wants his personal story to go. In general, if a PC has an idea that's at least as interesting as anything you were planning to do, and it doesn't seem like jockeying for mechanical advantage, giving the PCs some narrative control can only help their immersion in the story.

PLOT ADVANCEMENT

The PCs have goals – protect the village, gain fame and fortune, learn powerful magic – apart from the acquisition of experience points and improvement of character statistics. In-story goals and in-story rewards can be as rewarding as any mechanical benefit, if not more so! Gaining a fortune point happens all the time. Sinking the Dark Elf corsair vessel that has been harassing the PCs for months? That only happens once, and it's much more satisfying.

SPOTLIGHT TIME

Players are performers, and performers crave the spotlight. One of the most basic and powerful rewards you can offer as the GM is to focus the story on one PC for a time. Perhaps an NPC important to one of the characters appears in the story, or a key feature of his background is woven into a future episode. Adding special touches that directly affect or involve one of the players or their characters is a great way to encourage their participation and keep them invested in the adventure.



CHAPTER EIGHT

OPTIONAL RULES

The core rules and mechanics are very flexible. A GM and his players can adjust rules and modify the game in subtle ways to help create the right play experience for their group. Some popular optional rules and variants are presented here, which your group may want to try out.

EXPANDED AGGRESSION & CUNNING OPTIONS

To add more variety and options to the GM when managing NPCs and adversaries, here are some additional ways the Aggression and Cunning budgets can be used.

AGGRESSION

To allow more movement and flexibility to NPCs, the GM may spend one die from an adversary's Aggression budget to allow the NPC to perform an additional manoeuvre. This creates more dynamic, mobile encounters that can keep players' on their toes.

CUNNING

To account for the changing attitudes and postures of his NPCs, the GM may spend one die from an adversary's Cunning budget to adjust the NPC's stance one space in either direction for one check.

An NPC's stance is generally fixed, but this option allows a GM to reflect changing situations and provide some options for physical adversaries who otherwise have no real outlet for their Cunning.

PREPARING FOR ACTIONS

To provide players with another option during encounters, here's a new way to use the Prepare manoeuvre.

Before performing an action, a character has the option to perform the Prepare manoeuvre. This is in addition to any requirements to Prepare for the action that may be listed on the card. By performing the Prepare manoeuvre before attempting the action, the player places one fewer recharge token on the action if it succeeds.

SACRIFICING ACTIONS

Sometimes, a player would rather gain the extra benefit of a manoeuvre on his character's turn, but without having to suffer fatigue to perform additional manoeuvres. As an optional rule, the GM may choose to allow a player character to perform an additional free manoeuvre on his turn instead of using an action card, or allowing an NPC an additional free manoeuvre instead of using one of its provided actions.

RISKING AGAINST RECHARGE

The recharge value for various actions reflects several different factors that make the action more difficult to attempt repeatedly in a short period of time. Some players may enjoy this optional rule that allows their characters to use an action before it has fully recharged, but at greater risk.

A player may use an action before it has fully recharged, but must add one ■ misfortune die to the dice pool for each recharge token still on the action. If he is in a different stance than the side currently showing on the recharging action, he adds one additional ■ misfortune die to his dice pool, and then flips the action card over to match his current stance.

If the action succeeds, additional recharge tokens are placed on the card, equal to that action's normal recharge rating. However, if the action fails, the character suffers one fatigue if the attempted action was based on a physical characteristic, or he suffers one stress if the attempted action was based on a mental characteristic.

However, even with this optional rule, *Active Defence* actions cannot be used while there are recharge tokens on the card.

FORTUNATE CIRCUMSTANCES

Fortune points are one of the resources at the players' disposal to help provide favourable outcomes for their characters. To provide even more versatility and value to fortune points, the GM may consider allowing players to spend fortune points to account for favourable circumstances.

In general, fortune points represent luck, chance, and things just happening to break in favour of the PCs. By spending a fortune point, the players can gain some narrative control over the story by choosing to "get lucky" in the course of a single check and add a fortune die to their dice pool. But this isn't necessarily the only way players can use fortune points as a means to influence the narrative.

There are dozens of opportunities for a character to get lucky over the course of an adventure. Maybe a fortune point can assist a Skulduggery check to open a door – or maybe the last person to go through it forgot to lock it in the first place. Maybe a character can get lucky and the blunderbuss he recovers from the coachman's corpse as the beastmen swarm around him just happens to still be loaded. Maybe the falling rubble from the burning building strikes the villain, not the hero.

These are all opportunities for the GM to engage the players in the story by offering some narrative control. If a group is comfortable with a little improvisation and give-and-take in storytelling, inviting the players to spend fortune points on narrative effects such as those described above can be extremely rewarding.

With practice, players may start proposing their own lucky breaks. If it sounds plausible or interesting, or helps move the story along in a way that engages the players, the GM may want to consider allowing the fortune point to provide the lucky break described by the player. Keep in mind, though, that the GM is the final arbiter on these sorts of effects, and that fortune points should never be used to make the story less interesting.

MUTUALLY EXCLUSIVE CHARACTER OPTIONS

To encourage more diversity among their party members, some groups may wish to handle careers slightly differently during the character creation process. When creating characters as a group, each player is dealt his random starting career choices at the same time. This process ensures that no two players end up with overlapping career options for starting characters.

Further, when investing advances to develop and improve the player characters, some groups may wish to view the card mix for action cards and talents as limited, discrete options – meaning that other than the basic actions all characters are entitled to (see *WRP* page 48), if one member of the party acquires a specific action card or talent, none of the other party members can acquire the same ability.

RISKING AGAINST RECHARGE: AN EXAMPLE



Despite his usual aggressive demeanor, Gurni the Troll Slayer is heavily wounded and needs to keep from exhausting himself while trying to take out an angry troll, so he recently adopted a conservative stance. Unfortunately, his Troll-Feller Strike action currently has two recharge tokens on it – preventing him from using the action for two more rounds!

Gurni's player decides he can't wait that long – he may not survive two more rounds! – and decides to risk using the card again, despite the fact it is still recharging. He adds two misfortune dice to his pool, and if the action fails, Gurni will suffer one fatigue.

This approach to character creation and development results in a very dynamic and diverse group of characters.

RANK-BASED CASTING & INVOCATION

To add more flexibility (and potential risks) to spellcasting and invoking blessings, players may wish to have the default difficulty of casting or invoking based off the character's rank compared to the rank of the spell or blessing being used.

If the rank of the spell and the PC are the same, the check becomes an Average (2d) check, before other modifiers. For each PC rank above the spell rank, the difficulty is reduced one step. For each spell rank above the PC rank, the difficulty is increased one step.

For example, a Rank 2 wizard trying to cast a Rank 2 spell would proceed using an Average (2d) check. If that Rank 2 wizard wants to cast a Rank 1 spell, it is an Easy (1d) check, while casting a Rank 3 spell would be a Hard (3d) check.

A check reduced to Simple (0d) would still be resolved by rolling the appropriate dice pool, however, to determine the magnitude of the action and any corresponding side effects.

If the PC rank is three or more ranks lower than the spell or blessing rank, he cannot attempt it, as it would push the difficulty beyond Daunting (4d).

PC RANK COMPARED TO ACTION RANK	DIFFICULTY
PC two or more ranks higher	Simple (0d)
PC one rank higher	Easy (1d)
PC equal in rank	Average (2d)
PC one rank lower	Hard (3d)
PC two ranks lower	Daunting (4d)
PC three or more ranks lower	Cannot Attempt

Do not use rank-based difficulty values for opposed checks. These difficulties can either replace the difficulty modifiers listed on the spell or blessing cards or (to make spells even more dangerous!) be added to those difficulty modifiers.

HIGHER LETHALITY

Despite *Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay* already being a grim and dangerous game in a perilous setting, some players may wish to increase damage and introduce a broader range of possible damage outcomes during combat.

Using this alternate method, extra successes rolled for an action that inflicts damage have the potential to trigger additional damage. If more successes are generated than necessary to trigger the

HIGHER LETHALITY: AN EXAMPLE



Let's assume that a character with two ranks of Weapon Skill training performs a basic *Melee Strike* and generates a total of six successes.

First, he achieves the effect listed for the 4th success line. However, he will also inflict two additional points of potential damage, since he has two ranks of Weapon Skill training.

If the character had three levels of Weapon Skill training, the same roll would have inflicted three additional points of damage, since there were a total of three "extra" successes above what the maximum success line required to activate.

maximum success line of an action, the action inflicts +1 damage per extra success, up to a maximum amount equal to the level of training the character has in the related action's skill.

Likewise the GM may use the same approach to adjudicate extra successes generated on a non-combat or non-damaging check, by allowing an increased effect based on the total number of ranks the character has trained in the action's associated skill.

For NPCs, this extra magnitude is based on the creature or adversary's Expertise rating.



APPENDIX I

MASTER INDEX

This appendix allows for easier lookup of key terms, rules, and concepts by indexing all four books found in the *Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay* Core Set, as well as new terms and concepts introduced here in the *Game Master's Toolkit*. The indexed listing uses the following shorthand for book titles:

- ✦ WFRP – *the Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay Rulebook*
- ✦ ToA – *Tome of Adventure*
- ✦ ToB – *Tome of Blessings*
- ✦ ToM – *Tome of Mysteries*
- ✦ GMT – *Game Master's Toolkit*

Where more than one reference exists, the primary reference is listed first, followed by additional references from the other sources where that topic is covered.



A

abstract measurement	WFRP 52
A/C/E budget and rating	ToA 45
Acolyte, wizards	ToM 11
act	ToA 12, 18
action	WFRP 48, 57; ToA 41
action card	WFRP 48, 49, 50
active player	WFRP 56
advance	WFRP 34
advance, open career	WFRP 37
advancement worksheet	WFRP 36
Aggression	ToA 45, 46
Agility	WFRP 13
Amber Order	ToM 18
Amethyst Order	ToM 19
anatomy, action card	WFRP 49
anatomy, career sheet	WFRP 29
anatomy, party sheet	WFRP 21
Apprentice, wizards	ToM 11
armour	WFRP 59, 77; ToA 46
artefacts	ToM 14
assist / assisting	WFRP 43, 52
attuned items	ToM 37; WFRP 73
Azgaraz, Karak	WFRP 24

B

banes	WFRP 40, 44, 45, 59
bane ☠ symbol	WFRP 44
basic action card	WFRP 48
basic NPCs	ToA 66
beasts	ToA 48
beastmen	ToA 50
Beginning of Turn Phase	WFRP 57, 60
blessing	ToB 31, 34
boons	WFRP 40, 44, 45, 59
Boon ♣ symbol	WFRP 44
Brass Tier (economy)	WFRP 71
Bright Order	ToM 20, 44

C

campaign	ToA 31, 35, 38
career	WFRP 28, 29
career advances	WFRP 35
career transition	WFRP 37
career, new	WFRP 38
Celestial Order	ToM 21, 46
Challenge Level	WFRP 43, 58
challenge ♦ die	WFRP 10, 41
Challenge ✕ symbol	WFRP 44
channel power action	ToM 34
Channelling	ToM 33
Chaos	WFRP 92; ToA 52
Chaos Cults	ToB 25
Chaos Star ✨ symbol	WFRP 44
character creation	WFRP 27
character hooks	ToA 33
characteristic ♦ die	WFRP 10, 40
characteristics	WFRP 13, 28
characteristic upgrades	WFRP 37
check	WFRP 39
check, competitive	WFRP 43
check, initiative	WFRP 55
check, opposed	WFRP 42
check, standard	WFRP 39
Colleges of Magic	ToM 8
combat sequence	WFRP 57
conditions	WFRP 66, 69
conservative ● die	WFRP 10, 47, 58
conservative stance	WFRP 46
craftsmanship	WFRP 72
creation points	WFRP 28, 30
Critical Rating CR	WFRP 73
critical wound	WFRP 59, 63
Cult of Manann	ToB 10
Cult of Morr	ToB 11
Cult of Myrmidia	ToB 12
Cult of Ranald	ToB 13
Cult of Shallya	ToB 14
Cult of Sigmar	ToB 15

Cult of Taal	ToB 15
Cult of Ulric	ToB 17
Cult of Verena	ToB 18
Cultists	ToA 54
Cults, Imperial	ToB 8, 9
Cunning	ToA 45, 46
customer rating	WFRP 73

D

daemons	ToA 56
damage	WFRP 59, 63
damage potential	WFRP 59
Damage Rating DR	WFRP 73
Dark Magic, <i>Dhar</i>	ToM 31
death, characters	ToA 39
dedication bonus	WFRP 37
defence	WFRP 58, 77; ToA 46
Delay ⏸ symbol	WFRP 44
dice pool	WFRP 58; ToA 22
dice symbols	WFRP 44
difficulty modifier	WFRP 50
divine character	ToB 36
divine blessing	ToB 31
divine missions	ToB 38
dwarfs	WFRP 23, 88

E

effect, brief	WFRP 69
effect, dependent	WFRP 69
effect, lingering	WFRP 69
Elf, High	WFRP 24, 88
Elf, Wood	WFRP 26, 88
Empire	WFRP 86
Empire, Heroes	WFRP 90
Empire, History	WFRP 89
Empire, People	WFRP 88
Empire Map	WFRP 95
encounter	ToA 42, 44
encounter, combat	ToA 29
encounter, custom	ToA 43

encounter, social	ToA 27
encounter mode	WFRP 5
encumbrance limit	WFRP 81
encumbrance points	WFRP 81
encumbrance value	WFRP 73, 81
End of Turn Phase	WFRP 57, 61
enemy attributes	ToA 47
enemy threat level	ToA 46
engaged / engagement	WFRP 53
environmental complications	ToA 21
episode	ToA 12, 18
episode templates	GMT 6
Exertion ♠ symbol	WFRP 44
experience points	WFRP 34; ToA 19
expertise budget	WFRP 46
expertise ■ die	WFRP 10, 16

F	
fatigue	WFRP 62; ToA 20, 46
fatigued	WFRP 62
favour	ToB 31, 32
Fear / Fear Rating	WFRP 66
Fellowship	WFRP 13
First Aid	WFRP 17, 64
focus talent	WFRP 19, 31
fortune ■ die	WFRP 11, 16, 41; ToA 20
fortune points	WFRP 21; ToA 19
fortune pool	WFRP 21



G	
game master (GM)	WFRP 5; ToA 3-11
general career advance	WFRP 35
giants	ToA 58-59
goblins	WFRP 92; ToA 60
gods, dwarf	ToB 20
gods, elf	ToB 20-21
Gold Order	ToM 23
Gold Tier (economy)	WFRP 71g
greenskins	ToA 60
Grey Order	ToM 24, 45
grudge	WFRP 23

H	
healing	WFRP 64
henchman	ToA 42-43
heresy	ToB 28
High Elves	WFRP 24, 89
High Magic, <i>Qhaysh</i>	ToM 31

I	
In Great Need	ToB 34
initiative	WFRP 54
initiative order	WFRP 55-56
insanity	WFRP 67
Insanity Cards & traits	WFRP 68
Intelligence	WFRP 13
Interludes	ToA 33, 36
invocation	WFRP 18; ToB31
invoking a blessing	ToB 31

J	
Jade Order	ToM 25

K	
Karak Azgaraz	WFRP 23
Khorne	ToB 26

L	
Light Order	ToM 26
location cards	WFRP 7, GMT 31

M	
Manann	ToB 10
manoeuvre	WFRP 51-52
melee weapons	WFRP 74-75
Miscasts	ToM 35
Miscast cards	ToM 36
misfortune ■ die	WFRP 41-42; ToA 20
mode, encounter	WFRP 5; ToA 13-14
mode, story	WFRP 5; ToA 12
modifiers, combat	WFRP 60
Morr	ToB 11
movement	WFRP 52-53
Myrmidia	ToB 12

N	
necromancy	ToB 26
Nemesis NPC's & Organisations	GMT 4-5
neutral stance	WFRP 46
non-career advances	WFRP 37
non-player character (NPC)	ToA 6-7
NPC's, Basic	ToA 66-67
NPC's, Experts	ToA 68-69
NPC's, management	ToA 40-41
NPC's, Nemesis	GMT 4-5
Nurgle	ToB 26-27

O	
Omens & Portents	ToB 34-35
open career advances	WFRP 35-36
optional rules	GMT 37-39
orcs	WFRP 92; ToA 60
Organisations, Nemesis	GMT 4-5

P

party ability	WFRP 21
party tension	WFRP 21; ToA 10, 20, 26
party sheet	WFRP 20-21
phase, Beginning of Turn	WFRP 57, 60
phase, End of Turn	WFRP 57, 61
player character (PC)	WFRP 5, 27
Plot Triggers	ToA 33-34
power	ToM 33-35
power level	ToM 33-35
preparation (manoeuvre)	WFRP 52
priests	ToB 5, 8, 36
progress tracker	ToA 24-30

Q

Quickcasting	ToM 35
--------------	--------

R

races, player character	WFRP 22-26
Rally Step	ToA 13-14
rank	WFRP 35
Ranald	ToB 13
ranges	WFRP 52-53
ranged weapons	WFRP 75-78
rarity	WFRP 72-73
ratmen	a myth, not covered. See "skaven"
Reckless  die	WFRP 11
Reckless stance	WFRP 46; ToB 34; ToM 37
recovery	WFRP 64
Reikland	WFRP 87, 91-92
Reiklander	WFRP 23
Reknown	ToA 21
reputation talent	WFRP 19-20
Rest & Recovery	WFRP 64-65
rewards	GMT 34-36
Righteous Success  symbol	WFRP 44
Round	WFRP 54-57
Ruinous Powers	ToB 26-28

S

session	ToA 4, 9-10
Shallya	ToB 14, 35, 42-43
shields	WFRP 78-79
skaven	WFRP 93; ToA 62-63
skills, basic	WFRP 16-19, 30
skills, advanced	WFRP 16-19, 30
Sigmar	WFRP 89, ToB 15, 35, 43-45
Sigmar's Comet  symbol	WFRP 44, 46
Silver Tier (economy)	WFRP 71
Slaanesh	ToB 27
Soak, Soak Value	WFRP 59, 78, ToA 46
social encounters	ToA 27
Sorcerers	ToM 29
specialisation	WFRP 16
spell	ToM 33-35
stance, conservative	WFRP 46, ToB 34, ToM 37
stance, neutral	WFRP 46
stance, reckless	WFRP 46; ToB 34; ToM 37
stance meter	WFRP 31-32, 47
Story Mode	WFRP 5-6; ToA 12
Strained	WFRP 62-63, 67
Strength	WFRP 13
stress	WFRP 62; ToA 20
Success  symbol	WFRP 44-45
Success, Righteous  symbol	WFRP 44-45

T

Taal	ToB 15-16
tactic talent	WFRP 19-20
talent	WFRP 19-20, 31, 35
talent slot	WFRP 19-21
target	WFRP 57
Temporary Effects	WFRP 69
tension/tension meter	WFRP 21; ToA 10, 20, 26
Terror Rating	WFRP 66-67
threat level	ToA 46
token, tracking	ToA 24-28
tools	WFRP 79-80



Toughness	WFRP 13
triggering limit of effects	WFRP 45
trolls	ToA 58-59
turn	WFRP 54-57, 60-61
Tzeentch	ToA 56; ToB 27-28

U

Ulric	WFRP 88; ToB 17-18
undead	ToA 64-65
Universal Effects	WFRP 45

V

Verena	ToB 18
--------	--------

W

Warpstone	ToM 31
weapon characteristics	WFRP 73
weapons, melee	WFRP 74-75
weapons, ranged	WFRP 75-78
weapon groups	WFRP 74
weapon qualities	WFRP 73-75
Willpower	WFRP 13
witches	ToM 30-31
wizards	WFRP 78; ToA 68-69; ToM 10, 39, 43
Wood Elves	WFRP 26, 89; ToB 20
wound, normal	WFRP 59-63; ToA 41
wound, critical	WFRP 59-63; ToA 41
Wound Threshold	WFRP 14, 35; ToA 41, 46



APPENDIX II

GLOSSARY

This glossary helps define and clarify some of the key terms used in *Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay*. You can use the index in Appendix I to read more about many of these topics.

Act. An adventure's episodes are composed of building blocks called acts. Episodes in *Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay* make particular use of the three-act structure. This three-act structure is often seen in plays, with a rising action, a climax, and a falling action. Specifically, an act is a single goal or action within that episode. If the characters are pursuing a fleeing band of cultists, that is the episode.

Action. When a character wishes to perform a specific task, he is often attempting a type of action. An action is an attempt to use a skill or characteristic for a specific result or purpose. Most actions are resolved with a characteristic check. A variety of the actions available in the game are represented by a specific action card. The action being attempted indicates which skill or characteristic to use in the check, as shown on the card. For actions that do not rely on action cards, such as a standard use of a skill, the skill used determines which characteristic the check is based on.

Active Player. When a player has been chosen to take initiative, he becomes the active player. His character goes through the entire turn sequence, then that player's turn is over and the next initiative is resolved. After the active player completes his turn, he flips the initiative counter on his character's stance meter face down to indicate his character has already acted.

Advances. A character earns one advance for each experience point earned. Advances are the currency characters use to purchase improvements such as new action cards, improved characteristics, or other benefits. Each individual improvement is referred to as an advance or an advancement.

Aggression. An NPC's aggression rating indicates the number of fortune dice the GM can use when performing combat-oriented actions or other physical tasks with that NPC. Any number of these fortune dice can be used for a single check. Aggression is a general indicator of an enemy's physical prowess, boldness, and vigour.

Bane. Banes ☹ fuel negative side effects. They represent the flaws and imperfections of a task resolution. It is possible to succeed at a task and still trigger a bane effect. Banes and boons cancel each other out – if there are an equal number of both rolled, no bane or boon effects will be triggered.

Boon. Boons ☺ fuel beneficial side effects. They represent the advantages and perks that may arise during task resolution. It is possible to fail at a task and still trigger a boon effect. Banes and boons cancel each other out – if there are an equal number of both rolled, no bane or boon effects will be triggered.

Challenge. Challenge refers both to the purple ♦ challenge die, representing the difficulty of a task, and the Challenge symbol, which counters successes. Each challenge symbol ✕ cancels one success in the results pool. If there are more challenge symbols than success symbols, the task is too challenging for the character to resolve; the task automatically fails.

Challenge Level. There are five challenge levels – Simple, Easy, Average, Hard, and Daunting. A task's challenge level is a general indication of how difficult something is to accomplish, or how much resistance there is to achieving success. In addition to providing a general classification to describe difficulty, the challenge level also indicates how many of the purple challenge dice are added to a dice pool when attempting that particular task.

Chaos Star. The Chaos Star ✱ has the potential to trigger serious negative side effects. A Chaos Star triggers effects denoted by a Chaos Star. If there are no eligible effects to trigger, the Chaos Star counts as a bane. They generally reflect the worst possible negative side effects, such as suffering from a miscast when manipulating the Winds of Magic.

Characteristic. Six characteristics help define characters and creatures in *Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay*. The three characteristics that define the physical make-up of a character are Strength, Toughness, and Agility. The three characteristics that define the mental make-up of a character are Intelligence, Willpower, and Fellowship. Each of the six characteristics is represented by a single number, called the characteristic's rating.

Check. Characters will attempt a variety of tasks to accomplish various goals and move the scenes and story along during a session. When the outcome of a task is uncertain, a character performs a check to determine if the action succeeds or fails. Some actions are a general application of a characteristic or skill. Other actions are very specific, and are represented by an action card.

Conservative. The conservative stance is a relatively safe approach, allowing the greatest chance for basic success, often with little regard for achieving critical results (for good or ill). The conservative approach is a low-risk, low-reward stance. It reflects taking additional time, evaluating all the options, and being cautious, careful, and moderate.

Core Mechanic. The core mechanic refers to the task resolution system used to determine success and failure. In some respects, it is the engine that drives the game. The core mechanic in *Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay* is quite simple, and can be summarised as follows:

1. Roll a pool of dice.
2. After all other factors, if there is at least one ⚡ success symbol, the task succeeds.

Almost everything else in the game modifies or interacts with one of these two fundamental elements – the pool of dice, or the results on the dice after they are rolled.

Criticals / Critical Wounds. Critical wounds are more severe than normal wounds, representing significant injuries and debilitations – a smashed knee, a vicious cut, a deafening blow to the head. They are managed using the wound cards. A critical wound is placed face up to show its side effect and severity rating.

Cunning. An NPC's Cunning rating indicates the number of fortune dice the GM can use when performing social actions or other mental tasks with that NPC. Any number of these fortune dice can be used for a single check. Cunning is a general indicator of an enemy's mental acuity, instincts, and creativity.

Damage. Many attacks have the potential to inflict damage to the target. Damage is a representation of the *potential* wounds the target may suffer from. In simplest terms, any damage not absorbed by the target's soak value become wounds.

Defence. A target's defence rating is how much harder he is to hit than normal. A defence bonus or rating is generally provided by armour, a special ability, or a magical effect. Each point of defence rating adds one misfortune die to dice pools targeting the character with an attack.

Delay. If at least one delay ⌘ symbol appears in the results pool, the action causes a delay. During encounter mode, after the action is resolved, the GM has the option to either place two recharge counters on one of the rolling character's action cards, or to move the topmost token for the delayed character on the initiative track down one space in initiative order. During story mode, the GM may determine the action takes longer to resolve than expected.

Dice Pool. Once the appropriate type of action has been determined by the GM, the attempting character may need to make a check to see whether or not the action succeeds. In simplest terms, a player creates a pool of dice, comprised of dice representing the different factors involved in the action. This could be a combination of many types of dice, and can vary from action to action, situation to situation. After the dice pool has been created, the player rolls all of the dice and the results are evaluated.

Encounter Mode. During a game session, events occur in either story mode or encounter mode. Encounter mode is used when the GM or players wish to "zoom in" the story's focus. This mode is useful when actions are being opposed, when resolving the order of events is important, or players wish to roleplay events in character.

Engaged. To reflect that two or more targets are close enough to interact directly with each other, there is a special status called engaged. Two characters engaged with each other are in very close proximity. Engaged is also used to indicate that a person is close enough to an item to use it. A group of people engaged with each other is called an engagement.

Episode. Episodes are specific events that make up a story. An episode is a single cohesive activity that usually (but not always) takes place over a short amount of time and tends to be resolved within a single setting – though that setting can be as broad as "a castle" or "the trading road." When the focus of the action changes, and the characters adjust their immediate objectives, the game usually enters a new scene, representing a new episode.

Exertion. The exertion ⚡ symbol indicates that a task was more taxing than expected. If at least one exertion symbol appears in the results pool, the character performing the check suffers 1 stress (if it was a mental task) or 1 fatigue (if it was a physical task).

Experience / Experience Points. Experience points reflect a character's growing knowledge and worldliness, and his ability to apply what he's learned to self-improvement. Experience points are a general indicator of a character's power, ability, and influence. A character's cumulative experience determines his current rank.

Expertise. An NPC's Expertise rating indicates the number of expertise dice the GM can apply to any of that NPC's checks he wishes. No more than one expertise die can be added to any one check. Expertise is a general indicator of an enemy's training, resourcefulness, and aptitude.

Fear. A creature or encounter with a Fear rating is unnerving and worries at the mind and senses. The Fear rating is a measure of how difficult it is to remain disciplined, as well as how much stress the character risks losing if he fails a Discipline check when confronted with the Fear-inducing stimulus.

Fortune. In general, fortune represents small ways that things tend to go right for a character, and are most often reflected in the addition of white fortune □ dice to a task. The fortune dice have a few sides with beneficial symbols, and no detrimental symbols. Fortune dice most often represent tactical advantages or things working in favour of the character. Fortune dice can also be awarded by the GM for clever thinking, enjoyable role-playing, or tactical advantages. Finally, players can spend fortune points to add fortune dice to a dice pool. Each fortune point spent allows the player to add one fortune die to his pool.

Initiative. In certain situations, the specific order in which characters act is very important. These sorts of actions are easier to resolve in encounter mode using initiative. An initiative check is based on Agility for combat

encounters and Fellowship for social encounters. The number of successes achieved reserves an initiative slot for a member of that group. When an initiative slot comes up, any member of the corresponding group may choose to act and take his turn.

Insanity. The body and mind can only absorb so much shock and anxiety before succumbing to more serious, often debilitating effects. When a character suffers from too much fatigue and stress at once, dementia and insanity can result. When a character's Willpower is distressed (his current stress level is greater than his Willpower), any time the character suffers a level of stress, that character may become temporarily insane. Insanities are managed with their own deck of Insanity cards.

Manoeuvre. Collectively, the minor things a character accomplishes on his turn that are not defined by an action card are called manoeuvres. Manoeuvres cover a broad range of minor, incidental, and often automatic achievements. During Story Mode, manoeuvres can usually be performed as often as required, and are generally assumed to occur as needed to advance the plot. During Encounter Mode, when timing and the order in which things occur can become more important, characters are limited in the number of manoeuvres they can perform at a time.

Misfortune. All the niggling complications that undermine success are referred to as misfortunes. Misfortunes come in many shapes and forms, but are represented in the same manner – misfortune dice added to the dice pool. For each complication that makes this particular attempt of the action less likely to succeed, the GM adds a misfortune die to the dice pool. Misfortune can represent a variety of factors – bad weather, lack of equipment, being pressured and out of time, the effects of a critical wound, or being vastly outnumbered are just a few examples.

Rally Step. A unique element to the episode structure is the link between the acts. This interval is known as a rally step. It is a momentary lull in the action, a deliberate pause from the frenetic pace of the encounter, a commercial break from the current episode. The rally step is when characters and players alike can catch their breath. Out-of-character, it is a pause for bathroom breaks, drink refills, nagging rules questions, and off-topic asides. In-game, it is a chance for characters to reorient, rearm, and refocus.

Rank. When a character has earned a certain amount of experience, he gains rank. Rank is an abstract representation of a character's overall power and prestige. As a character's rank increases, he is able to train skills to an even greater degree and gain access to more advanced actions and abilities. The overall rank of the characters in a campaign also provides the GM with a general idea of the party's aptitude and capabilities, allowing him to better tailor adventures and encounters to match the characters.

Recharge. Some action cards require more effort, exact timing, or greater energy than others, and are not easy to perform over and over again. After an action with a recharge rating has been successfully performed, the active player places a number of tracking tokens onto the card equal to the card's recharge rating card. The card is unavailable for use while there are any tracking tokens on it.

Reckless. The reckless stance is a more mercurial, all-or-nothing approach, willing to take greater risks for the potential to achieve extreme results (often either extremely good – or extremely bad). The reckless stance is a high-risk, high-reward stance. It reflects a brash, daemon-may-care approach in an attempt to get the best of both worlds – success and critical effects – with the understanding that it could backfire.

Round. In structured encounters defined by initiative, the game resolves in rounds. A round is the time it takes for all the participants to take their actions. After the last participant in initiative order acts, the current round ends. If the encounter continues, a new round begins, going back to the top of the initiative order.

Sigmar's Comet. Sigmar's Comet has the potential to trigger powerful positive side effects. The active player may choose to have a Sigmar's Comet result count as a success symbol or a boon symbol. Alternatively, a Sigmar's Comet can trigger an effect denoted by a Sigmar's Comet symbol.

Skills, Advanced. Advanced skills are only available to people who have the proper discipline and training. Advanced skills represent very specific applications of a characteristic and cannot be attempted untrained. When a character acquires an advanced skill, it should be written in the space provided on the character sheet.

Skills, Basic. Basic skills are available to every character and are listed on the character sheet for convenience. Basic skills represent the wide range of activities and focused characteristic use that anyone can attempt even without special training. Characters with training in a basic skill will tend to perform better than someone without training, but the skills can still be attempted untrained.

Soak / Soak Value. A character's soak value is generally provided by any armour he is wearing or special abilities he possesses. Along with the character's Toughness rating, each point of soak prevents one point of potential damage. Damage in excess of the target's ability to soak becomes wounds.

Stance. The stance system introduces an element of risk management to task resolution by allowing characters to adopt a certain posture or approach to a task. The three stances are conservative, neutral, and reckless.

Story Mode. During a game session, events occur in either story mode or encounter mode. Story mode is used when the story's focus is "zoomed out". When actions are not being presented with significant conflicts, they can be resolved in story mode in a broad manner as if described by a narrator. If an event advances the story, but its individual details can be resolved with little resistance or conflict or if the order in which they are resolved is of little consequence, it is best to manage these actions in story mode.

Success Lines. Action cards feature success lines prefaced by the Success symbol, indicating effects that can be achieved when using that action. Some actions have additional success lines, which indicate an alternate success effect when a certain number of successes are achieved in the action's dice pool.

Terror. A creature or encounter with a Terror rating eats away at a character's mental and physical well-being. The Terror rating is a measure of how difficult it is to remain disciplined, as well as how much fatigue and stress the character risks losing if he fails a Discipline check when confronted by the Terror-inducing stimulus.

Traits. Many cards and game elements feature several identifying traits, often shown in italics. Some cards or game effects may interact with these traits in different ways. For example, when changing careers, the careers' traits are compared to see how compatible the two careers are.

Turn. A turn is one individual participant's opportunity to act during a round. In combat, a turn follows a specific sequence consisting of several opportunities to perform manoeuvres or actions, or to manage the character's abilities.

Wounds/Wound Threshold. The amount of physical damage a character can withstand is referred to as his wound threshold. A character's starting wound threshold is influenced by his race and Toughness. When a character suffers from more wounds than his wound threshold, he is knocked unconscious, and may be killed if he suffers from too many critical wounds. Normal wounds are the ordinary cuts, abrasions, burns, and the effects of the harsh environment.



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