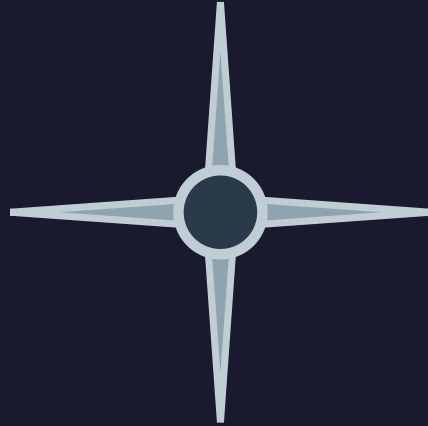




IRONSWORN

OFFICIAL RULEBOOK

A perilous quest through the Ironlands, guided by vows and oracle tables

1-4 PLAYERS	60-240 min MINUTES	14+ AGE
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IRONSWORN

A tabletop roleplaying game by Shawn Tomkin set in the mythic dark fantasy world of the Ironlands. Players take on the role of Ironsworn, heroes bound to sworn vows who face peril, make allies, and explore a dangerous frontier. Ironsworn plays solo, cooperatively, or with a guide (GM).

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CORE RULES

- ♦ [Stats and Tracks](#) – The Basics: stats, action rolls, momentum, progress tracks, harm, stress, assets, oracles, bonds
- ♦ [Your Character](#) – Vows, bonds, debilities, experience, character creation
- ♦ [Moves](#) – All moves: Adventure, Relationship, Combat, Suffer, Quest, Fate
- ♦ [Combat](#) – Enter the Fray, Strike, Clash, Turn the Tide, End the Fight, Battle
- ♦ [Foes and Encounters](#) – NPC components, packs, creating encounters
- ♦ [Character Sheet](#) – Blank character sheet (printable) with interactive generator

ORACLE TABLES

Roll dice and consult for narrative inspiration. Machine-readable JSON:

- ♦ [action.json](#) · [theme.json](#) · [combat-action.json](#)
- ♦ [major-plot-twist.json](#) · [challenge-rank.json](#) · [pay-the-price.json](#)
- ♦ [schema.json](#)

MOVES AND ASSETS (MACHINE-READABLE)

Structured JSON data for game tools and digital character sheets:

- ♦ [moves.json](#) – All moves (Adventure, Relationship, Combat, Suffer, Quest, Fate)
- ♦ [companion.json](#) – Companion assets (Cave Lion, Giant Spider, Hawk, Horse, Hound, Kindred, Mammoth, Owl, Raven, Young Wyvern)
- ♦ [path.json](#) – Path assets (Alchemist, Animal Kin, Banner-Sworn, and 25 more)
- ♦ [combat-talent.json](#) – Combat Talent assets (Archer, Berserker, Brawler, and 11 more)
- ♦ [ritual.json](#) – Ritual assets (Augur, Awakening, Bind, and 13 more)



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PART ONE: THE BASICS

PLAYING IRONSWORN

To play Ironsworn, you create your character, make some decisions about the world you inhabit, and set the story in motion. When you encounter something dangerous or uncertain, your choices and the dice determine the outcome.

Ironsworn supports three modes of play.

- ♦ Guided: One or more players take the role of their characters, the protagonists in your story, while a gamemaster (GM) moderates the session. The GM helps bring the world to life, portrays the people and creatures you encounter, and makes decisions about the outcome of your actions.

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- ♦ Cooperative (Co-Op): You and one or more friends play together to overcome challenges and complete quests. A GM is not required. The Ironsworn game system will help you explore the dramatic stories of your characters and their fateful vows.

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- ♦ Solo: As with cooperative play, no GM is necessary. You portray a lone heroic character in a dangerous world. Good luck!

Ironsworn is primarily intended for solo and small group play. One to four players (plus a GM in guided mode) is ideal. The characters portrayed by other players are referred to in these rules as your allies.

WHAT YOU NEED

If you're playing solo, just grab some materials and get started. A session can be as long as you like, from a few minutes to a few hours.

If you're playing with one or more friends—either guided or co-op—you probably want to dedicate enough time to make some progress in your quests. Plan on a couple of hours or more.

Make sure you have:

- ♦ Two ten-sided dice (d10) for each player. These are your challenge dice.
- ♦ One six-sided die (d6) for each player. This is your action die.
- ♦ Optionally, another pair of ten-sided dice to use as your oracle dice.
- ♦ A printed character sheet for each player and printed asset cards.
- ♦ Some counters for marking status tracks on your character sheet. You can use paper clips, beads, dice, coins, tokens from other games, or whatever is convenient.

MECHANICS AND THE FICTION

Ironsworn uses various mechanics, such as rolling dice and managing the stats and resources on your character sheet. As a player, you will often make decisions based on a desired mechanical outcome. For example, you might choose a particular action to get a bonus on your die roll. The basic mechanics of Ironsworn are introduced in this chapter.

Ironsworn is also heavily reliant on the fiction, which is the imagined characters, situations, and places within your game. You will play from the perspective of your character. You will interpret actions and events in a way that is consistent with the dramatic, fictional reality you have forged for your story and your world.

IRON VOWS

Vows are the core of playing Ironsworn. It is your vows that drive you. These goals create the context for your adventures and challenges. As you complete vows, you gain experience and new abilities.

When you create your character, you start with a background vow. When you setup your campaign, you envision or encounter an inciting incident which triggers a new vow. There are several prompts for vows associated with the details of the world in chapter 4, and with foes and encounters in chapter 5. You can select something which fits your vision for the world and your character's goals, or just come up with something yourself. If you are playing in co-op mode, you and your fellow players may have shared vows and personal vows.

YOUR CHARACTER

You use your character sheet to track your stats, overall condition, and progress in your quests. You also have assets, which are abilities you choose when you create your character and when you gain experience. These components help you determine the outcome when things get dangerous or uncertain.

However, your character is more than these mechanical bits. You are the protagonist in a rich story. You have hopes and fears, virtues and failings. You have a history. You are, or were, part of a community. This is the fiction of your character. Consider a few of these details as you create your character, but don't sweat it. You'll evolve it through play. At the start of your game, put your character on stage to see what happens. Fill in the blanks—for your character and your world—as you go.

MOVES

Moves are self-contained systems to resolve a specific action, scene or question. There is a move for most common situations you encounter in Ironsworn. They have specific triggers, phrased as "When you [blank]." When your character does that thing, or you encounter that situation, refer to the move to see what happens.

Moves are organized by activities.

- ♦ **Adventure moves** cover a variety of dangers, conducting investigations, traveling, making camp, and healing.
- ♦ **Relationship moves** involve persuading others to do something, building bonds with people and communities, resting and recuperating within a community, aiding your allies, and initiating duels.
- ♦ **Combat moves** are used when fighting (but not exclusively; other moves may come into play as well).
- ♦ **Suffer moves** occur when you endure hardship, such as suffering physical harm or facing a dispiriting challenge.
- ♦ **Quest moves** encompass iron vows, making progress in a sworn quest, and improving your character.
- ♦ **Fate moves** help you decide what happens in solo and co-op play, or support the GM's decisions and brainstorming in guided play.

When a move's name is referenced within these rules or by another move, you'll see it as *italicized* text.

Most moves are based on risky actions you are taking. You are attacking with your sword, making a dangerous climb, or healing an ally. These moves use dice to determine the outcome. This is called an **action roll**.

Some moves measure your headway against an extended challenge, such as a journey or fight, using a progress track. When you are ready to resolve the challenge, you make a **progress roll**.

Other moves utilize a different kind of dice roll, called an **oracle roll**. These moves help determine the outcome of uncertain events out of your character's control. If you're playing solo or co-op, you can use the Ask the Oracle move to answer questions about the world, resolve how other characters respond, or determine what happens next.

Some moves don't require a roll. They might support or reference a separate move, or simply help you resolve a mechanical or narrative situation. Don't roll dice unless a move tells you to.

THE ACTION ROLL

When you make a move representing a risky or uncertain action, you roll three dice at once.

- ♦ Challenge dice: Two ten-sided dice (D10)
- ♦ Action die: A six-sided die (D6)

Challenge Dice and Action Die

Add your relevant stat to your action die. The move will tell you which stat to add, or may give you a choice. Some moves will tell you to use one of your tracks, such as health or supply, in place of a stat. Based on the move or your character's assets, you may also have an opportunity to apply one or more bonuses called adds. The total of your action die, your stat, and any adds is your action score. Your action score is never greater than 10—anything over that is ignored.

How to roll the dice

To determine the outcome of your move, compare the action score to each of the challenge dice. You want it to be greater than the individual value of those dice.

How to compare the challenge dice to the action die

There are three possible results for a move.

STRONG HIT	WEAK HIT	MISS
 Two Successes is a Strong Hit Strong Hit: Your action score is greater than both the challenge dice. You succeed at what you are trying to do.	 One Success is a Weak Hit Weak Hit: Your action score is greater than only one of the challenge dice. You probably succeeded, but with a lesser effect or cost.	 No Successes is a Miss Miss: Your action score isn't greater than either of the challenge dice. You failed, or need to make some serious concessions.

The move will tell you how to interpret the outcome of your action, or offer a choice. The result may include mechanical changes to your character's status and narrative changes to the current situation.

When you score a miss on a move, you'll usually see a prompt to Pay the Price. This is a special move that lets you pick a likely negative outcome or roll to see what happens. If you're playing with a GM, she may consult with this move, or just tell you the price.

The main thing to remember on a miss: Something always happens. The situation gets more complex, dramatic, or dangerous.

Ties always go to the challenge dice. Your action score needs to exceed—not equal—the challenge dice to count as a hit.

MATCHES

 What a Match looks like

When you roll for a move, you should be on the lookout for a match on the challenge dice. In cooperative and solo play, this is your trigger to add a twist, create a new complication, or otherwise mix things up. Something interesting, unexpected, or unusual happens. If you're unsure, you *Ask the Oracle*, which is a move you use to ask questions or check for inspiration. If you're playing with a GM, a match on the challenge dice can be her prompt to introduce a surprising turn of events.

The outcome of a match should be evaluated based on the result of your move.

- ♦ **Strong hit:** The match should represent a twist in the narrative, something interesting, or a new opportunity.
- ♦ **Miss:** The match should represent a heightened negative outcome, a complication, or new danger. Things get worse for you in an unexpected way.

You can also let the intensity of your success or failure frame how you interpret a match. Rolling matched 10's on your challenge dice should prompt you to introduce a harrowing turn of events or a dire failure. It's as bad as things get.

GM'S AND THE DICE

If you are playing as a GM, you can focus on guiding the game and responding to your player's questions and actions. Since NPCs don't make moves, you won't need to make action rolls. However, you might want to have a pair of D10's available for oracle rolls.

THE MOMENTUM MECHANIC

Momentum is a special mechanic which is central to playing Ironsworn. Your momentum value ranges from a -6 to +10 and represents how you are faring in your quests. Move results may tell you to increase or decrease momentum.

The momentum track is on the left side of your character sheet. You can use a paper clip or token to mark the current value.

When you have positive momentum, things are going your way. You have the advantage. You are in control. Your path is clear. You are properly positioned for success.

When you have negative momentum, the tide has turned against you. You face tough odds. You are outmatched. Your next steps are uncertain.

Momentum persists through scenes and between gaming sessions. When you finish a session, write down your current momentum value. Then, pick up where you left off when you return to the game.

GAINING MOMENTUM

You gain momentum as an outcome or option when making moves. This represents securing advantages, acquiring new insight, and making progress in your quests. If a move tells you to add momentum (phrased as “take +X momentum”), increase your momentum track by the value indicated. The choices you make in a move, or the assets you use to support the move, may modify the amount rewarded.

In general, taking +1 momentum represents a minor advantage. Taking +2 momentum (or more) represents a major advantage.

LOSING MOMENTUM

You can lose momentum as a choice when making moves, or as an outcome of a move—particularly on a weak hit or miss. If a move tells you to suffer a specific loss of momentum (phrased as “suffer -X momentum”), you reduce your momentum track by the value indicated. The options you choose in a move, or the assets you leverage, may alter this penalty.

If you lose momentum as a result of a narrative outcome without a defined value, such as when you make the Pay the Price move, you should suffer a reduction appropriate to the narrative circumstances.

- ♦ **For a minor disadvantage or complication**, suffer -1 momentum.
- ♦ **For a major disadvantage or complication**, suffer -2 momentum.

Some moves and assets give you the option to suffer a loss of momentum in exchange for temporary advantages. If you take this option, adjust your momentum track by the amount indicated.

BURNING MOMENTUM

Burning momentum is a powerful option to build on your success and deliver a decisive result or avoid dire failure. When you have positive momentum, after you roll your move, you may cancel any challenge dice that are less than your current momentum value. This gives you an automatic hit.

If both challenge dice are less than your momentum value, you may cancel them both for a strong hit. If you burn momentum when only one of the challenge dice is less than your momentum value, the result of the other die stands—giving you a weak hit.

For example, your momentum track is at +6 and your action score is 4. You roll a 5 and an 8 on your challenge dice. You may burn momentum to cancel the 5, but not the 8. This shifts your result from a miss to a weak hit.



Hot to Burn Momentum

Burning momentum is never required. Even if you score a miss on a move and have enough momentum to cancel the challenge dice, you can choose to suffer the failure and save your momentum for a more crucial moment.

After you burn momentum, you must **reset your momentum**.

RESETTING MOMENTUM

After you burn momentum, you must adjust your momentum track to your momentum reset value. The default reset is +2. This value may be lowered when your character suffers from a debility. Debilities are conditions such as wounded, shaken, or unprepared. They are marked on your character sheet as a result of a move or a narrative event.

- ♦ If you have one debility marked, your momentum reset is +1.
- ♦ If you have more than one debility marked, your momentum reset is 0.

There is a box below the momentum track where you can record your current momentum reset.

SUFFERING NEGATIVE MOMENTUM



What Negative Momentum looks like

When your momentum is less than 0, and it matches the value of your action die, you must cancel your action die. You still check the success of your move by comparing your stat plus your adds to the challenge dice, but you won't have your action die to help you.

MINIMUM MOMENTUM

Your momentum cannot drop lower than -6. This is your minimum momentum. If a move tells you to lower your momentum, and your momentum is already at its minimum, you will instead make the Face a Setback move. As a result of this move, you reduce your health, spirit, or supply (or some combination thereof) by that amount, or undermine your progress in a current quest, journey, or fight.

Make moves such as Secure an Advantage to increase your momentum.

MAX MOMENTUM

Your max momentum starts at +10, and is reduced by 1 for every marked debility. There's a spot on your character sheet to record this value. You can't increase momentum over your max. If you are at your max and a move gives you an option to increase your momentum, you can't take that benefit.

PROGRESS TRACKS

A progress track is used to measure your pace and determine the outcome of a goal or challenge in specific situations.

- ♦ When you Swear an Iron Vow, a progress track represents the challenges you overcome on your way to achieving your ultimate goal.
- ♦ When you Undertake a Journey, a progress track represents how far you've gone and how favorable the travel has been.
- ♦ When you Enter the Fray, a progress track represents your advantage as you weaken or wound your foes in combat.
- ♦ When you establish a new relationship with a character in your world and Forge a Bond, you mark your bond on a progress track.

Progress tracks are drawn as a row of ten boxes which you fill in—or mark—as you make headway toward a goal. When you initiate a challenge, these boxes are empty.



An empty progress track

Since making progress on your quests may stretch over many sessions, your character sheet includes progress tracks for vows. Your character sheet also includes a progress track for your bonds. For journeys and fights, you can sketch out your progress tracks on whatever is convenient.

CHALLENGE RANKS

When you engage in a fight, initiate a journey, or swear a vow, you give your challenge a rank. In increasing order of difficulty, the ranks are troublesome, dangerous, formidable, extreme, and epic. You (or the GM) will choose a rank appropriate to the situation and how quickly or easily it should be resolved. Troublesome is used for simple challenges. A typical challenge is dangerous or formidable. Epic and extreme challenges require great effort and luck to overcome.

MARKING PROGRESS ON PROGRESS TRACKS

You will perform specific moves to advance toward your goal. For example, as you travel across perilous lands, you Undertake a Journey and mark progress as you successfully reach waypoints in your travel.

Similarly, when you fight, you Strike or Clash to inflict harm on your foe. To move forward in your quest, you use the *Reach a Milestone* move. These incremental moves let you amass advantages to have the best chance of success when you are ready to resolve your challenge.

Whenever you successfully move toward your goal, you partially or fully fill in a box on your progress track. You fill progress boxes with lines—called ticks. A full progress box consists of four ticks in a star-shaped pattern. When a move tells you to mark progress, fill in the appropriate number of ticks or progress boxes based on the rank of your challenge.

TROUBLESOME		DANGEROUS	FORMIDABLE	EXTREME	EPIC
					
3 of 3 full boxes Mark 3 progress		2 of 2 full boxes Mark 2 progress			

Marking Progress for Bonds

If you are marking progress on your bonds progress track, you always mark 1 tick unless a move tells you otherwise. Bonds are not given a challenge rank.

PROGRESS MOVES

There are four moves, called progress moves, which utilize progress tracks to resolve the outcome of a goal or challenge.

- ♦ To resolve a quest, Fulfill Your Vow.
- ♦ To end your journey, Reach Your Destination.
- ♦ To decide the outcome of combat, End the Fight.
- ♦ When you retire from your life as Ironsworn, Write Your Epilogue.

PROGRESS ROLLS

You don't make an action roll when you make a progress move. Instead, you tally the number of fully filled progress boxes (those with four ticks). This is your progress score. Then, roll your challenge dice and compare your progress score to the value of the dice.

As with an action roll, if your progress score is greater than both challenge dice, it's a strong hit. If you beat one of the challenge dice, it's a weak hit. If you fail to beat either die, it's a miss. The progress move will tell you how to resolve the challenge based on the outcome of your roll. Also, keep an eye out for a match, which represents a surprising twist or unusual complication.

In the example below, you would compare your +6 progress score to your challenge dice when making your progress move. The seventh progress box is only partially filled in, and won't count toward the progress score.



What a progress score looks like

When deciding whether to make your progress move, you need to weigh your chance of success against the risk of continuing to make preparatory moves. One thing to remember: It's not necessary to fill your progress track before making your progress move. In fact, a weak hit or miss on a progress roll can lead to exciting new story possibilities.

Momentum and Progress Rolls

Momentum is ignored when you make a progress move. You cannot burn momentum on a progress roll, and you do not suffer from negative momentum.

SHARING PROGRESS TRACKS WITH ALLIES

When you and your allies are working together to resolve a challenge—a quest, a journey, or a fight—you share a progress track and mark progress together. When you make a progress move, only one of you rolls the dice. The result will stand for the group.

HARM

Harm represents physical damage and fatigue. You inflict harm on your foes in combat, and you Endure Harm when you are attacked or fail to overcome a physical hazard or ordeal.

INFLECTING HARM

When you successfully attack a foe using the Strike or Clash moves, you inflict harm. If you are armed with a deadly weapon (such as a sword, axe, spear, or bow), you inflict 2 harm. If you are unarmed or using an improvised or simple weapon (such as a shield, stick, club, staff, or rock), you inflict 1 harm. You may have an option to inflict additional harm through the choices you make in a move.

Each point of harm you inflict is marked as progress on your foe's progress track, as appropriate to their rank. For example, each point of harm equals 2 ticks when fighting an extreme enemy, or 2 full progress boxes when fighting a dangerous enemy.

ENDURING HARM

When you face physical injury or hardship, make the Endure Harm move. As part of that move, you reduce your health track by the amount of harm suffered. There are five ranks of harm.

- ♦ Troublesome (1 harm): An attack by a minor foe, a painful injury, or a tiring effort.
- ♦ Dangerous (2 harm): An attack by a skilled foe or deadly creature, a nasty injury, or a demanding effort.
- ♦ Formidable (3 harm): An attack by an exceptional foe or mighty creature, a serious injury, or an exhausting effort.
- ♦ Extreme (4 harm): An overwhelming attack by a monster or beast, a grievous injury, or a debilitating effort.
- ♦ Epic (5 harm): An attack by a legendary foe of mythic power, a horrific injury, or a consuming effort.

When you are fighting a foe, they inflict harm based on their rank. Sample foes are in chapter 5.

If you are at 0 health, a miss on the Endure Harm move puts you at risk of suffering a debility or dying. You can recover health through rest and recuperation, using moves such as Heal, Make Camp, and Sojourn.

STRESS

Stress represents mental burdens and trauma. When you face mental shock or despair, make the Endure Stress move. As part of that move, you reduce your spirit track by the amount of stress suffered. There are five ranks of stress.

- ♦ Troublesome (1 stress): An unsettling incident or frustrating failure.
- ♦ Dangerous (2 stress): A distressing incident or upsetting failure.
- ♦ Formidable (3 stress): A horrifying incident or demoralizing failure.
- ♦ Extreme (4 stress): A heart-rending incident or traumatic failure.
- ♦ Epic (5 stress): A soul-shattering incident or the loss of all hope.

When you are opposing a foe, they can inflict stress (such as a terrifying visage or demoralizing taunt) based on their rank. Sample foes are in chapter 5.

When you Endure Stress, you reduce your spirit track by the amount of stress suffered. If you are at 0 spirit, you are in danger of suffering a debility or falling into desolation.

You can recover spirit by relaxing when you Make Camp, finding fellowship when you Sojourn, or when you Forge a Bond.

Unlike harm, you do not inflict stress on others—at least not mechanically. If you attempt to frighten or demoralize another character, make an appropriate move to see what happens.

ASSETS

Assets are a key component of your character. They give you additional options and bonuses when making a move, and may include their own special moves. When you create your character, you select your starting assets. When you Fulfill Your Vow and gain experience, you can Advance to spend your experience on new assets or upgrade current assets.

You can mix-and-match assets however you like. There are no designated assets based on character classes or roles. However, you should avoid picking the same asset as another player.

ORACLES

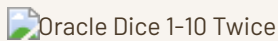
Some moves may prompt you to roll on a table to generate a result between 1 and 100. There are also a set of creative prompts in chapter 6, which you can use to reveal details, trigger events, and guide the actions of other characters in your world. These oracles help answer questions in solo or co-op games, or provide inspiration for the GM in guided play.

ROLLING ORACLE DICE

Whenever you are prompted by a move or an oracle table to generate a result between 1 and 100, roll two ten-sided dice.  Oracle Dice 1 - 100

One of your oracle dice may include tens digits on its faces. You'd read this result as 83.

You can also use two D10s of different colors, and decide before rolling which represents the tens digit and which is the units. You'd read this result as 36.



SEEKING ANSWERS

If you are playing solo or co-op, you can Ask the Oracle to help guide your game session and trigger ideas when you need to know what happens next. Its most basic function is to answer a “yes” or “no” question. Combined with your own instincts and creativity, this move—and other random prompts—can push your story in surprising and exciting directions.

If you are playing with a GM, they are the oracle. When you see a prompt to Ask the Oracle, turn to your GM. The GM is free to leverage random tools and creative prompts to come up with the answers.

Keep in mind that—even when playing with a GM—Ironsworn is about shared storytelling. Offer suggestions. Talk it out. The GM is the final arbiter of what happens next, but everyone at the table should participate in building the world and creating the narrative of your game.

MORE RANDOMNESS

You’ll find a set of random tables in chapter 6. These provide inspirational prompts and random results for common situations. You can also use whatever random generators you prefer, including those drawn from another game, online generators, or visual tools such as tarot cards.

TRUST YOUR INSTINCTS

These random generators will never replace your own imagination and intuition. If it’s interesting, dramatic, and pushes the story forward, make it happen. Too much reliance on random generators to answer questions about “what happens next” can kill the momentum of your game or make it feel disconnected and incoherent.

Keep it moving. Ask a question. If an answer leaps to mind, go with it. If you’re not sure, Ask the Oracle. Then, play.

BONDS

As you explore your world and complete quests, you create bonds with people and communities by making the Forge a Bond move. Bonds give you advantages for specific moves when interacting with those you have bonded with. For example, if you attempt to Compel someone, and you share a bond with them, you add +1 to your roll. The moves tell you when having a bond provides this advantage.

Bonds also help determine your fate when you retire from your life as an adventurer. The more bonds you create, the more connections you have with people and communities, the better your chance to live out your days peacefully in the company of others.

Your character sheet has a special progress track for bonds. When you successfully Forge a Bond, mark 1 tick on this progress track. When your adventures are complete and you Write Your Epilogue, tally your bonds and make a progress roll to wrap up your character’s story.

OTHER CHARACTERS

The mechanics of Ironsworn are almost entirely character-facing—meaning they reference the capabilities and actions of your character. Other non-player characters and creatures (NPCs) don't have mechanical detail. In fact, they may only have a single stat—their rank—for tracking progress against them in a combat scene. Further, NPCs do not make moves. You won't roll dice for them to determine the outcome of their actions. When you attempt to influence them, oppose them, resist them, or aid them, make moves as your character. If you have questions about an NPC's motivations or what they do next, Ask the Oracle.

ALLIES AND COMPANIONS

If you are playing a co-op or guided game with other players, their characters are referred to in these rules and in moves as your allies.

A companion is a special type of asset. Unlike normal NPCs, they can provide mechanical benefits through their abilities, and they have a health track to record harm. If the text of a move refers to a companion, it means a companion asset.

EQUIPMENT

In Ironsworn, you won't worry too much about equipment. Your supply track is an abstract representation of your general readiness, clothes, ammo, food, water, and mundane gear.

You are armed and armored as appropriate to your vision for your character. If you wield a weapon, you can inflict harm with it. If you are armed with a deadly weapon (such as a sword, axe, spear, or bow), you inflict 2 harm. If you are unarmed or using an improvised or simple weapon (such as a shield, stick, club, staff, or rock), you inflict 1 harm.

Other equipment provides narrative benefit. It enables you to make moves where that gear is important, or perhaps allows you to avoid a move altogether.

For example, you need to make your way down a steep rock face. Without assistance, you'd make a Face Danger move to see what happens. If you had rope, the climb is not particularly risky or uncertain. In that case, you might skip the move and just narrate the result.

Specific assets can make equipment more important and relevant to your character. For example, combat talent assets represent your expertise in a particular weapon or fighting style. When you wield an appropriate weapon, you gain the benefit of the asset.

Apart from assets, you can make note of equipment at whatever level of detail you like, but don't fuss over it. If you're wondering whether you have a particular mundane item, you can Ask the Oracle.

THE FLOW OF PLAY

Like most roleplaying games, you play primarily from the perspective of your character. What are you doing? What are you trying to achieve? What opposition and challenges do you face? Your quests, and the characters and situations you encounter, will guide the fiction and the choices you make.

When you have questions about what you find, how other characters in your world respond, or what happens next, you can go with what feels right (if you're playing solo or co-op), or ask your GM. When you are seeking inspiration or want to put it in the hands of fate, you make the Ask the Oracle move. Use the yes/no questions and random prompts to generate interesting twists and new complications you might not have thought of on your own. Above all, if it's interesting, dramatic and fits the fiction, make it happen.

If you are doing something covered by a move, refer to the move to resolve your action. If it tells you to roll dice, do it.

Scoring a strong hit on a move means you are in control. You're driving the narrative. What do you do next?

A weak hit or a miss means you don't have control of the situation. Instead of acting, you react. What happens next? If you're playing with a GM, she'll determine how the world responds. Otherwise, you rely on your intuition and occasional oracle rolls to drive the narrative.

PART TWO: YOUR CHARACTER

YOU ARE IRONSWORN

Others live out their lives hardly venturing beyond the walls of their village or steading, but you are different. Your sworn vows will lead to a life of danger, heroism, and sacrifice at the edge of the known world.

ENVISION YOUR CHARACTER

Before you jump into the mechanics of your character, consider her motivations, interests, skills, personality, and weaknesses. It's fine to start with one or two ideas about your background and goals. You can flesh out your character as you play.

Be Awesome

Your character is highly competent. You're smart, brave, and driven. You can hold your own in a fight. When you Swear an Iron Vow, you mean it.

You are not without your limitations. You'll face hardship. You'll make bad decisions. You will fail. Overcoming those failures, pushing on, is what makes you heroic.

Be Who You Want

You can envision your character however you like—unbound by geography, lineage, sexual orientation, and gender. Your character can be inspired directly by a real-world or historical culture, or you might weave a blend of cultural influences into your concept.

The default setting is human-centric, and these rules do not include specific options to play fantasy races. However, you can adjust to your liking. The mechanics of your character are relatively light and can be themed to support several types of fantasy or historical fiction.

CHARACTER BASICS

NAME

You have a name. Perhaps others will honor it someday in stories and songs.

Give your character a name.

STATS

There are five stats. Each is given a value from 1 to 3. When you make a move and roll dice, you usually add one of your stats to your action die. The move will tell you which stat to add, or give you a choice.

- ♦ Edge: Quickness, agility, and prowess in ranged combat.
- ♦ Heart: Courage, willpower, empathy, sociability, and loyalty.
- ♦ Iron: Physical strength, endurance, aggressiveness, and prowess in close combat.
- ♦ Shadow: Sneakiness, deceptiveness, and cunning.
- ♦ Wits: Expertise, knowledge, and observation.

To start, arrange these bonuses across your five stats in any order:

3, 2, 2, 1, 1.

HEALTH

Health represents your current physical condition and stamina, ranked from 0 to +5. Health is reduced when you Endure Harm, and increased when you rest or receive care through moves such as Heal or Sojourn.

If you are at 0 health, scoring a miss when you Endure Harm puts you at risk of suffering a debility or dying.

To start, set your health track to +5.

SPIRIT

Spirit is your current mental state, ranked from 0 to +5. Spirit is reduced when you Endure Stress. It is increased when you find comfort in companionship, success, or relaxed moments through moves such as Make Camp or Forge a Bond.

If you are at 0 spirit, scoring a miss when you Endure Stress puts you at risk of suffering a debility or falling into desolation.

To start, set your spirit track to +5.

SUPPLY

Supply is an abstract representation of your preparedness, including ammo, food, water, and general upkeep. It is ranked from 0 to +5. Instead of keeping track of a detailed inventory, you can consider most of your mundane gear as covered under supply.

Supply is decreased when you make the Undertake a Journey move. You might also reduce supply as a narrative cost when you face hardships as an outcome of other moves. For example, if you make the Face Danger move to ford a wild river, you might lose some gear as a result of a weak hit or miss. Supply is increased when you gather provisions through moves such as Resupply.

The supply track represents the shared assets among your party. You and your allies use the same supply value while you travel together. If any of you make a move to increase supply, or suffer the result of a move that reduces your supply, each of you adjust your supply track accordingly.

When your supply falls to 0, all characters make the Out of Supply move. If you are at 0 supply and suffer additional – supply, you each need to reduce your health, spirit, or momentum tracks by that amount.

To start, set your supply track to +5. You and your allies share the same supply value while you adventure together. When one of you makes a move that raises or lowers the supply track, each of you should make the adjustment on your character sheet.

MOMENTUM

Momentum represents how you are faring in your quests. It is gained and lost through moves. If you have positive momentum, you are building on your successes and ready to make decisive moves. If you have negative momentum, you have suffered setbacks and your quest is in jeopardy.

Use the momentum track on the left side of your character sheet to record your current momentum. Your character sheet also includes boxes to mark your max momentum and momentum reset.

- ♦ Your max momentum starts at +10, and is reduced by one for every marked debility.
- ♦ Your momentum reset starts at +2. If you have a one debility marked, your reset is +1. If you have more than one debility marked, your reset is 0.

To start, set your current momentum to +2, your max momentum to +10, and your momentum reset to +2.

VOWS

When you Swear an Iron Vow, you give it a rank (troublesome, dangerous, formidable, extreme, or epic), and mark it on your character sheet. You then use a vow progress track to mark when you *Reach a Milestone*.

You should start your first session with two vows: A long term goal (your background vow) and an immediate situation which must be dealt with (your inciting incident).

BONDS AND RELATIONSHIPS

As you build relationships and undertake and complete quests in the service of others, you create bonds by making the *Forge a Bond* move.

Bonds provide narrative texture to your world by fleshing out other characters and communities. They give you places to return to, and people to reconnect with, when your life as Ironsworn has taken its toll. Bonds also provide mechanical benefits when you act within a community or interact with someone with whom you share a bond. For example, the Sojourn move gives you a bonus to your action roll if you have a bond with that community.

The bonds progress track on your character sheet represents the connections you have made. When you successfully Forge a Bond, you mark progress (one tick). When your time as Ironsworn is done, you Write Your Epilogue. When you make that move, you tally the number of filled boxes on your bonds progress track as your progress score. See to learn more about progress tracks and progress moves.

You should start your first session with up to three background bonds. Make a note of the people or communities you share bonds with, and mark up to three ticks on your bond progress track.

DEBILITIES

As you suffer hardships and setbacks in your quests, you may need to mark debilities as a result of moves or narrative events. Moves will tell you which debility to mark, or give you a choice. Debilities represent temporary, long-term, and permanent disadvantages. Some can be easily cleared through an appropriate move. Others will forever become a part of your character.

Debilities should have a narrative impact on how you envision your character's actions and how others react to you. They also have a mechanical impact by reducing your momentum track.

- ♦ Each marked debility reduces your max momentum by 1.
- ♦ If you have one marked debility, your momentum reset is +1 instead of +2.
- ♦ If you have more than one marked debility, your momentum reset is 0.

CONDITIONS

- ♦ Wounded may be marked when you are at 0 health and fail to Endure Harm. You are severely injured and need treatment to recover.
- ♦ Shaken may be marked when you are at 0 spirit and fail to Endure Stress. You are despairing or distraught, and need comfort to recover.
- ♦ Unprepared is marked when you are at 0 supply and are Out of Supply. You and your allies share the same supply value, and will mark unprepared together.
- ♦ Encumbered is marked as appropriate to the circumstances when you are carrying excessive or cumbersome weight.

As with all debilities, conditions impact your max momentum and momentum reset. In addition, if you are wounded, shaken, or unprepared, you cannot increase the associated track.

- ♦ If you are wounded, you cannot increase health.
- ♦ If you are shaken, you cannot increase spirit.
- ♦ If you are unprepared, you cannot increase supply.

If a move gives you an opportunity to raise your health, spirit, or supply while the associated condition is marked, you can't take that option. You must clear the condition before improving the related status track.

Wounded, shaken, and unprepared can be cleared when you succeed on appropriate moves. For example, scoring a hit on the Heal move can clear the wounded condition. The shaken and unprepared conditions can generally only be cleared as you find fellowship and gather provisions in a community through the Sojourn move. Once you clear a condition, you restore your max momentum and momentum reset, and you can once again increase the associated track through moves.

Unlike other conditions, encumbered is not specifically triggered or resolved by a move. Instead, it should be marked when appropriate to the circumstances. For example, you would mark encumbered if you are carrying an unconscious ally to safety in a perilous situation. Encumbered can also be triggered by the Ironclad asset, which allows you to gain an advantage for heavy armor in exchange for marking the condition. Encumbered is cleared when you lighten your load.

BANES

- Maimed may be marked when you are at 0 health and fail to Endure Harm. You have suffered a wound which causes you ongoing physical challenges, such as the loss of an eye or hand. Or, you bear horrific scars which serve as a constant reminder of your failures.
- Corrupted may be marked when you are at 0 spirit and fail to Endure Stress. Your experiences have left you emotionally scarred. You are at the threshold of losing yourself to darkness.

Banes are permanent. They forever impact your character through the momentum penalty and—more importantly—through the narrative impact of being maimed or corrupted. You should factor this debility into how you perform moves and how you interact with the world. You may have physical or emotional limitations you must cope with. Your outlook may change. Your goals and methods may change. How others behave toward you may change.

If you are maimed, envision the injury and make note of it. Consider how this impacts your approach when facing physical challenges, and weave it into your roleplaying and the narrative of your moves.

When you are corrupted, envision how this impacts your personality and motivations. You might struggle with a new compulsion, quirk, or fear. You might even bear a physical, supernatural sign of the corruption. If so, what is it?

BURDENS

- Cursed is marked when you Face Death and return with a soul-bound quest. This burden can only be cleared by completing the quest.
- Tormented is marked when you Face Desolation and undertake a quest to prevent a dire future.

Burdens are a result of life-changing experiences that leave you bound to quests. Clearing a burden can only be accomplished by resolving the quest.

When you are cursed or tormented, you should consider the physical or emotional manifestations of these conditions. You have walked the lands beyond death or suffered visions of your greatest fears. What signs do you bear? How do these experiences affect your relationships?

When you create your character, all debilities should be unmarked.

ASSETS, BACKGROUNDS, SKILLS, AND TRAITS

Assets represent your background, skills, and traits. They give you additional options and bonuses when making a move—or sometimes act as their own self-contained moves.

Assets provide both mechanical and narrative benefits. For example, if you are an Herbalist, you gain bonuses to your moves when treating injuries or sicknesses. You can envision your character identifying plants, diagnosing rare illnesses, and summoning up obscure facts about herbal remedies. Even when you aren't making moves, your role colors the interests and manner of your character. Also, your expertise might offer story possibilities and new quests as you interact with others in need of your services.

Ironsworn assets are formatted as printable cards. Put them alongside your character sheet for easy reference. Each asset card includes three abilities.

ASSET TYPES

There are four types of assets: Companions, paths, combat talents, and rituals. You can mix-and-match assets as you like—whatever fits your vision for your character and their experiences and goals.

Companions

Companions are your NPC helpers. When you acquire a companion, give them a name and envision their appearance and personality. If they don't have a starting ability, choose one. Upgrading a companion enables additional abilities.

Companions utilize a health track and may suffer harm as a result of one of your moves. When your companion takes damage, make the Companion Endure Harm move to determine the outcome. See to learn more.

Paths

Paths represent your background, interests, training, and skills. They provide mechanical and narrative advantages, but also reflect who you are and how you interact with the world. For example, a Ritualist would likely have a different outlook than a Veteran. Choosing both those paths can reflect an evolution of your character or an interesting background.

Combat Talents

Ironsworn characters are assumed to be skilled fighters. Even without a combat talent, you can wield weapons and perform combat moves. A combat talent reflects a particular area of expertise, and gives you additional options and bonuses.

Combat talent assets typically require you to wield a specific weapon, as noted in the asset text. For example, if you are a Shield-Bearer and don't have a shield at the ready, you can't use the asset's abilities.

Rituals

Magic in Ironsworn is cast through rituals which help support your actions or act as unique moves. Like all assets, rituals can be selected as you gain experience and can be upgraded over time to make them more flexible or powerful.

All rituals utilize a move as their default marked ability. You must make this move and the associated action roll to trigger the effect. Any secondary abilities you gain by upgrading the asset are dependent on performing the ritual described as the default ability.

ACQUIRING ASSETS

You may select three assets when you create your character. Additional assets can be acquired with experience points when you Advance.

Some assets can only be obtained after you have fulfilled narrative or mechanical requirements. The text of the asset will outline the requirement, typically using the phrase "Once you..."

For example:

- ◆ Banner-Sworn requires that you have marked a bond with a leader or faction. If you have an appropriate background bond, or have made the Forge a Bond move with a leader or faction, you may add the asset.

- ◆ Battle-Scarred requires that you are maimed. If you have marked the debility, you may add the asset.

- ◆ Ritualist requires that you Fulfill Your Vow in service to an elder mystic, and Forge a Bond to train with them. Once you've done that, you may add the asset.

For assets without a requirement, you should consider the narrative justification when you add it to your character. What have you done to gain these abilities? How have your goals changed to support this new focus? Make your selection meaningful in the context of your story.

UPGRADING ASSETS

When you spend experience to upgrade an asset, you fill in the dot on your asset card to show you've acquired the ability. All assets include three abilities. The first will probably be filled in when you purchase the asset. If not, you get to choose one of the three abilities to start.

Upgrading an asset costs 2 experience. Abilities may be selected in any order. You don't have to activate the second ability to upgrade the third one.

ASSET ABILITIES

Assets provide one or more functions.

- ♦ They provide bonuses (adds) for specific moves.
- ♦ They allow you to alter the outcome of a move by rerolling dice.
- ♦ They provide improved outcomes for successful moves, such as taking +1 momentum on a hit.
- ♦ They give you an option to exchange one resource for another, such as trading momentum for inflicting additional harm.
- ♦ They allow you to use moves in unusual circumstances, such as using the Scrying ritual to Gather Information remotely.
- ♦ They allow you to use a different stat instead of the one normally required by a move.
- ♦ They provide unique self-contained moves.
- ♦ They add narrative detail and create situations where you can reveal more about your character or your world.

Follow the directions on the asset to apply its abilities to your current situation.

ABILITY REQUIREMENTS

Narrative circumstances and the outcome of failed moves may force you into situations where you can't leverage a key asset, making your adventure more challenging and dramatic.

For example, if you don't have a animal pelt, you can't perform the Bind ritual. If you Undertake a Journey without your Horse companion, you won't gain the bonus. If you are an Archer who's run out of arrows, you'll have to try something else. Before you make a move using an asset, take a moment to ensure you are properly positioned and equipped to use those abilities.

USING COMPANION ABILITIES

If you have a companion, leveraging their abilities is an option, not a requirement. Through the fiction, you can interact with your companion and have them perform tasks or assist you without using one of the asset abilities. For example, a Horse companion can put you in position to travel at speed or get away from danger.

When you leverage a companion's ability, you are inherently putting them at risk. If you roll a 1 on your action die when aided by a companion, any negative outcome of the move should involve your companion. Depending on the circumstances, they might suffer harm, be put in danger, become separated from you, or refuse your commands.

Inflicting Harm on Companions

When a companion suffers physical damage, you make the Companion Endure Harm move. When their health is at 0, they are in danger of being killed. Some moves, such as Sojourn and Make Camp, offer options for your companion to recover health.

Slain Companions

If your companion is killed, give yourself 1 experience point for each marked ability. Then, remove the asset. If you acquire the same type of companion through the narrative of your quest and journeys, you can rebuy the asset at the normal cost.

FAILING AN ASSET MOVE

For the sake of brevity, moves within an asset do not usually describe the result of a miss. If an asset offers a self-contained move, and doesn't provide a specific consequence for a miss, you can leverage the miss result of the Face Danger move : "On a miss, you fail, or your progress is undermined by a dramatic and costly turn of events. Pay the Price." In short, make something negative happen as appropriate to the circumstances.

Failed Rituals

Dabbling in the mystic arts is dangerous, and the results can be unpredictable. If the ritual goes wrong, envision what sort of backlash might be possible, or Ask the Oracle.

Failing a ritual might also lead to an entirely mundane result. Perhaps you were ambushed in the midst of the ritual. Or, you waste time (suffer -momentum) or resources (suffer -supply). You might choose to save any overt supernatural backlash for special circumstances, such as when you roll a match.

To start, select three assets. Since this is a key aspect of your character, feel free to choose assets as the first step in character creation. You can let your assets guide your concept, or vice versa.

EXPERIENCE

When you Fulfill Your Vow, you gain experience. The amount of experience is based on the rank of the quest, and ranges from 1 to 5 points. Mark an 'X' on your character sheet for each point you've earned.



Empty Experience Track

When you Advance, you spend experience to purchase assets or upgrade an asset. Replace the 'X' for each point spent with a filled-in dot.



Experience Track when you have Advanced

Per the Advance move, you may:

- ♦ Add a new asset by spending 3 experience.
- ♦ Upgrade an asset by spending 2 experience.

To start, your experience is unmarked.

EQUIPMENT YOU CARRY

Make note of any important equipment or items you start with. These are things that might impact the narrative and the moves you make, or provide texture to your character's background. They don't offer mechanical bonuses unless they are represented by an asset, such as a weapon used in a combat talent.

You can assume you are equipped for travel and adventure as represented by your supply track. Don't worry about managing rations or ammo or other mundane necessities.

To start, make note of any items which have a narrative impact and equipment which relates to your assets. Keep it simple.

CHARACTER CREATION SUMMARY

Work through the following steps in whatever order you prefer.

- ♦ Envision your character.
- ♦ Choose a name.
- ♦ Set your stats by arranging these bonuses across edge, heart, iron, shadow, and wits in any order: 3, 2, 2, 1, 1.
- ♦ Set your health, spirit, and supply to +5.
- ♦ Set your momentum to +2, your max momentum to +10, and your momentum reset to +2.
- ♦ Mark up to three background bonds.
- ♦ Pick three assets.
- ♦ Make note of any important equipment or items.
- ♦ Set a background vow, and give it a rank of extreme or epic. Then, envision your inciting incident and Swear an Iron Vow.

PART THREE: MOVES

MAKING MOVES

Moves help you decide what happens when you do something risky or uncertain, and they resolve various fictional and mechanical situations. There is a move for most common actions and scenes you will portray in Ironsworn. When you do something or encounter a situation within the scope of a move, refer to the move and follow its instructions to see what happens.

When a move is referenced within this rulebook or within another move, the move's name will be italicized. When you see italicized text, it's your prompt to make that move.

MOVE OUTCOMES

Most moves use an action roll to resolve the outcome. Roll your action die and challenge dice, add the relevant stat to your action die along with any adds provided by the move or your assets, and check the result.

- ♦ Strong hit: When your action score is greater than both of the challenge dice, you succeed at what you are trying to do. Take any benefits as defined by the move. You are in control. Envision what you do next.
-
- ♦ Weak hit: When your action score is greater than only one of the challenge dice, it's a mixed result. You've probably succeeded, but with a lesser effect or a cost. The move will describe the outcome or choice you need to make. Control of the situation is slipping away. What happens next?
-
- ♦ Miss: When your action score isn't greater than either of the challenge dice, you failed. Things get worse, or you need to make some serious concessions. The move will give you a specific result, or tell you to Pay the Price. You've lost control of the situation. What happens next?

A progress roll is variation of the action roll used to resolve an extended challenge. When you make a progress move, you won't roll your action die. Instead, roll the challenge dice and compare to your progress track. Then, check the result for a strong hit, weak hit, or miss.

Other moves leverage an oracle roll to help guide the fiction. You'll roll two ten-sided dice to generate a number between 1 and 100, and check your result against a table.

Some moves don't use dice at all; don't roll unless the move tells you to.

BEST PRACTICES FOR MOVES

Fiction first, then move

What are you trying to do? How are you doing it? What complications might you face? Envision it. If you're playing co-op or guided, talk it out. If—after thinking through the fiction—you decide you are doing something or encountering a situation that falls under a move, make the move.

Depending on the scale of the current action, you might be visualizing a montage of days (a journey, for example) or the passing of a mere second (an intense fight). Always think from the standpoint of the fiction—even if it's obvious what move you'll make. Then, translate the fiction into the mechanics of a move, and back to the fiction again as you play out the result.

Not everything is a move

Don't let your session jump from move to move without any roleplay, worldbuilding, or storytelling. If you're doing something safe and certain, it's probably not a move. If you'd rather gloss over something, do it.

Many moves offer a potential benefit and cost, and it's ultimately your decision whether to risk the move to gain the reward. If you happen across a community in your travels, and decide to roleplay some low-key interactions with the locals, that's not necessarily a move. However, if you are wounded and low on supplies, Sojourn gives you an opportunity to recover.

Moves are also used as a pacing mechanism. Moves leading immediately to other moves make the situation feel more intense and dangerous.

Make Moves Matter

Let your moves flow organically out of the narrative. Don't make moves purely for a mechanical benefit without some support in the fiction. Don't repeat a move trying to get your desired outcome. A move, hit or miss, should always result in a change to the current situation.

For example, you are trying to Compel a clan leader to agree to an alliance. You roleplay how you attempt to reason with him. Then, you make the roll, and fail. He refused. Why? What else do you learn or what does he do to make your situation more complex or dangerous? Whatever happens, something happens. You shouldn't try to Compel him again unless you bring a new approach or leverage to bear.

However, there will be times when you make a move multiple times in sequence. In combat, you'll often Strike or Clash with consecutive rolls. When you Undertake a Journey, you may make the roll several times to gain progress. That's fine as long as the rolls don't get too mechanical. Break up the flow of play with other actions, narrative beats, and events that cause you to rethink your approach. When in doubt, follow this guideline: If you've made the same move three times in a row, switch things up. Make something happen.

MAKING GROUP MOVES

When you are adventuring with allies (other player characters), you will often make moves to resolve a challenge for the group. This represents your character taking the lead in a particular scene. You might serve as the spokesperson as you Compel an enemy to negotiate a surrender. Or, you might guide your party through a dense wood as you Undertake a Journey. Unless a move specifically offers benefits for your allies, any mechanical bonus you gain from a hit is applied only to the character making the move. For example, if you represent your group as you Swear an Iron Vow and score a strong hit, you take the mechanical reward (per the move, "take +2 momentum"). Everyone else benefits from the narrative success.

The exception are moves such as Make Camp and Sojourn, which provide specific options for your allies to improve their status tracks or clear debilities. Also, your supply track is shared when you travel together, and any change (positive or negative) affects everyone in the group.

Allies can contribute to your action by making the Aid Your Ally move. On a hit, you gain a bonus you can leverage to improve your chance of success. If more than one ally makes this move, bonuses can be stacked.

When you make a move for your group and face a negative outcome, you should apply mechanical and narrative costs as appropriate to the current situation.

MAKING PROGRESS MOVES

There are four progress moves: Reach Your Destination, End the Fight, Fulfill Your Vow and Write Your Epilogue. These moves represent your attempt to act decisively and resolve a challenge or complete a narrative arc. When you make these moves, you won't roll your action die and add a stat. Instead, you tally your progress score by adding +1 for each fully filled progress box. Then, roll your challenge dice, compare to your progress score, and resolve the move as directed. You cannot burn momentum when making a progress move, and you are not affected by negative momentum.

EQUIPMENT AND MOVES

Equipment and items can contribute to the fiction of how you make or avoid a move. What you wear or the items you carry might also affect how you envision your character. Otherwise, equipment is not especially important.

Weapons and Armor

In combat, the weapons you wield and armor you wear mainly provide narrative detail for the scene. When you envision how you fight, take your equipment into account.

Weapons have implied characteristics. Light axes, knives, or spears can be thrown. A bow can be fired. A sword is a fine weapon balanced for attack and defense. When you wield a spear, you leverage its reach to hold your opponent at bay or attack with speed and precision. When you fight with a knife, you move inside your opponent's guard and slash and cut. When you hold a shield, you deflect blows, bash or shove your foe, or even block arrows at range.

Similarly, you can envision yourself relying on armor as you like. Do you wear crudely stitched hides for protection? Perhaps a fine shirt of mail handed down from your kin? Do you hide your face within a visored iron helm? How does your armor affect your combat stance and tactics?

You can lose a weapon, run out of ammo, or see your armor damaged as a result of a failed move. This can be represented mechanically through a loss of momentum. Or, you might Endure Stress if an item of sentimental value is destroyed. Losing access to a weapon also limits your ability to inflict harm (1 harm instead of 2). Always start with the fiction. What moves does this item allow you to make or avoid? What happens when you no longer have it?

If you have a combat talent asset, your weapon and armor may provide additional benefit through abilities. As long as you carry the item, you may use those abilities.

INITIATIVE

Initiative is a special mechanic in combat. It reflects who is in control. When you have initiative, you make proactive moves and have more options. When your foe has initiative against you, they are forcing you to react. Initiative shifts between you and your foes depending on the result of your moves. Some moves are inherently proactive or offensive and can only be made when you have initiative. Others are reactive or defensive and are made when your foe has initiative.

Combat moves usually specify when you make the move (with or without initiative) and whether you take or lose initiative as part of the outcome. However, you will make moves which aren't specifically combat moves to take action or avoid dangers in a fight. To determine whether you have initiative, follow these guidelines (unless a move tells you otherwise):

- ♦ When you score a strong hit, you take or retain initiative.
 - ♦ When you score a weak hit or miss, you lose initiative.
-

The ability to take initiative on a strong hit applies even to suffer moves. For example, if you score a miss when you Clash and your foe inflicts harm, you can still take back initiative with a strong hit on Endure Harm. This is your character shrugging off the hit and roaring back into the fight.

NPCs do not make moves. When an NPC has initiative, they take actions in the fiction of the scene which force you to react. When you have initiative, you are in control and taking proactive actions to achieve your objectives.

Initiative and Allies

When you are playing with allies (other player characters), you each track your own initiative based on the outcome of your moves. You can shift the focus between characters and make moves as appropriate to the situation. A character with initiative makes proactive moves to inflict harm or setup an advantage. A character without initiative defends against attacks or tries to get back into the fight.

Keep in mind that initiative doesn't represent who goes next. Talk out what happens as if moving a virtual camera around your imagined scene. Bring the chaos of a melee to life. Use a dramatic moment to jump to a different character and leave everyone in suspense. Keep things moving to give everyone a chance in the spotlight.

MOVE GLOSSARY

There are several common phrases, terms, and prompts you'll see as part of moves and assets. They are summarized here (in alphabetical order).

"Add +X"

Add this number to your action die. This is in addition to any other bonuses you otherwise receive, such as your stat. Your action die + your stat + adds is your final action score.

"Allies / Ally"

An ally is a character controlled by another player.

"Ask the Oracle"

When you seek inspiration to decide the outcome of a move, resolve what happens next, or get details about your world, you can Ask the Oracle. This move lets you ask questions to get a yes/no result or use random prompts for brainstorming. When you are playing with a GM, they are the oracle. Ask them what happens, or talk it out.

"Companion"

A companion is an NPC asset.

“Choose”

The move will provide a list of options and the number you may select. You may not select a single option more than once.

“Endure Harm (X Harm)”

Make the Endure Harm move reducing your health track by the indicated amount of harm.

“Endure Stress (X Stress)”

Make the Endure Stress move, reducing your spirit track by the indicated amount of stress.

“In Exchange for”

Adjust the appropriate tracks by the amount indicated in the move. Typically, you will trade +1 in one track for -1 in another.

“Inflict your Harm”

When you inflict your harm, you mark progress against your foe. If you are armed with a deadly weapon (such as a sword, axe, spear, or bow), you inflict 2 harm. If you are unarmed or using an improvised or simple weapon (such as a shield, stick, club, staff, or rock), you inflict 1 harm.

Each point of harm you inflict is marked as progress on your foe's progress track, as appropriate to their rank. For example, each point of harm equals 2 ticks when fighting an extreme enemy, or 2 full progress boxes when fighting a dangerous enemy.

“Inflict +X Harm”

“Inflict +1 Harm” tells you to add 1 harm to your current attack. Some assets increase your harm in particular circumstances, or a move might give you an option to increase your harm. You must inflict harm as a result of your move to gain the bonus. Always add your harm and any bonus harm together, then apply it to your foe's progress track.

“On a Hit” / “If You Score a Hit”

Act on these instructions if you score a weak or strong hit on a move (your move score beats one or both of the challenge dice).

“On a Weak Hit” / “If You Score a Weak Hit”

Act on these instructions if your move score is greater than one challenge die, but less than or equal to the other.

“On a Strong Hit” / “If You Score a Strong Hit”

Act on these instructions if your move score is greater than both challenge dice.

“On a Miss” / “If You Score a Miss”

Act on these instructions if your move score does not beat either of the challenge dice.

“Pay the Price”

When you roll a miss on a move, you’ll usually see a prompt to Pay the Price. This move helps you resolve the outcome of failure. If you’re playing without a GM, you make the most obvious or interesting bad outcome happen based on the current circumstances, roll on the Pay the Price table to see what happens, or Ask the Oracle. If you’re playing with a GM, they can decide what happens, ask you to roll on the table, or talk it with the group.

“Progress Move”

This is a special type of move to resolve the outcome of a goal or challenge. When you make a progress move, tally the number of filled boxes on your bonds progress track as your progress score. Only add fully filled boxes (those with four ticks). Then, roll your challenge dice, compare to your progress score, and resolve a strong hit, weak hit, or miss as normal. You may not burn momentum on this roll, and you are not affected by negative momentum.

“Reroll Any Dice”

After you roll your move, you may pick up and reroll your choice of any dice, including either or both of the challenge dice and your action die. Set aside the dice you intend to keep. You may only reroll once, using a single throw for all dice you choose to reroll. Choose carefully, because the new result for all dice must stand.

“Roll +[Stat]”

Add the value of the indicated stat to your action die. This is the basic action roll. Most moves indicate the stat you should use, such as “roll +iron”. If it doesn’t, or gives you a choice, use the most appropriate stat.

“Suffer -X”

Subtract this number from the indicated track. For example, “Suffer -1 supply” tells you to subtract 1 from your supply track. If a specific amount is open to interpretation, reduce the track as appropriate to the challenge faced.

RANK	AMOUNT
Troublesome	-1
Dangerous	-2
Formidable	-3
Extreme	-4
Epic	-5

When you are fighting a foe, they inflict harm and stress based on their rank. For example, a formidable foe inflicts 3 harm or stress.

When in doubt about the amount you suffer, just assume it is a dangerous result and adjust the associated track by -2.

“Take +X”

Add this number to the indicated track. For example, “Take +2 momentum” tells you to add 2 to your current momentum track.

Some assets may offer additional bonuses. Unless stated otherwise, this bonus is added to anything else you gain as a result of your move. If you take +2 momentum as part of a move, and you are using an asset which gives you +1 momentum on the same move, you take +3 momentum total.

“When You...”

This is the move trigger. When you do this thing, or encounter this situation, make the move. Only you, the character, makes moves. You or the GM don’t use moves for non-player characters or creatures. If you’re just checking to see if something happens or how someone acts, you can Ask the Oracle.

ADVENTURE MOVES

Adventure moves are used as you travel across perilous, investigate situations, and deal with threats.

FACE DANGER: ADVENTURE MOVE

When you attempt something risky or react to an imminent threat, envision your action and roll. If you act...

- ♦ With speed, agility, or precision: Roll +edge.
- ♦ With charm, loyalty, or courage: Roll +heart.
- ♦ With aggressive action, forceful defense, strength, or endurance: Roll +iron.
- ♦ With deception, stealth, or trickery: Roll +shadow.
- ♦ With expertise, insight, or observation: Roll +wits.

On a strong hit, you are successful. Take +1 momentum.

On a weak hit, you succeed, but face a troublesome cost. Choose one.

- ♦ You are delayed, lose advantage, or face a new danger: Suffer -1 momentum.
- ♦ You are tired or hurt: Endure Harm (1 harm).
- ♦ You are dispirited or afraid: Endure Stress (1 stress).
- ♦ You sacrifice resources: Suffer -1 supply.

On a miss, you fail, or your progress is undermined by a dramatic and costly turn of events. Pay the Price.

The Face Danger move is a catch-all for risky, dramatic, or complex actions not covered by another move. If you’re trying to overcome an obstacle or resist a threat, make this move to see what happens. You select which stat to roll based on how you address the challenge.

A strong hit means you succeed. You are in control. What do you do next?

A weak hit means you overcome the obstacle or avoid the threat, but not without cost. Choose an option and envision what happens next. You don't have complete control. Consider how the situation might escalate, perhaps forcing you to react with another move.

A miss means you are thwarted in your action, fail to oppose the threat, or make some progress but at great cost. You must Pay the Price.

SECURE AN ADVANTAGE : ADVENTURE MOVE

When you assess a situation, make preparations, or attempt to gain leverage, envision your action and roll. If you act...

- ♦ With speed, agility, or precision: Roll +edge.
- ♦ With charm, loyalty, or courage: Roll +heart.
- ♦ With aggressive action, forceful defense, strength, or endurance: Roll +iron.
- ♦ With deception, stealth, or trickery: Roll +shadow.
- ♦ With expertise, insight, or observation: Roll +wits.

On a strong hit, you gain advantage. Choose one.

- ♦ Take control: Make another move now (not a progress move); when you do, add +1.
- ♦ Prepare to act: Take +2 momentum.

On a weak hit, your advantage is short-lived. Take +1 momentum.

On a miss, you fail or your assumptions betray you. Pay the Price.

The structure of Secure an Advantage is similar to Face Danger. You envision your action and roll + your most relevant stat. This move, however, is proactive rather than reactive. You're evaluating the situation or strengthening your position.

This move gives you an opportunity to build your momentum or improve your chance of success on a subsequent move. It's a good move to make if you want to take a moment to size up the situation, or if you're acting to gain control. It will often encompass a moment in time—such as shoving your foe with your shield to setup an attack. Or, it can represent preparation or evaluation spanning minutes, hours, or even days, depending on the narrative circumstances.

A strong hit means you've identified an opportunity or gained the upper hand. You knocked your enemy down. You moved into position for an arrow shot. You built your trap. You scouted the best path through the mountains. Now it's time to build on your success.

A weak hit means your action has helped, but your advantage is fleeting or a new danger or complication is revealed. You pushed, and the world pushes back. What happens next?

A miss means your attempt to gain advantage has backfired. You acted too slowly, presumed too much, or were outwitted or outmatched. Pay the Price.

GATHER INFORMATION

When you search an area, ask questions, conduct an investigation, or follow a track, roll +wits. If you act within a community or ask questions of a person with whom you share a bond, add +1.

On a strong hit, you discover something helpful and specific. The path you must follow or action you must take to make progress is made clear. Envision what you learn (Ask the Oracle if unsure), and take +2 momentum.

On a weak hit, the information complicates your quest or introduces a new danger. Envision what you discover (Ask the Oracle if unsure), and take +1 momentum.

On a miss, your investigation unearths a dire threat or reveals an unwelcome truth that undermines your quest. Pay the Price.

Use this move when you're not sure of your next steps, when the trail has gone cold, when you make a careful search, or when you do fact-finding.

There's some overlap with other moves using +wits and involving knowledge, but each has their purpose. When you're forced to react with awareness or insight to deal with an immediate threat, that's Face Danger. When you size up your options or leverage your expertise and prepare to make a move, that's Secure an Advantage. When you're spending time searching, investigating, asking questions—especially related to a quest—that's when you Gather Information. Use whichever move is most appropriate to the circumstances and your intent.

A strong hit means you gain valuable new information. You know what you need to do next. Envision what you learn, or Ask the Oracle.

A weak hit means what you learned is unsettling or ambiguous. To move forward, you need to overcome new obstacles and see where the clues leads.

On a miss, some event or person acts against you, a dangerous new threat is revealed, or you learn of something which contradicts previous information or severely complicates your quest.

HEAL

When you treat an injury or ailment, roll +wits. If you are mending your own wounds, roll +wits or +iron, whichever is lower.

On a strong hit, your care is helpful. If you (or the ally under your care) have the wounded condition, you may clear it. Then, take or give up to +2 health.

On a weak hit, as above, but you must suffer -1 supply or -1 momentum (your choice).

On a miss, your aid is ineffective. Pay the Price.

When you tend to physical damage or sickness—for yourself, an ally, or an NPC—make this move. Healing might be represented by staunching bleeding, binding wounds, applying salves, or using herbs to brew a tonic.

Healing takes time. A few minutes for a quick treatment to get someone on their feet. Hours or perhaps days for more severe injuries. Use what seems appropriate to the circumstances, and consider how this downtime affects your quests and other things going on in your world.

A miss can mean you've caused harm rather than helping, or some perilous event interrupts your care.

NPCs who are not companions do not have a health track. When you attempt to Heal them, make this move and apply the result through the fiction. They will improve, or not, as appropriate to the move's outcome.

RESUPPLY

When you hunt, forage, or scavenge, roll +wits.

On a strong hit, you bolster your resources. Take +2 supply.

On a weak hit, take up to +2 supply, but suffer -1 momentum for each.

On a miss, you find nothing helpful. Pay the Price.

When you're in the field and need to bolster your supply track, make this move. Fictionally, this represents hunting and gathering. You might also search an area where supplies might be found, such as an abandoned camp or field of battle.

If you're adventuring with allies, you share the same supply value. When one of you makes this move, each of you adjust your supply track.

If you have the unprepared condition marked, you can't resupply. Instead, you need to find help in a community when you Sojourn.

MAKE CAMP

When you rest and recover for several hours in the wild, roll +supply.

On a strong hit, you and your allies may each choose two. On a weak hit, choose one.

- ♦ Recuperate: Take +1 health for you and any companions.
- ♦ Partake: Suffer -1 supply and take +1 health for you and any companions.
- ♦ Relax: Take +1 spirit.
- ♦ Focus: Take +1 momentum.
- ♦ Prepare: When you break camp, add +1 if you Undertake a Journey.

On a miss, you take no comfort. Pay the Price.

Making camp can be a purely narrative activity and can be abstracted or roleplayed as you like. However, if you need to recover from the struggle of your adventures while traveling through the wilds, make this move.

Unlike most moves, you will not roll + a stat. Instead, you roll +supply. This represents your access to provisions and gear. Huddling in your cloak on the cold ground is a different experience than a warm fire, good food, and a dry tent.

On a strong hit, choose two from the list. You may not select a single option more than once. On a weak hit, choose one. If you recuperate or partake, you can also apply those benefits to your companions (NPC assets).

If you are traveling with allies, only one of you makes this roll for the group. Each of you may then choose your own benefits on a strong or weak hit.

On a miss, you gain no benefits of your downtime. Perhaps you suffered troubling dreams (Endure Stress). Poor weather may have left you weary and cold (Endure Harm). Or, you were attacked. If in doubt, roll on the Pay the Price table or Ask the Oracle for inspiration. Depending on what you envision, you can play to see what happens, or jump to the next day as you continue on your journey the worse for wear.

UNDERTAKE A JOURNEY

When you travel across hazardous or unfamiliar lands, first set the rank of your journey.

- ♦ Troublesome journey: 3 progress per waypoint.
- ♦ Dangerous journey: 2 progress per waypoint.
- ♦ Formidable journey: 1 progress per waypoint.
- ♦ Extreme journey: 2 ticks per waypoint.
- ♦ Epic journey: 1 tick per waypoint.

Then, for each segment of your journey, roll +wits. If you are setting off from a community with which you share a bond, add +1 to your initial roll.

On a strong hit, you reach a waypoint. If the waypoint is unknown to you, envision it (Ask the Oracle if unsure). Then, choose one.

- ♦ You make good use of your resources: Mark progress.
- ♦ You move at speed: Mark progress and take +1 momentum, but suffer -1 supply.

On a weak hit, you reach a waypoint and mark progress, but suffer -1 supply.

On a miss, you are waylaid by a perilous event. Pay the Price.

This is Ironsworn's travel move. When you set off or push on toward a destination, make this move.

First, give your journey a rank. Decide how far—and how hazardous—it is based on the established fiction. If you're unsure, Ask the Oracle. Most of your journeys should be troublesome or dangerous. Formidable or extreme journeys might require weeks within your narrative, with appropriate stops, side quests, and adventures along the way. An epic journey is one of months, or even years. It is the journey of a lifetime.

If the journey is mundane—a relatively short distance through safe territory, —don't make this move. Just narrate the trip and jump to what happens or what you do when you arrive.

Along for the Ride?

If you are part of a caravan or party of NPCs, and aren't an active participant in the planning or execution of the journey, you won't make this move or track progress. The journey will be resolved in the fiction. You can Ask the Oracle to determine what happens en route or when you arrive.

Allies and Journeys

If you are traveling with allies, one of you makes the Undertake a Journey roll for each segment, and you share a progress track. The responsibility for leading the journey can switch from segment to segment as you like.

Your fellow travelers can assist by making the Aid Your Ally move. Perhaps they are scouting ahead or sustaining you with a lively song. They can also Resupply to represent foraging or hunting for supplies en route. Everyone should offer narrative color for what they do and see on the journey, even if they are not making moves.

Only the character making the move takes the momentum bonus on a strong hit. But, because your supply track is shared, each of you mark -1 supply when the acting character makes that choice on a strong hit or when they suffer a weak hit.

Waypoints

If you score a strong or weak hit on this move, you reach a waypoint. A waypoint is a feature of the landscape, a settlement, or a point-of-interest. Depending on the information you have or whether you have traveled this area before, a specific waypoint may be known to you. If it isn't, envision what you find. If you need inspiration, Ask the Oracle.

Depending on the pace of your story and your current situation, you may choose to focus on this waypoint. A settlement can offer roleplay opportunities or provide a chance to recuperate and provision via the Sojourn move. In the wilds, you might make moves such as Make Camp, Resupply, or Secure an Advantage. Or, you can play out a scene not involving moves as you interact with your allies or the world. Mix it up. Some waypoints will pass as a cinematic montage (doubtlessly depicted in a soaring helicopter shot as you trudge over jagged hills). Other waypoints offer opportunities to zoom in, enriching your story and your world.

When you roll a match, take the opportunity to introduce something unexpected. This could be an encounter, a surprising or dramatic feature of the landscape, or a turn of events in your current quest.

Marking Progress

When you score a hit and reach a waypoint, you mark progress per the rank of the journey. For example, on a dangerous journey you mark 2 progress (filling two boxes on your progress track) for each waypoint. When you feel you have accumulated enough progress and are ready to make a final push towards your destination, make the Reach Your Destination move.

Travel Time

Travel time can largely be abstracted. The time between waypoints might be hours or days, depending on the terrain and the distance. If it's important, make a judgment call based on what you know of your journey, or Ask the Oracle.

Mounts and Transport

Horses, mules, and transport (such as boats) influence the fiction of your journey—the logistics of travel and how long it takes. They do not provide a mechanical benefit unless you have an asset which gives you a bonus (such as a Horse companion).

Managing Resources

You can intersperse Resupply or Make Camp moves during your journey to manage your health, spirit and supply, or to create new scenes as diversions. Don't be concerned with using the Make Camp move as an automatic capstone to a day of travel. You can be assumed to rest and camp as appropriate without making the move, and you can roleplay out those scenes or gloss over them as you like. When you want the mechanical benefit of the Make Camp move, or you're interested in playing the move out through the fiction, then do it.

On a Miss

You do not mark progress on a miss. Instead, you encounter a new danger. You might face hazards through the weather, the terrain, encounters with creatures or people, attacks from your enemies, strange discoveries, or supernatural events. Decide what happens based on your current circumstances and surroundings, roll on the Pay the Price table, or Ask the Oracle for inspiration. Depending on your desired narrative pace, you can then play out the event to see what happens, or summarize and apply the consequences immediately.

For example, you roll a miss and decide you encounter a broad, wild river which must be crossed to continue on your journey. If you want to focus on how you deal with the situation, play to see what happens by making moves. You might Secure an Advantage by exploring upriver for a ford and then Face Danger to cross. Or, if want to quickly push the story forward, you could fast-forward to a perilous outcome such as losing some provisions during the crossing (suffer - supply). Mix things up, especially on long journeys.

REACH YOUR DESTINATION

Progress Move

When your journey comes to an end, roll the challenge dice and compare to your progress. Momentum is ignored on this roll.

On a strong hit, the situation at your destination favors you. Choose one.

- ♦ Make another move now (not a progress move), and add +1.
 - ♦ Take +1 momentum.
-

On a weak hit, you arrive but face an unforeseen hazard or complication. Envision what you find (Ask the Oracle if unsure).

On a miss, you have gone hopelessly astray, your objective is lost to you, or you were misled about your destination. If your journey continues, clear all but one filled progress, and raise the journey's rank by one (if not already epic).

When you have made progress on your journey progress track and are ready to complete your expedition, make this move. Since this is a progress move, you tally the number of filled boxes on your progress track. This is your progress score. Only add fully filled boxes (those with four ticks). Then, roll your challenge dice, compare to your progress score, and resolve a strong hit, weak hit, or miss as normal. You may not burn momentum on this roll, and you are not affected by negative momentum.

When you score a strong hit, you arrive at your destination and are well-positioned for success. This should be reflected in the mechanical benefit offered by the move, but also in how you envision your arrival. If this has been a long, arduous journey, make this moment feel rewarding.

On a weak hit, something complicates your arrival or your next steps. Things are not what you expected, or a new danger reveals itself. Perhaps the village is occupied by a raiding party, or the mystic whose council you sought is initially hostile to you. Envision what you find and play to see what happens.

On a miss, something has gone horribly wrong. You realize you are off-course, you had bad information about your destination, or you face a turn of events undermining your purpose here. Depending on the circumstances, this might mean your journey ends in failure, or that you must push on while clearing all but one of your filled progress and raising the journey's rank.

If you are traveling with allies, one of you makes this move. Each of you benefit (or suffer) from the narrative outcome of the roll. Only the character making the move gets the mechanical benefit of a strong hit.

RELATIONSHIP MOVES

Relationship moves are made as you interact with others in the world, fight duels, form bonds, support your allies, and determine the ultimate fate of your character.

COMPEL : RELATIONSHIP MOVE

When you attempt to persuade someone to do something, envision your approach and roll. If you...

- ♦ Charm, pacify, barter, or convince: Roll +heart (add +1 if you share a bond).
- ♦ Threaten or incite: Roll +iron.
- ♦ Lie or swindle: Roll +shadow.

On a strong hit, they'll do what you want or share what they know. Take +1 momentum. If you use this exchange to Gather Information, make that move now and add +1.

On a weak hit, as above, but they ask something of you in return. Envision what they want (Ask the Oracle if unsure).

On a miss, they refuse or make a demand which costs you greatly. Pay the Price...

When you act to persuade someone to do as you ask, or give you something, make this move. It might be through bargaining, or intimidation, charm, diplomacy, or trickery. Use the appropriate stat based on your approach, and roll to see what happens.

This move doesn't give you free rein to control the actions of other characters in your world. Remember: Fiction first. Consider their motivations. What is your leverage over them? What do they stand to gain or avoid? Do you have an existing relationship? If your argument has no merit, or your threat or promise carries no weight, you can't make this move. You can't intimidate your way out of a situation where you are at a clear disadvantage. You can't barter when you have nothing of value to offer. If you are unsure, Ask the Oracle, "Would they consider this?" If the answer is yes, make the move.

On the other hand, if their positive response is all but guaranteed—you are acting obviously in their best interest or offering a trade of fair value—don't make this move. Just make it happen. Save the move for times when the situation is uncertain and dramatic.

On a weak hit, success is hinged on their counter-proposal. Again, look to the fiction. What would they want? What would satisfy their concerns or motivate them to comply? If you accept their offer, you gain ground. If not, you've encountered an obstacle in your quest and need to find another path forward.

If you promise them something as part of this move, but then fail to do as you promised, they should respond accordingly. Perhaps it means a rude welcome when next you return to this community. If they are powerful, they may even act against you. If you share a bond, you would most certainly Test Your Bond. Your actions, good or bad, should have ramifications for your story beyond the scope of the move.

On a miss, they are insulted, angered, inflexible, see through your lies, or demand something of you which costs you dearly. Their response should introduce new dangers or complications.

Compel may also be used to bring combat to a non-violent conclusion. Your approach dictates the stat you use—typically +iron when you threaten with further violence, +heart when you attempt to surrender or reason with them, and +shadow when you use trickery. Your foe must have a reason to be open to your approach. If unsure, Ask the Oracle.

SOJOURN

When you spend time in a community seeking assistance, roll +heart. If you share a bond, add +1.

On strong hit, you and your allies may each choose two from within the categories below. On a weak hit, choose one. If you share a bond, choose one more.

On a hit, you and your allies may each focus on one of your chosen recover actions and roll +heart again. If you share a bond, add +1. On a strong hit, take +2 more for that action. On a weak hit, take +1 more. On a miss, it goes badly and you lose all benefits for that action.

Clear a Condition

- ♦ Mend: Clear a wounded debility and take +1 health.
- ♦ Hearten: Clear a shaken debility and take +1 spirit.
- ♦ Equip: Clear an unprepared debility and take +1 supply.

Recover

- ♦ Recuperate: Take +2 health for yourself and any companions.
- ♦ Consort: Take +2 spirit.
- ♦ Provision: Take +2 supply.
- ♦ Plan: Take +2 momentum.

Provide Aid

- ♦ Take a quest: Envision what this community needs, or what trouble it is facing (Ask the Oracle if unsure). If you chose to help, Swear an Iron Vow and add +1.

On a miss, you find no help here. Pay the Price.

When you rest, replenish, and share fellowship within a community, make this move. Depending on your level of success, you can choose one or more debilities to clear or tracks to increase. If you share a bond with this community and score a hit, you may select one more.

You may select an option only once. If you recuperate, you can also apply those benefits to your companions (NPC assets). If you Sojourn with allies, only one of you makes this move, but all of you can make your own choices on a strong or weak hit.

Make this move once when visiting a community. Your Sojourn should require several hours or several days, depending on your current circumstances and level of aid and recovery required.

On a hit, this move also includes an option to roll again for one of your selected recover actions. The second roll either provides a bonus to that activity (on a hit), or causes you to lose all benefits for your recovery. For example, if you are suffering from low spirit, you might choose to focus on the consort action, representing time in the mead hall or intimacy with a lover. Roll +heart again, and take the bonus if you score a hit.

You should envision what makes this community and its people unique. Give every community at least one memorable characteristic. If you need inspiration, Ask the Oracle. You will find creative prompts, along with generators for community names and troubles in chapter 6.

Narratively, you can imagine much of the time in this community passing as a montage. If you choose to focus on a recovery action, zoom into that scene and envision what happens. You might be in the healer's house, at the market, dancing at a festival, or speaking with the clan leader and making plans. Envision how this scene begins, make your roll, and then narrate the conclusion of the scene—good or bad—based on the result of your focus roll.

You can also perform additional moves while in the community. If you need to Gather Information, Compel someone, or Draw the Circle to resolve a feud, zoom into those scenes and play to see what happens. Sojourn is an overarching move that sets the tone for your stay and defines the mechanics of your recovery. It is not the only move you can make.

On a miss, something goes wrong. You are not welcomed. The citizens are hostile to you. Your dark mood alienates you. A perilous event threatens you all. Envision what happens based on your current circumstances, or Ask the Oracle.

DRAW THE CIRCLE

When you challenge someone to a formal duel, or accept a challenge, roll +heart. If you share a bond with this community, add +1.

On a strong hit, take +1 momentum. You may also choose up to three boasts and take +1 momentum for each.

On a weak hit, you may choose one boast in exchange for +1 momentum.

- ♦ Grant first strike: Your foe has initiative.
- ♦ Bare yourself: Take no benefit of armor or shield; your foe's harm is +1.
- ♦ Hold no iron: Take no benefit of weapons; your harm is 1.
- ♦ Bloody yourself: Endure Harm (1 harm).
- ♦ To the death: One way or another, this fight must end with death.

On a miss, you begin the duel at a disadvantage. Your foe has initiative. Pay the Price.

Then, make moves to resolve the fight. If you are the victor, you may make a lawful demand, and your opponent must comply or forfeit their honor and standing. If you refuse the challenge, surrender, or are defeated, they make a demand of you.

When you challenge someone or accept a challenge, you each trace one-half of the outline of a circle into the ground with the point of an iron blade. Then, you face each other in the center of the circle and fight.

You setup your foe's progress track per the Enter the Fray move, but use this move instead of Enter the Fray to begin the fight. You have initiative at the start of combat unless you score a miss or choose the option to grant first strike.

Duels are usually stopped when one of the duelists surrenders or is clearly defeated. The victor may then make a demand which the loser must abide by. Not complying with this demand means ostracism and shame. If you lose a duel, envision what your opponent demands of you. If you're unsure, Ask the Oracle. Then, do it or face the narrative cost of your dishonor.

Duels may also be to the death. If one of the combatants declares their intent to fight to the death, the other must agree or forfeit.

FORGE A BOND

When you spend significant time with a person or community, stand together to face hardships, or make sacrifices for their cause, you can attempt to create a bond. When you do, roll +heart. If you make this move after you successfully Fulfill Your Vow to their benefit, you may reroll any dice.

On a strong hit, make note of the bond, mark a tick on your bond progress track, and choose one.

- ♦ Take +1 spirit.
 - ♦ Take +2 momentum.
-

On a weak hit, they ask something more of you first. Envision what it is (Ask the Oracle if unsure), do it (or Swear an Iron Vow), and mark the bond. If you decline or fail, Pay the Price.

On a miss, you are refused. Pay the Price.

Bonds provide a story benefit by enriching your interactions and creating connections with a recurring cast of characters and familiar places. They also provide mechanical benefits by giving you adds when you make moves such as Sojourn or Compel. And, perhaps most importantly, your bonds help determine your ultimate fate when you retire from adventuring and Write Your Epilogue.

Bonds can be created through narrative circumstances or through sworn vows. If you've established a strong relationship with a person or community, you may Forge a Bond to give it significance. If you make this move after you successfully Fulfill Your Vow in service to them, you have proven yourself worthy and may reroll any dice.

When you Forge a Bond and score a strong hit, mark a tick on your bond progress track and make note of your bond.

On a weak hit, they ask more of you. It might be a task, an item, a concession, or even a vow. Envision what they need, or Ask the Oracle. If you do it, or Swear an Iron Vow, you can mark the bond.

On a miss, they have refused you. Why? The answer should introduce new complications or dangers.

Bonds and the Fiction

In the fiction of your world, bonds can be ceremonial. If your bond is with a person, perhaps you trade gifts. When you form a bond with a community, they may honor you in their own way. Envision what these ceremonies look like to add color and texture to the setting.

Also, respect the narrative weight of a bond. Don't declare a bond with everyone in sight to add more ticks to your bond progress track. Your bonds represent true, deep connections.

Bonds And Allies

If you and your allies act together to Forge a Bond with an NPC or community, only one of you makes the move. Others can Aid Your Ally to provide support. If you are successful, each of you may mark a tick on your bond progress track. Only the character making the move takes the mechanical benefits of a strong hit (+1 spirit or +2 momentum).

Bonds can also be made between allies. One of you makes the move, and both of you may mark the bond on a hit. If you score a weak hit, your ally may decide what they ask of you. On a miss, something still stands between you. What is it? What must you do to form a deeper connection?

TEST YOUR BOND

When your bond is tested through conflict, betrayal, or circumstance, roll +heart.

On a strong hit, this test has strengthened your bond. Choose one.

- ♦ Take +1 spirit.
 - ♦ Take +2 momentum.
-

On a weak hit, your bond is fragile and you must prove your loyalty. Envision what they ask of you (Ask the Oracle if unsure), and do it (or Swear an Iron Vow). If you decline or fail, clear the bond and Pay the Price.

On a miss, or if you have no interest in maintaining this relationship, clear the bond and Pay the Price.

Bonds are not necessarily everlasting. Events in your story may cause your bond to be tested. How strong is your commitment? If you seek to maintain this bond, at what cost? When you are forced to act against a community or person you share a bond with, fail in a crucial task for them, or they break faith with you, make this move.

You should Test Your Bond within the community or in the company of the person with whom you share the bond. If an incident forces this test, but you aren't in a position to resolve it, make a note. Then, make this move when you next come in contact. If extended time passes without making the test (days, weeks, or months, depending on the circumstance), clear the bond and be done with it.

If you and your allies share a bond with an NPC or community, and you act together to Test Your Bond, only one of you makes this move.

AID YOUR ALLY

When you Secure an Advantage in direct support of an ally, and score a hit, they (instead of you) can take the benefits of the move. If you are in combat and score a strong hit, you and your ally have initiative.

When you take an action to aid an ally (another player's character) through the Secure an Advantage move, you can hand over the benefits of that move to your ally. This represents setting your ally up for success through a supporting action. You might be distracting a foe in combat, scouting ahead on a journey, or giving them encouragement as you stand against a dire threat.

If you score a strong hit when you Secure an Advantage, your ally makes the choice between +2 momentum or making an immediate move with a +1 add. If you have an asset which gives you any additional benefits on the outcome of a Secure an Advantage move, your ally also takes those benefits (instead of you).

In combat, this is a proactive move, made when you have initiative. If you score a strong hit, you and your ally both take or retain initiative.

On a weak hit when you Secure an Advantage, your ally takes +1 momentum. But, this advantage is fleeting or your situation becomes more complicated or dangerous. If you are in combat, you both lose initiative.

On a miss, one or both of you should Pay the Price as appropriate to the circumstances and your intent when making the move. If in doubt, Ask the Oracle. As with a weak hit, you both lose initiative when in combat.

If multiple characters make this move to contribute to an ally action, all Secure an Advantage bonuses will stack. As long as someone scores a strong hit, the target character can take or retain initiative.

Don't ping pong this move back and forth between two characters in an attempt to build momentum. Envision what you are doing to Aid Your Ally, make the Secure an Advantage move, resolve it, and hand the reins over to your ally as they leverage the advantage. Keep it moving. Make things happen

WRITE YOUR EPILOGUE

Progress Move

When you retire from your life as Ironsworn, envision two things: What you hope for, and what you fear. Then, roll the challenge dice and compare to your bonds. Momentum is ignored on this roll.

On a strong hit, things come to pass as you hoped.

On a weak hit, your life takes an unexpected turn, but not necessarily for the worse. You find yourself spending your days with someone or in a place you did not foresee. Envision it (Ask the Oracle if unsure).

On a miss, your fears are realized.

You make this move only once—when all your vows are fulfilled or forsaken and you choose to end your character's adventuring life. For better or worse, the bonds you've made will echo through your days. How have you left your mark? Where are you welcomed and where are you shunned? What remains of you when your quests are at an end?

This is a progress move. Tally the number of filled boxes on your bonds progress track as your progress score. Only add fully filled boxes (those with four ticks). Then, roll your challenge dice, compare to your progress score, and resolve a strong hit, weak hit, or miss as normal. You may not burn momentum on this roll, and you are not affected by negative momentum.

Based on the result of this move, envision how you spend the remainder of your days.

COMBAT MOVES

When there are no other options, when the sword slips free of its sheath, when the arrow is nocked, when the shield is brought to bear, make these moves.

ENTER THE FRAY

When you enter into combat, first set the rank of each of your foes.

- ♦ Troublesome foe: 3 progress per harm; inflicts 1 harm.
- ♦ Dangerous foe: 2 progress per harm; inflicts 2 harm.
- ♦ Formidable foe: 1 progress per harm; inflicts 3 harm.
- ♦ Extreme foe: 2 ticks per harm; inflicts 4 harm.
- ♦ Epic foe: 1 tick per harm; inflicts 5 harm.

Then, roll to determine who is in control. If you are...

- ♦ Facing off against your foe: Roll +heart.
- ♦ Moving into position against an unaware foe, or striking without warning: Roll +shadow.
- ♦ Ambushed: Roll +wits.

On a strong hit, take +2 momentum. You have initiative.

On a weak hit, choose one.

- ♦ Bolster your position: Take +2 momentum.
 - ♦ Prepare to act: Take initiative.
-

On a miss, combat begins with you at a disadvantage. Pay the Price. Your foe has initiative.

Make this move when combat is joined. Set up your progress tracks for your foes and roll to see who is initially in control. Then, play to see what happens.

If you are fighting with allies, each of you make your own move to Enter the Fray. The outcome determines your initial positioning and readiness. You and the other players then envision the scene and make moves as appropriate. If you have initiative, you are positioned to make proactive moves. If not, you make moves to defend against attacks or get into position. If you and your allies are fighting against common enemies, you share progress tracks and mark the harm you each inflict.

If you are fighting a group of troublesome or dangerous foes, you can combine them into a single progress track. This is called a pack. Managing your progress against a pack is easier than tracking them as individuals, and will make combat go a bit faster. For a small pack (about 3 to 5), increase the rank by one. For a large pack (about 6 to 10) increase the rank by two. If you are facing more than 10 troublesome or dangerous foes, group them into smaller packs and associated progress tracks as appropriate.

STRIKE

When you have initiative and attack in close quarters, roll +iron When you have initiative and attack at range, roll +edge.

On a strong hit, inflict +1 harm. You retain initiative.

On a weak hit, inflict your harm and lose initiative.

On a miss, your attack fails and you must Pay the Price. Your foe has initiative.

Make this move when you have initiative and act to inflict harm on your foe. Narratively, this move might represent a focused moment in time—a single sweep of your axe or the flight of an arrow. Or, it can depict a flurry of attacks as you put your opponent on the defensive.

On a strong hit, you strike true. By default you inflict 2 harm if you are armed with a deadly weapon (such as a sword, axe, spear, or bow), and 1 harm if not. A strong hit on this move gives you an additional +1 harm (so, 3 harm with a deadly weapon). You may also have additional bonuses provided by assets.

Each point of harm you inflict is marked as progress on your foe's progress track, as appropriate to their rank. For example, each point of harm equals 2 ticks when fighting an extreme enemy, or 2 full progress boxes when fighting a dangerous enemy.

Narratively, a strong hit represents wounding your enemy or wearing them down. You have initiative and can make your next move. If this attack was intended as a decisive blow, you can attempt to End the Fight.

On a weak hit, you've done some damage but have overextended or your foe counters. You mark your harm, and your foe has initiative. What do they do next?

On a miss, you must Pay the Price. Your opponent strikes back and you Endure Harm. You lose position or advantage and suffer -momentum. You face a new or intensified danger. A companion or ally is put in harm's way. Your weapon is dropped or broken. Let the outcome flow out of the fiction, or roll on the Pay the Price table to see what happens.

CLASH

When your foe has initiative and you fight with them in close quarters, roll +iron. When you exchange a volley at range, or shoot at an advancing foe, roll +edge.

On a strong hit, inflict your harm and choose one. You have the initiative.

- ♦ You bolster your position: Take +1 momentum.
 - ♦ You find an opening: Inflict +1 harm.
-

On a weak hit, inflict your harm, but then Pay the Price. Your foe has initiative.

On a miss, you are outmatched and must Pay the Price. Your foe has initiative.

When your foe has initiative and attacks, and you choose to fight back, make this move.

First, envision your action and the fiction of the exchange. Is this a focused, dramatic moment where you each seek an opening? Or is it a flurry of attacks and parries, advances and retreats? The outcome of the Clash determines if your foe presses their advantage, or if you take control of the fight.

On a strong hit, you inflict your harm and steal back initiative. On a weak hit, you manage to inflict harm, but your foe retains initiative and you must Pay the Price. The price might be that you Endure Harm as your foe counters. Or, you may face some other dramatic outcome as appropriate to the current situation and your foe's intent.

On a miss, you fail to inflict harm and must Pay the Price. This fight is turning against you.

As with the Strike move, each point of harm you inflict is marked on your foe's progress track, as appropriate to their rank.

If you aren't actively fighting back—you're just trying to avoid the attack or seeking cover—you should Face Danger instead of Clash. Using that move gives you more flexibility to bring a favored stat into play, and you suffer a relatively minor cost on a weak hit. Unfortunately, you also give up the opportunity to inflict harm on your foe.

If you ever respond to an attack by just taking the hit, that's not a move. The outcome isn't in much doubt. Pay the Price.

TURN THE TIDE

Once per fight, when you risk it all, you may steal initiative from your foe to make a move (not a progress move). When you do, add +1 and take +1 momentum on a hit.

If you fail to score a hit on that move, you must suffer a dire outcome. Pay the Price.

This move represents a last ditch effort to recover control of the fight. It is that moment when all seems lost, but the hero somehow rallies.

Turn the Tide lets you take initiative and make a move. The move can be whatever is appropriate under the circumstance—likely Strike or Secure an Advantage. Roll the move (add +1), and act on the results. If you've scored a hit, you may take an additional +1 momentum. Then, play to see what happens. Hopefully this bold action is a turning point for the fight.

Here's the catch: If you score a miss when you make your move, you should add extra severity to the consequences. You might face additional harm. Your weapon is broken. Your companion is grievously wounded. Consider the result of your failure and give it teeth. If in doubt, Ask the Oracle.

Narratively, this is a dramatic moment. Focus on it. Envision your character's action. You struggle to your feet and raise your sword, your eyes hardening with determination. You spur your mount into a desperate charge. You grab your opponent's blade in your bare hand. You pull the dagger from your boot and lunge. Or, perhaps you state your name, lament the killing of your father, and tell your foe to prepare for death.

END THE FIGHT

Progress Move

When you make a move to take decisive action, and score a strong hit, you may resolve the outcome of this fight. If you do, roll the challenge dice and compare to your progress. Momentum is ignored on this roll.

On a strong hit, this foe is no longer in the fight. They are killed, out of action, flee, or surrender as appropriate to the situation and your intent (Ask the Oracle if unsure).

On a weak hit, as above, but you must also choose one.

- ◆ It's worse than you thought: Endure Harm.
- ◆ You are overcome: Endure Stress.
- ◆ Your victory is short-lived: A new danger or foe appears, or an existing danger worsens.
- ◆ You suffer collateral damage: Something of value is lost or broken, or someone important must pay the cost.
- ◆ You'll pay for it: An objective falls out of reach.
- ◆ Others won't forget: You are marked for vengeance.

On a miss, you have lost this fight. Pay the Price.

End the Fight fulfills your previous moves and the progress you have made in this scene. This is the all-or-nothing moment where the fight is decided. Is your foe defeated? Is your victory a pyrrhic one, and tastes of ash? Does your foe suddenly turn your assumed advantage against you?

Since this is a progress move, you add the number of filled boxes on your progress track for this foe, whether it's a single enemy or a pack. This is your progress score. Only add fully filled boxes (those with four ticks). Then, roll your challenge dice, compare to your progress score, and resolve a strong hit, weak hit, or miss as normal. You may not burn momentum on this roll, and you are not affected by negative momentum.

You can End the Fight only after you score a strong hit on a preceding move. Your setup move can be any action, but should be framed as a decisive maneuver or response, intended to bring the fight to a close.

If you find yourself struggling against a tide of weak hits and misses, unable to make this move, consider building and then burning momentum to get back control. Use your favored stats and assets to improve your chances. However, keep in mind that End the Fight is not the only way to resolve a combat scene. You can flee. You can give up. You can negotiate or force a surrender. End the Fight represents the conclusion of a bloody, desperate combat, with both sides committed to see it through.

On a strong hit, envision how this foe is defeated. If you still face other foes (using separate progress tracks), you have initiative and the fight continues.

If you score a weak hit, your victory comes at a cost. Choose a listed outcome as appropriate to the circumstances. Then, consider the narrative implications of your choice and how it impacts what happens next.

On a miss, you should face a dramatic and dire consequence. Are you captured? Mortally wounded and left for dead? Is someone under your protection killed? Is an important objective or vow now lost to you? Make a choice as appropriate to the situation and the intent of your foe, or roll on the Pay the Price table and interpret the result as severe. Make it hurt.

When you and your allies are fighting against a common foe, you share a progress track. Any of you may attempt to End the Fight. If you then score a weak hit or miss, consider how your choice impacts the group and who suffers the cost as appropriate to the situation.

BATTLE

When you fight a battle, and it happens in a blur, envision your objective and roll. If you primarily...

- ♦ Fight at range, or using your speed and the terrain to your advantage: Roll +edge.
- ♦ Fight depending on your courage, allies, or companions: Roll +heart.
- ♦ Fight in close to overpower your opponents: Roll +iron.
- ♦ Fight using trickery to befuddle your opponents: Roll +shadow.
- ♦ Fight using careful tactics to outsmart your opponents: Roll +wits.

On a strong hit, you achieve your objective unconditionally. Take +2 momentum.

On a weak hit, you achieve your objective, but not without cost. Pay the Price.

On a miss, you are defeated and the objective is lost to you. Pay the Price.

This move is used as an alternative to a detailed combat scene. When you want to zoom out and resolve a fight in a single roll, make this move.

First, consider your objective. Are you trying to defeat your foes? Hold them off until reinforcements arrive? Defend a person or place? Reach a position? Envision the situation, your strategy, and what you intend to gain or avoid.

Then, roll and envision the outcome. A strong hit is unconditional success. Your foes are defeated, surrender, flee, or give up their objectives as appropriate to the situation and your goals for the fight.

A weak hit means you've achieved your overall objective, but at some cost. Since this is the resolution of an extended scene, the price you pay should be dramatic and meaningful. This can include suffering a significant amount of harm, failing to achieve a secondary goal, or encountering a new danger or complication. If in doubt, roll on the Pay the Price table, or you may pick from the weak hit options in the End the Fight move.

A miss on the Battle move should have dire ramifications on your character and your quest. This objective is lost to you. What does that mean? Are you captured? Gravely wounded? Have you failed to save a loved one? Is the settlement overrun by raiders? Must you Forsake Your Vow? Consider the situation and the intent of your foe, and Pay the Price. Make it hurt.

Use the Battle move as you like. If your story doesn't emphasize fighting, or you'd rather generally abstract combat encounters, you can use this move exclusively. You can also drop it into some portion of a larger scene. Perhaps you Battle to quickly deal with lesser foes, then handle the fight against their leader with standard combat moves. The mix of Battle moves and more detailed fight scenes can help you pace your gaming sessions and let you focus on what is interesting or important.

Battling Alongside Allies

When you and your allies fight together, only one of you makes the move. Others can make the Aid Your Ally move, using stats as detailed in Battle. Resolve those moves first, and then Battle.

On a strong hit, all of you benefit from the narrative success, but only the character making the move gains the momentum bonus. On a weak hit or miss, all of you suffer an outcome as appropriate to the situation. When in doubt, Ask the Oracle.

OTHER MOVES IN COMBAT

You won't rely solely on combat moves in a fight. Make other moves as appropriate to the situation, your intent, and the actions of your foes.

Face Danger : Combat Move

Make this move when you seek to avoid or overcome an obstacle in combat, or when you choose to focus on defense.

- ♦ You leap over a gully as you ride into battle. Face Danger +edge.
- ♦ The massive elder bear roars, spittle flying. Will you muster your courage against this terrifying beast? Face Danger +heart.
- ♦ You bring up your shield as the raider presses her attack, standing your ground against the withering axe blows. Face Danger +iron.

If this is a proactive move—you are overcoming an obstacle—make it when you have initiative. If this is a reactive move—you are trying to avoid an immediate threat—your foe likely has the initiative.

When would you Face Danger instead of Clash against an attack? If you are fighting back, that's probably Clash. If you focusing on defense, getting out of the way, ducking behind your shield, or taking cover, that's Face Danger. It's less risky, since you can leverage a favored stat and the penalty on a weak hit is relatively mild. Unlike Clash, you won't have an opportunity to inflict immediate harm on a hit, but a strong hit with Face Danger can put you in good position for a follow-up move.

You'll also likely Face Danger if your foe is trying to gain advantage through an action other than a direct attack. They move to the trees to get a shot at you from cover. Or they taunt you, trying to provoke you into a reckless response. Perhaps they shove at you, putting you off-balance for a follow-up attack. What do you do? Envision it, then make the move. If you fail to score a hit, you likely suffer a loss of momentum to represent this setback. Your foe has initiative and will try to press their advantage.

Face Danger might also be used to flee combat altogether. If you have a path and means to escape, make this move to see if you get away.

Finally, in cases where an enemy represents a minor obstacle, Face Danger can be used to avoid combat or as a means of resolving your action against a mundane foe. For example, you can Face Danger to sneak past an enemy or run away from a potential fight. If you are dealing with a minor foe from a position of clear advantage, such as firing an arrow from hiding, you can Face Danger to see what happens. In either case, a miss on this move might force you to Enter the Fray.

Secure an Advantage : Combat Move

This move is made in combat when you try to gain some leverage, improve your position, or setup another move. For example:

- ♦ You take careful aim before shooting. Secure an Advantage +wits.
- ♦ You perform a sly feint, trying to put your opponent off balance and create an opening. Secure an Advantage +shadow.
- ♦ You attempt to dishearten your foe with an intimidating roar as you charge. Secure an Advantage +iron.

Secure an Advantage can be used whenever you have initiative, or as a means of establishing a favorable position prior to the fight. Mechanically, it's a powerful move for building your momentum track toward a decisive action. Narratively, it's a great way to bring cinematic action into the scene.

When you want to Secure an Advantage, picture the situation. Consider the terrain, your weapons, your position, and your fighting style and approach. Consider your enemy, and their tactics and readiness. Where is there an opportunity? Envision your action, then make the move.

Compel : Combat Move

Compel can be used as a shortcut to ending a combat. You don't have to make the End the Fight move to surrender or negotiate a truce. End the Fight is the outcome of a desperate, probably bloody, skirmish. If you or your foe have other objectives, give Compel a try.

- ♦ You attempt to force your foe to surrender. Compel +iron.
- ♦ You try to surrender, reason or negotiate. Compel +heart.
- ♦ You trick your foe into giving up the fight. Compel +shadow.

Compel needs to be supported by the fiction. What is your foe's intent? How do they feel about you? Are you a hated enemy? A potential meal? What are they willing to risk to end you? Has the fight gone in their favor or against them? What leverage do you have? If there's no upside for them, you can't make this move. If you aren't sure, Ask the Oracle before you Compel.

Compel might be used proactively (when you have initiative) or reactively (when your foe has it) depending on the circumstances. Offering to surrender is a reactive response, and can be done when you don't have initiative. Attempting to Compel your foe to give up the fight is a proactive move made when you are in control.

Aid Your Ally : Combat Move

This move is an obvious choice when you want to bolster your ally's actions. Envision what you do to help them, make the Secure an Advantage move, and let them take the benefits of the outcome.

You should have initiative before you attempt to Aid Your Ally. On a strong hit, both of you then take or retain initiative. This is a huge advantage for your ally if they were having a difficult time making progress against their foe. On a weak hit or miss, you both lose initiative.

Suffer Moves : Combat Move

Make Suffer moves as appropriate when you face the outcome of your actions within a combat scene.

If you make a suffer move and score a strong hit, you may take or retain initiative—even if you scored a weak hit or miss on the preceding move. However, this opportunity does not overrule the fiction of the moment. If you are out of action and Face Death, you aren't likely to come springing back into the fight. If you do score a strong hit on a suffer move, consider what happens next and the moves you may make in the context of the situation.

Pay the Price : Combat Move

Being forced to make the Endure Harm move is the obvious result when you must Pay the Price in a fight, but there's much more that can happen in a dynamic combat situation. You lose your footing. You drop your weapon. Your shield is shattered. A goal is lost to you. A companion or ally is injured. You are put in a perilous position. A new threat reveals itself.

Mix it up. Make combat exciting and cinematic. Whatever happens, make the outcome one you wish you had avoided. If in doubt, roll on the Pay the Price table or Ask the Oracle.

Ask the Oracle : Combat Move

In solo and co-op play, you can Ask the Oracle about your foe's objectives, tactics, and specific actions. The oracle can also help determine the outcome of events or introduce new twists.

Use this move sparingly. For the most part, trust your instincts. Your actions trigger reactions. Who are you fighting? What do they want? What do they do next? Your first impulse is often the right one.

Chapter 6 includes the Combat Action oracle which you can use to prompt an NPC action or response in a fight. You can also leverage the description of your foe's tactics in chapter 5 to guide their behavior.

Be mindful of your surroundings and other characters. Ask questions. "Can I take cover here?", "Is the river shallow enough to cross?", "Do the villagers flee?" Consider your foe's actions and your opportunities in the context of the environment.

In guided play, the GM is your oracle. When you have questions about what happens next, look to them, or talk it out at the table. Your GM is free to use the Ask the Oracle move to answer questions.

SUFFER MOVES

These moves are made as a result of a perilous event or bad outcome on other moves. They represent what happens to you, and how you hold up against the trauma.

- ♦ When you face physical damage, make the Endure Harm move.
- ♦ When you score a miss on the Endure Harm move, and your health is at 0, you may need to Face Death.
- ♦ When your companion is exposed to harm, make the Companion Endure Harm move.
- ♦ When you are demoralized, afraid, or acting against your best intentions, make the Endure Stress move.
- ♦ When you score a miss on the Endure Stress move, and your spirit is at 0, you may need to Face Desolation.
- ♦ When your supply falls to 0, all characters make the Out of Supply move. If you are at 0 supply and suffer additional -supply, you each need to reduce your health, spirit, or momentum tracks by that amount.
- ♦ When your momentum track is at its minimum (-6), and you suffer additional -momentum, make the Face a Setback move.

Making a suffer move is not, however, the only possible outcome of a failure. You might face story complications or new dangers. You might lose an item. Your relationship with another character might be tested. Keep it fresh and interesting. When in doubt, Ask the Oracle.

ENDURE HARM

When you face physical damage, suffer -health equal to your foe's rank or as appropriate to the situation. If your health is 0, suffer -momentum equal to any remaining -health.

Then, roll +health or +iron, whichever is higher.

On a strong hit, choose one.

- ♦ Shake it off: If your health is greater than 0, suffer -1 momentum in exchange for +1 health.
- ♦ Embrace the pain: Take +1 momentum.

On a weak hit, you press on.

On a miss, also suffer -1 momentum. If you are at 0 health, you must mark wounded or maimed (if currently unmarked) or roll on the following table.

ROLL	RESULT
1-10	The harm is mortal. Face Death.
11-20	You are dying. You need to Heal within an hour or two, or Face Death.
21-35	You are unconscious and out of action. If left alone, you come back to your senses in an hour or two. If you are vulnerable to a foe not inclined to show mercy, Face Death.
36-50	You are reeling and fighting to stay conscious. If you engage in any vigorous activity (such as running or fighting) before taking a breather for a few minutes, roll on this table again (before resolving the other move).
51-00	You are battered but still standing.

If you fail to defend against an attack, suffer an injury, are stricken with disease or sickness, or bear the brunt of an arduous action, make this move.

When you are forced to Pay the Price, you should Endure Harm if physical damage is an obvious and dramatic outcome of the current situation. Also, some moves and assets will direct you to Endure Harm as a cost or concession, and may indicate a specific amount of harm to suffer.

If you face an attack by an NPC foe, you use their rank to determine the amount of harm dealt. If the amount of harm is not indicated or obvious, use the following guidelines.

- ♦ Troublesome (1 harm): An attack by a minor foe, a painful injury, or a tiring effort.
- ♦ Dangerous (2 harm): An attack by a skilled foe or deadly creature, a nasty injury, or a demanding effort.
- ♦ Formidable (3 harm): An attack by an exceptional foe or mighty creature, a serious injury, or an exhausting effort.
- ♦ Extreme (4 harm): An overwhelming attack by a monster or beast, a grievous injury, or a debilitating effort.
- ♦ Epic (5 harm): An attack by a legendary foe of mythic power, a horrific injury, or a consuming effort.

If in doubt, make it dangerous (2 harm).

Next, reduce your health track by the amount suffered. If your health is at 0, apply any remaining -health to your momentum track. Then, roll.

On a strong hit, you are undaunted. You can regain 1 health or take +1 momentum. On a weak hit, you are battered but manage to persevere.

When you score a miss, you need to make an important decision. Do you risk the potential for death by rolling on the oracle table, or mark a debility? The wounded debility is temporary and can be dealt with through the Heal or Sojourn moves, but becoming maimed is a permanent, life-altering event.

If you score a miss and your debilities are already marked, you have no choice. Roll the dice and hope for the best.

FACE DEATH

When you are brought to the brink of death, and glimpse the world beyond, roll +heart.

On a strong hit, death rejects you. You are cast back into the mortal world.

On a weak hit, choose one.

- ♦ You die, but not before making a noble sacrifice. Envision your final moments.
- ♦ Death desires something of you in exchange for your life. Envision what it wants (Ask the Oracle if unsure), and Swear an Iron Vow (formidable or extreme) to complete that quest. If you fail to score a hit when you Swear an Iron Vow, or refuse the quest, you are dead. Otherwise, you return to the mortal world and are now cursed. You may only clear the cursed debility by completing the quest.

On a miss, you are dead.

You make this move when forced to Face Death as a result of a miss on the Endure Harm move, or when you face a physical trauma so horrific that death is the only reasonable outcome. This move is (hopefully) rarely made and a chance for storytelling and for enriching your world and its myths. Make it dramatic and personal.

When you first make this move, you should envision how the afterlife is represented in your setting, or specifically to your character. What do you see and experience? Is it only blackness and void? Do you see iron gates parting before you? Does a ferryman guide you across a blood-red river? Do you hear the songs of your kin calling you to the feast hall? On a strong hit, you might only catch glimpses of what lay beyond. Does your experience support your beliefs or call them into question? If in doubt, Ask the Oracle.

There is also the personage of death to consider. Does death take form, or is it nameless and unknowable? Is it beautiful and welcoming? Sly and full of guile? As grim as the coldest night? On a weak hit, you may decide what death asks of you, which leads to a new quest and the cursed debility as you return to the mortal world.

On a miss, you are dead. Envision what awaits you. You may begin again with a new character, or explore your current world and storyline from a new perspective. Perhaps your kin will avenge you?

COMPANION ENDURE HARM

When your companion faces physical damage, they suffer -health equal to the amount of harm inflicted. If your companion's health is 0, exchange any leftover -health for -momentum.

Then, roll +heart or +your companion's health, whichever is higher.

On a strong hit, your companion rallies. Give them +1 health.

On a weak hit, your companion is battered. If their health is 0, they cannot assist you until they gain at least +1 health.

On a miss, also suffer -1 momentum. If your companion's health is 0, they are gravely wounded and out of action. Without aid, they die in an hour or two.

If you roll a miss with a 1 on your action die, and your companion's health is 0, they are now dead. Take 1 experience for each marked ability on your companion asset, and remove it.

A companion is an NPC asset which complements your abilities and can help support your actions. When you leverage a companion on a move, you are inherently putting them at risk. If you roll a 1 on your action die when using a companion ability, you should make the companion the focus of any negative outcome for that move. Depending on the fiction of the current situation, this might include harm.

Inflicting harm on your companion might also happen as a reasonable outcome of any move, or through a roll on the Pay the Price table.

Your companion asset has a health track which functions the same as your own. If they face physical damage, reduce the health track as appropriate to the circumstances or the rank of your foe, and take any leftover as -momentum. Then, roll this move.

When your companion's health is at 0 and you score a weak hit or miss, you cannot use their abilities until they gain at least +1 health. To aid your companion, make an appropriate move, such as Heal, Make Camp, or Sojourn.

If your companion is killed, give yourself 1 experience point for each marked ability. Then, remove the asset. If you acquire the same type of companion through the narrative of your quest and journeys, you are free to rebuy the asset at the normal cost.

You should also Endure Stress and suffer -spirit as appropriate to the fiction when your companion is wounded or dies.

ENDURE STRESS

When you face mental shock or despair, suffer -spirit equal to your foe's rank or as appropriate to the situation. If your spirit is 0, suffer -momentum equal to any remaining -spirit.

Then, roll +heart or +spirit, whichever is higher.

On a strong hit, choose one.

- ♦ Shake it off: If your spirit is greater than 0, suffer -1 momentum in exchange for +1 spirit
- ♦ Embrace the darkness: Take +1 momentum

On a weak hit, you press on.

On a miss, also suffer -1 momentum. If you are at 0 spirit, you must mark shaken or corrupted (if currently unmarked) or roll on the following table.

ROLL	RESULT
1-10	You are overwhelmed. <i>Face Desolation.</i>

11-25 | You give up. *Forsake Your Vow* (if possible, one relevant to your current crisis).

26-50 | You give in to a fear or compulsion, and act against your better instincts.

51-00 | You persevere.

Make this move when your courage fails you, when you are unnerved or disheartened, or when you act against your best intentions.

When you are forced to Pay the Price, you should Endure Stress if mental hardship is an obvious and dramatic outcome of the current situation. Also, some moves and assets will direct you to Endure Stress as a cost or concession, and may indicate a specific amount of stress to suffer.

If you are demoralized or frightened by an NPC foe, you can use their rank to determine amount of stress you must suffer. If the amount of stress is not provided or obvious, use the following guidelines.

- ♦ Troublesome (1 stress): An unsettling incident or a frustrating failure.
- ♦ Dangerous (2 stress): A distressing incident or an upsetting failure.
- ♦ Formidable (3 stress): A horrifying incident or a demoralizing failure.
- ♦ Extreme (4 stress): A heart-rending incident or traumatic failure.
- ♦ Epic (5 stress): A soul-shattering incident or the loss of all hope.

If in doubt, make it dangerous (2 stress).

Next, reduce your spirit track by the amount suffered. If your spirit is at 0, apply any remaining -spirit to your momentum track. Then, roll.

On a strong hit, you are unfazed. You can suffer 1 less spirit or take +1 momentum. On a weak hit, you are rattled but carry on.

As with the Endure Harm move, when you score a miss you need to make an important decision. Do you risk the potential for desolation by rolling on the oracle table, or mark a debility? The shaken debility is temporary and can be dealt with through the Heal or Sojourn moves, but becoming corrupted is a permanent, life-altering event.

If you've scored a miss and your debilities are both marked, you must roll on the table to determine your fate.

FACE DESOLATION

When you are brought to the brink of desolation, roll +heart.

On a strong hit, you resist and press on.

On a weak hit, choose one.

- ♦ Your spirit or sanity breaks, but not before you make a noble sacrifice. Envision your final moments.

You see a vision of a dreaded event coming to pass. Envision that dark future (Ask the Oracle if unsure), and Swear an Iron Vow (formidable or extreme) to prevent it. If you fail to score a hit when you Swear an Iron Vow, or refuse the

- ♦ quest, you are lost. Otherwise, you return to your senses and are now tormented. You may only clear the tormented debility by completing the quest.

On a miss, you succumb to despair or horror and are lost.

You make this move when forced to Face Desolation as a result of a miss on the Endure Stress move. This represents the potential breaking point for your character. Do you push on in spite of all you have seen, all you have done, or do you fall into darkness?

Choosing the option to become tormented on a weak hit creates interesting story possibilities. What is your greatest fear? Preventing that dire outcome can steer your story in a compelling new direction.

On a miss, you are broken. There is no recovery possible. This is the end of your character's story.

OUT OF SUPPLY

When your supply is exhausted (reduced to 0), mark unprepared. If you suffer additional -supply while unprepared, you must exchange each additional -supply for any combination of -health, -spirit or -momentum as appropriate to the circumstances.

When you and your allies reduce your supply to 0 (through a choice or result of another move), you each mark unprepared. The unprepared debility can be cleared when you score a hit on the Sojourn move and choose the equip option.

While you are unprepared, you cannot increase your supply track. If you suffer additional -supply while unprepared, you and your allies must exchange each -supply for some combination of -momentum, -health, or -spirit. Select an option appropriate to the situation. A lack of provisions can have an obvious impact on your fitness, morale, and readiness for challenges.

FACE A SETBACK

When your momentum is at its minimum (-6), and you suffer additional -momentum, choose one.

- ♦ Exchange each additional -momentum for any combination of -health, -spirit, or -supply as appropriate to the circumstances.
-
- Envision an event or discovery (Ask the Oracle if unsure) which undermines your progress in a current quest, journey, or fight. Then, for each additional -momentum, clear 1 unit of progress on that track per its rank
- ♦ (troublesome=clear 3 progress; dangerous=clear 2 progress; formidable=clear 1 progress; extreme=clear 2 ticks; epic=clear 1 tick).

When you suffer -momentum while your momentum track is already at its lowest possible point (-6), the leftover -momentum must be traded for an equal value in -health, -spirit or -supply, or it must be accounted for as lost progress in a relevant progress track. Make a choice appropriate to your character's status and the current situation. Don't just shift points around. Envision how your choice is reflected in the fiction.

If your health, spirit, and supply are all at 0, you have no choice. You must clear progress on a related progress track. You should use the quest, journey, or fight which is most relevant to the current situation.

QUEST MOVES

Making and fulfilling vows is central to your character's motivations. These oaths drive your story and give you the means to gain experience and acquire new abilities. When you embark upon a quest, manage your progress on a quest, seek to complete a quest, or gain the rewards of a quest, make these moves.

SWEAR AN IRON VOW

When you swear upon iron to complete a quest, write your vow and give the quest a rank. Then, roll +heart. If you make this vow to a person or community with whom you share a bond, add +1.

On a strong hit, you are emboldened and it is clear what you must do next (Ask the Oracle if unsure). Take +2 momentum.

On a weak hit, you are determined but begin your quest with more questions than answers. Take +1 momentum, and envision what you do to find a path forward.

On a miss, you face a significant obstacle before you can begin your quest. Envision what stands in your way (Ask the Oracle if unsure), and choose one.

- ♦ You press on: Suffer -2 momentum, and do what you must to overcome this obstacle.
-
- ♦ You give up: Forsake Your Vow.

When you encounter a wrong that must be made right, seek to fulfill a personal ambition, or give your word to serve someone, make this move.

Fictionally, an iron vow is ceremonial. You touch a piece of iron and speak your vow. Don't just make the move. Envision how your character enacts the ceremony. What do you do? What do you say? Is this a moment of grudging acceptance or one of fiery determination?

Set the rank of your quest based on what you know of the challenges you will face, or Ask the Oracle. Higher ranked quests require more effort (both in your narrative and through session-time and focus), but offer greater experience rewards. An epic quest could be the endeavor of a lifetime, while a troublesome quest might be resolved in a few scenes.

It is not necessary to resolve one vow before swearing another. In fact, the intent of these rules is for your character to run afoul of new situations and get side-tracked with new vows even while attempting to complete a separate quest. This is the life of the Ironsworn.

Based on the results of this move, your path may be clear (a strong hit), or more investigation may be required to identify your next steps (a weak hit).

On a miss, you face a serious obstacle at the very start which prevents you from undertaking this quest. It might be a sudden event, someone working against you or refusing your aid, or a personal conviction which must be overcome. When in doubt about what happens, Ask the Oracle. It should be significant and not easily dealt with. Also, when you resolve this obstacle, you won't *Reach a Milestone* for your quest. You aren't actually able to make progress on the vow until you overcome this initial challenge.

You also have the option, on a miss, to come to the realization that your vow was made impulsively or without support, and you may simply give up. If you do, Forsake Your Vow.

When allies join together to Swear an Iron Vow, one of you speaks for the group and makes the move. The others can commit to the cause with the Aid Your Ally move. If you score a hit and take +momentum, or score a miss and choose to suffer -momentum, only the character making the move adjusts their momentum track. Once your quest is underway, you share a progress track and mark progress together.

REACH A MILESTONE

When you make significant progress in your quest by overcoming a critical obstacle, completing a perilous journey, solving a complex mystery, defeating a powerful threat, gaining vital support, or acquiring a crucial item, you may mark progress.

- ♦ Troublesome quest: Mark 3 progress.
- ♦ Dangerous quest: Mark 2 progress.
- ♦ Formidable quest: Mark 1 progress.
- ♦ Extreme quest: Mark 2 ticks.
- ♦ Epic quest: Mark 1 tick.

You will face obstacles as you strive to complete quests. Some of these obstacles arise naturally out of the fiction of the situation. Overcoming one challenge leads naturally to the next. Others represent narrative twists introduced when you interpret the result of a move, or when you Ask the Oracle for inspiration. When you overcome one of these obstacles, and it was a notable challenge, make this move and mark progress on your quest.

Not every step on this path is worthy of a milestone. Did it put you in great danger? Did it cost you something significant? Did you unravel a complex web of clues and motivations? Was it dramatic and narratively interesting? Most importantly, was it directly related to your quest, and not a random or unconnected event?

How you define milestones determines the pace of your game. You need to overcome challenges to *Reach a Milestone* and mark progress. You can't (with confidence) Fulfill Your Vow unless you've marked progress. You don't gain experience unless you Fulfill Your Vow. You can't add new assets to your character unless you gain experience. That's the broad flow of how quests drive gameplay and character improvement, the tempo of which is determined by you and others at your table. If you come up against relatively simple obstacles and call them milestones, you'll mark progress and move quickly toward completing the quest. But, if you do, you'll miss out on storytelling opportunities and the satisfaction earned when you prevail against a worthy challenge.

Not sure if something is worthy as a milestone? If you're playing co-op or guided, talk it out at the table. If you're playing solo, trust your instincts and the type of play experience you want to create. In the end, it's your game.

FULFILL YOUR VOW

Progress Move

When you achieve what you believe to be the fulfillment of your vow, roll the challenge dice and compare to your progress. Momentum is ignored on this roll.

On a strong hit, your quest is complete. Mark experience (troublesome=1; dangerous=2; formidable=3; extreme=4; epic=5).

On a weak hit, there is more to be done or you realize the truth of your quest. Envision what you discover (Ask the Oracle if unsure). Then, mark experience (troublesome=0; dangerous=1; formidable=2; extreme=3; epic=4). You may Swear an Iron Vow to set things right. If you do, add +1.

On a miss, your quest is undone. Envision what happens (Ask the Oracle if unsure), and choose one.

- ♦ You recommit: Clear all but one filled progress, and raise the quest's rank by one (if not already epic).
 - ♦ You give up: Forsake Your Vow
-

Your path leads here. Your foe is defeated. The relic is found. Your training is complete. The village is saved. The beast is killed. The murder is avenged. Your family's honor is restored. You are triumphant.

Or are you? Make this move to find out.

Since this is a progress move, you tally the number of filled boxes on your progress track for this quest. This is your progress score. Only add fully filled boxes (those with four ticks). Then, roll your challenge dice, compare to your progress score, and resolve a strong hit, weak hit, or miss as normal. You may not burn momentum on this roll, and you are not affected by negative momentum.

When you and your allies are working to fulfill a common vow, you share a progress track. When it is time to see the vow done, one of you represents the group and make the Fulfill a Vow move. The outcome affects everyone involved.

On a strong hit, your vow is fulfilled. Mark your experience, clear the vow, and decide what you do next. Do other quests call you into the wilds? Or, do you Write Your Epilogue, never again to return to your life as Ironsworn?

On a weak hit, you discover or realize something which leaves your quest unfinished or undermines your success. Envision what you learn (or Ask the Oracle), make your choice, and play to see what happens. Whether you leave this behind or take on a new quest should be driven by the fiction and your choices as the character. Have you defeated your foe in a bloody fight, but they use their dying breath to say your true enemy still lives? You might Swear an Iron Vow to hunt them down. Have you helped return the clan chief to power, only to learn his promises were lies? You can Swear an Iron Vow to usurp this deceiver, or simply leave this place, promising never to return.

On a miss, a turn of events finds you defeated or your true goal is suddenly beyond reach. The band of raiders were a diversion, and a more dangerous force has stolen away with the winter stores. The crown of kings is found, but it is a forgery. You've hunted and defeated the wyvern, but discover it was only one of a large flock of beasts. If you choose to press on, the nature of your quest remains the same—protect the village, find the crown, stop the ravages of the wyverns—but most of your progress is undone through this dramatic realization.

FORSAKE YOUR VOW

When you renounce your quest, betray your promise, or the goal is lost to you, clear the vow and Endure Stress. You suffer -spirit equal to the rank of your quest (troublesome=1; dangerous=2; formidable=3; extreme=4; epic=5).

Make this move when you decide to abandon a quest, or if circumstances leave your goal seemingly unobtainable.

For an Ironsworn, realizing you must Forsake Your Vow is a dramatic and disheartening decision. Tradition says the item upon which you swore your vow—your sword, your armor, the iron coin—is discarded. Some clans even believe you must cast away all of your weapons and armor and bear no iron until you redeem yourself.

Mechanically, you Endure Stress, reducing your spirit track by an amount equal to the rank of your quest (troublesome=1; dangerous=2; formidable=3; extreme=4; epic=5). Narratively, you should consider how your failure affects your story and what you do to put yourself back on the proper path. Did you swear this vow in service to others? How does this impact your relationship with them? If your vow was a personal quest, how does this failure force you to rethink the path your life has taken? Where do you go from here?

If you have abandoned a quest which is central to your character's motivations, you may decide your life as an Ironsworn is done. If so, Write Your Epilogue to determine your fate.

ADVANCE

When you focus on your skills, receive training, find inspiration, earn a reward, or gain a companion, you may spend 3 experience to add a new asset, or 2 experience to upgrade an asset.

Make this move when you spend experience to add an asset or upgrade an existing asset.

Narratively, you should consider how your recent experiences and fulfilled vows have led to these new abilities. Was your horse a reward from the thankful chief of a highland clan? Did you train under a powerful mystic? Has your time spent trekking across the wilds made you adept at woodcraft or navigation? Let your choice of assets flow naturally from the fiction.

FATE MOVES

In solo and co-op play, the fate moves mediate the result of other moves or serve as inspirational prompts for your story. When you face the outcome of a move, want to know what happens next, or have a question about people, places and events external to your character, the fate moves help you discover an answer.

In guided mode, your GM represents the whims of fate. They can reference these moves as they like, but they can also decide the outcome or direct the question back to you.

There are three key aspects of using the fate moves:

- ♦ Instinct: If an answer to a question or the result of a situation is obvious, interesting and dramatic, make it happen.
- ♦ Randomness: You can roll on random tables to generate a result or answer a question.
- ♦ Inspiration: You can use creative prompts, such as those included in the oracles chapter to guide your story.

PAY THE PRICE

When you suffer the outcome of a move, choose one.

- ♦ Make the most obvious negative outcome happen.
- ♦ Envision two negative outcomes. Rate one as 'likely', and Ask the Oracle using the yes/no table. On a 'yes', make that outcome happen. Otherwise, make it the other.
- ♦ Roll on the following table. If you have difficulty interpreting the result to fit the current situation, roll again.

ROLL	RESULT
1-2	Roll again and apply that result but make it worse. If you roll this result yet again, think of something dreadful that changes the course of your quest (Ask the Oracle if unsure) and make it happen.
3-5	A person or community you trusted loses faith in you, or acts against you.
6-9	A person or community you care about is exposed to danger.
10-16	You are separated from something or someone.
17-23	Your action has an unintended effect.
24-32	Something of value is lost or destroyed.
33-41	The current situation worsens.
42-50	A new danger or foe is revealed.
51-59	It causes a delay or puts you at a disadvantage.
60-68	It is harmful.
69-77	It is stressful.
78-85	A surprising development complicates your quest.
86-90	It wastes resources.
91-94	It forces you to act against your best intentions.
95-98	A friend, companion, or ally is put in harm's way (or you are, if alone).
99-00	Roll twice more on this table. Both results occur. If they are the same result, make it worse.

This is one of the most common moves in Ironsworn. Make this move when directed to by the outcome of another move, or when the current situation naturally leads to a cost through your choices or actions.

First, choose an option as described in the move. You may determine the outcome yourself, Ask the Oracle to decide between two options, or roll on the table. In guided play, you look to your GM for a ruling. Whatever choice you make, always follow the fiction. If a dramatic outcome springs to mind immediately, go with it.

Next, envision the outcome. What happens? How does it impact the current situation and your character? Apply the outcome to the fiction of your scene before you determine any mechanical impact. Focusing on the narrative cost leads to deeper, more dramatic stories.

Finally, apply any appropriate mechanical penalty:

- ♦ If you face a physical hardship or injury, Endure Harm and suffer -health.
- ♦ If you are disheartened or frightened, Endure Stress and suffer -spirit.
- ♦ If you lose equipment or exhaust resources, suffer -supply.
- ♦ If you waste precious moments or are put in an unfavorable position, suffer -momentum.
- ♦ If an ally or companion is put in harm's way, apply the cost to them.

When in doubt, suffer -2 from the appropriate track.

Most situations can impact both the narrative situation and your mechanical status. But, a result might also be purely narrative without an immediate mechanical cost. An initial failure might introduce a complication or force a reactive move (such as Face Danger). A failure on a subsequent move can then introduce a mechanical penalty. In this way, failures build on each other, and the situation gets riskier and more intense.

The narrative and mechanical costs you endure should be appropriate to the circumstances and the move you are making. Scoring a miss on End the Fight implies a greater cost than if you fail to Clash within that scene. For dramatic moments and decisive moves, up the stakes.

Once you've resolved the outcome, envision what happens next and how you react. You are not in control. The situation is more complex and dangerous. You may need to respond with another move to restore your advantage and avoid further cost.

Rolling Matches

If you rolled a match on a move, and the outcome of that move tells you to Pay the Price, you can consider rolling on the table instead of just choosing an outcome. This fulfills the promise of the match by introducing a result you might otherwise not have considered. When in doubt about what a result on the table might represent (for example, "a new danger or foe is revealed"), you can Ask the Oracle. However, rolling a match on the Pay the Price table itself doesn't have any special significance.

ASK THE ORACLE

When you seek to resolve questions, discover details in the world, determine how other characters respond, or trigger encounters or events, you may...

- ♦ Draw a conclusion: Decide the answer based on the most interesting and obvious result.
- ♦ Ask a yes/no question: Decide the odds of a 'yes', and roll on the table below to check the answer.
- ♦ Pick two: Envision two options. Rate one as 'likely', and roll on the table below to see if it is true. If not, it is the other.
- ♦ Spark an idea: Brainstorm or use a random prompt.

ODDS	THE ANSWER IS 'YES' IF YOU ROLL...
Almost Certain	11 or greater
Likely	26 or greater
50/50	51 or greater
Unlikely	76 or greater
Small Chance	91 or greater

On a match, an extreme result or twist has occurred.

In solo or co-op play, use this move when you have a question or want to reveal details about your world. In guided play, the GM may use this move to answer their own questions or inspire the story of your game session.

Draw a Conclusion

The most basic use of this move is to simply decide the answer. Think it over for a moment (or talk it out with others at your table), and go with what seems most appropriate to the current situation and introduces the most potential for drama and excitement.

Your first instinct is often the right one. If it leapt to mind, it's probably a good fit for the current situation. But, if your initial impulse doesn't really excite or interest you, give it more thought. Wait for an "aha" moment.

If you're still not sure of the answer, or want to put things in the hand of fate, you have some other options...

Ask a Yes/NO question

- ♦ You can ask a binary yes/no question and leave the answer open to fate.

- ♦ "Is this steading inhabited?"

- ♦ "Do I drop my sword?"

- ♦ "Is there somewhere I can hide?"

- ♦ "Do I know the way?"

- ♦ "Would she consider this trade?"

Decide the likeliness of a 'yes' answer, and roll your oracle dice to get the result. For example, if you rate the chance of a 'yes' as 'unlikely', you must roll 76-100 for a yes. Otherwise, the answer is no.

Pick Two

The next option is to ask a question and pick two viable results.

- ♦ "Do I drop my sword or my shield?"
- ♦ "Is it in the forest or the hills?"
- ♦ "Does the elder bear try to pin me down, or does it bite?"
- ♦ "Am I attacked by a horror, or a beast?"
- ♦ "Is this a formidable foe, or a dangerous one?"

You rate one of those as 'likely', and roll on the table. If it's a 'yes', the answer is your likely pick. If not, it's the other. Use this approach when the answer is more open-ended, but you have a couple of options in mind.

Spark an Idea

The final option is to seek inspiration through an open-ended question.

- ♦ "What happens next?"
- ♦ "What does she want?"
- ♦ "What's this place look like?"
- ♦ "What do I find?"
- ♦ "Who or what attacks?"

If you're in a game with other players, you can talk it out. Brainstorming together will lead you to interesting answers you might not have thought of on your own.

You can also use random generators to help inspire an answer. See chapter 6 for creative prompts and random results. Or, use your preferred tools, such as an online generator for interesting names, or a set of tarot cards or rune stones for visual inspiration. When asking an open-ended question, use tools which offer a spark of inspiration instead of a definitive response. Your creative mind will lead you naturally from an abstract concept to a relevant answer, adding exciting and surprising dimension to your story.

Questions Upon Questions

You can come back to the yes/no table and ask a follow-up question to clarify or affirm a result. However, you should avoid leaning too heavily on asking questions (or this move in general). Don't let one question snowball into a series of more specific questions. Even when playing solo, oracles should be the spice of your game, not the main course. Ask a question or two, decide what it means, and move on. When in doubt, follow your gut. Your first instinct is probably the right one. Go with it.

Rolling A Match

A match on your oracle dice when rolling on the yes/no table should trigger an extreme result or narrative twist. This can mean an all-caps "HELL YES!" or "HELL NO!", or a yes or no but with an interesting or dramatic complication.

When you're unsure what a match might mean, you can roll on another oracle table for inspiration. If you're still left scratching your head, just move on. Resolving a match is not a requirement. It's just a way to introduce narrative turning points that lead you along unexpected paths. Head down the rabbit hole, but don't get stuck in it.

Oracles and Guided Play

In guided play, your GM is the oracle. You won't make this move unless you are talking things out and need a random result or a bit of inspiration. Your GM can use this move (or ask you to make it) to help guide the story.

COMBAT MOVES

When there are no other options, when the sword slips free of its sheath, when the arrow is nocked, when the shield is brought to bear, make these moves.

ENTER THE FRAY

When you enter into combat, first set the rank of each of your foes.

- ♦ Troublesome foe: 3 progress per harm; inflicts 1 harm.
- ♦ Dangerous foe: 2 progress per harm; inflicts 2 harm.
- ♦ Formidable foe: 1 progress per harm; inflicts 3 harm.
- ♦ Extreme foe: 2 ticks per harm; inflicts 4 harm.
- ♦ Epic foe: 1 tick per harm; inflicts 5 harm.

Then, roll to determine who is in control. If you are...

- ♦ Facing off against your foe: Roll +heart.
- ♦ Moving into position against an unaware foe, or striking without warning: Roll +shadow.
- ♦ Ambushed: Roll +wits.

On a strong hit, take +2 momentum. You have initiative.

On a weak hit, choose one.

- ♦ Bolster your position: Take +2 momentum.
- ♦ Prepare to act: Take initiative.

On a miss, combat begins with you at a disadvantage. Pay the Price. Your foe has initiative.

Make this move when combat is joined. Set up your progress tracks for your foes and roll to see who is initially in control. Then, play to see what happens.

If you are fighting with allies, each of you make your own move to Enter the Fray. The outcome determines your initial positioning and readiness. You and the other players then envision the scene and make moves as appropriate. If you have initiative, you are positioned to make proactive moves. If not, you make moves to defend against attacks or get into position. If you and your allies are fighting against common enemies, you share progress tracks and mark the harm you each inflict.

If you are fighting a group of troublesome or dangerous foes, you can combine them into a single progress track. This is called a pack. Managing your progress against a pack is easier than tracking them as individuals, and will make combat go a bit faster. For a small pack (about 3 to 5), increase the rank by one. For a large pack (about 6 to 10) increase the rank by two. If you are facing more than 10 troublesome or dangerous foes, group them into smaller packs and associated progress tracks as appropriate.

STRIKE

When you have initiative and attack in close quarters, roll +iron. When you have initiative and attack at range, roll +edge.

On a strong hit, inflict +1 harm. You retain initiative.

On a weak hit, inflict your harm and lose initiative.

On a miss, your attack fails and you must Pay the Price. Your foe has initiative.

Make this move when you have initiative and act to inflict harm on your foe. Narratively, this move might represent a focused moment in time—a single sweep of your axe or the flight of an arrow. Or, it can depict a flurry of attacks as you put your opponent on the defensive.

On a strong hit, you strike true. By default you inflict 2 harm if you are armed with a deadly weapon (such as a sword, axe, spear, or bow), and 1 harm if not. A strong hit on this move gives you an additional +1 harm (so, 3 harm with a deadly weapon). You may also have additional bonuses provided by assets.

Each point of harm you inflict is marked as progress on your foe's progress track, as appropriate to their rank. For example, each point of harm equals 2 ticks when fighting an extreme enemy, or 2 full progress boxes when fighting a dangerous enemy.

Narratively, a strong hit represents wounding your enemy or wearing them down. You have initiative and can make your next move. If this attack was intended as a decisive blow, you can attempt to End the Fight.

On a weak hit, you've done some damage but have overextended or your foe counters. You mark your harm, and your foe has initiative. What do they do next?

On a miss, you must Pay the Price. Your opponent strikes back and you Endure Harm. You lose position or advantage and suffer -momentum. You face a new or intensified danger. A companion or ally is put in harm's way. Your weapon is dropped or broken. Let the outcome flow out of the fiction, or roll on the Pay the Price table to see what happens.

CLASH

When your foe has initiative and you fight with them in close quarters, roll +iron. When you exchange a volley at range, or shoot at an advancing foe, roll +edge.

On a strong hit, inflict your harm and choose one. You have the initiative.

- ♦ You bolster your position: Take +1 momentum.
 - ♦ You find an opening: Inflict +1 harm.
-

On a weak hit, inflict your harm, but then Pay the Price. Your foe has initiative.

On a miss, you are outmatched and must Pay the Price. Your foe has initiative.

When your foe has initiative and attacks, and you choose to fight back, make this move.

First, envision your action and the fiction of the exchange. Is this a focused, dramatic moment where you each seek an opening? Or is it a flurry of attacks and parries, advances and retreats? The outcome of the Clash determines if your foe presses their advantage, or if you take control of the fight.

On a strong hit, you inflict your harm and steal back initiative. On a weak hit, you manage to inflict harm, but your foe retains initiative and you must Pay the Price. The price might be that you Endure Harm as your foe counters. Or, you may face some other dramatic outcome as appropriate to the current situation and your foe's intent.

On a miss, you fail to inflict harm and must Pay the Price. This fight is turning against you.

As with the Strike move, each point of harm you inflict is marked on your foe's progress track, as appropriate to their rank.

If you aren't actively fighting back—you're just trying to avoid the attack or seeking cover—you should Face Danger instead of Clash. Using that move gives you more flexibility to bring a favored stat into play, and you suffer a relatively minor cost on a weak hit. Unfortunately, you also give up the opportunity to inflict harm on your foe.

If you ever respond to an attack by just taking the hit, that's not a move. The outcome isn't in much doubt. Pay the Price.

TURN THE TIDE

Once per fight, when you risk it all, you may steal initiative from your foe to make a move (not a progress move). When you do, add +1 and take +1 momentum on a hit.

If you fail to score a hit on that move, you must suffer a dire outcome. Pay the Price.

This move represents a last ditch effort to recover control of the fight. It is that moment when all seems lost, but the hero somehow rallies.

Turn the Tide lets you take initiative and make a move. The move can be whatever is appropriate under the circumstance—likely Strike or Secure an Advantage. Roll the move (add +1), and act on the results. If you've scored a hit, you may take an additional +1 momentum. Then, play to see what happens. Hopefully this bold action is a turning point for the fight.

Here's the catch: If you score a miss when you make your move, you should add extra severity to the consequences. You might face additional harm. Your weapon is broken. Your companion is grievously wounded. Consider the result of your failure and give it teeth. If in doubt, Ask the Oracle.

Narratively, this is a dramatic moment. Focus on it. Envision your character's action. You struggle to your feet and raise your sword, your eyes hardening with determination. You spur your mount into a desperate charge. You grab your opponent's blade in your bare hand. You pull the dagger from your boot and lunge. Or, perhaps you state your name, lament the killing of your father, and tell your foe to prepare for death.

END THE FIGHT

Progress Move

When you make a move to take decisive action, and score a strong hit, you may resolve the outcome of this fight. If you do, roll the challenge dice and compare to your progress. Momentum is ignored on this roll.

On a strong hit, this foe is no longer in the fight. They are killed, out of action, flee, or surrender as appropriate to the situation and your intent (Ask the Oracle if unsure).

On a weak hit, as above, but you must also choose one.

- ♦ It's worse than you thought: Endure Harm.
- ♦ You are overcome: Endure Stress.
- ♦ Your victory is short-lived: A new danger or foe appears, or an existing danger worsens.
- ♦ You suffer collateral damage: Something of value is lost or broken, or someone important must pay the cost.
- ♦ You'll pay for it: An objective falls out of reach.
- ♦ Others won't forget: You are marked for vengeance.

On a miss, you have lost this fight. Pay the Price.

End the Fight fulfills your previous moves and the progress you have made in this scene. This is the all-or-nothing moment where the fight is decided. Is your foe defeated? Is your victory a pyrrhic one, and tastes of ash? Does your foe suddenly turn your assumed advantage against you?

Since this is a progress move, you add the number of filled boxes on your progress track for this foe, whether it's a single enemy or a pack. This is your progress score. Only add fully filled boxes (those with four ticks). Then, roll your challenge dice, compare to your progress score, and resolve a strong hit, weak hit, or miss as normal. You may not burn momentum on this roll, and you are not affected by negative momentum.

You can End the Fight only after you score a strong hit on a preceding move. Your setup move can be any action, but should be framed as a decisive maneuver or response, intended to bring the fight to a close.

If you find yourself struggling against a tide of weak hits and misses, unable to make this move, consider building and then burning momentum to get back control. Use your favored stats and assets to improve your chances. However, keep in mind that End the Fight is not the only way to resolve a combat scene. You can flee. You can give up. You can negotiate or force a surrender. End the Fight represents the conclusion of a bloody, desperate combat, with both sides committed to see it through.

On a strong hit, envision how this foe is defeated. If you still face other foes (using separate progress tracks), you have initiative and the fight continues.

If you score a weak hit, your victory comes at a cost. Choose a listed outcome as appropriate to the circumstances. Then, consider the narrative implications of your choice and how it impacts what happens next.

On a miss, you should face a dramatic and dire consequence. Are you captured? Mortally wounded and left for dead? Is someone under your protection killed? Is an important objective or vow now lost to you? Make a choice as appropriate to the situation and the intent of your foe, or roll on the Pay the Price table and interpret the result as severe. Make it hurt.

When you and your allies are fighting against a common foe, you share a progress track. Any of you may attempt to End the Fight. If you then score a weak hit or miss, consider how your choice impacts the group and who suffers the cost as appropriate to the situation.

BATTLE

When you fight a battle, and it happens in a blur, envision your objective and roll. If you primarily...

- ♦ Fight at range, or using your speed and the terrain to your advantage: Roll +edge.
- ♦ Fight depending on your courage, allies, or companions: Roll +heart.
- ♦ Fight in close to overpower your opponents: Roll +iron.
- ♦ Fight using trickery to befuddle your opponents: Roll +shadow.
- ♦ Fight using careful tactics to outsmart your opponents: Roll +wits.

On a strong hit, you achieve your objective unconditionally. Take +2 momentum.

On a weak hit, you achieve your objective, but not without cost. Pay the Price.

On a miss, you are defeated and the objective is lost to you. Pay the Price.

This move is used as an alternative to a detailed combat scene. When you want to zoom out and resolve a fight in a single roll, make this move.

First, consider your objective. Are you trying to defeat your foes? Hold them off until reinforcements arrive? Defend a person or place? Reach a position? Envision the situation, your strategy, and what you intend to gain or avoid.

Then, roll and envision the outcome. A strong hit is unconditional success. Your foes are defeated, surrender, flee, or give up their objectives as appropriate to the situation and your goals for the fight.

A weak hit means you've achieved your overall objective, but at some cost. Since this is the resolution of an extended scene, the price you pay should be dramatic and meaningful. This can include suffering a significant amount of harm, failing to achieve a secondary goal, or encountering a new danger or complication. If in doubt, roll on the Pay the Price table, or you may pick from the weak hit options in the End the Fight move.

A miss on the Battle move should have dire ramifications on your character and your quest. This objective is lost to you. What does that mean? Are you captured? Gravely wounded? Have you failed to save a loved one? Is the settlement overrun by raiders? Must you Forsake Your Vow? Consider the situation and the intent of your foe, and Pay the Price. Make it hurt.

Use the Battle move as you like. If your story doesn't emphasize fighting, or you'd rather generally abstract combat encounters, you can use this move exclusively. You can also drop it into some portion of a larger scene. Perhaps you Battle to quickly deal with lesser foes, then handle the fight against their leader with standard combat moves. The mix of Battle moves and more detailed fight scenes can help you pace your gaming sessions and let you focus on what is interesting or important.

Battling Alongside Allies

When you and your allies fight together, only one of you makes the move. Others can make the Aid Your Ally move, using stats as detailed in Battle. Resolve those moves first, and then Battle.

On a strong hit, all of you benefit from the narrative success, but only the character making the move gains the momentum bonus. On a weak hit or miss, all of you suffer an outcome as appropriate to the situation. When in doubt, Ask the Oracle.

OTHER MOVES IN COMBAT

You won't rely solely on combat moves in a fight. Make other moves as appropriate to the situation, your intent, and the actions of your foes.

Face Danger : Combat Move

Make this move when you seek to avoid or overcome an obstacle in combat, or when you choose to focus on defense.

- ♦ You leap over a gully as you ride into battle. Face Danger +edge.

- ♦ The massive elder bear roars, spittle flying. Will you muster your courage against this terrifying beast? Face Danger +heart.

- ♦ You bring up your shield as the raider presses her attack, standing your ground against the withering axe blows. Face Danger +iron.

If this is a proactive move—you are overcoming an obstacle—make it when you have initiative. If this is a reactive move—you are trying to avoid an immediate threat—your foe likely has the initiative.

When would you Face Danger instead of Clash against an attack? If you are fighting back, that's probably Clash. If you focusing on defense, getting out of the way, ducking behind your shield, or taking cover, that's Face Danger. It's less risky, since you can leverage a favored stat and the penalty on a weak hit is relatively mild. Unlike Clash, you won't have an opportunity to inflict immediate harm on a hit, but a strong hit with Face Danger can put you in good position for a follow-up move.

You'll also likely Face Danger if your foe is trying to gain advantage through an action other than a direct attack. They move to the trees to get a shot at you from cover. Or they taunt you, trying to provoke you into a reckless response. Perhaps they shove at you, putting you off-balance for a follow-up attack. What do you do? Envision it, then make the move. If you fail to score a hit, you likely suffer a loss of momentum to represent this setback. Your foe has initiative and will try to press their advantage.

Face Danger might also be used to flee combat altogether. If you have a path and means to escape, make this move to see if you get away.

Finally, in cases where an enemy represents a minor obstacle, Face Danger can be used to avoid combat or as a means of resolving your action against a mundane foe. For example, you can Face Danger to sneak past an enemy or run away from a potential fight. If you are dealing with a minor foe from a position of clear advantage, such as firing an arrow from hiding, you can Face Danger to see what happens. In either case, a miss on this move might force you to Enter the Fray.

Secure an Advantage : Combat Move

This move is made in combat when you try to gain some leverage, improve your position, or setup another move. For example:

- ♦ You take careful aim before shooting. Secure an Advantage +wits.

- ♦ You perform a sly feint, trying to put your opponent off balance and create an opening. Secure an Advantage +shadow.

- ♦ You attempt to dishearten your foe with an intimidating roar as you charge. Secure an Advantage +iron.

Secure an Advantage can be used whenever you have initiative, or as a means of establishing a favorable position prior to the fight. Mechanically, it's a powerful move for building your momentum track toward a decisive action. Narratively, it's a great way to bring cinematic action into the scene.

When you want to Secure an Advantage, picture the situation. Consider the terrain, your weapons, your position, and your fighting style and approach. Consider your enemy, and their tactics and readiness. Where is there an opportunity? Envision your action, then make the move.

Compel : Combat Move

Compel can be used as a shortcut to ending a combat. You don't have to make the End the Fight move to surrender or negotiate a truce. End the Fight is the outcome of a desperate, probably bloody, skirmish. If you or your foe have other objectives, give Compel a try.

- ♦ You attempt to force your foe to surrender. Compel +iron.
- ♦ You try to surrender, reason or negotiate. Compel +heart.
- ♦ You trick your foe into giving up the fight. Compel +shadow.

Compel needs to be supported by the fiction. What is your foe's intent? How do they feel about you? Are you a hated enemy? A potential meal? What are they willing to risk to end you? Has the fight gone in their favor or against them? What leverage do you have? If there's no upside for them, you can't make this move. If you aren't sure, Ask the Oracle before you Compel.

Compel might be used proactively (when you have initiative) or reactively (when your foe has it) depending on the circumstances. Offering to surrender is a reactive response, and can be done when you don't have initiative. Attempting to Compel your foe to give up the fight is a proactive move made when you are in control.

Aid Your Ally : Combat Move

This move is an obvious choice when you want to bolster your ally's actions. Envision what you do to help them, make the Secure an Advantage move, and let them take the benefits of the outcome.

You should have initiative before you attempt to Aid Your Ally. On a strong hit, both of you then take or retain initiative. This is a huge advantage for your ally if they were having a difficult time making progress against their foe. On a weak hit or miss, you both lose initiative.

Suffer Moves : Combat Move

Make Suffer moves as appropriate when you face the outcome of your actions within a combat scene.

If you make a suffer move and score a strong hit, you may take or retain initiative—even if you scored a weak hit or miss on the preceding move. However, this opportunity does not overrule the fiction of the moment. If you are out of action and Face Death, you aren't likely to come springing back into the fight. If you do score a strong hit on a suffer move, consider what happens next and the moves you may make in the context of the situation.

Pay the Price : Combat Move

Being forced to make the Endure Harm move is the obvious result when you must Pay the Price in a fight, but there's much more that can happen in a dynamic combat situation. You lose your footing. You drop your weapon. Your shield is shattered. A goal is lost to you. A companion or ally is injured. You are put in a perilous position. A new threat reveals itself.

Mix it up. Make combat exciting and cinematic. Whatever happens, make the outcome one you wish you had avoided. If in doubt, roll on the Pay the Price table or Ask the Oracle.

Ask the Oracle : Combat Move

In solo and co-op play, you can Ask the Oracle about your foe's objectives, tactics, and specific actions. The oracle can also help determine the outcome of events or introduce new twists.

Use this move sparingly. For the most part, trust your instincts. Your actions trigger reactions. Who are you fighting? What do they want? What do they do next? Your first impulse is often the right one.

Chapter 6 includes the Combat Action oracle which you can use to prompt an NPC action or response in a fight. You can also leverage the description of your foe's tactics in chapter 5 to guide their behavior.

Be mindful of your surroundings and other characters. Ask questions. "Can I take cover here?", "Is the river shallow enough to cross?", "Do the villagers flee?" Consider your foe's actions and your opportunities in the context of the environment.

In guided play, the GM is your oracle. When you have questions about what happens next, look to them, or talk it out at the table. Your GM is free to use the Ask the Oracle move to answer questions.

PART FOUR: FOES AND ENCOUNTERS

An NPC (non-player character/creature) is anyone who inhabits your setting other than your character and those portrayed by your fellow players. They can be a person, being or creature. You will roleplay your interactions with NPCs, and make moves when you attempt to influence them, aid them, gain their help, or act against them.

COMPONENTS OF AN NPC

Because gameplay in Ironsworn is centered on the abilities and actions of your character, NPCs are primarily represented through your fiction rather than mechanics. They don't have stats, assets, or tracks. Instead, the sample NPCs in this chapter include some broad details to help guide their actions and the threat they pose in combat.

When you interact with an NPC, envision their personality and motivations. A brutish character leverages their strength, or attempts to bully and intimidate. A sly character acts through manipulation or trickery. A noble character behaves according to her sense of honor. An animal, depending on its disposition, may attack when threatened or may run away. A supernatural being may act with mindless malice and hate for the living, or may have more complex needs. When you are unsure of an NPC's traits or next action, Ask the Oracle. Then, envision what they do and make moves to aid or oppose them as appropriate.

RANK

NPCs have a single mechanical attribute, their rank. From this, their ability to resist and inflict harm in combat is derived, as follows:

RANK	TYPE	PROGRESS	HARM
Troublesome	Common enemies	3 progress per harm	Inflicts 1 harm
Dangerous	Capable fighters and deadly creatures	2 progress per harm	Inflicts 2 harm
Formidable	Exceptional fighters and mighty creatures	1 progress per harm	Inflicts 3 harm
Extreme	Foes of overwhelming skill or power	2 ticks per harm	Inflicts 4 harm
Epic	Legendary foes of mythic power	1 tick per harm	Inflicts 5 harm

When you engage a foe in combat, give them a standard progress track (10 boxes). When you Strike or Clash and inflict harm, mark progress for each point of harm based on the foe's rank. For example, you mark 2 ticks for each point of harm inflicted on an extreme foe, and 2 progress (2 full boxes) for each point of harm against a dangerous foe.

When you fail to defend against a foe's attack and face physical harm, you make the Endure Harm move. As part of that move, you reduce your health track by the amount of harm your foe inflicts, per their rank.

If appropriate to the NPC, they can also inflict stress equal to their rank when you fail to resist an action which frightens, demoralizes, or rattles you.

Use the *End the Fight* move, adding your progress against this foe, when you attempt to resolve the combat.

The ranks for the sample NPCs represent a typical individual of that type. For unusually powerful NPCs, increase their rank by one (to a maximum of epic). For less powerful foes, decrease their rank by one (to a minimum of troublesome). You can also adjust the rank of a foe when circumstances give you significant narrative disadvantage or advantage before the fight.

FEATURES

These are the typical characteristics of appearance and personality for an NPC. They are not universally true, especially within diverse societies, but can provide some common impressions as a starting point.

DRIVES

Drives reflect the motivations and instincts of an NPC. For creatures, these are relatively simple: Hunt, eat, defend territory. For intelligent beings, drives are the typical goals and beliefs of their society, but do not represent the complex range of motivations you will encounter. Drives are a starting place, giving you the rough outline of a typical NPC to be fleshed out (or contradicted) appropriate to their role in the fiction.

NPCs who are prominent in your campaign will have more detail. Depending on their role in your story, their drives may support—or conflict with—your own goals. As you discover details about an important NPC, make note of it. Look for opportunities to introduce interesting and surprising backstories and motivations for these characters.

TACTICS

Tactics provide a reference for how an NPC might act in combat. These give you a sense of typical maneuvers, but do not represent the possibilities of a complex and dramatic combat scene. You should let NPC actions flow out of the fiction. What is the situation? What is their goal? What will add to the excitement and danger of this moment? Make it happen. When in doubt, Ask the Oracle.

Your foes should do more than simply try to inflict harm. A fearsome roar or demoralizing boast might cause you to Endure Stress. Tactical maneuvers reduce your momentum. Fictional complications—the appearance of new foes, putting companions or allies at risk, or a realization that undermines your quest—will heighten the drama of the scene.

NPC PACKS

When you fight a group of troublesome or dangerous foes, you may combine them into a single progress track. This is called a pack. It's more convenient than tracking progress for each individual foe, and the scene will move faster.

When you group foes into a pack, increase their rank to represent their combined ability to inflict and resist harm. For a small pack (about 3 to 5), increase the rank by one. For a large pack (about 6 to 10) increase the rank by two. For example, a pack of 4 troublesome foes are treated as a single dangerous foe. If you are facing more than 10 troublesome or dangerous foes, you can group them into smaller packs and associated progress tracks.

When you inflict harm on the pack, you can envision it as appropriate to the fiction. You might wound them, put one or more of them out of action, or drive some back. When you successfully End the Fight, you have defeated the last of them, or broken their fighting spirit.

Formidable, extreme, and epic foes may not be grouped into a pack. Each must have its own progress track.

JOINING FORCES WITH NPCS

If your story leads you to cooperating with helper NPCs to overcome challenges, you need to consider how they impact the fiction and your moves. NPCs—unless they are a companion asset—won't give you mechanical bonuses on your moves. They also won't make moves of their own. They are simply a part of your story, perhaps impacting the moves you make, the results of those moves, and the rank of your challenges. Gaining the aid of an important NPC might also allow you to *Reach a Milestone*.

For example:

- If you are charged with protecting NPCs, they might be placed in danger or suffer losses as a result of your failures on moves.
-
- If you are fighting alongside NPCs, you can reduce the rank of your foes. For example, battling alone against a large pack of raiders might be an extreme challenge. If you are aided by a stalwart band of villagers, you could shift the enemies' rank to formidable.
-
- If you are being led by an experienced scout, you might choose to skip the *Undertake a Journey* move, or reduce the rank of the journey.
-
- If an NPC leader agrees to support your quest by allowing passage through contested lands, you might *Reach a Milestone* and mark progress.

As with any NPC, you can *Ask the Oracle* to see how a helper NPC responds, how they fare in a challenge, or what they do next. You can make moves to influence them, such as *Compel*. If you develop a strong relationship through your story, or if you *Fulfill Your Vow* in their service, you can choose to *Forge a Bond*.

In short, make them characters, not numbers. Give them personalities. Give them quirks and motivations. Let them impact your story and your quests, for better or worse, but always keep the focus on your character and your allies.

CREATING NPCS

You should create NPCs that fit your version of the setting, enhance your story, and enrich your character's adventures. Because NPCs don't have mechanical detail, it's easy to bring them to life without advance preparation.

If you face an NPC in combat, give them a rank. If you like, you can also make note of their drives and tactics. Otherwise, their motivations, abilities, and actions are entirely part of your fiction. They may ignore you, aid you, or oppose you. Make moves to resolve your intentions with them as appropriate. Springboard off those moves with new details and complications to flesh out these characters.

For reoccurring NPCs, make note of what you learn of them over time. If you share a bond, mark it down.

SAMPLE NPC

WYVERN

WYVERN'S RANK

- ♦ Extreme (2 ticks per harm; inflicts 4 harm)

WYVERN'S FEATURES

- ♦ Huge, bat-like wings
- ♦ Rows of knife-sized teeth
- ♦ Thick hide with a metallic sheen
- ♦ Long tail

WYVERN'S DRIVES

- ♦ Watch for prey from high above
- ♦ Feed

WYVERN'S TACTICS

- ♦ Swoop down
- ♦ Snap up prey
- ♦ Fearsome roar
- ♦ Bash with tail

CHARACTER SHEET

A blank character sheet for recording your Ironsworn character's stats, vows, bonds, and assets. Print this sheet or use the [interactive character generator](https://engine.moddable.games/play/?game=ironsworn&variant=character-sheet) to create a new character with randomised starting assets and background vows.

Ironsworn									
Name					Epithet				
Abilities									
Edge		Heart		Iron		Shadow		Wits	
1-3		1-3		1-3		1-3		1-3	
Health		0 1 2 3 4 5							
Spirit		0 1 2 3 4 5							
Supply		0 1 2 3 4 5							
Momentum		-6 -5 -4 -3 -2 -1 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10							
Vows									
Title:					Rank:				
Title:					Rank:				
Title:					Rank:				
Title:					Rank:				
Bonds									
Assets									
Asset 1			Asset 2			Asset 3			
Debilities									
Wounded Shaken Unprepared Encumbered Maimed Corrupted Cursed Tormented									

Equipment & Notes
