

MONARCHIES of MAU



CORE RULEBOOK

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CAT'S GUIDE TO EXPLORATION

"All cats will fall to the might of Labo Tor!" The wind whipped at the mouse's white leather coat as she plucked one of the brightly colored vials from her belt and reached back, preparing to throw.

Nerma von Korat, his red lacquered armor gleaming, snarled and tossed his scimitar with a flick of his wrist. The blade spun through the air and knocked the vial from the mouse's paw. The glass hit the stone of the tower's roof. It shattered at the mouse's feet, and lightning leapt up around her. The cultist screamed, clawing at her face and eyes before falling to the ground in a heap.

The large cat grunted and walked over to the body. He kicked it once for good measure before bending over to pick up his sword. "Aren't you done yet?" he yelled over his shoulder, not looking at his partner as he carefully slid the sword into his scabbard.

Halo von Siberian grimaced as she stared at her opponent, paws outstretched in a precise martial stance. "Patience is rewarded when you have a still mind," she muttered through clenched teeth, never taking her eyes off the rat in front of her. Like his comrade, the rat was dressed in a long leather coat that was bleached white, but he had nothing on his belt. Instead, his temples bulged, and his unusually large eyes were bloodshot with concentration. Halo had been staring at the rat for several seconds now, and neither had made a move.

Nerma turned around to look at the two of them, and threw his paws up in exasperation. "Oh, come on! You haven't even started yet. I'm already done with mine!"

"Silence, foul cat!" the rat barked, speaking for the first time during their encounter. "I could destroy you both with but a thought!"

The warrior growled at this challenge, but Halo sidestepped to stand in front of Nerma. "Do not interfere," she said. "Your anger will only put you in more danger."

"Tell that to Crispy over there," Nerma said. He jerked a thumb over his shoulder, but no one was looking at him. This annoyed him even more, and he scowled. "Just hurry up, already."

"Yes, wanderer," the rat said with a smirk. "Hurry up and face your destruction. Take one step toward me, and I will obliterate you with my mind!"

"Then do so," Halo said, her eyes never leaving the rat's.

"I'm sorry?" The rat didn't seem to have anticipated this.

"Destroy me," Halo pressed. "With your mind. And my friend. Go ahead."



“I will! I will destroy you both.”

Nerma drew his scimitar again as he towered behind Halo. “Think a single evil thought, rat, and I will slice your head off.”

Halo forced down another bloom of irritation. “No, you won’t,” she said carefully, her eyes trained on the strange patch of white fur just over the rat’s eye. “This is between me and the magician here.”

“I am no magician!” the rat screeched. “I am a scientist! I have studied the ancient records of the Old Ones, and I know the true power of the universe! I have mastered 47 of the 100 Theories!” During his tirade, the rat’s bulbous eyes began to water, and he finally did what Halo was waiting for.

He blinked.

When the rat opened his eyes a fraction of a second later, Halo had leapt into the air. Her foot glowed with a blue aura as she kicked him in the snout. The pain was intense, and the rat could feel his fur and flesh becoming bitterly cold as the blue energy enveloped him. He tried to speak, to unleash his mental attack, but he couldn’t move. The ice cracked and popped as his eyes froze solid. Halo nodded in satisfaction as the frozen rat fell over the side of the roof.

Nerma growled, and sheathed his sword again. “Showoff,” he muttered.

Halo bristled. Nerma had a habit of rubbing her the wrong way. “We should head back and tell the Ruling Council what we’ve discovered,” she said, walking away from her angry companion. “They’ll want to know that the Cult of Labo Tor has infiltrated the monarchy of Korat.”



INTRODUCTION

Countless centuries have turned since we disappeared. The cities we know have long since crumbled to dust. Highways and railroads are buried beneath the rocks of new mountains, the sands of new deserts, and the roots of new forests. The occasional ruin remains as a strange reminder of our legacy, perhaps as a not-yet-decayed building or incomprehensible piece of technology. Nature has reclaimed the earth. Those who remain – our constant companions – seek to reclaim our legacy by exploring our past and building their future.

Monarchies of Mau is a fantasy game set in the ancient future with intelligent, evolved cats as the main characters. The cats live within six city-states recently united under one leader in the hopes of putting aside their differences to build something stronger, something better, together. They seek out evidence of the Old Ones (also known as

“Man”) to discover what they did right, what they did wrong, and what those who remain can use to build their society up in a strange new world. Other animals seek to answer the same questions in their own way, like the dogs of the kingdom of Pugmire or the mice and rats scattered throughout both lands. Regardless of their differences, all the species agree that there was a world before this one: a world filled with danger, wonder, and mystery.

Cats built their kingdoms, explored the world around them, and salvaged what they could from the relics of Man. They considered the Old Ones to be loyal servants whom their feline ancestors rewarded with great power and responsibility, and the cats seek to honor that service to this day. The artifacts cats uncover are viewed as prizes carelessly left behind by powerful retainers. These gifts manifest as magic items, enchantments, and spells. We might recognize

WHAT IS THIS GAME ABOUT?

these pieces of sufficiently advanced technology that the cats are unable to distinguish from magic, but we are no longer there to explain the difference.

Welcome to a world where cats sneak through ancient hallways seeking out lost artifacts while confronting strange creatures made from hideous flesh, magical technology... or both.

Welcome to a world where long-standing rivalries threaten to doom a country united under a ruler that can no longer hold the alliance together now that she has passed on to her next life.

Welcome to a world where heroes always strive to do what is best, but must always choose between what's best for them and what's best for everybody.

Welcome to *Monarchies of Mau*.

WHAT IS THIS GAME ABOUT?

Before we talk about how to play the game, we should take a moment to discuss what the game is about. That breaks down into three big elements: *theme* (the central idea), *mood* (how the game should feel), and *action* (what the characters do).

THEME: INSTINCT VS. SOCIETY

Monarchies of Mau is a game about cat people, but the fact that they are cats only highlights the more important point that they are *people*. The dangerous and mysterious world they inhabit causes them to face threats from external beings like the Unseen to internal challenges caused by the intrigues of their kingdoms. Many cats use a code of behavior called the Precepts of Mau to survive, yet the first Precept is “always trust your instincts.”

Monarch Trillani Persian von Mau united the cat kingdoms under her clever paw before she passed on a year ago. She worked hard to give cats a society that builds and reinforces productive and “civilized” behaviors. Yet, cats are notorious for their independence and self-reliance, forcing the members of these houses to choose between helping their house or promoting their own agenda. When these desires align, things usually move smoothly. When personal desire conflicts with loyalty and duty, or when two houses want the same thing and only one of them can have it, that's when things get interesting.

Choosing to take the best course of action can also be a spiritual choice. Many cats believe in reincarnation — after all, the Old Ones told them they have nine lives — so they believe the actions of their past selves put them in the spot they are now. No one can *prove* that reincarnation exists, but the actions a cat takes now might affect their position in the next life. What the Precepts of Mau demand versus what may be best for personal spirituality is rarely an easy choice to make. Cats must constantly decide whether they wish to act selfishly or if they want to act selflessly.

There are few things that are purely good or purely evil to the cats of Mau. Only the creatures of the Unseen that leave chaos and destruction in their wake come close to being pure evil. When the Unseen reveal their presence, even the most selfish of cats set aside their differences to put down the terrifying demons and monsters in the world.

MOOD: MYSTERIOUS INTRIGUE

At some point in the future, all of humanity disappeared. Dozens of theories are debated between the house scholars in libraries and salons across the Monarchies. Was there a mass extinction event caused by a war? Did we all succumb to some unknown disease or famine? Did we depart for the stars to never return home? Were we transformed into something we would no longer recognize as human? Many of these questions will never be answered, and those that are lead to even more questions. The facts about the Old Ones are minimal and the spaces between those facts are filled in with theory, mythology, and legend. The Old Ones are somehow god, servant, and progenitor depending on whom you ask and, sometimes, fulfill all those roles at the same time. Each of the intelligent species of the world has a general idea of how the Old Ones fit into the world, but those viewpoints often contradict with others and conflict with stories told within their own peoples.

For cats, how and why the Old Ones left is secondary to what they left behind. The monarchies battled, robbed, and bartered with each other for centuries for the relics of the Old Ones. Holding the best artifacts was a sign that a specific house was the strongest and most prestigious... now that they had the power to back up threats. Cats today find it better to work together as one body, but the intrigues and betrayals of years gone by still influence

Inspirations for Monarchies of Mau

During the creation of *Monarchies of Mau* (and its predecessor, *Pugmire*), we were inspired by many books, comics, games, movies, and television shows. Here's a small sample of them, in case you find them to be inspirational as well.

- *Mouse Guard* by David Petersen
- *The Secrets of Cats* by Richard Bellingham
- *Redwall* by Brian Jacques
- *The Rats of Nimh* by Robert C. O'Brien and Jane Leslie Conly
- *The Amazing Maurice and his Educated Rodents* by Terry Pratchett
- *Adventure Time* by Pendleton Ward
- *Dungeons & Dragons* originally by Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson (particularly early material, like *Expedition to the Barrier Peaks* by Gary Gygax)
- *Gamma World* originally by James M. Ward and Gary Jaquet (again, particularly the early material)
- *ElfQuest* by Wendy and Richard Pini
- *Thundarr the Barbarian* by Steve Gerber, Joe Ruby, and Ken Spears
- The *Geneforge* series by Jeff Vogel
- *A Song of Ice and Fire* series by George R. R. Martin

which house gets their paws on that magic sword discovered by clever cats in a long-forgotten crypt.

The houses aren't just playing politics. Very real threats exist in the world around them. The Cult of Labo Tor perverts the idea of Man to its own malicious means. The demons of the Unseen threaten to corrupt and destroy all the cats have built. The badgers attack cat settlements to tear away resources for their tribes. The deepskins drag unwary cats into the inky depths in search of Old Ones beneath the waves. Strong houses protect against these and other dangers. Strong houses must continue to explore and expand to keep their strength.

And so, solving these mysteries must continue. Every question answered, every intrigue revealed, and every threat neutralized by a house strengthens it. As each house grows, so does the union. When all the houses are strong, when they are all unified, only then will the Monarchies of Mau reclaim the world left to them as the ultimate gift from their greatest servants.

ACTION: EXPLORING THE WORLD AND YOURSELF

Cats are, by their very nature, *explorers*. They seek out high ground to observe their territory, then find ways to uncover every nook and cranny of it. The cats in *Monarchies of Mau* are adventurers, and much of the adventure comes from discovering new parts of the world. But as danger and intrigue threaten the heroes, they learn about themselves and what they will and won't do. They explore themselves as much as the world around them.

As such, literal exploration is part of the action, but so is combat and social interaction. Excavating a ruin for a strange artifact, stealing treasure from corrupt nobility to give back to a poor hamlet, fighting duels to claim an ancient family territory, seeking out spies within the ranks of a house, and facing down the Unseen corruptor of a superior officer are all potential stories. Thread these together through multiple sessions, and you are well on your way to

WHAT DO I NEED TO PLAY?

telling a complete chronicle, but even more stories await as you explore not just the world around your characters, but the characters themselves.

WHAT IS A ROLE-PLAYING GAME?

Much of the game is a conversation between the players and the Guide. The Guide presents something exciting that happens, like a new place to explore or a monster attack, and the players tell the Guide how their characters react. The Guide then tells the players how the parts of the scene react, and this back and forth goes on until the story comes to a point where the Guide isn't sure how the players' success or failure should affect the scene.

That's when the game part comes to the front and players roll dice for their characters. This most commonly happens in combat, where players battle monsters and other enemies. It also happens when a Guide thinks a character's skills, bravery, or luck might be tested by an action, such as sneaking past a guard to get into a noble's private library or arguing with a magistrate for the release of a friend. Sometimes the Guide will describe what happens because of the dice roll, and sometimes the player will.

Once the question has been answered, the game returns to the conversational mode until another situation arises that requires dice, the story comes to an end, or the group runs out of time and pauses the story until next session.

WHAT DO I NEED TO PLAY?

To play *Monarchies of Mau* you will need:

- At least one copy of this book.
- A place to record your character and their traits. We have character sheets in the back of the book that can be printed or photocopied. These sheets help organize this information in a helpful way.
- 3-6 people to play with. One person will be the Guide, while the others will be the players. Games with fewer people are possible, but lose some of the elements of ensemble intrigue that give the game flavor. Larger

groups can also exist, but it's often challenging for the Guide to keep the right amount of focus on each player.

- Dice. One set of "polyhedral dice" is all that's necessary to play, but if everyone has one set, play can move faster. We'll talk more about dice below.

The basics here can exist in physical form, digital form, or both. Some players like physical versions for the tactile feel and smell of books. Other players prefer digital versions of books and dice-roller apps because they play online with others all over the world. As long as you're playing with friends, that's what's important.

Optional things include:

- Something physical to represent fortune. Fortune can be marked on character sheets or by the Guide, but having physical markers that can be passed around adds a great element to the game.
- Cards to represent when players have taken their turns in combat. There are official ones available for purchase, but any two-sided cards will do.
- A screen to block the Guide's part of the table from view. This can help a Guide keep notes organized, and the official screen has useful reference materials.
- Snacks and refreshments. Sessions can run for a few hours, so having something handy to eat and drink will keep everyone's energy up.
- Maps and miniatures. Sometimes visualizing the layout of a scene can help players make informed decisions. Some groups like to play out battles with full maps and painted miniatures, but even quick sketches can clear up where enemies are and what plan of action the players might take.
- Music and sound effects. Some groups like their adventures to be accompanied by epic soundtracks, while others like the ambient sounds of a location like a library or temple. Many such resources can be found on the internet.

DICE

Dice are important because they determine whether your character succeeds or fails, or how well they do in combat. The most commonly used is the 20-sided die, called the *d20* in these rules. You will also see notes for four-sided dice (*d4*), six-sided dice (*d6*), eight-sided dice (*d8*), 10-sided dice (*d10*), and 12-sided dice (*d12*). These dice, often called roleplaying dice or polyhedral dice, are available from a variety of sources like game stores, bookstores, and online sellers. Many smartphones have access to dice-roller apps, and there are browser-friendly ones for players playing online.

If you see a notation like *2d8* in these rules, the number before the “d” refers to how many dice of that type you should roll at once. Add the results together. If you see a math symbol after a dice notation, like *2d4 + 1* or *d12 - 2*, that means to roll the dice, add the results if multiple dice are rolled, and then add or subtract the amount from the final roll. Occasionally, you might have to divide numbers. When you do, always round down any leftover fractions.

How Do I Roll Dice?

There is one roll at the center of the game. The rest of this book is variations on this central mechanic. As long as you remember the process that follows here, everything else is just detail.

- **Step 1.** Pick up a *d20*.
- **Step 2.** Determine if the character has an *advantage* or a *disadvantage*. If so, pick up another *d20*.
- **Step 3.** Roll the die or dice. If the character has an advantage, use the higher result. If the character has a disadvantage, use the lower roll. A higher number is better.
- **Step 4.** Add (or subtract) any relevant modifiers to the roll: usually an ability modifier, sometimes a proficiency bonus, and occasionally a bonus from a secret.
- **Step 5.** Compare the total to the difficulty of the task. If it equals or exceeds the difficulty number, the action is a successful!

So, let’s show you an example of how it works. Let’s check in with Nerma von Korat, who is sneaking into a Cult of Labo Tor temple.

- *Step 1.* Nerma’s player picks up a *d20*.
- *Step 2.* Nerma... *acquired* a map of the temple, so the Guide says he has advantage. Nerma’s player picks up another *d20*.
- *Step 3.* Nerma’s player rolls a 10 and a 3. Good thing he had those plans!
- *Step 4.* Nerma’s player adds his Dexterity (+3) and his proficiency (+2, because he has Sneak as a skill) for a total of 15.
- *Step 5.* The difficulty to sneak past the guards is a 15, so Nerma makes it to the inner sanctum without incident.

And that’s how it works!

How Do I Read This Book?

If you hadn’t already guessed, this isn’t a normal book. That’s good because most experienced players don’t read it in a normal way! If you’ve not played a roleplaying game before, we recommend reading the first part of the book, which is called the Cat’s Guide to Exploration. It has much of the information on how to play and more details on the world of the game. If you want to be the Guide, you should probably read the other part of the book, called the Guide’s Tome of Secrets. It has information on all the enemies and advice on creating adventures for you and your friends to enjoy.

At the very least, read the parts of the book that look interesting to you. If there is something you don’t understand, you can always look it up later. This book is built for reference at your table, so it’s okay to reference things during a game. Nobody expects players or Guides to have these rules memorized. Even the designers look things up from time to time! What is important is to get a feel for the rules, an idea for the setting, put it together, and tell fun stories with a group of friends. Everything else will work out as you play.

To help you out, we have a few different boxes (or as we call them, *sidebars*) scattered throughout the text to call out anything important in the text. We’ve enlisted the help of some of the best cats from the Monarchies to help us out.



My name is Sabian Sphynx von Angora. I have been asked to provide guidance to new players, young and old, on concepts important to the game.



I'm Blayze Rex von Rex. I'm here to let you know about things that are different from other games of this type and how to take advantage of them for the best experience.

This section of text should be read aloud at the table. Only the Guide sees this text, to describe something to their players.

CHAPTERS

Here's a brief synopsis of what's in the book.

CAT'S GUIDE TO EXPLORATION

This section is most important to the players, but the Guide will want to read it, too.

- **Introduction.** An explanation of *Monarchies of Mau* and what you'll find in it. Hey, you're almost done with this part already!
- **Chapter One: Report to the Castellan.** This is a report about the current state of the *Monarchies of Mau*. Other cats offer their opinions as well on what problems cats must face.

- **Chapter Two: An Excellent Cat.** This chapter helps players choose what cat to play or make their own brand-new cat character. It contains all the information players need to put on their character sheets.
- **Chapter Three: Playing the Game.** Here are all the rules of the game in one place. Everyone should at least look at this chapter.
- **Chapter Four: Magic.** This covers magic and spells for mancers and ministers.

GUIDE'S TOME OF SECRETS

This section contains information useful for anyone who wishes to be a Guide. Players don't need to know this stuff; in fact, some players might prefer being surprised in play!

- **Chapter Five: The Monarchies of Mau.** More detail about the cat kingdoms and the rest of the world. This helps Guides understand the setting so they can present it in a cohesive way.
- **Chapter Six: Guide Advice.** A chapter full of advice for Guides on how to put together their games. It's geared toward new Guides, but experienced Guides from other games might find a useful trick or two in here, too.
- **Chapter Seven: Masterworks.** This section details the powerful relics of Man and how to gain their power.
- **Chapter Eight: Enemies.** This chapter is full of characters for the Guide to use as enemies, foils, and maybe even allies in their adventures. There are also rules included for Guides to make their own enemies to challenge players.

ALL HAIL THE RAT KING!

We've even included an introductory adventure for Guides to see how we structure our stories. You can use it to kick off your chronicle. If you're a player, you definitely want to skip this part so you don't spoil the surprises that await!



CHAPTER ONE: REPORT TO THE CASTELLAN

Castellan Banjir von Korat,

The following pages contain the information you requested, delving into the history and culture of the Monarchies of Mau. I believe it will give the dogs of Pugmire a solid understanding of our society, without exposing any weaknesses they might desire to exploit. If you or Diplomat Illiad have any questions, I am happy to answer them and make changes as need be.

Sincerely,
Pixie von Siberian

Castellan Banjir -

As you asked, I have looked over this document and made notes from a historical and mystical perspective, offering some nuance and insight where my views differ from Pixie's.

Signed,

Salsian Sphinx von Angora

Some of the facts in here stink worse than a startled polecat. I'll tell you what's REALLY what.

Blayze Rex von Rex

HISTORY OF THE MONARCHIES

While the individual monarchies that make up our lands are ancient, the Monarchies of Mau as they exist today have only been united for a scant few decades. Much of ancient cat-history is fragmented and lost to time, but scholars have pieced together valuable information and a functional narrative from what remains.

It's not so much that our history is lost as it is the houses like keeping their failures obscured and the secrets behind their successes, well, secret. Whatever makes the house look best and drives its agenda forward. House Rex, of course, is dedicated to uncovering the truth in all things, and proudly leaves its histories untouched... oh, who am I kidding, we're guilty of this, too.

Your honesty is appreciated, Comrade von Rex.

The six monarchies were formed centuries ago, each one ruled by a powerful cat family. Though the monarchies are all vastly different from one another, each one is home to shining examples of art and architecture. Our scholars pride themselves on their pursuit of mystical knowledge, and libraries like those of Houses Angora and Mau are repositories of

priceless information. As more families were welcomed into the monarchies, their cities expanded significantly over the years. It quickly became necessary for the growing territories to annex nearby towns and lay claim to uninhabited lands. All six monarchies grew and grew until eventually their borders met, and there were no new lands left to acquire.

This, of course, put the neighboring monarchies in conflict with one another. Well before the kingdom of Pugmire was raised from the muck, the cats were solving their border disputes. But cats are clever, and over time, each ruling family developed strategies aimed to best outmaneuver their rivals and gain the advantage when contentious situations arose.

What my colleague is not saying here is that many of those "contentious situations" were of a military manner, and the houses' specializations gave them the upper paw on the battlefield. For example, my own house, Angora, concentrates on magical knowledge. Our skills allow us to strike at the enemy from a distance, as well as revive fallen troops.

I keep meaning to ask if that counts as one of our lives, if a necromancer brings us back. Not that I'm in any hurry to find out personally, mind you.

As the years passed, cats formed alliances within and between the monarchies. Political intrigue and espionage began to take the place of military conflict: Instead of trading blows on the battlefield, cats traded secrets and information designed to undermine their rivals. Because of this, many cats defected from one monarchy to another, and began appending their home monarchy to their names. Which family you hailed from became secondary to which monarchy you'd sworn allegiance. Thus "Pixie, pledged to House Siberian" became "Pixie von Siberian."

THE WORLD

Conquering a neighboring monarchy is expensive, both in terms of resources and in troops sent to the front. It became clear to the monarchs that their plastic was better spent elsewhere, and they set their sights on annexing lands that weren't already controlled by cats. While no monarchy will ever completely shutter its armies, significant portions of the city-states' military budgets were redirected toward exploration instead.

The world, it turns out, is full of danger and wonders in equal measure. Perhaps most significantly, we discovered evidence of and artifacts from the Old Ones at every turn. Man had clearly left these marvels behind for cats to use in our conquests. Perhaps our worshippers



KORAT

SIBERIAN

MAU

ANGORA

CYMRIC

REX



knew what terrors we would be facing, or perhaps those same terrors are what caused the Old Ones to flee or die off. We don't know what ultimately happened to Man, but our servants provided us with these gifts as one last offering, and we strive to use them well and wisely.

As we explored, we also discovered places inhabited by other species. Although our emissaries attempted to forge diplomatic relations with both the dogs and the consortium of rats and mice, neither could grasp how becoming part of our glorious civilization was in their best interests.

We're better off without the rodents, I say. They had their chance, and without our protection their city fell. If they want to live among our garbage, that's their decision. A disgusting decision, but rats will be rats.

There's more nuance to our relationship with the dogs than can fit in this report. We both have great interest in one another's technology, and our scholars gain better understanding of mystical knowledge by exchanging ideas and theories. However, the dogs' insistence on worshipping the Old Ones — where we know that the Old Ones worshipped us cats — puts us at an ideological impasse.

RUINS AND TOMBS

Despite our sundry differences, all species can agree that the Old Ones are long gone. They are, by the kindest interpretations, missing. Perhaps they discovered new lands on the far side of the Acid Sea and left the lands in our capable paws. Perhaps they died out, whether via plague or war or some other terrible cause we cannot fathom. Regardless, they are so far removed from our everyday lives that it makes little difference to a cat whether Man is alive or dead.

Perhaps we should tread carefully here. Casually suggesting to Pugmire that the Old Ones — their gods — are gone and don't care about them could cause a diplomatic incident.

Agreed. Though we disagree on the Old Ones' role in our lives, we should be respectful of their beliefs. (Although I admit, the image of them all getting bees up their collective snouts amuses me. All the sneezing and head-shaking!)

Even with the Old Ones gone, their ruins remain. The brave explorers who seek out these hidden tombs return with items of great mystical power. The ancients left them so that we might vanquish our foes and triumph over the Unseen, but many of their secrets died with them.

This is true to an extent, but we cats know that it is possible to interact with the dead, and some of the artifacts I've studied suggest that Man must have tapped into those mysteries as well. Our servants were capable of brilliant intuitive leaps; it would not surprise me in the least if the Old Ones learned how to speak to us across the years or from beyond the grave. We need only discover their methods for doing so and listen.

Though cats have made great strides in exploration, there are still places both within the monarchies and beyond our borders that remain untouched. Some are extremely dangerous, full of traps waiting to be sprung and monsters lurking hungrily, eager to feed upon unsuspecting cats. Others are simply difficult to get to, requiring cats to climb high mountain peaks, or cross over miles and miles of treacherous terrain. The funding expeditions of that nature would require — and the slim chances of the mission's success — often mean those areas go unexplored by savvy cats. Our archives tell stories of the occasional fools and mad cats who

set out on such journeys and triumphed despite impossible odds, but for a long time, most cats preferred to stay within the borders of the known world, where it was relatively safe.

Then came Trillani's Trailblazers, which I will touch upon a little later.

THE WAR OF DOGS AND CATS

Tall mountains can be scaled and rough terrain can be traversed, given time, patience, and enough resources. The one thing none of those could overcome were the waters of the Acid Sea. Ships' hulls couldn't withstand long voyages on the open ocean, and while cats often sailed and traded along our monarchies' rivers, we did not venture out onto the waves. Not until Caesar von ██████ learned that plastic-hulled ships could survive in the poison waters of the Acid Sea.

While Comrade von Pixie's report is well-researched, the Ruling Council has declared all references to the fallen monarchy be excised, as I have done here.

May those moggies find only cold floors to sleep on and rotted meat to eat in this life, and all their lives to come.

With that discovery, the monarchies saw opportunities to increase trade, explore new lands, and potentially expand their territories. All the ruling families poured money and materials into ship-building, each one striving to get ahead of the others. However, at that time, House Rex controlled the coasts... and therefore the ports. Suddenly, House Rex — which had been one of the weaker among the monarchies — saw its fortunes change. The other houses opened their coffers to fill Rex' own. Their emissaries whispered bribes into the ears of Rex diplomats, offering them anything they might need in exchange for access to their ports.

All, that is, except for House Korat, who did not wish to be beholden to House Rex. Korat saw an opportunity to work instead with Waterdog Port, a city controlled by the dogs of Pugmire on the western side of the Fearful Forest. Korat had the resources to build the ships, and Waterdog Port had access to the Acid Sea. Thus, House Korat made an offer to help dogs get out to sea, if they would grant the house use of their docks. For a time, the arrangement worked out in both species' favor, but the collaboration didn't last. The dogs demanded more and more to fund their own ships and expeditions. The amounts they requested were far beyond what Korat had available. Eventually, Korat refused to pay, and the dogs attacked. Despite efforts on both sides to deescalate the situation, tensions rose and further skirmishes ensued. Queen Lilly Springer II, Pugmire's then-ruler, attempted to ban all cats from Waterdog Port. This unacceptable move led House Korat to call upon its allies to claim the port for the cats. Pugmire refused to yield, and so began The War of Dogs and Cats.

Perhaps if Korat had been willing to work with my house in the first place, the war could have been avoided.

True, but then the monarchies as they are today might never have formed. I'd say it worked out for us, in the end.

TRILLANI VON MAU

With the War in full swing, the rulers of the monarchies realized that the political intrigues between the city-states couldn't continue the way they had been for so many generations. Not while we were also fighting the dogs. Even though centuries' worth of deals and allegiances tied the various monarchies together, that meant there were also centuries-old rivalries and ancient slights between the houses that threatened to tear those alliances apart.

Trillani Persian von Mau, May All Her Lives Be Long, knew just how untenable the situation had become. She was a cat of legendary charisma and political savvy, and she relied upon both those qualities as she traveled to each monarchy and pled her case. Trillani was also a brilliant researcher, with a specialty in the Unseen. Her findings dated all the way back to the time of the Old Ones, and she presented what she'd learned to the cats she met: It was a cat's ancient and most sacred duty to protect the world from the Unseen. How could cats expect to uphold that responsibility while they were not only at war with the dogs, but were also fighting amongst themselves?

While the monarchies saw the wisdom in Trillani's words, they did not leap immediately to action. No noble family wanted to sacrifice their own power, nor risk having their secrets uncovered in the name of unity. The negotiations took the better part of a year, while Trillani listened to the cats' counsels, heard their demands, and worked out compromises. In the end, the six monarchies signed the Treaty of Unification to become the Monarchies of Mau, with Trillani herself elected as Monarch by unanimous vote. She ruled the Monarchies well and wisely until her dying day late last year.

The Six Houses

The former leaders of the separate monarchies became Dynasts of their newly created noble houses. The Dynasts of the six houses comprise the Ruling Council. All of them work together diligently and respectfully to do what's best for the monarchies.

Since when is a knife in the back respectful? Everyone knows the houses do whatever it takes to make sure their monarchy has the upper paw.

I won't entirely refute that claim, Blayze, but I do believe that's changing. What Comrade Pixie has written here is exactly what we've been telling the kittens born these past few generations. As far as they know, it's the truth, and therefore trust and unity become the ideals they work toward. I'd think you'd find that heartening.

THE SHADOW BLOC

There are, of course, cats who've declared allegiance to no one but themselves, or who don't descend from any family of great note. These unaffiliated cats, along with cats from minor houses and small factions, make up the Shadow Bloc. Together, they comprise a significant enough portion of the monarchies to warrant their own elected Shadow Dynast, who sits on the Ruling Council. The Shadow Dynast's voice — and therefore the cats she represents — is heard, but her votes don't hold quite as much weight as those Dynasts from the monarchies.

This experiment in democracy is new for us all, and cats from the great houses still sniff at it warily. Many gray furs twitch their tails in disdain at the very idea of the Shadow Bloc having its say, but younger cats seem willing to give it a chance.

Huh. I take your earlier point. The kittens are all right.

THE ROLE OF SECRECY

Whether they are part of a noble house or a moggie living out in the wild, all cats have secrets. In fact, next to pouncing on the Unseen, keeping secrets is the strongest imperative that cats all have in common, regardless of where their allegiances lie. Sometimes, even the mere idea of having a secret is more important than actually having one.

Cat culture values privacy in addition to our “public face.” Because of this, many cats will harbor the illusion that something is a secret, even if it's knowledge that has been widely revealed. Their well-mannered compatriots will not only respect that illusion, but will work to shore it up themselves.

Such “open secrets” run especially rampant within the great houses. Though a cat may leave one house and declare herself part of another, she leaves the secrets of her old house behind the same way she folds and leaves behind her clothing bearing her former house's

colors. While divulging her former house's secrets might earn her some temporary advantage among her new peers, in the long run she'd be known as an untrustworthy cat. After all, if she's willing to spill one house's secrets, she might do it again with another's. By preserving face and maintaining the impression of secrecy, we show others that secrets can be kept and respected.

For example, each house has its own language, which only cats in that house are taught and allowed to speak. However, allegiances change, and a cat who was born a Cymric might at some point break her ties with that house and join Korat. She doesn't suddenly forget how to speak and understand Cymric's secret language, but neither would she ever utter a word of it once her loyalty changes: It is considered poor behavior to speak in your old house's tongue. Such is our emphasis on maintaining that illusion of secrecy, that any cat who did overhear such a slip would pretend not to notice. (Though actions might be taken later in private, depending on the house involved.)

Ever since I was a kitten, it has been vastly frustrating to me that we keep secrets from one another rather than pool our knowledge. Think of the things we might learn from other houses' research that would benefit us all!

You assume that those in power would use that knowledge to the good, rather than use one house's secrets to crush another. It's sweet, Sabian, but awfully naive.

THE PRECEPTS OF MAU (ACCEPTED AND DISPUTED)

Signing the Treaty of Unification was only the first step in making the Monarchies of Mau into one single nation. The monarchies all had their own rules of conduct and discipline formed over the centuries, and it fell to Trillani von Mau to standardize them for cats traveling between the city-states. Once more, she listened to the suggestions of the Ruling Council and her advisors, and once more, it took time to settle on a small pawful of rules that every monarchy would agree to adhere to. Hundreds of precepts were proposed and debated at length, from short and pithy sayings to regulations that spanned volumes. Most of these were rejected, until four remained. These are called the Accepted Precepts of Mau, and they are as follows:

ALWAYS TRUST YOUR INSTINCTS
ALWAYS POUNCE UPON MINIONS
OF THE UNSEEN
ALWAYS REWARD LOYALTY
ALWAYS RESPECT AN HONEST DUEL

All great houses have their own additional precepts that, while they wish would be added to the Accepted Precepts of Mau, have not been adopted. These are called the Disputed Precepts of Mau, and are enforced differently by their respective houses. Many cats see the value in these unofficial rules, and some even abide by the ones they feel best apply to them.

Considering the way the houses support Trillani's Trailblazers, I would think "Always Pursue Knowledge" would be easy enough for everyone to follow. And yet the Ruling Council rejected it.

Tell you what, Sabian. You and I should go before the Council and suggest that they reconsider.

I suspect that offer is more in service to your own house's precept about pushing boundaries, rather than agreeing with my own, so I will respectfully decline.

MAGIC

Among the wonders the Old Ones left behind were their many mystical artifacts. Some of the items' purposes are immediately clear to us: bowls that make food appear out of thin air, rods that shoot a bolt of fire at our enemies. Others' uses are more obscure and require close study before

SPRITUALITY AND REINCARNATION

they give up their secrets. Cats have learned how to use these magical relics to aid us in battle. We also channel the energies from those artifacts to work wonders of our own.

From this research, cats have formed two main branches of magical discipline: mancers and ministers. Mancers study the Old Ones and their artifacts, looking for answers about our fascinating world and seeking out new mysteries to unveil. They harness energies from the natural world, and sometimes even those of death itself, in order to power their spells. Ministers use their powerful voices to heal their wounded companions, to soothe the souls of the weary, and to stir the faithful to action. They are the heart of the monarchies, those who guide us toward the wisdom waiting from our past lives, and who counsel us toward wise actions that are worthy of our next ones.

While we have discovered many of the artifacts Man gifted to us, how they were built is often unknown, as are the ways in which these mysterious items derive their power. When an explorer returns with a previously-unknown item, our scholars set to work dismantling the object to unravel the artifacts' secrets. Though it may ultimately result in the original object's destruction, cats gain knowledge from what lies inside, and may even absorb some of the energies stored therein.

SPRITUALITY AND REINCARNATION

It is commonly believed that cats have nine lives, as opposed to the single life most other species are granted. Knowing that the Old Ones chose to bestow this gift upon cats, we strive to live each of our lives fully, to carry on the legacy of the lives we've already lived, and to be worthy of the lives we will be reborn into when this one ends.



Most cats require the help of ministers to learn what wisdom our former lives can offer. For those purposes, the monarchies funded and built the Temple of the Nine, a place where cats may go to pray or commune with their other lives. Though religion is deeply personal and individual for each cat, our comrades appreciate having a place to contemplate who we once were and who we might yet be.

I confess, neither I nor any of my family members have found evidence of this so-called reincarnation. I suspect the only additional lives many of our comrades receive are the ones our mancers grant them when they are reanimated.

I wouldn't go spreading that around if I were you. Remember that bit earlier about not upsetting the dogs by poking at their beliefs? That goes double for this.

TRILLANI'S TRAILBLAZERS

After The War of Dogs and Cats ended, House Rex proposed that the monarchies once again set their sights on exploration. Now that we were at relative peace, it made sense to go out into the world and discover what wonders still awaited. The Ruling Council agreed, and each house offered up money and resources to get things off the ground. The noble houses weren't the only participants — those unaffiliated cats and smaller factions that would soon become the Shadow Bloc added their plastic to the cause. From this universal effort, Trillani's Trailblazers were formed.

Though the organization is only a couple of decades old, its membership has swelled significantly since its inauguration. Each group of trailblazers is overseen by a Castellan (an old term for cats in charge of protecting castles within their monarchies). The Castellan reports her trailblazers' achievements and activities back to the Ruling Council, but in general the groups have a lot of freedom to choose where they wish to explore, and what artifacts and supplies they bring with them... as long as they're not acting against the monarchies or the Accepted Precepts.

House Rex has always been willing to venture into the unknown to further our accomplishments, not only for cat-kind, but for the benefit of the world itself. I've crossed paths with pioneer dogs in the past, and think we could learn a lot from one another.

Even with good armor and weapons and well-seasoned comrades at your side, exploration can still be quite dangerous. If monsters don't kill you, a roving band of badgers eager to steal your equipment might. Some houses funnel their problem cats into Trillani's Trailblazers and hope for just such "accidents" to happen. (Of course, if a troublemaking tabby returns home despite the odds, bearing a rucksack full of artifacts, the house has an entirely different problem on its paws...) Others send their strongest members out on expeditions in the hopes they'll bring back powerful relics that will help the house. Many trailblazers simply follow their own agendas, regardless of what their houses intend.

RELATIONS WITH OTHER SPECIES

As the monarchies expand, we've encountered the other species who share or travel through our lands. It's important to know who is looking to deal with us honestly, and who might be plotting to attack our cities.

THE GOOD DOGS OF PUGMIRE

Since the war ended, the monarchies' relationship with the dogs of Pugmire has been a beneficial one, though it can still be tense at times. The dogs' propensity to worship Man causes some conflicts with cats' worldviews, especially when it comes to relics. The dogs would prefer to keep such artifacts locked in museums, while to us they are meant to be used against the Unseen, even if the relic is lost or damaged as a result. Additionally, dogs' loyalty to their birth families makes little sense to cats. For us, loyalty is earned rather than freely given, and that type of unquestioning devotion speaks of vulnerabilities waiting to be exploited. Some dogs do have homes in the monarchies, though they mostly live in the worse-off parts of our cities and stick to low-paying jobs.

Ultimately, cats and dogs have much to learn from one another, and though we have our occasional ideological disagreements, we also recognize that we have a common enemy in the Unseen.

RODENTS, BADGERS, AND LIZARDS

Hundreds of years ago, the monarchies reached out to the rats and mice, offering them a place in our society. They refused, being unnecessarily suspicious of cats, and kept to their own city — which fell to ruin, or was overrun by monsters, or was lost due to any number of other rumors the rodents whisper amongst themselves. Whatever the cause, those who didn't

make their homes in caves and ruins decided to live in the monarchies after all, burrowing in among our trash and calling it good. They look at cats as though we're always plotting to eat them; likewise, cats keep a close eye on the rodents, as they run their criminal enterprises right under our noses. Put simply, rats and mice are tolerated but never trusted.

I've spoken to several mice who were quite kind, if a bit timid. They mentioned a faction that frightens even the most hardened of them, called the Cult of Lobo Tor, whose atrocities give the rest of their kind a bad name. Nuance to everything, I suppose.

Badgers have neither kingdoms nor monarchies, and any settlements they control have been stolen from someone else. Even, on occasion, from other bands of badgers. As long as they continue looking out only for their immediate companions, they'll never build anything to rival the glory of the monarchies. However, rumors speak of a badger king who is attempting to unite them under his banner.

I've seen the destruction badgers can wreak. If this Kibu the Red exists, and if he succeeds in wrangling them into one big army, the monarchies and Pugmire would be wise to band together to oppose them.

Lizards are perhaps the most inscrutable of the other species. They come from far away, set up their tents and trade, then all too soon pack up and move on to the next place. They bring valuable supplies into the monarchies and are excellent sources of information, but they reveal very little about themselves. Some even seem to travel with birds — a rare sight in the monarchies, as the birds seem to instinctively hate and fear us.

MONSTERS AND THE UNSEEN

Even a group of rabid badgers can be reasoned with. Not so the monsters and the Unseen. Monsters live in the wild places, in unexplored or rarely traveled lands, and seek only to destroy whatever comes their way. They exist in all shapes and sizes, and the vilest of them all are the Unseen.

Agreed.

Agreed.



You, our brave allies in Pugmire, need no introduction to the Unseen. Far from living in remote places, where we might never have to encounter them, these demons infiltrate our cities and attack our people in their very homes. They are invisible, and nearly undetectable until they've already begun wreaking their havoc. We have seen things done by the Unseen that are worse than anything we witnessed during the war.

No matter our other differences, we are certain both the dogs of Pugmire and the cats of the Monarchies of Mau can agree we have a common enemy in the Unseen. The Old Ones charged both our species with protecting the world from their evil, each of us to our strengths.

It is our sincere belief that this is the ground upon which we can build and fortify our alliance. We must come together to uphold the faith the Old Ones placed in us, to vanquish that enemy that would destroy us from without, and which attempts to turn us against one another and destroy ourselves from within. Now is the time for all good dogs and all brave cats to trust our instincts, defend our homes, and pounce upon the minions of the Unseen.

Sincerely,

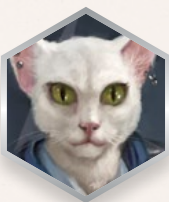
The Dynasts of the Ruling Council of the Monarchies of Mau

(signatures to be added)



CHAPTER TWO: AN EXCELLENT CAT

Before exploring the world of *Monarchies of Mau*, you need a cat character. You can make your own character, or take on the role of one of the ready-to-play characters. This chapter details both options.



Some of you are new to our world, some lack time to craft a new character, and others just want an excuse to pounce right into the thick of it. If you want to get straight into a game, pick one of the cats from this chapter, copy the information you need, and get playing! You can even portray me, if you like!

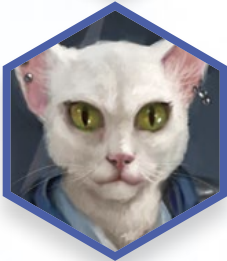


Not to downplay Blayze's kind offer, but consider what an excellent, independently minded cat you could create, were you to follow my step-by-step guide starting on p. 46. Just a thought for you to consider.

READY-TO-PLAY CHARACTERS

If you aim to initiate a new story starring cats ready for adventure, the following twelve pages offer you a diverse range of first-level characters to help get you started. You will need to choose the character who presents the greatest appeal to you as a player, and transcribe the character's statistics onto a new character sheet. Traits presented in italics are a cat's primary abilities (see p. 72). Cats have different speeds depending on whether they're moving around on two legs or four, with the figure on the left side of the slash as two-legged speed, and the figure on the right being four-legged speed (p. 94). All cats possess secrets, with those listed on the sample characters detailed later in the chapter (starting on p. 76).

Though we present these characters as ready to play, you are free to change any part of your chosen cat's history, roleplay tips, description, or personality. If you decide any equipment needs replacing with something more appropriate to your vision for the character, or you want to adjust any ability values by 1 in either direction (reducing one to increase another), check with your Guide to make sure she's happy with any adjustments. While the six characters complement each other in ability, there is nothing preventing multiple players in your group choosing the same character as a template, and making small adjustments to make each cat distinct.





NERMA VON KORAT



Level: 1

Calling: Champion

House: Korat

Background: Soldier

Proficiency Bonus: +2

Stamina Dice: 1d10

Stamina Points: 12

Defense: 16

Initiative: +1

Speed: 25/30

Spell Slots: 0

Abilities: Strength +3 (17), Dexterity +1 (13), Constitution +2 (14), Intelligence -1 (8), Wisdom +0 (10), Charisma +1 (12)

Skills: Intimidate, Sense Motive, Survive, Traverse

Secrets: Simple Weapon Aptitude, Martial Weapon Aptitude, Light Armor Aptitude, Medium Armor Aptitude, Heavy Armor Aptitude, Shield Aptitude, Fighting Style: Two-Weapon Fighting Style, House Upbringing (Korat), Brute Strength

History: Nerma has always been a cat held back by his rage. It was only through the love of his mother that he found some peace and success in the Korat army. When his mother died, he lashed out at everyone around him. Thus, he was stripped of his title as Commander and kicked out of his military unit. Now he wanders, selling his sword to anyone willing to pay his price and tolerate his temper. It's only through his purple keepsake, made for him by his mother, that he can find any solace.

Roleplay Tips: A cat of few words, and those he does speak aren't nice. Seeks combat as an outlet for the anger always bubbling deep inside. Has a secret soft spot for the weak and defenseless. Doesn't get along with Halo, but appreciates Malcolm's soothing words.

Description: Tall and solid with muscle, Nerma is the largest of the iconic cats, and presents an intimidating figure. His light gray fur is marked with dark stripes and spots and a soft patch of brown on the bridge of his nose. Brilliant blue

eyes take in the world around him with a suspicious gaze. He wears a suit of lacquered dark red armor with a black cloak.

PERSONALITY TRAITS

Ideal: What is most important to me is protecting the weak.

Mystery: No one knows about my love for my dead mother.

Flaw: No matter what, I just can't control my temper.

RUCKSACK

Two scimitars (finesse, light, 1d6 slashing), lacquered splint mail, gloves, torches, rations, 50 feet of rope, purple keepsake from his mother, insignia of rank, a set of common clothes, a bejeweled eye-shaped brooch, and a belt pouch containing a few plastic coins.





MALCOLM MAINCOON VON CYMRIC



Level: 1

Calling: Minister

House: Cymric

Background: Scholar

Proficiency Bonus: +2

Stamina Dice: 1d6

Stamina Points: 8

Defense: 10

Initiative: -1

Speed: 30/35

Spell Slots: 4

Abilities: Strength +1 (12), Dexterity -1 (8), Constitution +2 (14), Intelligence +1 (13), Wisdom +0 (12), Charisma +3 (17)

Skills: Know Arcana, Know History, Persuade, Sense Motive

Secrets: Simple Weapon Aptitude, Light Armor Aptitude, Given the Voice, House Upbringing (Cymric), Immaculate Grooming

Spells: Command, Thaumaturgy, Vicious Mockery, Charm Person, Healing Word

History: Malcolm Maincoon was always considered to be too dour by his brothers and sisters in House Cymric. No matter how eloquent and passionate his speeches, they would always chide him: "You look so serious!" As such, despite his charm, he gravitated to books and academic study. There he discovered his passion for ancient knowledge. In seeking more obscure tomes and rituals, Malcolm found his serious but diplomatic nature to be a positive boon, and from there he became a successful minister. His respect in the monarchies has dramatically increased, but many cats still consider him to be just a little too serious.

Roleplay Tips: Although Malcolm has a serious face, he's quite personable and friendly. He has a habit of overexplaining at times, worrying more about being complete than succinct. Once he gets on a roll, it's hard not to get absorbed by his passionate speeches on the value of the Precepts of Mau. Gets along with Blayze, and works with Nerma on his temper.

Description: A fluffy cat with brown, black, and white fur, and a serious face. His fur occasionally sticks out at strange angles from his lavish black and green robes, and he has a surprising number of items stashed in his overly large sleeves. He also carries a similarly extravagant satchel.

PERSONALITY TRAITS

Ideal: What is most important to me is the unity of the monarchies.

Mystery: No one knows about my fun-loving side.

Flaw: No matter what, I just can't be succinct.

RUCKSACK

Mace (1d6 bludgeoning), leather robes, candles, set of formal clothing, rations, symbol of House Cymric, a magnifying glass, a set of common clothes, a locket containing fur from a famed heroic cat, and a belt pouch containing a few plastic coins.



SW



MONIFA MAU VON MAU



Level: 1

Calling: Tracker

House: Mau

Background: Noble

Proficiency Bonus: +2

Stamina Dice: 1d10

Stamina Points: 11

Defense: 15

Initiative: +2

Speed: 30/35

Spell Slots: 0

Abilities: Strength +0 (10), Dexterity +2 (15), Constitution +1 (13), Intelligence -1 (8), Wisdom +3 (16), Charisma +1 (12)

Skills: Handle Animal, Persuade, Sense Motive, Survive

Secrets: Simple Weapon Aptitude, Martial Weapon Aptitude, Light Armor Aptitude, Medium Armor Aptitude, Shield Aptitude, Smite, House Upbringing (Mau), Keen Observer

History: Monifa's father learned the nuances of diplomacy and politics, and Monifa idolized him. When Monifa's father died under mysterious circumstances, she was heartbroken, but she expected that she would take on her father's role. However, she learned that her father was murdered, and by a cat who had been possessed by one of the demons of the Unseen. At that point, she wanted nothing more than to destroy all the monsters that threatened her family. She spent nearly every plastic coin of her inheritance learning from old trackers and hunters across the land, as well as buying the best equipment she could. And now, she's ready to take the fight back to the demons.

Roleplay Tips: Polite, cordial, and diplomatic, Monifa uses her knowledge of courtly etiquette to cover her constant desire for revenge against the Unseen. Although woefully inexperienced as a tracker, she is willing to do whatever it takes to succeed. She understands Nerma's rage in a way few other cats do, and respects Blayze as a social peer (even if the footpad often discards her noble trappings).

Description: She looks like a hunter with far too much wealth. All her clothing is in the Mau house colors of black and yellow, although she uses a green and brown cloak to cover herself. Her bow looks ornate, and her armor is intricate leather. Her fur is a light orange color with darker orange stripes.

PERSONALITY TRAITS

Ideal: What is most important to me is protecting cats from the Unseen.

Mystery: No one knows about the truth behind my father's murder.

Flaw: No matter what, I just can't stop hunting demons.

RUCKSACK

Longbow (ammunition, ranged 150/600, two-pawed, 1d8 piercing), shortsword (finesse, light, 1d6 piercing), spare ammunition, hard leather armor, torches, rations, a signet ring, a set of fine clothes, a scroll proclaiming deed to a foreign castle, and a purse containing many plastic coins.





BLAYZE REX VON REX



Level: 1

Calling: Footpad

House: Rex

Background: Noble

Proficiency Bonus: +2

Stamina Dice: 1d8

Stamina Points: 7

Defense: 14

Initiative: +3

Speed: 30/35

Spell Slots: 0

Abilities: Strength +0 (10), *Dexterity* +3 (17), Constitution –1 (8), *Intelligence* +2 (14), Wisdom +1 (12), Charisma +1 (13)

Skills: Balance, Bluff, Persuade, Steal

Secrets: Simple Weapon Aptitude, Martial Weapon Aptitude, Light Armor Aptitude, Expertise (Steal, Persuade), Cat of the World (Noble), Perfect Balance

History: You would never know it, but Blayze is nobility. Her family were the founders of the monarchy of Rex centuries ago, and they are very proud of their lineage, even if the other houses see them as little more than dog sympathizers. As such, despite Blayze's pedigree, her family doesn't care much about etiquette and finery, which suits Blayze just fine. As a young kitten, she was prone to sneaking out of the house and running with the local street cats. Now as a full-grown cat, she uses her street smarts and noble pull in equal measure to make the lives of the cats around her a little better. Plus, she gets a thrill out of solving problems, whether it's a difficult lock or crafting an escape plan from a dull party.

Roleplay Tips: Blayze is quick-witted, endlessly cracking jokes and unleashing pranks on her fellow travelers. Even during fights, she's prone to making quips while tossing daggers or shooting a crossbow. Enjoys ribbing Malcolm, and appreciates Monifa's straight talk.

Description: Blayze has large eyes and ears that dominate her small face and frame. Her

fur is completely white. She has well-tailored black leather armor covered in pockets, small bags, and sheaths, but small bits of blue peek out in various parts of her outfit.

PERSONALITY TRAITS

Ideal: What is most important to me is the thrill of solving a problem.

Mystery: No one knows about my craving for danger.

Flaw: No matter what, I just can't intimidate people.

RUCKSACK

Dagger (finesse, light, thrown 20/60, 1d4 piercing damage), small crossbow (ammunition, ranged 80/320, loading, 1d8 piercing damage), leather armor, a hooded lantern, rations, 50 feet of rope, a set of footpad's tools, a signet ring, a set of fine clothes, an ornate box containing a flea circus, and a purse containing many plastic coins.



SW



HALO VON SIBERIAN



Level: 1

Calling: Wanderer

House: Siberian

Background: Criminal

Proficiency Bonus: +2

Stamina Dice: 1d8

Stamina Points: 11

Defense: 11

Initiative: +1

Speed: 30/35

Spell Slots: 0

Abilities: *Strength* +2 (15), *Dexterity* +1 (13), *Constitution* +3 (16), *Intelligence* +0 (10), *Wisdom* +1 (12), *Charisma* -1 (8)

Skills: Balance, Sneak, Survive, Traverse

Secrets: Simple Weapon Aptitude, Martial Weapon Aptitude, Light Armor Aptitude, Martial Arts, Cat of the World (Criminal), Hardy Constitution

History: At one time, the name “Halo” was feared throughout House Siberian. She was a skilled fighter with a calculating mind, and she frequently traveled outside the monarchies to attack those enemies that stood in the way of Siberian’s goals. However, one night she made a mistake. An attempt to rough up a particularly stubborn Bulldog left Halo badly injured. It was only through the benevolence of a religious cat living in Pugmire that Halo survived. Since then, she has devoted her life to understanding the Old Ones and why she was spared from a cold and miserable death.

Roleplay Tips: Halo is a calm and composed cat with kind eyes. Though Halo has put her dark past behind her, she’s never forgotten how to do what she used to do. If anyone she protects is threatened, the kindness in her eyes is replaced with a cold steel that sends a chill down the spine of even the most hardened cat. Nerma’s volatile temper consistently rubs Halo the wrong way.

Description: Gray and brown mottled fur, with greenish-yellow eyes. Wears simple black and purple pants with a matching vest (allowing her to fight more easily with punches and kicks). She has an intricate backpack with lots of small pieces of equipment carefully packed and attached.

PERSONALITY TRAITS

Ideal: What is most important to me is understanding the Old Ones.

Mystery: No one knows about my violent past.

Flaw: No matter what, I just can’t watch a defenseless cat be threatened.

RUCKSACK

Sickle (light, 1d4 slashing), a shovel, torches, rations, a sitar (stringed instrument), a crowbar, a set of common clothes, a wanted poster bearing the face of the Bulldog who beat her, and a belt pouch containing a few plastic coins.





SABIAN SPHYNX VON ANGORA



Level: 1

Calling: Mancer

House: Angora

Background: Scholar

Proficiency Bonus: +2

Stamina Dice: 1d6

Stamina Points: 6

Defense: 12

Initiative: +1

Speed: 30/35

Spell Slots: 2

Abilities: Strength -1 (8), Dexterity +1 (12), Constitution +0 (10) *Intelligence* +3 (17), *Wisdom* +2 (14), *Charisma* +1 (13)

Skills: Know Arcana, Know Culture, Know History, Search

Secrets: Simple Weapon Aptitude, Light Armor Aptitude, Mancy, House Upbringing (Angora), Voracious Learner

Spells: Chill Touch, Eldritch Blast, Prestidigitation, False Life, Unnatural Rebuke

History: Sabian is the victim of stereotyping. The Sphynx family have been mancercers for generations, and it was expected that he would follow in their footsteps. He even found that he had an aptitude for magic. However, Sabian never embraced his family's reputation for being conniving, manipulative masters of the dark arts. Instead, Sabian is a quiet but eager student, content to help others while also increasing his own repertoire of knowledge. Others treat him as some kind of dark magician, when he'd really rather just curl up with a book and a nice cup of tea.

Roleplay Tips: Quiet and meek, Sabian prefers the company of scrolls and lab equipment to other people. If he is asked about a pet topic of study, however, he can become quite loquacious, but otherwise his shrinking silence is often mistaken for menacing looming. He likes the company of Malcolm and Halo, as they make him feel social even when he's not talking.

Description: With thin gray fur, Sabian is often cold, even in the most tropical of climates.

He is rarely seen without his white and black robes, his paws hidden in the large sleeves. His scrawny frame isn't much for carrying heavy objects, beyond the occasional thick tome of spells.

PERSONALITY TRAITS

Ideal: What is most important to me is learning as much as I can.

Mystery: No one knows about how much I want to help others.

Flaw: No matter what, I just can't manipulate people.

RUCKSACK

Dagger (finesse, light, thrown 20/60, 1d4 piercing), padded robes, one bone focus (rat skull on a chain), a bottle of ink, an ink pen, a few sheets of parchment, a small collection of books, a magnifying glass, a set of common clothes, a flask of wine that refills itself every night, and a belt pouch containing a few plastic coins.



SW

MAKING YOUR CAT

Building a character for *Monarchies of Mau* involves making a series of choices, a little bit of math, and discussion with the players or Guide. Each choice makes your character distinct. You can even form the basis of your character from a cat you know in real life! The one who lives with you, the stray who comes in every night for company, or the one you grew up with are all excellent baselines for characters. Every cat has a personality, and drawing from experience is always a fine place to start. Here are all the steps for the process of creating a character:

1. (below) Choose a **calling**.
2. (p. 60) Choose a **house** (as well as a family, if you like).
3. (p. 69) Choose a **background**.
4. (p. 71) Assign **ability scores**, adjust them based on house, and mark **primary abilities**.
5. (p. 71) Calculate **ability modifiers**, **stamina dice**, **stamina points**, and **proficiency bonus**.
6. (p. 74) Write down four **skills**, based on background (two) and calling (two).
7. (p. 76) Write down all your **secrets**, based on calling (pp. 78-86) and house (pp. 86-91).
- 7a. (p. 113) If your cat knows how to cast magic, choose magic **spells** as well.
8. (p. 91) Write down all equipment in your **rucksack**, based on calling and background.
9. (p. 94) Calculate **defense**, **initiative**, and **speed**.
10. (p. 94) Choose three **personality traits**.
11. (p. 95) Name your cat and write her story.

CALLINGS

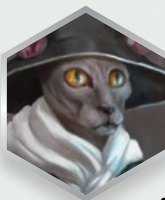
Adventuring cats fall into one of several *callings*, reflecting their knowledge and specialties within the group of heroic companions, as well as in cat society. A calling helps define a cat's role in life, whether wielding a blade in defense of friends and family, casting bewitching magical spells, or tracking creatures, threats, and treasures in the wild areas outside the kingdom. A cat of any house and background can choose to follow any calling.

Callings contain the following information, some of which will impact later steps in making your cat:

Typical cat: What a typical cat of this calling looks and acts like, and the families that commonly produce cats of this vocation.

View on the Precepts: How the average cat of this calling interprets the Precepts of Mau. Cats are fiercely independent and will possess their own opinions, but cats of the same calling often share views.

View on other callings: What the typical cat of this calling thinks of her peers from other callings. As with the Precepts, no cat is likely to share all views with her fellows of the same calling.



It may seem like a lot of information, but that's why we break it down step by step. All you really need to do right now is flip through the callings and pick the one that appeals the most to you. Don't worry about anything beyond the calling's "character creation" sub-header until everyone playing has selected a preference.

Six cats: The kinds of cats that gravitate to this calling. If you like, you can roll 1d6 and pick one of the examples from the list.

Stamina dice: What stamina dice the calling uses (p. 73). A cat gets a number of these dice equal to her level.

Stamina points: How many stamina points (p. 72) the cat receives each level.

Primary abilities: Which two ability scores the secrets for this calling are generally based on (p. 72). These are also the abilities to which you add your cat's proficiency bonus for saving throws (p. 97).

Skills: A list of skills, from which your cat can choose two (p. 74).

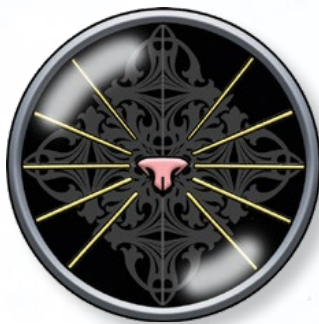
Rucksack: The contents of your cat's starting rucksack. Equipment is adjustable with your Guide's permission. Depending on calling, you may have an option of which equipment to choose.

Unusual circumstances: One item in the rucksack is listed as having been acquired under "unusual circumstances." These circumstances can be anything you want, but we offer six ideas to get you started.

First secrets: The secrets you start with at first level (p. 78).



CHAMPIONS



FOOTPADS



MANCERS



MINISTERS



TRACKERS



WANDERERS



Champions



"I've been looking for a new dance partner, and it seems I've found one! Raise your sword!"

– Blacky von Rex II

Cats fight for noble reasons as often as they do for the sake of reputation. Champions run the gamut between defenders of the kingdom and paragons of moral causes, to braggart swashbucklers and rough-and-tumble brawlers. Champions keep the peace and wage war. Few bands of adventuring cats will tackle a nest of the Unseen without a champion among them, to lead the charge and slay with pride.

Champions are diverse in their specializations, some opting for the traditional sword and shield, others donning heavy armor of thick metal, or wielding an exotic weapon unfamiliar to her opponents. Mau's champions enjoy garnering reputations for heroic (and occasionally dastardly) deeds, acquiring nicknames such as "the Mighty," "Bronze Flail," or "the Lion-Hearted." To be the best cats they can be, many champions follow a code calling them to challenge increasingly dangerous opponents, acquire trophies or evidence of the battle, and present them at clubs comprising the monarchies' most valiant cats.

Some champions hold the Precepts and the goals of the nation close to their hearts, while others care only about treasure or glory, but all confront danger head on. House Cymric is noted for creating talented military leaders, while House Korat is known for their desire for a good fight. Champions are as inclined to stoically beat down an opponent as duel with words, or combine the two by making a witty remark with every cut of the sword. Champions known for their humor and honor receive high regard from other cats. It is one thing to cut an opponent down. It is quite another to do so with a pun, and to then help him back to his feet, dusting him off and providing him a valuable lesson.

Typical champion: The single unifying ideal in the life of all champions is the principle of honorable defeat. Champions often fight to the last, whether defending a loved one or a castle, or seeking to claim a bag of plastic. Yet, if brought to one knee, champions know the offer of surrender must be made. Champions who disregard this ideal find little respect or warmth from fellow cats. While



Six Champions

1. An anonymous tank of a cat, clad in black, thick-plated armor, marked only with a house sigil.
2. A dashing cat with a winning smile, as skilled with his silver tongue as with his hammer.
3. A revolutionary cat prepared to lead with a fight and talk later.
4. A wandering cat of a fallen family, known for his amazing sword-fighting skills.
5. A proud cat who never backs down from a challenge, even when defeat is inevitable.
6. A rusty tutor, skilled in teaching archery, but new to shooting an arrow in the heat of battle.

most champions prefer fighting paw-to-paw, a rising movement of cats with bows call the honorable defeat principle into question. How does an opponent struck with an arrow hundreds of meters away yield? For this reason, some champions spurn the use of ranged weaponry as cowardly. Champions would rather charge into battle with a blade or mace held aloft, ready wit on their lips and glory on their minds.

View on the Precepts of Mau: Champions closely follow the Precepts of Mau, with the common exception of not always following their instincts. If every champion acted with her gut, there would be considerably more unwarranted violence within the monarchies. Cats are grateful for the champions who restrict combat to appropriate times and places. Cats rely on champions to lead the battle against the Unseen and maintain loyalty to their causes at all times. Importantly, even vagabond cats respect honest duels, at least when an audience is present. To many champions, this Precept dominates all others.

View on other callings:

- **Footpads:** I appreciate their liteness and grace, but think what they could achieve with a little more pride.
- **Mancers:** I leave these cats to their books, and they leave me to my fights. It's an equitable relationship.
- **Ministers:** Without ministers, champions would live to fight once, and then die of an infected wound. They have my respect.
- **Trackers:** Do not downplay their role. A tracker can locate Unseen like *that*.
- **Wanderers:** I envy their freedom, but pity their lack of honor. I would not fall to one knee before one and hope to keep my head.

CHARACTER CREATION

Stamina dice: d10 per level

Stamina points: 10 + Constitution modifier per level

Primary abilities: Charisma and Strength

Skills: Choose two from Balance, Handle Animal, Intimidate, Notice, Persuade, Search, Sense Motive, Survive, and Traverse.

Rucksack: One melee weapon and a shield *or* two melee weapons and no shield, one suit of armor, gloves, torches, rations, and 50 feet of rope. The weapon(s) or the armor were acquired under unusual circumstances.

Unusual Circumstances

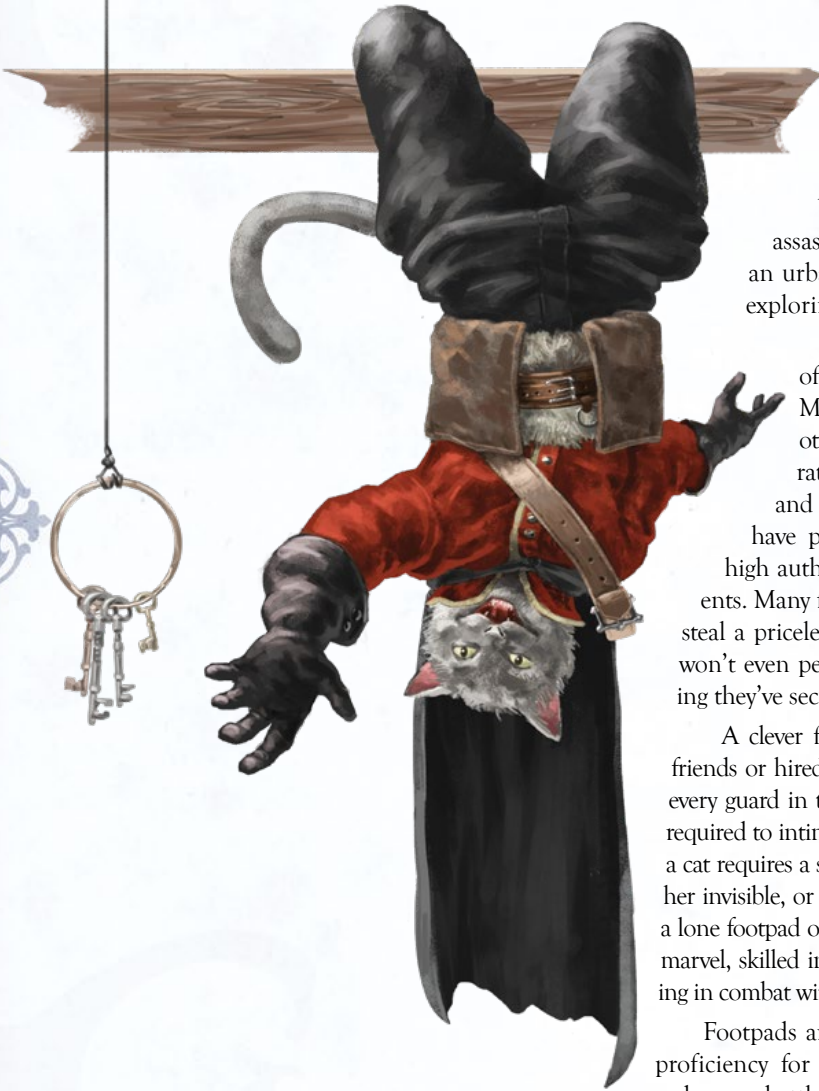
1. Bestowed upon you by your childhood hero.
2. Found on the banks of a raging river, half buried in silt.
3. Discovered clutched in the paw of a mysterious, deceased traveler from far away.
4. Purchased at a high price from an extravagant merchant.
5. Salvaged from the ruins of a rat's wooden castle.
6. Left to you by an ancestor you never met.

First secrets: Simple Weapon Aptitude (p. 77), Martial Weapon Aptitude (p. 77), Light Armor Aptitude (p. 77), Medium Armor Aptitude (p. 77), Heavy Armor Aptitude (p. 78), Shield Aptitude (p. 78), and choose one from either Barbed Heckle (p. 78) or Fighting Style (p. 79).

FOOTPADS

*"I swear on my house's honor that my paw was never in your pocket.
What do you mean, 'which house?'"*

– Kyra Stryka von Korat



Some societies see the footpad as an unwelcome rogue, thieving from her betters and becoming rich on larceny. In cat culture, the footpad takes on a role of greater reverence. Acrobats and scouts, investigators and assassins, and yes, thieves, the footpad is an urban hunter recruited for delving and exploring where other cats fear to tread.

Footpads gleefully jump the lines of legality within the Monarchies of Mau. Some identify as privateers while others take the role of city-dwelling pirates. They all perform deceitful acts, and stealing is commonplace, but some have powerful masters or a writ from on high authorizing the use of their specialist talents. Many footpads will break into a mansion to steal a priceless artifact for the thrill of it. Others won't even peer through a keyhole without knowing they've secured protection from repercussions.

A clever footpad always surrounds herself with friends or hired help. As exciting as it is to run from every guard in the city, sometimes the right muscle is required to intimidate a soldier into standing down, or a cat requires a spell to increase stealth abilities, render her invisible, or cause a distraction. On the other paw, a lone footpad often focuses on becoming an acrobatic marvel, skilled in dancing away from danger, or engaging in combat with flair.

Footpads are no strangers to a fight, and their proficiency for light weapons, archery, and speed makes any battle a flashy affair, with a bow to an applauding audience. For all their attempts at discretion, cats of the footpad calling are as prone to preening

and pride as any of their peers.

The noble houses often recruit footpads to act as private investigators and trap locators. These cats explore abandoned castles and palaces, rendering them safe before one of the houses takes over and commences renovation. They also seek out rival footpads, threats of assassination against their employers, and act as informal bodyguards.

Six Footpads

1. A rapier-wielding, domino-mask-wearing cad who laughs with every somersault.
2. A gruff, grizzled cat who's seen too many crimes go unsolved.
3. An honored guild cat, respected by her peers in the shadowy organization.
4. A rogue, vicious cat, who cares little for those from whom he steals.
5. An obsessive cat known for documenting traps and ancient mechanisms.
6. A dancer turned footpad, who makes every act an exceptional performance.

Typical footpad: Most footpads emphasize speed, flexibility, and cunning. Few dress garishly or announce their calling in public, as civilian cats identify most footpads as common thieves, ignorant of their other skills. Footpads favor light weapons, and when they wear armor they tend toward leathers and other light material. Footpads come from many walks of life, the gentlecat burglar as common as the lower-class mugger, but most seek patronage from one of the major guilds in the monarchies. Footpads know solitary jobs are more lucrative, but few crave the danger to a fatal degree.

View on the Precepts of Mau: Footpads encourage a healthy skepticism toward the Precepts, except for the instruction to trust their instincts. Many a footpad caught in a bind, whether socially ensnared or physically restrained, has had to go with her gut to escape the situation. Footpads train their bodies to slip into impossibly tight crawlspaces, flee across rooftops from pursuing dogs, and perform amazing feats of agility, making their instincts often more important than tactical planning. Footpads laugh at the idea of engaging in a duel, honest or otherwise, but many guilds encourage their members to only target the possessions of worthy targets.

View on other callings:

- **Champions:** From how many champions have I run...? I wouldn't want a straight fight with one, that's for sure.
- **Mancers:** They pay me well to uncover, unlock, and make safe their precious ruins, so they can then walk in unimpeded.
- **Ministers:** They judge us, but when they want some new artifact, they somehow know how to contact the guild.
- **Trackers:** They do out there what we do in the city. For that they have my respect.

- **Wanderers:** Many a time have I wanted to take to the road without encumbrment. They are braver than I.

CHARACTER CREATION

Stamina dice: d8 per level

Stamina points: 8 + Constitution modifier per level

Primary abilities: Dexterity and Intelligence

Skills: Choose two from Balance, Bluff, Notice, Perform, Persuade, Search, Sense Motive, Sneak, Steal, and Traverse.

Rucksack: One simple melee weapon, one simple ranged weapon, one set of light armor, a hooded lantern, rations, 50 feet of rope, a set of footpad's tools, and an item of great financial value gained under unusual circumstances.

Unusual Circumstances

1. Stolen from the wealthiest cat in the city.
2. Retrieved from a chest housing three traps coated in lethal poison.
3. Found hanging from a chain over a pit rumored to be bottomless.
4. Won from a fellow footpad in a contest of wits.
5. Pilfered from a drunk dog's bag.
6. Dug up from the earth after following a crude treasure map.

First secrets: Simple Weapon Aptitude (p. 77), Martial Weapon Aptitude (p. 77), Light Armor Aptitude (p. 77), and choose one from either Expertise (p. 80) or Precise Attack (p. 81).



MANCERS



*“The last cat to lay a paw on me without my express permission lost her paw,
and all her fur as well.”*

– Aeris von Angora

Cats born both low and high respect the study of magical arts. The undeniable presence of magic in the world enralls many cats, though few who explore mysticism come away with full understanding. Those who do commonly earn the epithet of mancer, derived from the common suffix applied by cats to wielders of the magical arts, such as necromancers, pyromancers, and geomancers. Though death, preservation, and life-giving magic sees a great focus within the Monarchies of Mau, mancers may wield power well beyond the animation of necrotic flesh.

Mancers dedicate their lives to understanding their fascinating world. They delve into forgotten structures and pore over enigmatic texts and relics, hoping to unlock answers and unleash vast knowledge. Though some mancers seek power for power’s sake, others attempt to abide by legal decrees and aim to serve the kingdom by chronicling new discoveries, presenting them to the nobility, and seeking additional funding for further adventures. Mancers are more drawn to the hunt for new mysteries than solving them, leaving collections of artifacts and devices to museums and libraries as they search the world.

Mancers believe life’s meaning is discernible through study, experience, and analysis of the Old Ones’ ways. Their mantra is “constant intellectual betterment,” though not every mancer practices what he preaches. Some recklessly pursue forbidden knowledge to the point of danger and madness. The unofficial mancer line speaks against the irresponsible pursuit of magics under the Unseen’s guard, or in trap-laced crypts, but the excitement of exploration is enough to persuade most mancers to try their paw at a new mystery.

Typical mancer: Mancers spend little time focusing on physical exercise or training with a sword, favoring the pen and the page to the spilling of blood. For this reason, their constitution demands they wrap in many layers, to conceal their spindly limbs. Mancers often bundle into blankets, but within that cocoon of warmth lies a calculating mastermind. Few mancers are ashamed of their cause, and will take to both peasant and noble classes to teach mysticism to whomever might show genuine interest.



Six Mancers

1. A mysterious cat, clad in a heavy cloak studded with jewels shaped like star formations.
2. An obsessive cat, who can recite the page number on which any magic enigma is stated.
3. A young, naïve cat, fresh from the city and desperate to make her mark on mysticism.
4. A disheveled and twitchy cat, once the subject of multiple reanimation attempts.
5. A strong, resolute cat, determined to raid ruins with tactical precision and no time-wasting.
6. A round cat, profuse with advice, who regales others with anecdotes of former mysteries.

View on the Precepts of Mau: Mancers harbor a pragmatic approach regarding the Precepts. They do not believe instinct requires advocating, when in their calling strategy and forethought often win the day. Mancers all agree cats should pounce on the Unseen, but what follows differs depending on the Unseen's ferocity and the coldness of the cats. Mancers have been known to attempt to dissect the invisible Unseen, interrogate and question them, and even ambush them for study. Loyalty is a noble trait among mancers, who prefer to serve themselves but uphold the ideal that any form of magic must follow rules and a system. Mentors and apprentices form particularly tight bonds. Mancers do engage in honorable duels, but rarely with mundane weapons. An informal code states a powerful mancer may not subjugate a weaker one, especially in the realm of spell duels. Unless the mancers are evenly matched, other cats call it an ignoble duel.

View on other callings:

- **Champions:** Intensely useful where others are not. How many cats do you know who willingly embrace death?
- **Footpads:** Absolutely fine, if they're not raiding my study.
- **Ministers:** Even I see the need for faith, but I do feel its chief followers have better things to do than talk about it.
- **Trackers:** I would have never discovered that tomb without my tracker. A shame he didn't make it back.
- **Wanderers:** Their dedication to the self is admirable, if obsessive.

CHARACTER CREATION

Stamina dice: d6 per level

Stamina points: 6 + Constitution modifier per level

Primary abilities: Intelligence and Wisdom

Skills: Choose two from Heal, Know Arcana, Know Culture, Know History, Know Nature, Know Spirituality, Notice, Search, and Sense Motive.

Rucksack: One simple weapon, one set of light armor, one focus crafted from bone (acquired under unusual circumstances), a bottle of ink, an ink pen, a few sheets of parchment, and a small collection of books.

Unusual Circumstances

1. Extracted from inside a long-dead creature's skull.
2. Discovered tightly entwined in the branches of a sentient tree.
3. Procured from a mad cat who did not realize the item's worth.
4. Retrieved from a dark tomb, unsealed after centuries of stasis.
5. Borrowed from a friend who subsequently disappeared.
6. Gifted to you from the vault of one of the monarchies' noble houses.

First secrets: Simple Weapon Aptitude (p. 77), Light Armor Aptitude (p. 77), and choose one from either Good Memory (p. 81) or Mancy (p. 82).



MINISTERS



“My voice is a weapon as well as a balm. Push me to find out how painful my song can be.”

– Klara Resku von Shadow

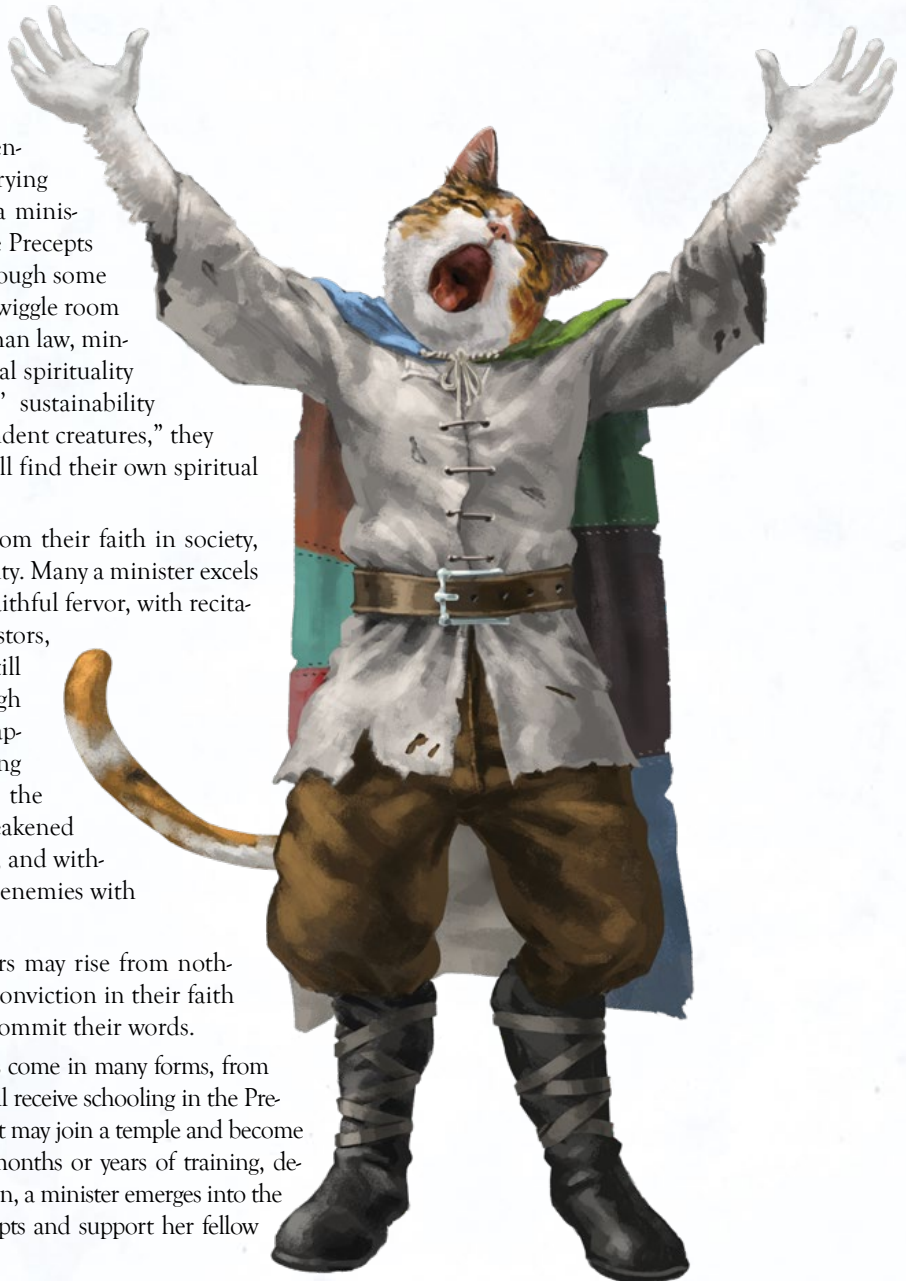
The ministers consider themselves the monarchies’ heart and voice, and it is a view most cats share. Medics, inspirations, philosophers, and bards, ministers fulfil many roles in cat society, acting both as ministers in a bureaucratic sense as a spiritual one. It is the power of their voices, words, and songs that often serves to soothe conflict between the Monarchies through diplomacy or raw magical power. Despite the reverence cats afford ministers, they need not be educated, noble, or possess raw talent: The ranks of ministers support their own, elevating each other to communal greatness.

Ministers guard the hearts and souls of their brethren. They maintain and enforce the Precepts of Mau to varying degrees of orthodoxy. When a minister first accepts the calling, the Precepts become their life’s mission, though some cats give younger peers a little wiggle room from strict judgement. More than law, ministers believe each cat’s personal spirituality is critical to the monarchies’ sustainability and growth. “Cats are independent creatures,” they say, “and we must help them all find their own spiritual journey.”

Ministers derive power from their faith in society, and the study of their spirituality. Many a minister excels at whipping up a crowd into faithful fervor, with recitation of the deeds of their ancestors, who some ministers believe still interact with the world through their descendants. They also appear within bands of traveling cats, for no other calling has the presence of voice to rally a weakened group, tend to wounds so ably, and withstand the slings and arrows of enemies with such fortitude.

Truly egalitarian, ministers may rise from nothing to prominence, based on conviction in their faith and the zeal with which they commit their words.

Typical minister: Ministers come in many forms, from multiple lifestyles, though they all receive schooling in the Precepts of Mau. From any age, a cat may join a temple and become a novice minister, and after months or years of training, depending on the cat’s conviction, a minister emerges into the world to spread the Precepts and support her fellow



Six Ministers

1. A quietly philosophical cat, always available to offer sage wisdom.
2. An evangelical, crowd-pleasing cat, with a sing-song voice and dedicated following.
3. A vivacious, hard-drinking cat, known for holding court in the tavern.
4. An enthusiastic, scholarly cat, dedicated to cataloguing every weird event she encounters.
5. A manipulative cat, whose words cut sharper than any sword.
6. A jovial cat with time for every party, and an answer to every question.

cats in the ways of her ancestors. Ministers rarely engage directly in combat, preferring to negotiate peace or deeper understanding of the present conflict. Ministers will often display their belief by taking several blows from an opponent, responding only with words. Although ministers are not pacifists, they view combat as wasteful.

View on the Precepts of Mau: Ministers live and die for the Precepts. Contrary to many cats' beliefs, ministers are not all fanatics, and most demonstrate their reasoning capabilities. Crimes against the Precepts test this ability to reason, forcing ministers into damning polemics when another cat tricks an opponent in a duel, or displays disloyalty. In all things, ministers crave the order in which they receive education, and attempt to educate others. Freedom is fine, but the Precepts don't stop at the monarchies' walls.

View on other callings:

- **Champions:** I spend a lot of time tending to the wounds of champions, but they defend our people, making the sacrifice of my time and efforts worthwhile.
- **Footpads:** I have little time for thieves. They mock the Precepts.
- **Mancers:** The other side of our coin. Their intellect cannot be doubted, though they are in it for themselves.
- **Trackers:** We give voice to the wisdom they collect, though they could afford to be more faithful.
- **Wanderers:** To pursue life as an independent cat? It is a dream few follow for long.

CHARACTER CREATION

Stamina dice: d6 per level

Stamina points: 6 + Constitution modifier per level

Primary abilities: Charisma and Constitution

Skills: Choose two from Heal, Know Arcana, Know Culture, Know History, Know Spirituality, Persuade, and Sense Motive.

Rucksack: One simple melee weapon, one set of light armor, candles, set of formal clothing, rations, and a portable copy of the Precepts of Mau gained under unusual circumstances.

Unusual Circumstances

1. Found abandoned on your doorstep one morning.
2. Given to you by a penitent cat, who divested himself of all worldly goods.
3. Stolen from a dying cat, who begged you not to take it.
4. Taken as payment for defending a family from the Unseen.
5. Gifted to you by a friendly badger who counted you as a firm friend before disappearing.
6. Offered to you as a bribe to look the other way while a crime took place.

First secrets: Simple Weapon Aptitude (p. 77), Light Armor Aptitude (p. 77), and choose one from either Given the Voice (p. 82) or Invigoration (p. 83).



TRACKERS



*“There are worse things in those woods than dogs and badgers, little kitten.
Take this dagger and stay alert.”*

– Harald von Siberian

All trackers swear a single oath before undertaking their calling: Murder the Unseen. Murder is a strong word, unpleasant in many cats’ minds, but trackers like to remind themselves of their mission’s severity. Theirs is a life of kill or be killed, defending the wilds so other cats may travel safely. Unlike champions and footpads, they act with little flair and bear a reputation for grimness. Other cats rarely provide them with lavish ceremonies or special thanks. As many trackers say, “If we wanted applause, we’d do tricks like a dog.”

Most trackers live in the wilderness, hunting game and monsters alike. Some civilized cats consider them a little too wild, while some moggies consider them too tame. Many cats find their notoriously stoic demeanors difficult to penetrate, but trackers share a dark humor among their own, or their trusted companions. Careless behavior and revelry holds little appeal when a cat needs to stalk through the forests, but around the campfire trackers prove themselves to be the warmest, most generous of hosts.

Informally referred to as “outdoors cats,” trackers often experience claustrophobia in urban environments. Some claim their breeding pushes them to become trackers, that somewhere in their past they all descended from cats who had no choice but to pounce on rodents for food. Ministers take great interest in tracker ancestry.

Trackers commit heart and soul to the destruction of the Unseen, which to an entity appear malicious and destructive. For the safety of the monarchies, trackers do not retire until physically incapable of continuing the fight.

Typical tracker: Trackers rarely care for the appearances of their garb or equipment. Function trumps form, resulting in trackers with crude outfits, weapons, and lodgings. They harbor little pride, if their inventory works. Trackers emphasize physical hardiness and the personal study of nature. Though teachers exist within their number, most trackers encourage new members of the calling to spend time alone



Six Trackers

1. A disinherited cat, heir to a noble house but living in the wilds.
2. A rambunctious, playful cat, who loves the dirt of the trail over the grime of the city.
3. An animal-loving cat, who adores befriending and taming wild beasts.
4. A proud, deadly cat, determined to claim trophies from fallen prey.
5. A rogue cat, exiled to the wilderness for a crime she won't discuss.
6. A nature-worshipping cat, always in search of new herbs and poisons to harvest.

on the plains, swimming the rivers, or climbing the mountains to gain a sincere appreciation and understanding of what they must face. No book can achieve this so well. As hunters, trackers attempt to abide by the principle of swift, painless kills, even for the Unseen.

View on the Precepts of Mau: Trackers consider the Precepts of the utmost importance... to city cats. Yes, following instincts is valuable for a tracker, but she would do so without regard to the Precept. Combating the Unseen is a necessity to the tracker calling, so they nod their head when they hear a minister calling for this Precept's completion. Few trackers cling to the Precept of loyalty. Loyalty is a double-edged sword, as rulers can prove incompetent and companions mentally maligned by Unseen. Most trackers laugh at the idea of an honest duel, considering them a thing for nobles with too much time on their paws. In the wilderness, the only thing honest is the certainty of death for the unprepared.

View on other callings:

- **Champions:** Talk about using a warhammer to crack a nut...
- **Footpads:** I've had the pleasure to associate with many a footpad. I scare the beasts from the bushes, and the footpad brings it down with a well-placed arrow.
- **Mancers:** They hide behind me, which is just as well. I'd hate to cut through one.
- **Ministers:** They talk reality into new shapes. They control cats like a shepherd does sheep, for good or ill.
- **Wanderers:** Yes, it's very impressive to kick an Unseen. I fail to see why they wouldn't just stab the thing.

CHARACTER CREATION

Stamina dice: d10 per level

Stamina points: 10 + Constitution modifier per level

Primary abilities: Constitution and Wisdom

Skills: Choose two from Handle Animal, Know Culture, Know Nature, Notice, Search, Sense Motive, Sneak, Survive, and Traverse.

Rucksack: One ranged weapon, one melee weapon, spare ammunition, one set of light or medium armor, torches, rations, and a trophy gained under unusual circumstances.

Unusual Circumstances

1. Found at the opening to a cavernous tunnel leading underground.
2. Unearthed from the spot you decided to bury a dear friend.
3. Passed on from an elderly relative too ill to pursue the tracker calling.
4. Purchased from a wandering minstrel, who returned your money a day later.
5. Extracted from a sucking bog that seemed to want to claim this item.
6. Spat out by one of the Old Ones' machines before it blew up.

First secrets: Simple Weapon Aptitude (p. 77), Martial Weapon Aptitude (p. 77), Light Armor Aptitude (p. 77), Medium Armor Aptitude (p. 77), Shield Aptitude (p. 78), and choose one from either Smite (p. 84) or Weapon to Paw (p. 85).



WANDERERS



"I need no sword, no shield, no bolts of energy. My body is all the weapon I need."

Virgil von Mau

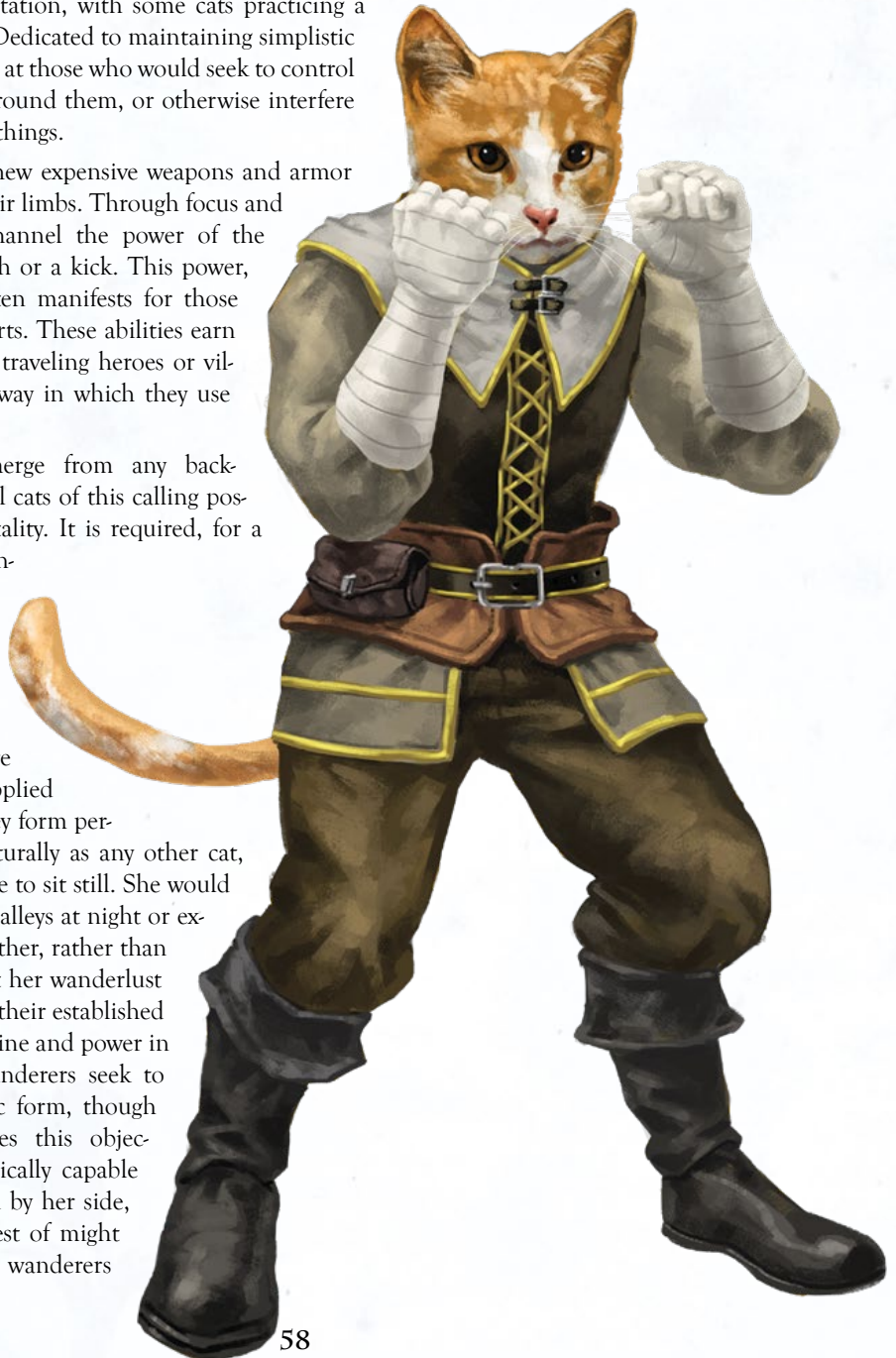
Some cats have abandoned the monarchies to focus on their personal enlightenment and their connection to the Old Ones. They live in the wilderness, but occasionally they work with others in the pursuit of a greater goal. These wanderers hone their minds, bodies, and souls into objects of peace or devastation, with some cats practicing a duality between the two. Dedicated to maintaining simplistic lives, wanderer cats rankle at those who would seek to control others, harm the world around them, or otherwise interfere with the natural order of things.

Some wanderers eschew expensive weapons and armor in favor of reliance on their limbs. Through focus and experience, wanderers channel the power of the elements through a punch or a kick. This power, unique to wanderers, often manifests for those who pursue the martial arts. These abilities earn wanderers reputations as traveling heroes or villains, depending on the way in which they use their powers.

Wanderers may emerge from any background, but the successful cats of this calling possess a self-sufficient mentality. It is required, for a wanderer to last long without the comforts of the city or a stable homestead.

Typical wanderer:

Independent, stubborn, and physically powerful are descriptors commonly applied to wanderers. Though they form personal relationships as naturally as any other cat, the wanderer does not like to sit still. She would rather wander the town's alleys at night or explore the forest a little farther, rather than rest on her laurels and let her wanderlust atrophy. Wanderers from their established schools display self-discipline and power in their physical forms. Wanderers seek to attain the perfect athletic form, though vanity rarely accompanies this objective. Even the most physically capable wanderer keeps a weapon by her side, unless pride or a contest of might intervenes. Many wanderers



Six Wanderers

1. A famous cat, known for bringing a rival low despite immense odds.
2. A humble, thoughtful cat, shy around praise or affection.
3. A flamboyant cat, known for winning tournaments and courting her fans.
4. A focused cat, dedicated to honing his body into peak condition.
5. A mercurial cat, prone to flights of fancy and unplanned journeys.
6. An excitable cat, hoping to map the lands around the Monarchies of Mau.

learn musical instruments or other entertaining skills to amuse themselves and small audiences on the road.

View on the Precepts of Mau: Independent as they are, wanderers' views on the Precepts vary widely. The only philosophical commonality wanderers share comes through their schooling, if a strict master decided to emphasize one Precept over another. Wanderers largely agree about the Unseen as enemies in need of destruction, though it rarely acts as a primary objective. Most wanderers consider honorable duels a luxury afforded to city cats, although they often conduct formal contests in which they display skills to fellow wanderers. Most wanderer schools criticize the ideal of following instincts alone. While they are chaotic by their independent nature and avoidance of bureaucracy, their internal codes guide them rigidly. The only thing all wanderers agree on is the Precept of loyalty. A wanderer is loyal to her friends, her school, her master, and her own path. Loyalty to the Monarchies of Mau closely follows this devotion.

View on other callings:

- **Champions:** What good is your armor if I can start a fire inside it?
- **Footpads:** Any cat prepared to use guile over brutality is a friend, and worthy feline.
- **Mancers:** I see you hiding back there, and I don't like it.
- **Ministers:** I know many like myself who appreciate the ministers' beautiful, inspiring words. They give a cat inner strength, even when much of it is nonsense.
- **Trackers:** Our natural companions. To walk a path, one benefits from a guide.

CHARACTER CREATION

Stamina dice: d8 per level

Stamina points: 8 + Constitution modifier per level

Primary abilities: Dexterity and Strength

Skills: Choose two from Balance, Know History, Know Spirituality, Notice, Perform, Sneak, Survive, and Traverse.

Rucksack: One melee weapon, a shovel, torches, rations, and a musical instrument gained under unusual circumstances.

Unusual Circumstances

1. Earned through studying under the harsh tutelage of an ancient cat.
2. Discovered on a rock in the middle of a perfectly peaceful clearing.
3. Taken from the corpse of a fallen opponent, to honor her sacrifice.
4. Received as payment from a poor family of cats with no coin to spend.
5. Stolen from an employer after he endangered your life too many times.
6. Found glowing in the forest, calling your name as you approached.

First secrets: Simple Weapon Aptitude (p. 77), Martial Weapon Aptitude (p. 77), Light Armor Aptitude (p. 77), and choose one from either Martial Arts (p. 85) or Unarmored Defense (p. 86).



Following the step-by-step instructions, I will start by selecting a calling for my cat. Though my own experience compels me to pursue the calling of a mancer, I've always been interested in the lives of ministers, so let's play one of those morally upright pillars of the monarchies. Knowing my cat's calling, I will keep in mind her stamina dice and pool of potential skills, but I won't choose anything until after the next couple of steps.

houses

Since the six monarchies unified, the residents and rulers of each monarchy found themselves a part of one of the six major *houses*. A cat's calling is what she chooses to do with her life, but her house shapes how and why she does it, and for whom. Most cats pledge their loyalty to one of these six houses, while those who stand alone or belong to minor (but powerful) families and factions have banded together into a political bloc for mutual support. Cats can and do change allegiances, so the idea of devotion to a biological family isn't as strong as with, say, dogs.

Houses all have one tenet that they follow, acting as a combination of house motto and mission statement for those who pledge allegiance. They also have a private language, which is a dense lexicon that (generally) only cats of that house use with each other. Further, each house has a "secret" agenda. These are plans and goals that no one in the house openly speaks of, but most cats savvy to the monarchies' ancient animosities have a good sense of each house's desires. However, no cat is crass enough to accuse another house of holding such a secret agenda. It's all about face — even when a cat stumbles and accidentally reveals her house plans, everyone immediately pretends like it never happened.

However, these intrigues and secret agendas are mostly the concern of higher-ranking cats. Most of the rank-and-file cats, like the trailblazers, are usually unaffected by such lofty conspiracies. As cat heroes become more powerful, though, they may feel increased pressure to fulfill their house agendas over supporting their adventuring friends and allies.

Houses contain the following information, some of which impacts later steps in character creation.

House colors: The colors that members of the house are expected to wear. Cats are generally quite fashionable and find lots of creative ways to demonstrate their house colors. New house members only wear house colors on a single article of clothing or visible piece of jewelry, until they perform an act that proves their loyalty.

House motto: The house may have its own interpretation of the existing Precepts, or one of their own that they dedicatedly follow. This Precept will take the form of a motto for each house, by which the majority of cats within abide.

Ability bonus: What ability the cat's birth house grants a bonus to, and its value (p. 71).

House secrets: Two secrets you start with at first level (p. 87).

HOUSES



ANGORA



CYMRIC



KORAT



MAU



REX



SIBERIAN



SHADOW BLOC

HOUSE ANGORA

"I am your master and tester, and if you do not impress me you'll be copying texts for the next year. For your own good, of course."

– Rudyard Siamese von Angora

Scholars and intellectuals, House Angora devotes itself to finding and preserving knowledge and magic. They believe learning is the best path forward against the enemies of the monarchies. In public, they claim their only focus is their education on topics about which the other houses approve, but in secret there is nothing off-limits to their studies – not even knowledge of summoning and controlling the Unseen.

The elder cats of House Angora regularly set trials and gauntlets for young cats and joiners fresh from other houses. These tests nearly always involve translating coded texts or deciphering scrambled maps, the objective being to assess a house member's abilities of calculation, assessment, and problem-solving. Oftentimes, these texts and maps will lead a cat to a small treasure set aside by the house elders as a reward for solving the puzzle.

House Angora's libraries are magnificent, multi-tiered, shifting structures dotted throughout the monarchies. With floors and bookcases built on hinges and gears, entering one of these labyrinthine buildings is always an impressive sight. A cat might witness one shelf laden with books fold away with two new ones appearing in its place, or stand on a floor that can travel up, down, or along otherwise hard-to-reach bookcases. House Angora's libraries are awe-inspiring troves of knowledge to all cats.

House colors: Black and white

House motto: "Always pursue knowledge"

Ability bonus: +2 to Intelligence

House secrets: Voracious Learner, and choose either House Upbringing (Angora) or Cat of the World





HOUSE CYMRIC



"Don't listen to what the others say. Instead, watch what they do."

– Mercurtio von Cymric

Diplomats and negotiators, House Cymric was one of the first houses to see the value in the Treaty of Unification. They believe the Old Ones worshipped cats for their grace. As such, acting as the Old Ones envisioned by the graceful enforcement of those social mores will preserve cat unity. In public, they claim they only seek to support the nation, but in secret they work to oust House Mau as the de facto leaders and institute themselves in Mau's place.

House Cymric produces a plethora of cats in the entertainment fields, acting as minstrels, jesters, and actors for the pleasure of the other houses. While the house's political diplomats sniff dismissively at their more fun-loving cousins, these cats are no less capable of charming an audience, wheedling out a nugget of information with favors, or flattering a target for a valuable secret.

Self-grooming equates to self-respect for a cat of House Cymric. While he may not be vain, he knows that to appear disheveled before the other members of his house is to risk disfavor. All kittens of House Cymric are taught from an early age to wash several times a day, smell good, and dress to outdo all peers no matter the circumstance of environment. On the battlefield, this edict leads the champions of House Cymric to wear great plumes of feathers, ridiculous numbers of medals, and the newest weapons and armor. For the mockery they receive, the cats of this house care little. They know the tales of said battle will recount only the deeds of the cats who stand out.

House colors: Black and green

House motto: "Always operate with discretion"

Ability bonus: +2 to Charisma

House secrets: Immaculate Grooming, and choose either House Upbringing (Cymric) or Cat of the World





HOUSE KORAT



*"The other houses rely on our swords swinging in the direction of their choosing.
This will be their undoing."*

— Norah Forest von Korat

Soldiers and tacticians, House Korat dedicates its cats to assuring the monarchies are ready to march on their enemies, no matter what. They believe force is the only way the monarchies will remain strong, and they constantly test the strength of others and each other. In public, they grumble and reluctantly agree that reconciliation with Pugmire and the other species is the only way they can focus on the Unseen, but they secretly desire another War of Dogs and Cats, so they can prove their superiority in open warfare.

The experienced cats of House Korat set difficult physical challenges for their young, typically involving the exploration of a forbidding area, the slaying of a mighty beast and acquisition of a trophy from same, or the mastery of a heavy weapon rare for cat use, such as a maul, greataxe, or heavy flail. House Korat believes a healthy body makes a healthy mind, and is a rare house in its ready expulsion of physically frail cats. House loyalists tend to support such weaklings into new houses, but they have come under fire from the other nobles for occasionally abandoning such cats on the streets or in the wild.

Cats of the other houses stereotype House Korat as a family of thick-limbs and thick-heads, with a single brain cell passed between them. This assumption forgets the role of strategists and commanders in the house's highest echelons. While some earn their place through breeding, more take those positions through deed. House Korat is happy to play the part of dumb cat, watching its enemies closely until the time to strike arrives.

House colors:
Black and red

House motto: "Always strike when least expected"

Ability bonus: +2 to Strength

House secrets: Brute Strength, and choose either House Upbringing (Korat) or Cat of the World





house MAU



“We are an old house comprising young cats. Let us prove ourselves worthy of our ancestral name.”
 – Zohar von Mau

Leaders and judges, House Mau was the first to propose the unification of the monarchies, as well as codifying the study of magic. They believe that careful thinking and devotion to the truth will keep cat society safe. In public, they steadfastly refused to seize power, allowing the other houses to have an equal part in ruling the nation. The other houses don't trust such altruism, and they are right not to: House Mau works behind the scenes to chip away at the power bases of the other houses and rule the Monarchies of Mau openly.

Birth into House Mau comes with a peer expectation for duty, and through duty, greatness. One of the stricter houses in hierarchy, House Mau elevates cats to new positions based on the deaths of their forebears, or through lengthy, exclusive service to the house. The house's upper members like to claim they all reached their positions through merit, but over the years a considerable number of House Mau's elder cats died and are now preserved in the house's opulent sepulchers. The slew of assassinations and battlefield deaths led to a frantic series of promotions, resulting in a house with the youngest leading cats in the monarchies. Time will tell if they will succeed as the new nobility.

House Mau approaches every deal with an open paw and a gentle smile, espousing that all parties can walk away from a trade or diplomatic engagement happy, if everyone is prepared to sacrifice for the benefit of all. These words reach the lower classes in the monarchies and speak to their plight, leading to a surge in popular support for this house.

House colors: Black and yellow

House motto: “Always act with honor”

Ability bonus: +2 to Wisdom

House secrets: Keen Observer, and choose either House Upbringing (Mau) or Cat of the World



HOUSE REX

“Run on four legs or walk on two, you’re welcome at our table either way.”

– Shadow “Nettles” von Rex

Explorers and outsiders, House Rex was the first monarchy to explore outside its lands, and the first to encourage peace over conflict with other species. They also have strong ties to the dogs at Waterdog Port, and have learned diverse ways to approach problems. They believe that travel can help cats to broaden their minds. This house doesn’t seem to have a secret agenda – they are open in their beliefs that joining with Pugmire is good for all sides – and this lack of intrigue and willingness to speak their minds often makes them political targets from other cats who view them as naïve.

Of course, few houses believe House Rex truly lacks a secret agenda. House Cymric has wasted many of its best spies trying to uproot House Rex’s darkest secrets, but each finds little but frustration. Rex’s cats harbor personal secrets and agendas, but nothing that permeates the entire house. The house members’ individualism acts as a boon in clandestine matters, but causes the house to suffer a lack of unity when facing external threats. Free will is a House Rex cornerstone, and before the house makes any major decision for its members, it allows every single member to cast a vote.

House Rex’s liberalism encourages outsiders to join with less trial and initiation than exists in the other noble houses. This unrestricted access may soon tighten, as the house’s veteran cats worry the house may lose its last vestiges of identity if it accepts every stray. Despite concerns, few cats leave House Rex. Its relaxed attitude to tradition proves popular among the youngest cats, who would drop their smoking pipes and cups of honeyed milk to raise swords in the house’s defense.

House colors: Black and blue

House motto: “Always push boundaries”

Ability bonus: +2 to Dexterity

House secrets: Perfect Balance, and choose either House Upbringing (Rex) or Cat of the World





HOUSE SIBERIAN



"There is no sacrifice too great, when the reward is the safety and growth of our house."

– Kashic Blue von Siberian

Traditionalists and medics, House Siberian epitomizes the status quo, preferring convention and security over innovation and recklessness. They believe progress should be carefully measured, focusing on utility over unconstrained change. In public, they support the Treaty of Unification, but in secret they work to abolish the treaty and reestablish themselves as a self-sufficient monarchy. They keep this agenda deeply buried, while trying to influence an outside danger to discredit the Treaty.

House Siberian's conservatism often leads to their peers underestimating the house's capability for understanding, adaptation, and action. House Siberian moves slowly, but when it acts, it acts with destructive ferocity.

During the War of Dogs and Cats, a Siberian unit lured a desperate army of mutts into a well-stocked fortress built purely to collapse on its new inhabitants. Few survivors emerged from the wreckage. For the house, the loss of a family castle was a small price to pay for the elimination of such a threat.

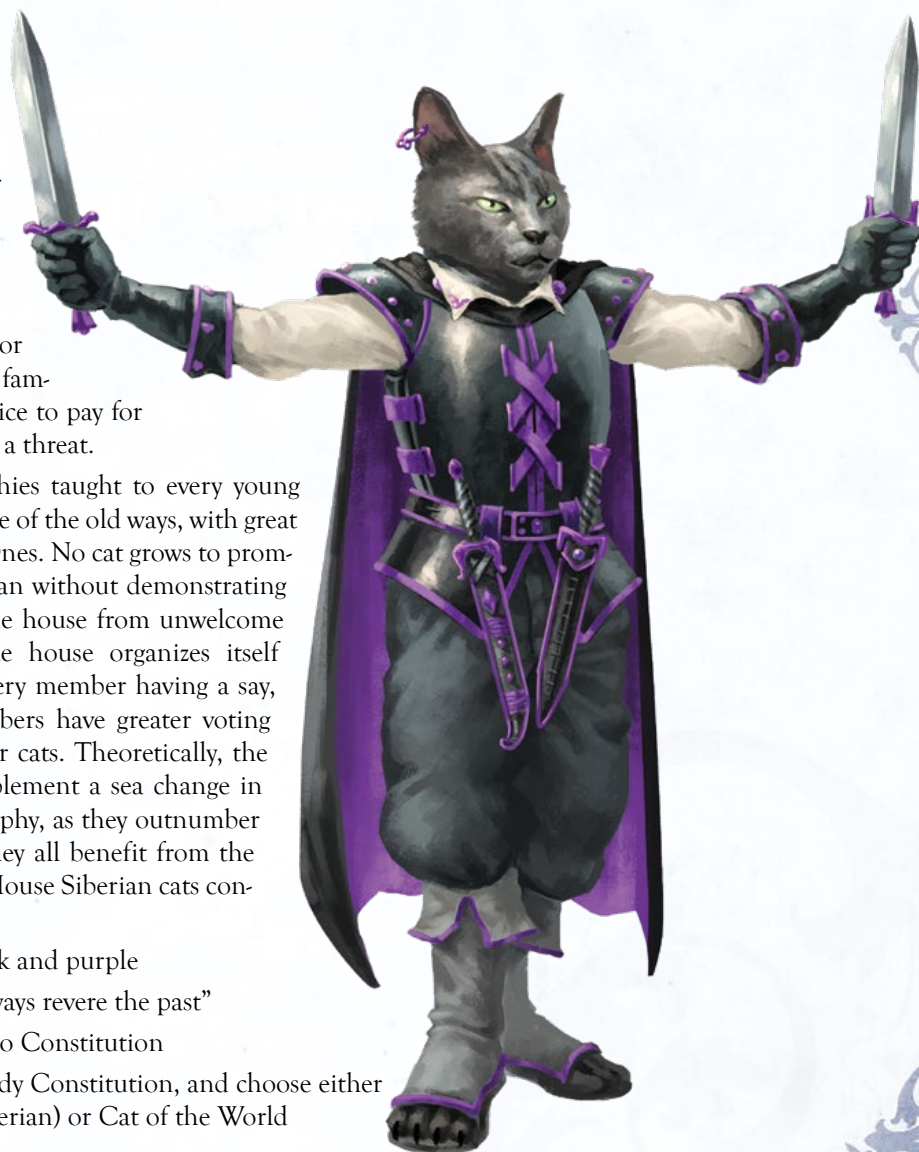
The core philosophies taught to every young cat born to the house are of the old ways, with great reverence for the Old Ones. No cat grows to prominence in House Siberian without demonstrating the ability to defend the house from unwelcome change or danger. The house organizes itself into a council, with every member having a say, though its oldest members have greater voting power than the younger cats. Theoretically, the younger cats could implement a sea change in House Siberian philosophy, as they outnumber the elder group. But they all benefit from the house's wealth, so the House Siberian cats continue acting as one.

House colors: Black and purple

House motto: "Always revere the past"

Ability bonus: +2 to Constitution

House secrets: Hardy Constitution, and choose either House Upbringing (Siberian) or Cat of the World





THE SHADOW BLOC



"We will not be silent. With my dying breath I will cry for our recognition."

– Starla von Forest

There are other minor houses, organizations, and the like that desire a say in the government of the monarchies. Only those houses that held a monarchy before Unification are considered a major house — all the rest (and those cats with no house) are part of the Shadow Bloc. A recent addition to the monarchies, this group has no unified structure or agenda. But all of them do agree that they deserve a seat at the table. Many of the smaller houses and guilds within the Shadow Bloc hope that unity among other outsiders will lead to their ascension to prominence, or revitalization of their old nobility.

Though house cats attempt to keep tabs on the movements and agendas of the Shadow Bloc, the group's constantly shifting nature makes relevant information transient at best. Informants adopt new identities from one day to the next, and the Shadow Bloc's many constituent parties lead to schizoid agendas.

The Shadow Bloc grants a cat the chameleonic benefit of being just a face in a crowd of lower classes and malcontents. Joining the bloc is as easy as walking into a bar or marketplace and adopting an assumed name. The monarchies suspect magic is involved to assure loyalty, but the Shadow Bloc laughs at such suggestions.

Secretly, the cats of the fallen monarchy of Smilodon attempt to manipulate the Shadow Bloc's rebels and outsiders. Smilodon was widely believed to be destroyed years before the formation of the Monarchies of Mau, but a few still cling to their identity.

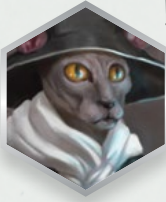
House colors: Black and gray

House motto: "Always seek vengeance"

Ability bonus: +1 to any two abilities

First secret: Cat of the World, and choose one from Brute Strength, Hardy Constitution, Immaculate Grooming, Keen Observer, Perfect Balance, or Voracious Learner





I know what you're thinking. How could an Angora like myself want to play a cat of any other house? Well, we're nothing if not experimental. My minister will be of House Cymric. I already know Charisma is a focus of many ministers, and with the bonus those shifty Cymric cats get to that trait, I feel it's appropriate if I want to play a truly charming minister.

BACKGROUNDS

A cat's *background* details what she did before she became a hero, whether she was a commoner working in the fields or a noble of one of the established houses. It gives her access to the following items, which impact later stages of character creation.

Skills: Two skills to which the character gains access (p. 74).

Rucksack: Some equipment your character can add to her rucksack at the start of her adventuring career. Any of these can be changed with Guide permission.

Common Folk

You come from humble social rank, and you're used to hard work and getting your paws dirty. Whether you embrace your common roots or try to put them behind you, you always understand those who toil to get by. If you claim membership in a noble house, you no doubt have a remarkable story to tell.

Skills: Handle Animal, Survive

Rucksack: An iron pot, a set of common clothes, and a belt pouch containing a few plastic coins.

CRIMINAL

You are a former (or current!) criminal who has experience with, and a history of, breaking the law. You have spent a lot of time among other law-breakers, and still have contacts within the local criminal networks. You may work for one of the footpad guilds, even if it is not your calling.

Skills: Bluff, Sneak

Rucksack: A crowbar, a set of dark common clothes that includes a hood, and a belt pouch containing a few plastic coins.

DISCIPLE

You have spent your life focused on your personal spirituality and the study of your past lives. This doesn't necessarily mean you are a minister, however — performing sacred rites and prayers is not the same thing as developing your voice to produce spiritual power. You may revere the Old Ones, worship your own ancestors, or harbor a stranger set of beliefs.

Skills: Know Spirituality, Sense Motive

Rucksack: A journal, a set of common clothes, and a belt pouch containing a few plastic coins.

MERCHANT

At one point you bought and sold items of value in the marketplaces of the monarchies, or perhaps in one of the other kingdoms. You still have a good sense of how to haggle and usually know when someone attempts to take advantage of you. Your mercantile skills are good enough that you can talk confidently on any trading subject.

Skills: Bluff, Sense Motive

Rucksack: A set of scales, a set of fine clothes, and a purse containing some plastic coins.

CHAPTER TWO: AN EXCELLENT CAT

Noble

Whether you are a pampered aristocrat, a direct descendant of one of the original ruling families, or a disinherited scoundrel, your family has a lot of respect and political pull within one of the six houses. You may feel an instinctual rivalry with any fellow nobles, or kinship in the face of commoners.

Skills: Know History, Persuade

Rucksack: A signet ring in your house colors, a set of fine clothes, and a purse containing many plastic coins.

Outsider

You no longer call the cities of civilization your home, choosing instead to live in the wild places. Or perhaps you've never known a roof aside from the sky. Either way, your life is dangerous and perilous, but at least it's *your* life. Whether or not your exile is self-imposed, you know the benefits of true freedom.

Skills: Know Nature, Survive

Rucksack: A bedroll, a set of patched common clothes, and a belt pouch containing a few plastic coins.

Scholar

You spent years learning lost lore and the history of the world. You've scoured manuscripts, studied scrolls, and listened to experts on subjects that fascinated you. Your quest for knowledge is never-ending. You will dabble in dangerous tombs and read forbidden tomes in your hunt for answers.

Skills: Know Arcana, Know History

Rucksack: A magnifying glass, a set of common clothes, and a belt pouch containing a few plastic coins.

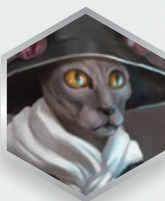
Soldier

You trained as a kitten to survive on the battlefield, studying the use of weapons and armor. You might have been part of the watch or a mercenary company, or maybe you were part of one of the houses' elite guard. You may prefer to work alongside your fellow soldiers, act in defense of others, or lead the charge with aspirations of regard as a hero.

Skills: Intimidate, Traverse

Rucksack: An insignia of rank, a set of common clothes, and a belt pouch containing a few plastic coins.





This may surprise you, but my minister of House Cymric's background will be Criminal. I'm enjoying the idea of a minister with a shadowy background, perhaps more bluff than sincere belief. My character lines her dark clothing with green, to reflect the colors of House Cymric. I shall call her Tifa von Cymric.



Name: TIFA VON CYMRIC
 Calling & Level: MINISTER/1
 House: CYMRIC
 Family: _____
 Background: CRIMINAL

ABILITY SCORES

Every character, from the most heroic warrior to the lowliest moggie, and the most terrifying monsters to the most unusual species, have six *abilities*. These abilities act as a character's physical, social, and mental building blocks. Nearly every roll you make in *Monarchies of Mau* is based on one of these abilities, so they're important for everyone. Each ability has a *score* and a *modifier*. The scores generally range from 1-20.

- Strength: Muscle and physical power.
- Dexterity: Paw-eye coordination, agility, reflexes, and balance.
- Constitution: Hardiness, stamina, and resistance to pain.
- Intelligence: Learning, knowledge, and reason.
- Wisdom: Willpower, common sense, perception, intuition, and wits.
- Charisma: Personality, persuasiveness, personal magnetism, and ability to lead.

Assign one of the following numbers to each ability: 15, 14, 13, 12, 10, and 8. You can apply these numbers to any abilities, but keep the primary abilities of your cat's calling in mind. It's likely your character will use those abilities more than any other. The higher the ability score, the greater the likelihood of success on tasks involving dice rolls. Add additional bonuses to your scores as per your cat's house.

HOUSE	ABILITY SCORE BONUS
Angora	+2 to Intelligence score
Cymric	+2 to Charisma score
Korat	+2 to Strength score
Mau	+2 to Wisdom score
Rex	+2 to Dexterity score
Siberian	+2 to Constitution score
Shadow Bloc	+1 to any two scores

Having assigned scores to each ability, you can now add that ability's modifier in the main box, writing the score in the small oval underneath. These modifiers add to or subtract from any rolls relating to the ability in question, and modify other components of the game.

SCORE	MODIFIER
1	-5
2-3	-4
4-5	-3
6-7	-2
8-9	-1
10-11	0
12-13	+1
14-15	+2
16-17	+3
18-19	+4
20	+5



Tifa's going to be a hardy cat, so I'll assign the 15 to Constitution. Tifa's going to benefit from the Charisma bonus of being a Cymric, so I will assign 14 to Charisma, knowing it will increase to 16. As a former criminal I suspect she'll find Dexterity useful, so that gets a 13. She's somewhat wise to the ways of the world, so I'll put the 12 in Wisdom. I'll put 10 in her Intelligence, which is unremarkably average, and finally, 8 in Strength. She can take a hit, and maybe dodge one, but she's no warrior.

STR
STRENGTH

-1

8

INT
INTELLIGENCE

0

10

DEX
DEXTERITY

+1

13

WIS
WISDOM

+1

12

CON
CONSTITUTION

+2

15

CHA
CHARISMA

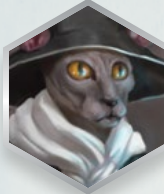
+3

16

PRIMARY ABILITIES

Each calling has two *primary abilities*. These two abilities are the ones the calling uses the most, particularly as part of their calling secrets. They also allow the cat to use her proficiency bonus for saving throws (p. 97), so don't forget about them.

CALLING	PRIMARY ABILITIES
Champions	Charisma and Strength
Footpads	Dexterity and Intelligence
Mancers	Intelligence and Wisdom
Ministers	Charisma and Constitution
Trackers	Constitution and Wisdom
Wanderers	Dexterity and Strength



Tifa's a minister, so I color in the circle next to her primary abilities of Constitution and Charisma. I can fill in the boxes beside them in a little while. Don't worry about them for now.

SAVING THROWS

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="text"/>	STRENGTH
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="text"/>	DEXTERITY
<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="text"/>	CONSTITUTION
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="text"/>	INTELLIGENCE
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="text"/>	WISDOM
<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="text"/>	CHARISMA

STAMINA POINTS

Try as they might to avoid harm, when a blow connects with a cat, she loses stamina. When a cat's stamina runs out, she may fall unconscious or be in danger of dying (p. 108). In *Monarchies of Mau* you track how healthy your cat is through both *stamina points* and *stamina dice*.

Your cat's stamina points are determined by her calling, which gives a set number that is added to her Constitution modifier for a final number of stamina points. Every time your cat gains a level, that amount adds again to her stamina point total, giving her more and more stamina points. With each level, your cat gets tougher!

Your cat also has stamina dice – the die type of your stamina dice is based on your character’s calling, ranging from d6 to d10. A cat’s total stamina dice equal her level. For example, a fourth-level champion has 4d10 stamina dice. These dice see use in a variety of ways, but mostly they allow the cat to regain some of her stamina points during an adventure or at rest.

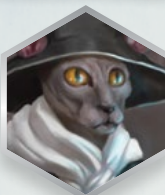
CALLING	STAMINA POINTS/LEVEL	STAMINA DICE/LEVEL
Champions	10 + Constitution modifier	d10
Footpads	8 + Constitution modifier	d8
Mancers	6 + Constitution modifier	d6
Ministers	6 + Constitution modifier	d6
Trackers	10 + Constitution modifier	d10
Wanderers	8 + Constitution modifier	d8

PROFICIENCY BONUS

The *proficiency bonus* represents your cat’s growth in knowledge and experience. Your cat adds her proficiency bonus to die rolls when using the skills she knows. Your cat’s proficiency bonus increases over time, as she gains levels. A first-level cat starts with a proficiency bonus of +2, and it’s applied in the following rolls:

- Attack rolls using weapons for which she has an appropriate aptitude secret (p. 77)
- Attack rolls with spells she casts (p. 113)
- Ability checks using skills she has (see p. 74)
- Saving throws in which she uses one of her calling’s primary abilities (p. 97)
- Saving throw difficulties for spells she casts (p. 113)

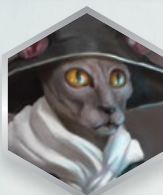
Your cat’s proficiency bonus can’t be added more than once to a single die roll or to another number. However, the proficiency bonus might occasionally be modified (doubled or halved, for example) before you apply it.



Ministers have 1d6 stamina dice, putting Tifa at the weaker end of the wedge. Not to worry though: as I assigned her Constitution an ability score of 15, she has a +2 to her starting stamina of 6. Tifa starts with 8 stamina points. Here’s how I complete this part of her character sheet:

STAMINA POINTS	
8	/ 8
CURRENT/MAXIMUM STAMINA POINTS	

STAMINA DICE
1D6
TOTAL



Tifa’s a first-level minister, gaining a proficiency bonus of +2 that I add to the appropriate part of her character sheet.

+2	PROFICIENCY BONUS
----	-------------------

With the proficiency bonus handled, I can fill out that saving throws section we looked at earlier. For her primary abilities I add both her ability bonus and proficiency bonus. For her other abilities, I add only the ability bonus where she has one. Sadly for Tifa, that means a negative bonus

for Strength, but pleasingly, look at how good her Charisma is. Looks like she'll be using a champion in her party as a shield or attempting to negotiate with most enemies.

SAVING THROWS		
<input type="radio"/>	-1	STRENGTH
<input type="radio"/>	+1	DEXTERITY
<input checked="" type="radio"/>	+4	CONSTITUTION
<input type="radio"/>	0	INTELLIGENCE
<input type="radio"/>	+1	WISDOM
<input checked="" type="radio"/>	+5	CHARISMA

as understanding the secret language of another house without Know Culture). Each situation is up to the Guide to decide whether you can roll, and if your cat is at a disadvantage.

Your cat gets both skills listed with her background, as well as two more from the list given with her calling.

BACKGROUND	SKILLS
Common Folk	Handle Animal, Survive
Criminal	Bluff, Sneak
Disciple	Know Spirituality, Sense Motive
Merchant	Bluff, Sense Motive
Noble	Know History, Persuade
Outsider	Know Nature, Survive
Scholar	Know Arcana, Know History
Soldier	Intimidate, Traverse

Skills

Skills are things your cat flourishes at, and help define what makes her an excellent cat. Think of them in the context of conversation – when your cat wants to tell others what she is good at, she might say “I can tame any beast (Handle Animal), bluff my way past any guard (Bluff), tell when someone is lying to me (Sense Motive), and know all about a variety of faiths (Know Spirituality).” Skills are binary: You either have a skill or you don’t.

Whenever your cat takes an action involving one of her six abilities, check to see if your character has a relevant skill for the roll. If so, you can add her proficiency bonus to the ability check, in addition to any ability modifier associated with the roll.

The skills generally fall under certain abilities, but if you can justify a skill being used with another ability (and your Guide agrees), you can add your cat’s proficiency bonus as normal. For example, Perform is usually a Charisma skill, but if a footpad wants to gymnastically vault from beam to beam, making a show of her agility to entertain people, she may ask to use Perform as a Dexterity skill.

Sometimes, if your character doesn’t have the appropriate skill, you may roll as normal, without a proficiency bonus. Occasionally you may roll at a disadvantage, or not be able to roll at all (such

STRENGTH

Intimidate: This skill helps your character influence someone through threats, physical violence, and other hostile actions. You may channel intimidation through body language, actions, or words.

DEXTERITY

Balance: This skill enables your character to remain upright in precarious situations, such as trying to balance on a tightrope, maintain footing on a slippery slope, or hold steady on a high tree branch during a gale.

Sneak: This skill covers your character’s ability to conceal herself from onlookers, slip away without notice, sneak past guards, or conceal something on her person.

Steal: This skill enables your cat to take something from someone else without them noticing, as well as the ability to bypass locks, doors, and other barriers.

CONSTITUTION

Traverse: This skill covers your character’s ability to use her body to overcome physical obstacles, by climbing them, jumping over them, or swimming through them.

SKILLS

CALLING	SKILLS
Champions	Choose two from Balance, Handle Animal, Intimidate, Notice, Persuade, Search, Sense Motive, Survive, and Traverse
Footpads	Choose two from Balance, Bluff, Notice, Perform, Persuade, Search, Sense Motive, Sneak, Steal, and Traverse
Mancers	Choose two from Heal, Know Arcana, Know Culture, Know History, Know Nature, Know Spirituality, Notice, Search, and Sense Motive
Ministers	Choose two from Heal, Know Arcana, Know Culture, Know History, Know Spirituality, Persuade, and Sense Motive
Trackers	Choose two from Handle Animal, Know Culture, Know Nature, Notice, Search, Sense Motive, Sneak, Survive, and Traverse
Wanderers	Choose two from Balance, Know History, Know Spirituality, Notice, Perform, Sneak, Survive, and Traverse

INTELLIGENCE

Know Arcana: This skill represents your character's ability to recall information and lore about magic, spells, masterwork relics, and the like, as well as read the language of the Old Ones.

Know Culture: This skill helps your character understand the nuances of cat society (such as the intricacies of the Ruling Council), or to understand a different culture entirely. While all the uplifted speak the same core

language, Know Culture allows your cat to understand a particular society's lexicon, idioms, or euphemisms.

Know History: This skill represents your character's ability to recall information about historical events, legendary people, and some of the more common myths of the lost civilizations of the Old Ones.

Know Nature: This skill represents your character's ability to recall information about terrain, plants (from nutritious to toxic), animals, the weather, and natural cycles.



Know Spirituality: This skill represents your character's ability to recall information about the spirituality of the Nine Lives, rites and prayers, the personal spiritual relationship with the Old Ones, and even the beliefs and religions of other species.

WISDOM

Handle Animal: This skill covers your character's ability to calm down a domesticated animal, assure your mount isn't spooked by nearby danger, or discern an animal's intentions.

Heal: This skill covers your character's ability to stabilize a dying companion (see p. 109) or diagnose an illness, including types of poisoning.

Notice: This skill covers your character's awareness of his surroundings, noticing sudden changes in the environment, and his overall keenness of sense. Cats value sight and smell equally, and sometimes a distinct smell is more useful than what a cat can see.

Search: This skill helps your character as he actively looks or smells for clues or hidden items, as well as deduces where they might be found. It's different from Notice because the character is actively looking instead of reacting to stimuli.

Sense Motive: This skill helps your character determine someone's true intentions. Whether uncovering a lie or predicting her actions, the cat learns the truth through observation of her target's body language, speech patterns, and mannerisms.

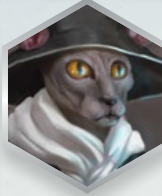
Survive: This skill represents your cat's ability to follow tracks, hunt game, identify signs that enemies live nearby, predict the weather, or avoid natural hazards.

CHARISMA

Bluff: This skill helps your character to convincingly hide the truth. Whether verbally or through his actions, he can mislead others by ambiguity or outright lies.

Perform: This skill covers how well your character can please and delight an audience, whether it's by storytelling, acting, dancing, music, or some other form of entertainment.

Persuade: This skill represents your character's ability to influence someone through tact, social grace, diplomacy, or a generally positive nature.



By choosing Criminal as a background for Tifa, she gains Bluff and Sneak as skills.

Now that I've assigned ability scores, I can look at the skills on offer for ministers, and see which ones would suit Tifa best. As I think about this silver-tongued cat, more gifted with charm than wisdom, I feel Persuade is a natural fit. While Sense Motive is another tempting skill to choose, I'll instead choose Know Culture. She may not be the most spiritual minister, but she knows a lot about the other houses.

SKILLS	
Bluff	_____
Sneak	_____
Persuade	_____
Know Culture	_____

SECRETS

Secrets are the special abilities and powers cats gain as they improve. Secrets come from your cat's calling, house, and sometimes from absorbing masterwork relics (see "Masterworks," p. 182).

Your character's house comes with two secrets — one's already determined, so choose the other and mark them both down on your character sheet. For your character's calling, you receive a few aptitude secrets for free. In addition, you can choose one of the two secrets listed under "first secrets" and add it to your sheet.

LEARNING NEW SECRETS

Every level, your cat has the option to gaining a new calling, house, or aptitude secret as part of her improvement (p. 111). This new secret must be one your character has access to – she cannot choose secrets outside her calling, for example.

Similarly, you can choose to refine a secret your cat already has, reflecting how the cat learns to use her secret in a new way or more effectively. There's a list of all refinements a cat can take under the appropriate secrets. Unless otherwise stated, each refinement can only be taken once, but they can be taken in any order.

APTITUDE SECRETS

Anyone can don armor, but few can walk comfortably in layers of metal plate. Any cat can swing a sword, but it takes a stalwart champion to wield it with prowess. Aptitude secrets allow your character advantages when using certain kinds of items, such as weapons and armor.

CALLING	APTITUDE SECRETS
Champions	Simple Weapon Aptitude, Martial Weapon Aptitude, Light Armor Aptitude, Medium Armor Aptitude, Heavy Armor Aptitude, Shield Aptitude
Footpads	Simple Weapon Aptitude, Martial Weapon Aptitude, Light Armor Aptitude
Mancers	Simple Weapon Aptitude, Light Armor Aptitude
Ministers	Simple Weapon Aptitude, Light Armor Aptitude
Trackers	Simple Weapon Aptitude, Martial Weapon Aptitude, Light Armor Aptitude, Medium Armor Aptitude, Shield Aptitude
Wanderers	Simple Weapon Aptitude, Martial Weapon Aptitude, Light Armor Aptitude

Simple Weapon Aptitude

Any cat can use a simple weapon, but those with this secret add their proficiency bonus to attack rolls when using any simple weapon. Simple weapons include clubs, daggers, darts, handaxes,

javelins, maces, quarterstaves, shortbows, sickles, slings, small crossbows, spears, and unarmed punches, kicks, and bites.

Martial Weapon Aptitude

Using martial weapons requires training and dedication – a cat without this secret always attacks with such weapons at a disadvantage. Cats with this secret, however, can use martial weapons well – they don't roll at a disadvantage, and they also add their proficiency bonus to attack rolls using them. This includes battleaxes, crossbows, flails, glaives, greatswords, greataxes, halberds, lances, longbows, longswords, rapiers, scimitars, shortswords, tridents, war picks, warhammers, and whips.

Characters must have the Simple Weapon Aptitude secret before they can take Martial Weapon Aptitude.

Exotic Weapon Aptitude

Exotic weapons are so strange and rare that it's hard to train in them, and most cats can't even work out how to use such bizarre weaponry. However, a cat with this secret has been around these exotic weapons enough that she can not only use them, but can also add her proficiency bonus to attack rolls using them. This doesn't include masterwork weapons that are based on existing simple or martial weapons (such as masterwork swords) – those weapons only require either Simple Weapon Aptitude or Martial Weapon Aptitude.

Characters must have the Martial Weapon Aptitude or Masterwork Knowledge secret before they can take Exotic Weapon Aptitude.

Light Armor Aptitude

The cat with this secret can wear light armor effectively, giving her a defense of 11 + her Dexterity modifier. Examples of light armor include padded armor, leather armor, and studded leather armor.

Medium Armor Aptitude

The cat with this secret can wear medium armor effectively, giving her a defense of 13 + her Dexterity modifier. Further, the cat's Dexterity checks (not attack rolls) are at a disadvan-

tage. Examples of medium armor include hide armor, a chain shirt, scale mail, and half plate mail.

Characters must have the Light Armor Aptitude secret before they can take Medium Armor Aptitude.

HEAVY ARMOR APTITUDE

The cat with this secret can wear heavy armor effectively, giving her a defense of 16 (no Dexterity modifier is added). Further, the cat's two-legged and four-legged speeds (p. 94) are reduced by five feet, and her Dexterity checks (not attack rolls) are at a disadvantage. Examples of heavy armor include ring mail, chain mail, splint mail, and plate mail.

Characters must have the Medium Armor Aptitude secret before they can take Heavy Armor Aptitude.

SHIELD APTITUDE

The cat with this secret can use a shield effectively, giving her +2 to her defense. However, she only has one free paw and cannot use weapons or objects with the "two-pawed" quality (p. 93). Further, the shield offers no benefit against attacks that the user cannot actively defend against (such as attacks from behind or spell effects that go around corners).

DARKVISION

Cats with this secret gain Darkvision, allowing them to see further in darkness. Characters using Darkvision in darkness can only see in black and white. Darkvision does not allow a cat to see invisible creatures.

MAGIC APTITUDE

Not only mancercs and ministers can cast spells. All cats have a little bit of magical capability, and a cat who learns Magic Aptitude (called a *dabbler*) has access to some first-level spells, which can sometimes be the crucial ace in the hole.

Upon taking this secret, the cat chooses to focus on either mancer spells or minister spells. Once chosen, this choice is permanent, so think carefully! If the cat chooses mancer spells as a focus, Intelligence is the ability the cat uses for spellcasting, while minister spells use Charisma.

Once you decide on your cat's focus, the cat has a number of spell slots equal her level plus her Constitution modifier. She also gains all basic spells for her focus, and can choose two first-level spells from her area of focus as well.

Mancercs and ministers cannot take this secret, as they have secrets of their own which replace and improve on this aptitude.

Refinements

- The cat may take two more first-level spells in her area of focus.

CALLING SECRETS

These are the secrets that are specific to a cat's calling. At first level, each character starts with one of two calling secrets.

CALLING	FIRST CALLING SECRET
Champions	Either Barbed Heckle or Fighting Style
Footpads	Either Expertise or Precise Attack
Mancercs	Either Good Memory or Mancy
Ministers	Either Given the Voice or Invigoration
Trackers	Either Smite or Weapon to Paw
Wanderers	Either Martial Arts or Unarmored Defense

CHAMPIONS

Champion secrets revolve around leadership, power in combat, and brilliant swashbuckling. Charisma and Strength are helpful when using these secrets.

BARBED HECKLE

The champion throws insults or sings a song of mockery against an opponent that emboldens the champion and her allies, giving them the confidence needed to overcome the opposition.

When the champion heckles an enemy, all allies within 10 feet of the target gain a bonus equal to the champion's Charisma modifier to any saving throws.



Refinements

- Barbed Heckle now affects the champion and any ally within 30 feet.
- The champion now cannot be Scared. All allies within range gain a saving throw against being Scared even if they would not normally receive one.

FIGHTING STYLE

The champion has mastered a fighting style, giving her certain advantages in combat. The first time this secret is chosen, choose from the following options:

- Defensive style: +1 to defense when wearing armor.
- Dueling style: When wielding a melee weapon in one paw and no other weapons, damage rolls gain +2.
- Great weapon style: When wielding a two-pawed melee weapon, a 1 or a 2 on a damage die can be rerolled, but the new roll is final.

- Protection style: When wielding a shield and when an opponent attacks an ally within five feet of you, use a reaction to give the opponent a disadvantage.
- Two-weapon fighting style: When wielding two light weapons, add your ability modifier *and* your proficiency bonus to the damage roll. As with anyone using two light weapons, you can make a second attack on the same target with your bonus action.

Refinements

- The champion can choose an additional fighting style. This refinement can be taken multiple times.
- Critical strike style: When wielding a melee weapon, the champion can choose to roll a number of damage dice equal to her proficiency bonus. This style can be used a number of times equal to the champion's Strength bonus (minimum of 1) before the cat needs to sleep.

HONOR CHALLENGE

Using conviction and manipulative words, the champion can force someone to take up battle against them.

Any character with a negative disposition toward the champion — perhaps due to prior insults or blows being exchanged — is subject to this secret. If the target is within earshot of the champion, and the champion uses a bonus action to formally request they participate in a duel, the target must succeed on a Wisdom saving throw against $10 +$ the champion's Charisma modifier, or agree to duel. Terms of the duel may still be negotiated, as this secret influences the target, rather than controlling their mind. This can be used once before the cat needs to sleep.

Refinements

- The champion may choose to add their Strength *and* their Charisma modifier to the saving throw difficulty.
- The champion may give the target freedom to decline, though doing so results in the target's humiliation, lowering all their saving throws by -2 for a day.
 - If this refinement is taken again, the champion may force the duel terms, such as which weapon is used or requiring a duel to first blood.

INSPIRING WORD

Using leadership and strength of personality, the champion encourages allies to keep fighting.

If any ally is within 60 feet and can see or hear the champion, she can use a bonus action and speak something encouraging, allowing all allies within range to immediately use a stamina die to regain stamina points or spell slots. This can be used a number of times equal to the champion's Charisma modifier (minimum of 1) before the cat needs to sleep.

Refinements

- The champion now adds 1d6 stamina points or spell slots to the results of the stamina die roll.
 - If this refinement is taken a second time, this increases to 1d10.

- The champion can now touch an ally and give the benefit without speaking.
- The champion can now use her reaction (when it's not her turn) to allow an ally to immediately reroll a saving throw.

FOOTPADS

Footpad secrets are based around cunning, precision, and speed. Dexterity and Intelligence are both useful for these secrets.

ARCHERY

Some callings are particularly experienced with ranged weapons, becoming very accurate with them.

Once this secret is taken, the cat gains $+2$ to all attack rolls with ranged weapons.

Refinements

- The cat now gets an advantage on ammunition saving throws (p. 93).
- The cat can now make a second ranged attack on the same target as a bonus action.
 - If this refinement is taken again, the cat can choose a different target with this bonus action.
- The cat can now reroll any damage die for a ranged weapon that shows a 1, but the new roll must be kept.
 - If this refinement is taken again, any damage die that shows a 1 or 2 can be rerolled.

EXPERTISE

Footpads are very cunning, and can master skills quickly.

The footpad chooses two skills. His proficiency bonus is doubled for any ability check that makes use of either of those skills.

Refinements

- The footpad can choose two more skills. His proficiency bonus is doubled for any ability check that makes use of any of the four skills chosen. (Like most refinements, this can be taken only once.)

PRECISE ATTACK

Most footpads aren't honorable fighters. They know that doing the most damage is all that matters. Once per turn, the footpad can add 1d6 to a melee attack damage roll if she has advantage for any reason, or if an ally of the footpad is within five feet of the target.

In addition, the footpad can make a Dexterity check (difficulty is 10 + the highest Wisdom modifier of all active opponents) as an action to hide in the shadows or otherwise avoid a target's attention. If successful, she gains an advantage on her next melee attack roll.

Refinements

- The footpad now adds 1d8 to the damage roll.
 - If this refinement is taken again, she adds 2d6 to the damage roll.
 - If this refinement is taken a third time, she adds 2d10 to the damage roll.
- The footpad can now use this secret on melee or ranged attacks.
- The footpad can now make a Dexterity check to hide as a bonus action, instead of a regular action.

TRAP SENSE

Locks. Security wards. Traps. No matter what device keeps a footpad from her goal, she has a secret to getting around it.

The footpad can choose either Intelligence or Wisdom when avoiding traps (see p. 102). Further, any saving throws to avoid traps have advantage. Finally, she doubles her proficiency bonus on all checks to bypass a lock, trap, or similar device that keeps her from her objective. The device is broken on a success.

Refinements

- The footpad no longer breaks the device. Further, she can re-engage it if she chooses. She must make another attempt to bypass it if she doesn't have a legitimate means to deactivating it (a key, a security incantation, and so on).

- All allies within 10 feet of the footpad now have an advantage to their Wisdom saving throws when near traps.
- All allies within 10 feet of the footpad can now make a Dexterity saving throw to avoid all damage from activated traps, even if they would not normally receive a saving throw.

MANCERS

Mancer secrets rely on the cat's intellectual understanding of magic, hidden knowledge, and forbidden treasures. A cat with high Intelligence excels in the role of mancer.

GOOD MEMORY

The cat learns a lot of unrelated information in the process of studying ancient mysteries, and has an easier time recalling that knowledge than most. The character can choose up to two Intelligence-based skills she has – the proficiency bonus for those specific skills is now doubled. The cat can also use an Intelligence-based skill as a bonus action at any time.

Refinements

- The cat can now use any Intelligence-based skill at a disadvantage if she normally would not get a roll at all, such as reading the mystical script of the Old Ones when she doesn't have the Know Arcana skill.

INHERITED ARCANA

Once in a rare while, a cat who has internalized the power of a relic can pass it on to her kittens, if they have a strong aptitude for magic. This mancer is one such inheritor, and may believe such an ability comes from one of her past lives.

Choose the effects of any masterwork item marked "can be absorbed." The mancer now has that secret.

Refinements

- Same as refining the absorbed masterwork item (i.e., if no refinements are listed, the Inherited Arcana secret cannot be refined).

MANCY

The mancer starts with a personal focus made of bone (p. 113). By taking this secret, the cat has become spiritually attuned to the focus, and can draw and channel arcane energy through it. In effect, the cat uses the focus to cast spells.

This focus is powered by the mancer's life force and, once attuned, is uniquely tied to the mancer — another cat cannot use it, and another mancer with a similar focus might find that it allows her to create different effects.

Upon taking this secret, the mancer learns three basic spells that can always be used by the focus (Chill Touch, Eldritch Blast, and Prestidigitiation — see p. 112 for more information). In addition, the mancer can choose two first-level spells. All references to “spellcasting ability” are references to Intelligence.

Refinements

- The mancer can choose spells of the next-highest spell level (p. 113). This refinement can be taken multiple times.
- The mancer can learn four more spells at her current spell level this advancement (for a total of six; p. 113). This refinement can be taken multiple times.

SPELLWEAVER

The mancer with this secret can improve the effectiveness of her spells. Upon taking the secret, the mancer chooses one style:

- Distant style: Spend one additional spell slot to double the range of any spell with a range of five feet or more.
- Extended style: Spend one additional spell slot to double the duration of any spell with a duration of one minute or longer.
- Powerful style: Spend one additional spell slot to give disadvantage to any saving throws the target must make for the duration of the spell.
- Precision style: Spend one additional spell slot to have the option for rerolling the damage dice of any spell. If rerolled, the new roll must be kept.

- Quicken style: Spend one additional spell slot to change the casting time of a spell from one action to one bonus action.

Additional spell slots are expended at the same time as the spell slots to cast the spell are spent. The mancer must have the Mancy secret before she can take Spellweaver.

Refinements

- The mancer can choose an additional Spellweaver style. This refinement can be taken multiple times.

MINISTERS

Minister secrets work best when the cat is both robust and compelling. Constitution and Charisma are very helpful with these secrets.

GIVEN THE VOICE

Ministers use the power of their voice to perform incredible feats of magic. These sermons, commands, or rants are powered by the minister's life force. New incantations are learned either from extensive study within the archives of the various houses, or through intense meditation and communion.

Upon taking this secret, the minister learns three basic spells that can always be used through the minister's mastery of the voice (Animal Friendship, Thaumaturgy, and Vicious Mockery — see p. 112 for more information). In addition, the minister can choose two first-level spells. All references to “spellcasting ability” are references to Charisma.

Refinements

- The minister can choose spells of the next-highest spell level (p. 113). This refinement can be taken multiple times.
- The minister can learn four more spells at her current spell level this advancement (for a total of six; p. 113). This refinement can be taken multiple times.

HEALING

Ministers are, by their natures, healers. As such, while they have access to a variety of spells that help them with healing, in a pinch they can use some of their own life force to help their allies.

SECRETS

When this secret is taken, ministers can give another character one of their stamina dice as a bonus action. The character receiving the die rolls it immediately, and adds the result to his stamina points.

Refinements

- The minister can now add 1d6 to the number of stamina points given from all healing spells and uses of the Healing secret.
 - If this refinement is taken again, this bonus increases to 1d8.
 - If this refinement is taken a third time, this bonus increases to 1d10.
- The successful use of a minister's healing spell or the Healing secret now also gives the target the chance to remove conditions. The target makes a Wisdom saving throw for one condition (difficulty is the original spellcaster's spell difficulty, if from a spell, or 15 otherwise). If the saving throw is successful, the condition is removed.
 - If this refinement is taken again, after a successful healing spell or use of the Healing secret, the target now automatically removes any one condition she desires, as if the target succeeded in their Wisdom saving throw.

INVIGORATION

The minister can encourage his allies and friends, whether through inspirational words, entralling song, or by sheer enthusiasm.

If at least one ally is within 60 feet and can see or hear the minister, he can use a bonus action to give all allies in range an encouragement die (a d4). The target must use the encouragement die on their next d20 roll, adding the results of the die to their d20.

This secret can be used a number of times equal to the cat's Charisma modifier before the cat needs to sleep.

Refinements

- The encouragement die is changed to a d6.

- If this refinement is taken a second time, the encouragement die increases to a d8.
- The ally can now immediately roll the encouragement die and regain that many stamina points or spell slots, instead of using it to add to a d20 roll. The die is expended as normal.

SECOND WIND

Ministers learn to push past the pain and persevere in the most unusual of environments.

The minister can take a bonus action to roll one of his stamina dice and regain stamina points or spell slots immediately. He can do this once before resting or sleeping.

Refinements

- The minister can now add his proficiency bonus to the stamina or spell slot die roll.
- The minister can now spend as many stamina dice as he likes on a Second Wind roll.
- The minister can now use this secret a number of times up to his Constitution modifier (if greater than 1) before resting or sleeping.

TRACKERS

Tracker secrets involve understanding of the wilderness, as well as rugged determination. High Constitution and Wisdom are therefore useful for these secrets.

BEAST MASTER

After spending a lot of time around animals, the tracker can calm them. The tracker can give commands to animals as per the Command spell (p. 118). She can do this a number of times equal to her Wisdom modifier before sleeping.

Refinements

- The tracker can now choose a loyal animal companion, which uses relevant mechanics for the animal (such as those on p. 191).
 - If this refinement is taken again, the tracker can now communicate flu-



ently with his companion by thought, without needing to speak.

NATURAL EXPLORER

The tracker masters a preferred kind of terrain.

Once this secret is chosen, the tracker picks one type of nonurban terrain (woods, plains, marsh, desert, hills, mountains, water, and so on). She doubles her proficiency bonus on all Wisdom checks related to that type of terrain, including Survive checks. She also does not need rations to survive while in her terrain, as she can always hunt for sustenance (and is therefore effectively allowed a free Constitution check reroll when sleeping outdoors – see p.102).

Refinements

- The tracker can choose a second type of terrain in which to gain the benefits listed above. All bonuses for this secret now apply to both kinds of terrain. (As with many refinements, this can only be taken once.)

- The tracker now moves at her full speed in her terrain, even if others can't. She can also do this while sneaking.
- The tracker now cannot be lost or surprised in her terrain.

SMITE

Cats with the Smite secret can impose impressive amounts of damage, particularly against minions of the Unseen.

When the tracker makes a successful attack roll, she can choose to add 2d8 radiant damage in addition to her normal damage. She can do this once before sleeping.

Refinements

- The tracker can now choose to add 2d12 radiant damage instead of 2d8 radiant damage.
 - If taken again, the tracker can now choose to add 4d8 radiant damage instead of 2d12.

SECRETS

- The tracker can now choose to make the attack do heat damage instead of radiant.
- The tracker can now use Smite a number of times equal to her Constitution modifier (if greater than one) before sleeping.
- Sturdy Body: Spend a stamina die to regain stamina points as a bonus action.

The wanderer can use Inner Feline a number of times equal to his Strength modifier before sleeping.

WEAPON TO PAW

Thanks to long training and a dose of paranoia, the tracker will never fail to bring a weapon to paw.

No matter the situation, the tracker can use an action to bring an environment-appropriate weapon to bear. For example, indoors this may be a chair, a kitchen knife, a broken piece of table leg, a trophy, or a candlestick. Outdoors, this may be a sharpened stake, a strong vine, a fragment of bone, a cart wheel, or even a toxic frog that could be launched into an enemy's face. The improvised weapon does 1d6 damage of an appropriate type (usually bludgeoning, piercing, or slashing), and the tracker gains an advantage on initiative rolls. The weapon is destroyed or otherwise lost after one combat scene.

Refinements

- The tracker no longer needs to take an action to change weapons or items.
- The tracker can now never be surprised, and will always get an initiative roll.
- The tracker's improvised weapon now does 1d8 damage of an appropriate type.

WANDERERS

Wanderer secrets represent the cat's training and enlightenment gained from her travels. Dexterity and Strength are useful when taking these secrets.

INNER FELINE

The wanderer has learned to harness his own inner energies, allowing him to perform several incredible stunts. Each time he uses Inner Feline, the wanderer gains one of the following benefits:

- Quick Reflexes: Take a Defend, Disengage, or Run action (p. 105) as a bonus action on the wanderer's turn.

Refinements

Each refinement adds an additional potential benefit. Only one benefit can be chosen at a time.

- Deflect Missiles: When a physical ranged weapon attack hits the wanderer, she can now use her reaction to reduce the damage by 1d10 + her Dexterity modifier, provided she has a free paw. If she reduces the damage to 0, she can catch the missile if it is small enough for her to hold in that paw. This has no effect on ranged attacks that use energy, such as force, heat, lightning, and cold damage.
- Graceful Landing: The wanderer can now use her reaction when she falls to reduce any falling damage by a number of d8s equal to her level.

MARTIAL ARTS

The wanderer has learned to fight her enemies on her own, using whatever weapons are available – even her own paws. When the cat is:

- Not wearing armor or using a shield (such as when using the Unarmored Defense secret)
- Unarmed or wielding only simple melee weapons that don't have the two-pawed quality (p. 93)

The cat gains the following benefits:

- All attacks while unarmed or with melee weapons have the finesse quality.
- Normal damage while attacking unarmed or with melee weapons can be replaced with 1d6 (the type of damage does not change).
- If an attack roll with an unarmed strike or melee weapon is a success or triumph, you can make another attack of the same kind as a bonus action.

Refinements

- Whenever the wanderer fulfills the requirements for Martial Arts, all allies within 30 feet now also get the benefits of Martial Arts (without refinements), as long as the ally fulfills the requirements regarding armor and armaments.
- Normal damage while attacking unarmed or with melee weapons can now be replaced with 1d10.
 - If this refinement is taken again, normal damage in these circumstances can now be replaced with 2d8.
- If the bonus action attack roll is a success or triumph, you can now make a third attack of the same kind by using your reaction.
- You can choose one additional damage type for all martial arts attacks from the following list: acid, cold, force, heat, lightning, necrotic, radiant, and thunder. This refinement can be taken multiple times.

STILL MIND

Long days and nights of meditation and contemplation gives the wanderer an edge when people attempt to force her to do things against her will.

The wanderer adds twice her proficiency bonus to saving throws against compulsion, including magical effects such as the Command spell.

Refinements

- The wanderer now gives anyone within 30 feet of her an advantage on saving throws against compulsion.
- If the wanderer makes her saving throw against a compulsion effect, she now cannot be the target of that effect again for 24 hours. In addition, the wanderer can immediately use one of her stamina dice to regain stamina points or spell slots, if she chooses.

UNARMORED DEFENSE

The wanderer can defend himself without the need for bulky armor.

Once this secret is taken, and if the wanderer is without armor or only uses a shield, his defense is 10 + Constitution modifier + Dexterity modifier + shield (if used).

Refinements

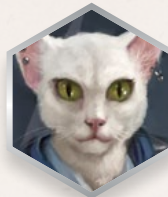
- The wanderer's defense is now increased by an additional +1. This can be taken up to three times.

HOUSE SECRETS

These are the secrets to which each house has access. As part of an improvement, cats can choose a new secret for their house (a character can only ever have one kitten secret).

Shadow Bloc characters are different. All of them start with Cat of the World as their kitten secret. From there, they choose one house secret at character creation – any future house secrets must come from the same house list, as if they were part of that house. This indicates the Shadow Bloc character's personal inclinations, not actual affiliation with the house in question.

In general, cats keep house affiliation all their lives, but some choose to join a different house once they become adults. For the purposes of creating your cat, choose which house your character grew up in, and decide whether your character's loyalty to her current house, or rebellion against her previous one, defines her more. Characters loyal to their original house can take House Upbringing from her current house, while characters who rebelled against their original house can take House Upbringing from her previous house. Or, in either case, they can be a Cat of the World.



It's possible that, after character creation, a cat may defect to another house. In those cases,

just take the new House Upbringing secret as a house secret as your improvement (p. 111), replacing the original one. Further house secrets you take in future

levels are based on your character's current House Upbringing secret, not their former one.

A cat in the Shadow Bloc that later joins a house works the same way — just take House Upbringing as a house secret for your next improvement, and future house secrets are based off the new affiliation. Going the other way doesn't require a change, though. It's easier to leave the houses entirely than it is to join a new one! Cats that leave a house to join the Shadow Bloc keep taking house secrets from their old house.

HOUSE UPBRINGING

The cat grew up as part of one of the six noble houses. She isn't necessarily an important part of the house (that depends on the character's background), but she can speak a secret language known by other cats of that house, as well as expect small favors from them. Such favors will be offered only if the help isn't dangerous or doesn't cause any problems. If the player spends fortune, she can declare that a previously unknown non-player character of that house is an old friend or relative on good terms with the cat.

CAT OF THE WORLD

The cat never knew the support of the noble houses, or isn't much interested in the details of house membership. Instead, she had to rely on herself and those she met during her life. The cat knows various non-player characters related to her background — military personnel if the cat has the Soldier background, diplomats and aristocrats for the Noble background, and so on. The Cat of the World can ask such characters for small favors and expect a degree of recognition and respect amongst her peers. If the player spends fortune, she can declare that a previously unknown non-player character tied to her background is an old friend or relative on good terms with the cat.

KITTEN SECRETS

Background secrets determine the cat's environment as a kitten before becoming an adventurer. There are two kitten secrets: House Upbringing and Cat of the World.

HOUSE	KITTEN SECRET	HOUSE SECRET
Angora	House Upbringing (Angora) or Cat of the World	Voracious Learner
Cymric	House Upbringing (Cymric) or Cat of the World	Immaculate Grooming
Korat	House Upbringing (Korat) or Cat of the World	Brute Strength
Mau	House Upbringing (Mau) or Cat of the World	Keen Observer
Rex	House Upbringing (Rex) or Cat of the World	Perfect Balance
Siberian	House Upbringing (Siberian) or Cat of the World	Hardy Constitution
Shadow Bloc	Cat of the World	Choose one from Brute Strength, Hardy Constitution, Immaculate Grooming, Keen Observer, Perfect Balance, or Voracious Learner

CHAPTER TWO: AN EXCELLENT CAT

HOUSE ANGORA

House Angora secrets key off the cat's inherent intellect. As such, high Intelligence will often produce the best results with these secrets.

CRIMINAL BEHAVIOR

The Angora with this secret can make an Intelligence check (difficulty 15) to immediately deduce a critical clue related to a crime scene they are examining. This secret may reveal a murder weapon, the route by which a thief escaped, the type of poison used, or even the motive behind a crime based on the crime scene's layout. Most Angora experience a tingling of the whiskers when in the presence of a recent crime scene.

DEDUCTIVE STRIKE

The Angora with this secret can observe an enemy to learn where her opponent's weaknesses are. The Angora can observe one target as a bonus action. Any round after the one in which the Angora observed the opponent, she can make an attack roll using her Intelligence modifier instead of Strength or Dexterity. If successful, the Intelli-

gence modifier also adds to her damage. Once the attack is made, or if the Angora observes a different target, the effects of Deductive Strike on the original target are lost.

MASTERWORK KNOWLEDGE

The Angora with this secret can make an Intelligence check (difficulty 15) to immediately determine all magic properties of a masterwork she holds, including how to activate those functions (if appropriate), and how many charges are left (if any).

Upon taking this secret, the Angora can add the Know Arcana skill to her character sheet immediately after taking Masterwork Knowledge, if she doesn't already have it. Further, she can choose to take the Exotic Weapon Aptitude secret (p. 77) with a future improvement without needing to learn Martial Weapon Aptitude first.

VORACIOUS LEARNER

The Angora with this secret gains an advantage on Intelligence checks involving something the cat might have read or heard about in the past. It does not apply to situations that are new to the Angora's experience.



HOUSE CYMRIC

House Cymric secrets work best when the cat is being charming — useful when she has a high Charisma.

CHARMING DISCOURSE

After a few minutes of conversation, a target is Charmed (p. 109) for one hour, unless he makes a Wisdom saving throw. If the target is currently being threatened or attacked by the Cymric or her allies, however, he receives an advantage to his saving throw, and subsequent aggressive acts give additional saving throws with an advantage.

This secret can be used a number of times per day equal to the Cymric's Charisma modifier (minimum of 1), before the cat needs to sleep.

DISTRACTING BANTER

A Cymric with this secret rambles at or insults a single target. If the target fails a Wisdom saving throw, she becomes Confused until the end of the target's next turn.

The cat can perform Distracting Banter a number of times equal to her Charisma modifier (minimum of 1) before needing to sleep.

IMMACULATE GROOMING

The Cymric gains an advantage on Charisma checks involving making friends or being polite.

SPY THE UNSEEN

With a successful Wisdom check (difficulty equal to 10 + target's Wisdom modifier), the cat can spy unnatural ripples in the air, denoting the presence of any objects or beings that are invisible within her range of vision, as if they were normally visible. Such characters can attempt a Wisdom saving throw to remain undetected, if they know they have a chance of being sensed.

This secret also allows the cat to sense if Unseen characters are possessing others, after the cat has a conversation with the target assumed to be possessed (and a successful Charisma check, with a difficulty equal to 10 + the target's Wisdom modifier). A cat's fur stands on end whenever this detection succeeds.

HOUSE KORAT

House Korat secrets all involve the effective use of physical power. Effective use of these secrets is helped by having a high Strength.

BRUTE STRENGTH

The Korat with this secret gains an advantage on Strength checks involving lifting or pulling something.

FRIGHTENING COUNTENANCE

After a few minutes of threats or intimidating gestures from the Korat, a character is Scared (p. 110) for one hour, unless he makes a Wisdom saving throw, with a difficulty equal to 12 + the intimidating cat's Strength modifier. If the target is currently being attacked by the Korat or her allies, however, he receives an advantage to his saving throw, and subsequent acts of violence give additional saving throws with an advantage (it's easier to threaten someone with violence before you actually hurt them).

This secret can be used a number of times per day equal to the Korat's Strength modifier (minimum of 1), before the cat needs to sleep.

MIGHTY THERWS

For one round, the Korat with this secret gains an advantage on all attack rolls and Strength ability checks. The Korat can use this secret a number of times equal to his Strength modifier (minimum 1) before the cat needs to sleep.

TIGER STRENGTH

The Korat with this secret has schooled their companions in getting the best results from their bodies, at least temporarily. With motivational language, a collective mantra, or bellowing like a drill sergeant, the Korat's words allow companions to double their Strength modifier (or add 1, if their modifier is negative) until they take damage or stop to rest. Use of this secret makes the affected companions lose 1d4 stamina points once the effect wears off.

HOUSE MAU

House Mau secrets work best with the cat's intuition and thoughtfulness. A good Wisdom is useful with these secrets.

ANIMAL FRIENDS

After a few minutes of soothing a (non-uplifted) animal, the creature is considered Charmed (p. 109) for one hour, unless it makes a Wisdom saving throw. If the animal is currently being threatened or attacked by the Mau or his allies, however, it receives an advantage to its saving throw, and subsequent acts give additional saving throws with an advantage.

This secret can be used a number of times per day equal to the Mau's Wisdom modifier (minimum of 1) before the cat needs to sleep.

KEEN OBSERVER

The Mau with this secret gains an advantage on all Wisdom checks involving hearing, sight, or smell.

NO CAT'S FOOL

House Mau consists of many canny cats who bodily react to the lies of others. The Mau with this secret is skilled in detecting deception, and possesses body language that gives away a liar. This cat gains an advantage on Wisdom saving throws against being deceived, as do her companions if they are conversant with the Mau's physical behavior. Mau react in different ways to lies. Some bristle angrily, others yawn, and several find their ears twitching as if picking up danger nearby.

QUICK SUGGESTION

The Mau with this secret give another character advice as a bonus action. The person receiving the advice can add 1d4 to any ability check of her choice within the next hour. The target can roll the die before or after making the ability check.

The character with this secret can use it a number of times equal to his Wisdom modifier (minimum of 1) before the cat needs to sleep.

HOUSE REX

House Rex secrets are focused on improving or making use of the cat's speed. As

such, Dexterity can be important to the use of these secrets.

INHERENT GRACE

If the Rex with this secret is subjected to an effect that allows her to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, she instead takes no damage if the throw is successful, and only half damage if the throw fails. She still takes full damage if the saving throw is a botch, however.

INSTINCTIVE DODGE

The Rex's defense is increased by 2 for one attack. This can be used after a successful attack, potentially turning a hit into a miss. This secret can be used a number of times equal to the Rex's Dexterity modifier (minimum of 1) before the cat needs to sleep.

PERFECT BALANCE

With this secret, the Rex gains advantage on all ability checks that involve balance. Further, all damage from falling is halved.

SPEEDY RUNNER

The Rex with this secret gets an advantage on all Dexterity checks having to do with running or being involved in a chase. Also, the character's speed is increased to 35 feet (or 50 feet while running on all fours).

HOUSE SIBERIAN

House Siberian secrets enhance the cat's natural tenacity. A high Constitution increases the usefulness of such secrets.

BURST OF ENERGY

For one round, the Siberian with this secret gains an advantage on all attack rolls and Constitution saving throws. The character can use this secret a number of times equal to her Constitution modifier (minimum 1) before the cat needs to sleep.

HARDY CONSTITUTION

The Siberian with this secret can add 1d4 to all Constitution saving throws.

IRON RESOLVE

The Siberian with this secret gains an advantage to all saving throws against attempts to force her into a course of action she doesn't want to do.

URGE ON

The Siberian's great fortitude acts as an inspiration to her companions. By encouraging her companions within 30 feet of her, the cat with this secret can take a bonus action to roll one of her stamina dice. The number rolled is given to each of her companions in range as stamina points. This secret can be used again after the cat has slept.



Tifa takes House Upbringing (Cymric) and Immaculate Grooming for her first-level house secrets as a member of House Cymric. For being a minister, she has Simple Weapon Aptitude and Light Armor Aptitude, and I choose Given the Voice for her final secret as a first-level character. We'll pick her spells in chapter four.

SECRETS

- Simple Weapon Aptitude
- Light Armor Aptitude
- House Upbringing (Cymric)
- Immaculate Grooming
- Given the Voice
- _____
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RUCKSACK

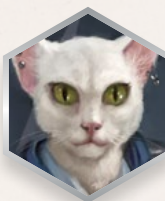
No cat worth her salt would take to an adventure without a trove of goods, weapons, and treasures. Everything they have on them is part of their *rucksack*.

Each character has starting equipment in her rucksack, based on her calling and background. If a specific item is listed, simply write it down on your character sheet. Sometimes, you are given a choice between different options — select the one that makes the most sense to you. Also keep in mind the unusual nature of an item gained when selecting your character's calling. This item should be one of importance to the character.

WEAPONS

For each weapon your cat wields, she uses an ability modifier when attacking with it, a proficiency bonus if she has the right aptitude secret, and an amount and type of *damage* she deals when she hits. Some weapons also have additional rules, known as *qualities* (see p. 97 for more on damage rolls). After making an attack roll, a successful attack allows you to make a damage roll, using the die listed (unless a secret or the Guide says otherwise).

Unless a weapon has the quality of “finesse” or “ranged,” add the character's Strength modifier to all attack and damage rolls. Ranged weapons add the cat's Dexterity modifier to all attack and damage rolls, while finesse weapons can add either the Strength or Dexterity modifier to both the attack and damage rolls.



The only difference in damage between a strike from a paw or foot and the strike from a bared claw is the damage type. Both deal 1 damage, but the paw and foot deal bludgeoning to the claw's slashing damage.

SAMPLE WEAPONS

SIMPLE WEAPONS, MELEE

Bite	1 piercing damage
Club (light)	1d4 bludgeoning damage
Dagger (finesse, light, thrown 20/60)	1d4 piercing damage
Greatclub (two-pawed)	1d8 bludgeoning damage
Handaxe (light, thrown 20/60)	1d6 slashing damage
Javelin (thrown 30/120)	1d6 piercing damage
Long spear (reach, two-pawed)	1d10 piercing damage
Mace	1d6 bludgeoning damage
Quarterstaff (two-pawed)	1d8 bludgeoning damage
Sickle (light)	1d4 slashing damage
Spear (thrown 20/60)	1d8 piercing damage
Unarmed punch or kick	1 bludgeoning (paw or foot) or slashing (claw) damage

SIMPLE WEAPONS, RANGED

Dart (finesse, thrown 20/60)	1d4 piercing damage
Shortbow (ammunition, ranged 80/320, two-pawed)	1d6 piercing damage
Sling (ammunition, ranged 30/120)	1d4 bludgeoning damage
Small crossbow (ammunition, ranged 80/320, loading)	1d8 piercing damage
Staff sling (ammunition, ranged 40/160, two-pawed)	1d6 bludgeoning damage

MARTIAL WEAPONS, MELEE

Battleaxe	1d8 slashing damage
Flail	1d8 bludgeoning damage
Glaive or halberd (reach, two-pawed)	1d10 slashing damage
Greatsword or great-axe (two-pawed)	1d12 slashing damage
Lance (reach, mounted only, disadvantage against targets within five feet)	1d12 piercing damage
Longsword	1d8 slashing damage
Maul (two-pawed)	1d12 bludgeoning damage
Rapier (finesse)	1d8 piercing damage
Scimitar (finesse, light)	1d6 slashing damage
Shortsword (finesse, light)	1d6 piercing damage
Trident (thrown 20/60)	1d8 piercing damage
War pick	1d8 piercing damage
Warhammer	1d8 bludgeoning damage
Whip (finesse, light, reach)	1d6 slashing damage

MARTIAL WEAPONS, RANGED

Crossbow (ammunition, ranged 100/400, loading, two-pawed)	1d10 piercing damage
Longbow (ammunition, ranged 150/600, two-pawed)	1d8 piercing damage

QUALITIES

Ammunition: You can make a ranged attack only if you have ammunition to fire from the weapon. Drawing the ammunition from a quiver, case, or other container is part of the attack. After every combat in which the ranged weapon was used more than once, make a Dexterity saving throw. If the roll bears difficulty 10, the cat recovers or conserves enough ammunition to use it again next combat. Otherwise, the container of ammunition is expended, although the cat can carry more than one container.

A weapon with the ammunition quality is assumed to have one container of ammunition at the start of a story – any ammunition listed in the cat's rucksack are extra containers.

Finesse: When making an attack with this weapon, you can use either your Strength or Dexterity modifier for the attack and damage rolls. You must use the same modifier for both rolls.

Light: A light weapon is small and easy to handle, which means a cat can use one light weapon in each paw. A character with two weapons can make a second attack on the same target as a bonus action.



It looks like these clever cats have found a different way to use light weapons. But it's okay if you want to let us dogs from the Pugmire game use them like this, too. Same with guardians that use Fighting Style: Two-Weapon — I'm sure Leo would like to have an extra attack now and then!

Loading: This weapon takes a long time to load. As such, you can fire this weapon only once per turn, regardless of how many attacks you can normally make (such as through secrets).

Ranged: This is a ranged weapon, and is listed with two numbers. The first is the weapon's normal range in feet, and the second is the weapon's maximum range. When attacking a target beyond normal range, the roll has a disadvantage. You can't attack a target beyond the weapon's maximum range.

Reach: Weapons with reach can attack targets up to five feet away, and the attacker does not need

to disengage (p. 105) if they use their reach to attack.

Thrown: Thrown weapons are melee weapons that can be turned into ranged weapons. Use the same ability modifier for the attack and damage roll that you would use for a melee attack: Strength, or Strength/Dexterity for weapons with the finesse quality.

Two-pawed: This weapon requires two paws to use.



I'm noting the contents of Tifa's rucksack, and because she's a minister she has one simple melee weapon, one set of light armor, some candles, a single set of formal clothing, rations for the road, and a tattered copy of the Precepts of Mau gained under unusual circumstances. I want her simple weapon to be a spear, much longer than she is tall. She wears padded armor beneath her hooded clothing. I think she found the Precepts of Mau at the bottom of a well she was exploring, coated in a fine layer of ash. As a Criminal, she also gets a crowbar (which she'll undoubtedly use for illegal acts), traveling clothes, and a few coins. I think she's all packed and ready to go.

RUCKSACK AND EQUIPMENT

Spear (thrown 20/60, 1d8 piercing), padded armor, some candles, a single set of formal clothing, rations, tattered copy of the Precepts of Mau found at the bottom of a well and coated in a fine layer of ash, crowbar, traveling clothes, and a few plastic coins.

DEFENSE INITIATIVE AND SPEED

Your cat's *defense* represents how well he avoids being wounded in battle. Without armor or a shield, your cat's defense equals 10 + his Dexterity modifier. Some spells and secrets give you a separate way to calculate your cat's defense. Having the secret is key, however — just putting on a suit of armor doesn't help if you don't know how to use it right, and it won't change your defense. If the cat has multiple secrets, spells, or items that impact his defense, you choose which one to use.

A cat's *initiative* determines how fast she acts at the start of a fight. Initiative is covered in greater detail next chapter (p. 103 if you want to jump ahead), but for now just remember that it's equal to your Dexterity modifier.

Speed is how far a cat can move during her turn. All cats can move at a speed of 30 feet per turn. If they drop to all fours to run, they can increase their speed to 35 feet per turn. Certain kinds of armor can decrease how fast the cat can run — check the aptitude secrets (p. 77).



As Tifa wears padded armor, her default defense is 11. Adding her Dexterity modifier of +1, her defense is

12. Her initiative is +1, matching her Dexterity modifier. Her speed will not be impeded, due to the lightness of her armor.

12

DEFENSE

+1

INITIATIVE

35
50

SPEED

PERSONALITY TRAITS

Every cat's personality manifests through *personality traits*. By playing up your cat's personality traits, such as voluntarily failing a roll at appropriate times, you build up and spend the group's

fortune (which is covered on p. 98). Failing is never bad, if it drives the story forward in interesting ways.

Each personality trait should be a description of something that makes your cat stand out. For example, "I cannot fail" isn't very good, since a lot of cats are arrogant. "I cannot fail my husband," on the other hand, says something about your cat's personality. This cat is married, and devoted to succeeding in her lover's eyes. A Guide can use this information in future stories.

Each cat chooses a personality trait in three categories: ideal, mystery, and flaw.

IDEAL

Describe one ideal that drives the cat, completing the sentence "What is most important to me is..." An ideal is what she believes in most strongly, the fundamental moral and ethical principle that compels her to act. An ideal can be anything from a life goal to a core belief system. It can even be an interpretation of one of the tenets of the Precepts of Mau.

If you have trouble thinking of an ideal, roll 1d6 on the table below, using the result as inspiration.

What is most important to me is...

- ... protecting my loved ones.
- ... studying the Unseen.
- ... building a trove of knowledge about the Old Ones.
- ... finding out who my parents were.
- ... building relations between the monarchies.
- ... keeping the dogs out of our territory.

MYSTERY

Choose one mystery for the cat, completing the sentence "No one knows about..." This is a fact, past event, or personal quirk the cat hides from everyone else. Even if this secret about the cat is revealed, he will do whatever he can to keep it quiet. It is this mystery — whether out of shame or a desire to do better — that motivates the cat to heroic deeds.

If you have trouble thinking of a mystery, roll 1d6 on the table below, using the result as inspiration.



I'm going to choose Tifa's ideal, mystery, and flaw now. Most important to Tifa is keeping her friends happy. Her mystery relates to her criminal past. No one knows about how she was a common thief before taking on the role of minister. Finally, her flaw is that no matter what, she just can't hang on to plastic.

PERSONALITY TRAITS

Ideal: What is most important to me is...
Keeping my friends' spirits high.

Mystery: No one knows about...
My criminal past.

Flaw: No matter what, I just can't...
Stop spending money.

No one knows about...

1. ... the jewelry I stole from the Dynast.
2. ... my hidden cache of books about the Unseen.
3. ... my love for a cat of another house.
4. ... my secret den in the wild.
5. ... my ambition to rule my house.
6. ... the old cat I accidentally scared to death one night.

No matter what, I just can't...

1. ... accept my father's guilty verdict.
2. ... get over my fear of spiders.
3. ... keep my love of catnip tea in check.
4. ... bring myself to kill.
5. ... return the item I know should not be in my possession.
6. ... tell the truth about what I saw those nobles doing.

FLAW

Finally, choose one flaw for the cat, completing the sentence "No matter what, I just can't..." This flaw represents some weakness, compulsion, or fear she has — in particular, anything that could be used by the Guide to cause her problems or lead her to act in ways that would cause problems for the group. Anything can be the source for a flaw.

If you have trouble thinking of a mystery, roll 1d6 on the table below, using the result as inspiration.

NAME AND STORY

All that's left is to name the cat, and write up her story if you choose.

All cats have a one-word name that can be anything, although names that sound a bit like human names are good. If the cat is part of a house, add her allegiance to (or in place of) the surname. If the cat is part of the Shadow Bloc, he either has no family name, or he can choose to take any name — some particularly arrogant cats choose "von Shadow" as their name.

Her story is up to you. It can be a quick sentence, a couple of paragraphs, or pages and pages of history. Whatever helps you and your Guide understand what your character is like is perfectly fine.



CHAPTER THREE

PLAYING THE GAME

Now that you have created your cat characters, let's look at the main rules that help you play them in *Monarchies of Mau*. Specific rules, such as how to use magic, are covered in other chapters.

ROLLING THE DICE

There are some key rules to remember when playing *Monarchies of Mau*, so here is a refresher on what they are. When you want your cat to do something, or prevent something from happening, follow these steps:

Step 1. Pick up a d20.

Step 2. Does the character have an advantage or disadvantage for this situation? If so, pick up another d20.

Step 3. Roll the d20(s). If the character has an advantage, use the higher result. If the character has a disadvantage, use the lower result. A higher number is generally better.

You cannot use multiple advantages or disadvantages for your dice rolls. In addition, having both advantage and disadvantage will cancel each other out. Your cat may normally receive an advantage for certain situations, but if a temporary disadvantage comes along (such as a spell that is designed to impair in some way), the advantage cannot be used at that time. It will be treated as an unmodified d20 dice roll.

Step 4. Add or subtract any relevant modifiers to the result. Modifiers will usually be an *ability modifier*, sometimes a *proficiency bonus*, or occasionally a bonus from a *secret*.

ROLLING THE DICE

Step 5. Find your total result and compare it to the *difficulty* of the task. Difficulties can range from 5 (for very easy actions) to 20 or more (for extremely difficult actions), with 15 being a common number for tasks of moderate difficulty.

If the result is equal to or greater than the difficulty number, the action is a success! If the result is lower than the difficulty number, the action is a failure. Specific results are detailed below.

FOUR DIFFERENT ROLLS

There are four distinct kinds of dice rolls in *Monarchies of Mau*.

ABILITY CHECKS

Ability checks, or just “checks,” are the most common kind of dice rolls. When your cat is trying to accomplish something unrelated to attacking or defending, such as climbing a wall or giving a speech, she will roll a check based on the most relevant ability to see if she succeeds.

ATTACK ROLLS

Whenever your cat wants to hurt another character or an enemy, you must perform an attack roll. Attack rolls use abilities differently than checks. Although climbing a wall and shooting a bow both use the Dexterity ability, the attack roll determines if your cat successfully hits the deepskin with her arrow. See more on attack rolls on p. 107.

SAVING THROWS

If something bad is happening to your cat, such as an attack, conditions (see p. 109), or disastrous effect from another action, you can roll a saving throw to attempt to protect him. Saving throws are different from attack rolls and ability checks, although they may use the same ability scores to make a dice roll. Avoiding the effects of a cloud of gas, for example, may require rolling a Constitution saving throw.

DAMAGE ROLLS

If your cat has a success or triumph result for their attack roll, he can then roll dice to determine damage. This dice roll does not use a d20, but rath-

er depends on the damage dice from the weapon, secret, or spell you chose to attack. See p. 107 for more on types of damage.

RESULTS OF D20 ROLLS

When rolling d20s against a difficulty, there are four possible results:

FAILURE

If the total result of the dice roll (after all modifiers have been applied) is less than the difficulty number, the action fails. In some cases, this may mean that nothing happens – for example, your character is unable to climb the wall. In other cases, this may mean the action goes awry, or becomes worse – your cat’s attempts at diplomacy are taken as an insult.

SUCCESS

If the total result of the dice roll (after all modifiers have been applied) is equal to or greater than the difficulty number, the action succeeds. Usually this simply means the player’s desired action takes place, but the Guide may choose to interpret what success specifically means. Perhaps successfully bribing a guard to let a character pass a restricted area doesn’t mean that no alarms are raised, but only that the alarms are delayed.

BOTCH

If the dice roll is a natural 1 – meaning the d20 die roll you consult for your result is a 1, before any modifiers are applied – then the action fails in an especially bad way. This is called a *botch*. Sometimes it will be easy to see how an action will fail in this way, such as your cat falling from the wall he was climbing and losing stamina points. Other times the Guide will need to interpret the severity of the failure and how it will affect your character, such as a challenge to a duel in response to a terrible collapse of diplomacy.

TRIUMPH

If the dice roll is a natural 20 – meaning the d20 die roll you consult for your result is a 20, before any modifiers are applied – then the action succeeds especially well. This is called a

triumph. It may be obvious in what way the action succeeds well, such as climbing a wall faster than previously anticipated. Other times the Guide will need to interpret in what way the action favors your character, such as a bribed guard taking their money and entirely leaving their post before they are discovered to have assisted you.

FORTUNE FORTUNE PILES AND THE FORTUNE BOWL

Fortune is a measure of a character's enthusiasm, inspiration, and instincts. This is a way your character's personality traits (p. 94) can be important to the success or failure of an action. As characters overcome obstacles, portray themselves in intriguing ways, or otherwise contribute to interesting stories, they build up fortune in their personal *fortune pile* or in the group's *fortune bowl*. When things get tough or a particularly critical roll needs to succeed, the characters use fortune to push the odds in their favor.

At the start of every adventure, the fortune bowl has two points in it. As the game progresses, the Guide gives out fortune as players play to their character's personality traits in a way that makes the story more complicated or interesting. The Guide can also give out fortune at her discretion if a player at the table makes someone laugh, comes up with a good plan, or acts in a way that everyone agrees is in line with the character's instincts.

Whenever the Guide awards a player fortune, that player must decide immediately if she wants to keep the fortune for herself, or add it to the fortune bowl. A player doesn't need to justify their reasons for either decision, but they can be fun to consider. Is the character building up to succeed in a personal, secret mission? Or is she more invested in the Precept of loyalty over instincts? Perhaps the group mission best serves her purposes for the moment, so the player awards most of their fortune to the fortune bowl, only keeping a little for herself until mutual goals no longer align. Fortune that isn't awarded to a specific player always goes directly into the fortune bowl.

A player can force the Guide to award them fortune by intentionally failing. If the player is about to make a dice roll that one of his cat's personality traits would affect (such as "be nice to

dogs" when a diplomat from Pugmire is trying to get secret information out of him), the player can choose to fail before he rolls any dice. If he chooses failure, the Guide gives the player a fortune, and the result counts as if the player rolled a botch. Spellcasters can also intentionally fail spells — see p. 113 for more information.

Whenever a character is in a difficult situation, the player can use a fortune from his fortune pile by giving it to the Guide. If the player doesn't have any fortune in his fortune pile, or simply doesn't want to spend it, he can take ask the group if he can spend fortune from the bowl. If no one disagrees, he takes one fortune out of the fortune bowl and gives it back to the Guide. This point of fortune is considered spent — it's gone. It is recommended that the Guide and players have a way of keeping track of fortune piles and the fortune bowl, such as tokens, chips, bottlecaps, cards, slips of paper, and so forth.

The fortunate player then rerolls any die (including a damage or stamina die), choosing the higher roll. This isn't the same as having an advantage — the player can choose to reroll either d20 on a roll with an advantage or a disadvantage, and pick whichever result works best for him. Whether the player succeeds or fails, though, the point of fortune is gone.

There are other uses for fortune besides rerolling a die. Spellcasting characters can use a point of fortune to cast a spell even if they are out of spell slots. A character can spend a fortune to interrupt initiative and take their action immediately (p. 106). Additionally, some secrets require the expenditure of fortune. In each of these cases, the player can use fortune from his pile or the group's bowl.

If the Guide chooses, she can add fortune to the bowl once per scene on behalf of a non-player (Guide-controlled) character. That character can use the fortune in the same ways as a player character — rerolling a die, casting a spell without spell slots, interrupting initiative, or activating a secret. Since this fortune isn't going to a player, it goes directly to the group's fortune bowl.

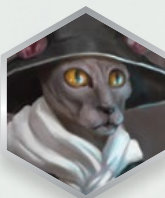
WORKING TOGETHER

Sometimes, two or more cats can team up directly to attempt something. It can be a joint effort to knock down a locked door, solve an ancient

puzzle, or convince a servant to let them into his master's house. The cat leading the effort, or the one with the highest ability modifier, can make an ability check with an advantage. This reflects the help the other cats are providing. In combat, this requires the helping character to use the Help action (p. 105).

A cat can only provide help if the task is one that she could attempt alone. For example, a cat can't help with magical research if she doesn't have Know Arcana, no matter how well intentioned she is. Moreover, a cat can help only when two or more individuals working together would be productive – if two cats fell overboard from a ship, neither can help the other to swim better.

When several individuals are trying to accomplish something as a group (such as everyone trying to sneak past an undead monster), the Guide might ask for a group ability check. Everyone in the group rolls the requisite ability check. If at least half of the group succeeds in their rolls, the whole group is considered to have succeeded at the check. Otherwise, the whole group fails.



In an odd-numbered group, the Guide may need to decide what makes "half" of the group. The Guide could decide based upon the degree of success or failure, whether or not advantages and disadvantages played a part, the use of fortune, the difficulty of the circumstances the characters face, and so on.

ADVENTURE!

In *Monarchies of Mau*, when cats are not living out the boring portions of their lives, they are often going off on adventures. There are some specific rules to consider while adventuring.

TIME

Adventures can be broken down into units of time. In this section we will cover the differences between a *chronicle*, a *story*, a *session*, a *scene*, a *round*, a *turn*, and an *action*.

CHRONICLE

The largest unit of time is a chronicle, which encompasses all the connected stories the Guide assists the players in telling over the course of days, months, or even years of play. This represents the collected history or saga of all the decisions, actions, discoveries, and developments the characters make over a long period of time.

STORY

The next largest unit of time is a story. The story is a sequence of events told over multiple sessions of play and comes to a Guide-defined ending point. This could be anything from solving the mystery of the disappearance of an important ambassador to discovering and exploring a forgotten ruin.

SESSION

Each time the Guide and players meet to play *Monarchies of Mau* is a session, which is most often several hours long but can be longer or shorter. Usually there is a defined goal for a session, such as completing one or more scenes, discussing character goals with the Guide, or even just preparation for another session that might require a large battle or lots of political intrigue.

SCENE

A scene is one event of many that characters will face over the course of a story. For example, in looking for the missing ambassador, the characters may have to interrogate the last cat who saw him in one scene, and in the next scene they might confront another cat long known to have been an enemy. Exploring a lost ruin may see cats fighting a monster patrolling the grounds in one scene, and in another scene trying to make a bargain with a crazed hermit who claims to have found a magical key to a room within.

CHAPTER THREE: PLAYING THE GAME

ROUND

A scene that requires combat (p. 103), such as the monster example above, is further broken into rounds. Every player character, non-player character, and enemy has opportunities to act or react within a round. Sometimes an opportunity is taken away due to bad conditions, and the character or enemy affected will be skipped, but otherwise everyone has a chance to take a turn to say what will or will not be done and roll the dice. When everyone has taken their turn, that round is done and a new round will begin.

TURN

Within a round, each character or enemy has an opportunity to take their turn. Each character or enemy has one turn per round. This is their time allotted to take one or more different actions. It's usually a good idea to state clearly when a character is done with his turn to avoid confusion.

ACTION

The smallest unit of time is an action. Several types of actions are discussed further on pp. 104-105,

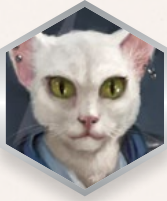
but at their most basic include things like running, spellcasting, drawing a weapon, throwing an item, or taunting an enemy.

DISTANCE

Sometimes, how fast a character is or how far away she is from someone else is important. All distances in *Monarchies of Mau* are given in feet, but that doesn't mean you should worry about precise measurements. A lot of times the Guide will use distance and measurements to give everyone at the table a general idea of how long something is, or how far something can reach. In fact you could even change three feet into one meter, if that's more comfortable.

Never feel constrained by the numbers. If one cat runs at 30 feet per turn and is being chased by a dog that runs at 40 feet per turn, the dog is faster and will catch up unless the cat does something else – that's all you need to know. If a hole is more than 50 feet deep, a 50-foot rope won't reach a cat trapped at the bottom. Only use measurements if they add something to the story – otherwise, just make a guess and move on.





I get it! Sometimes it's all big stuff, and it's all important!

But we can at least make "distance"

easier when there's already too much important stuff to worry about. Maybe you just need a general idea of how far you need to run past those guards to be safe, right?

I can tell you right now, if they're less than five feet from you, they're touching and you don't want that. Even five to 20 feet is nearby, and maybe not safe enough if you can't run fast enough, especially with your loot! They're still close at 20 to 40 feet away, so you might be able to squeak by them on a whisker.

What you need for a decent getaway is for those guards to be far, like 40 to 80 feet. Better is to have them very far, around 80 to 160 feet, and the very best (and my favorite) is for those guards to be only within line of sight at 160 feet or more. They'll never catch you then!

EQUIPMENT

Cats are assumed to be adequately equipped, armed, and armored per their capabilities. Each

character's calling and background gives them some starting equipment to place in their rucksack. At the beginning of each story, each character can pick one additional piece of mundane (non-masterwork) equipment, based on the needs of the adventure and what's available based on the area they're in. If they want more equipment, each player can ask the Guide to switch one of her existing pieces of equipment for a second piece.

If the cat would have a piece of equipment that wasn't detailed ahead of time, the player can roll a Wisdom saving throw, with a difficulty equivalent to how unlikely it is for the cat to have the item in question (default difficulty is 15). Success means the cat remembers that she did pack the item, and the player adds it to her sheet. For example, your cat may always have a coil of rope with them for various needs, but now she discovers she also needs a pair of gloves, or a piece of specialized climbing equipment to scale some particularly rough terrain. A successful Wisdom saving throw might mean your cat studied maps or consulted guides ahead of time, and would have known they would need this tool and packed it. Maybe it was only temporarily buried in her pack.

The Guide can create circumstances where cats are unarmed, unarmored, or do not have access to their usual equipment. In these cases, cats regain the benefits of their equipment once they can recover it, or when they rest in an area where they could conceivably re-equip themselves, such as a town.

Information for weapons and rules for calculating defense for suits of armor are found on pp. 91-94.

RESTING, SLEEPING, AND REGAINING STAMINA

Resting is a period of downtime, at least one hour long, during which a cat does nothing more strenuous than eating, drinking, reading, napping, or tending to wounds. At the end of a rest, a cat can spend one or more of her remaining stamina dice. For each stamina die spent in this way, the player rolls the die, adds the cat's Constitution modifier, and heals that many stamina points (or, if the cat prefers, spell slots). The player can de-

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side to spend additional stamina dice after each roll, up to the number she has at her level. See pp. 72-73 for a reminder of how stamina points and stamina dice work.

Sleeping can be any extended period of downtime, at least eight hours long. Aside from sleeping a cat can do light activity: talking, eating, reading, or standing watch for a couple of hours. Once the cat wakes up, she regains all lost stamina points, spell slots, and expended stamina dice.

Every time the party sleeps outdoors while traveling in the wilderness, each player rolls a Constitution saving throw for her character at difficulty 10. If the roll fails, she regains her stamina dice and spell slots, but not her stamina points. The player can choose to use her character's rations from her rucksack (if she has any) to reroll. This reflects how much harder it is to get proper rest and healing while roughing it.

VISION

Some spells, secrets, and relics can give a cat the ability to see in darkness. Some enemies can do this as well. There are two kinds of special vision: *Darkvision* and *Low-light Vision*.

DARKVISION

Darkvision allows for a character to see without any light at all. Characters that use Darkvision in darkness can only see in black and white (they can't see any colors). It doesn't give them any ability to see things they normally wouldn't be able to see in the light, such as invisible characters or monsters.

LOW-LIGHT VISION

Low-light Vision allows a character to see twice as far as they normally might be able to in dim light. They can see in color and make out details as if the area were brightly lit. They do need to take a few seconds to adjust, however — a character with Low-light Vision who suddenly has bright light in their eyes may get the *Blind* condition (p. 109) for a few minutes.

TRAPS AND AMBUSHES

Sometimes danger is hidden. The pit with spikes might be covered with a thin layer of leaves, or an enemy might lurk behind a thick curtain, waiting for the perfect moment to strike. How-

ever, requiring rolls to check every 10 feet in an ancient ruin can become boring very quickly.

Players do not need to be constantly alert, and can assume that their characters are. Whenever a character stumbles across a trap or is led into an ambush, they may roll a Wisdom saving throw. The difficulty depends on the quality of the subterfuge — an intricately concealed panel containing an ancient flame trap might need a difficulty of 20, while a pair of bandits in shiny armor hiding in a pile of leaves by the side of the road might only require a difficulty of 5.

Failure: You are surprised. The trap activates, or you are unable to act in the first round of combat (see next page).

Success: You notice the surprise and can act to avoid it. You may be able to roll another saving throw (such as a Dexterity saving throw) to avoid being hurt if the trap is already sprung (such as by the actions of another character who failed his saving throw). In combat, you can act normally.

Botch: You are completely flatfooted. This means not only are you surprised (see the above condition for failure), but also that the trap might be particularly effective in holding or damaging your cat or the party, or you might grant an advantage to your ambushers.

Triumph: You were expecting trouble. You have an advantage on avoiding the trap (if it activates) or on your first turn of combat.

GETTING LOST

No matter how good a cat's senses are or what kind of vision she might have, one of the biggest hazards of exploration is getting lost. Following a road, trail, or obvious feature like a river or shoreline makes it hard to become lost, but when travelers head off cross-country, things become more difficult. This is especially true in cases of poor visibility or traveling in difficult terrain (such as a dense forest, a foggy moor, or in the mountains).

If the conditions could lead to a group becoming lost, the Guide may require that the character leading the way make a Wisdom check a few times during each day of travel. The difficulty of the check depends on the terrain, the visibility conditions (full sunlight, light rain, fog, etc.), and whether any of the characters has a map, but 15 is a good default difficulty.

If the roll fails, the group is lost. The Guide can randomly determine in which direction the

party is actually moving — roll a d12 and use a clock face (with 12 as north) as an indication of which direction the group is now moving in. They will continue to move in that direction until they get some indication that they are lost, such as finding a landmark or moving into new terrain that isn't expected. (For Guides, a short but flavorful description of the journey between rolls not only acts as a clue that the characters are lost, but also helps to alleviate what could be just a series of dull dice rolls.) Once they realize they are lost, the leader can roll another Wisdom ability check to reorient.

A help roll is completely at the Guide's discretion, remembering that only those with the relevant skills can do so!

COMBAT

Sometimes, cats must fight. When they do, the game moves into *combat*, which requires a more structured system of determining what each character does and when. Use the following steps to manage what each character can do in combat — each step is explained below.

Step 1. Determine surprise.

Step 2. Establish positions.

Step 3. Roll initiative and start the first round.

Step 4. Each character takes a turn, and can do one of each of the following per turn:

- Regain reaction, if reaction has been spent.
- Move up to the character's maximum speed.
- Take one action.
- Take one free action.
- Take one bonus action, if available.

Step 5. Once a turn is over, choose who goes next.

Step 6. Once everyone has taken a turn, a new round begins. The player of the final character to act in the last round chooses who starts the new round.

STEP 1. DETERMINE SURPRISE

The Guide determines whether anyone involved in the combat is surprised (see previous

page). If a character has the potential to be surprised, the Guide may require that some characters involved roll Wisdom saving throws against an opponent's Dexterity ability check or a set difficulty.

If a character is surprised, that character does not take a turn during the first round — treat them as if they have already acted that round.

STEP 2. ESTABLISH POSITIONS

The Guide describes where all the cats and other characters are located, including how far away the characters are from each other. The players can suggest what their characters might be doing, but in the end the Guide makes the final decision.

STEP 3. ROLL INITIATIVE

Now everyone needs to know who goes first. Every character (that isn't surprised) in the combat makes a Dexterity check, including all the non-player characters. The character that rolls the highest result gets to go first. If the highest roll is tied between two or more characters, compare their Dexterity scores — the highest score goes first. If there's still a tie, the Guide decides who goes first.

STEP 4. TAKE A TURN

Whether it's a character controlled by a player or the Guide, each participant takes a turn. On her turn, a character can do one of each of the following things below:

REGAIN REACTION

Every round, each character has an opportunity to act outside of his turn in response to another character or combatant. This is called a *reaction*. A reaction happens after a character has taken her turn, but before she takes her next turn. There can be only one reaction per character per round. Opportunity attacks, Ready actions, secrets, and spell effects are all examples of things that may take place during a reaction. Some secrets or other actions call for a reaction from a character before it succeeds. If that character has already used her reaction, she cannot use it again.

During step four, if the character has spent her reaction, she regains it at the start of her turn.



MOVE

Move any distance up to the character's maximum speed. Movement can be broken up between other actions, if the total movement for the turn does not exceed the character's speed. Characters can also use their move to stand up if rendered Prone (see p. 109).

TAKE ONE ACTION

An action is one significant thing the character is doing on their turn, usually involving an ability check. The action can take place before, during, or after moving. Some possible actions that a character can take include:

Attack: Attempt to damage an enemy (see "Attack Rolls," p. 107).



Cast: Use a spell with a casting time of “one action,” or add time to a spell with a longer casting time.

Change: Replace one item in your paw(s) with one in your rucksack.

Defend: Defend yourself more effectively. All attacks against you are at a disadvantage until your

next turn, and you make Dexterity saving throws at an advantage.

Disengage: Stop attacking a character or combatant with the intent to withdraw from combat, either to run away or to engage a different combatant. Movement after taking this action doesn’t provoke an attack of opportunity (p. 107).

Help: Give a nearby (within 20 feet) ally an advantage on an attack roll or ability check before your next turn.

Hide: Make a Dexterity check (using the Sneak skill) to be or to remain unseen.

Ready: Decide on a triggering event (such as, “Once that dog moves within five feet of me...”). Then decide on an action (such as, “... I will use my action to attack with my sword.”) If the trigger happens, you can spend your *reaction* (see “Regaining Reaction” below) to take the described action, or ignore it and let the trigger expire. Spellcasters (mancers, ministers, and dabblers) can ready a spell with the casting time of one action in this way as well.



Cats are taught to study a situation before they act. Because of this, cats who take Ready actions call it pouncing, and cats gain a unique benefit from choosing this unavailable to dogs and other species. A cat who pounces (takes a Ready action) gains an advantage on the roll for the triggered action.

Run: Move again up to your speed – in effect, you are moving twice.

Search: Look through a nearby area (usually a Wisdom check) with a goal of finding something (treasure, traps, a lost item, etc.).

Use: Use an item or object.

TAKE ONE FREE ACTION

A free action is something your cat does that is quick and not significant — it does not require any checks or rolls. Examples of quick actions:

- Ask or answer a question
- Banter
- Flip a switch
- Open an unlocked door
- Press a button
- Scream something

TAKE ONE BONUS ACTION

Sometimes, a character will have a secret, a spell, or some other ability that allows them to do something using a bonus action. This is just like an action, but it allows you to do a second, specific thing during a turn. If a character has multiple opportunities to take a bonus action, however, only one can be used per turn. Something that requires a bonus action cannot be taken as a normal action, a free action, or a reaction.

STEP 5. CHOOSE WHO GOES NEXT

Once a character has taken her turn, the player or Guide who controls her can decide which character goes next. Sometimes it's best to pick someone on your side, but occasionally it can be advantageous to pick someone on the opposite side. A character who is surprised or has already taken a turn this round cannot be chosen. The chosen character then goes to step four.

There is one exception: Once the next character is chosen, a player whose character hasn't gone yet can decide to *interrupt* the order. They spend a fortune either from their fortune pile or the fortune bowl, and that player immediately goes to step four. Then they get to choose who goes next in step five, as if they were originally selected. Similarly, a character can choose the Ready action (p. 105) earlier in the round, and if a character performs the appropriate triggering action, the Ready character can interrupt for free!

The Guide can also interrupt, if they have non-player characters who haven't taken a turn.

If the Guide chooses to interrupt, she puts a

fortune into the fortune bowl, and then her chosen non-player character goes to step four, as if that character was selected. Non-player characters can also take the Ready action as well.

Once either a player or a Guide has spent fortune to interrupt the order, however, that's it until the turn is over. No one else can spend fortune to interrupt the interrupt. Only a previously announced Ready action can interrupt the interrupt, if the trigger condition is met.

STEP 6. BEGIN THE NEXT ROUND

Once everyone who can take a turn this round has done so, a new round begins. The player or Guide of the character that went last in the previous round chooses which character goes first in the new round. She can choose her own character to go again, if she wishes.

COMBAT ROUND EXAMPLE

Iris von Rex and Schadie von Siberian are creeping down a corridor when two rats of Labo Tor jump out. In step one, Schadie is surprised, but Iris is free to act as normal (her dice roll to determine surprise is a success).

One of the rats wins the initiative roll and goes first: He moves to close with Schadie and attacks with a dagger. He rolls his attack, which is successful, then rolls damage to determine how much stamina Schadie loses. The first rat's turn is finished. The Guide, who controls the rats, determines that the player controlling Iris goes next.

Iris chooses to move close to the first rat and attacks: She is successful and also rolls to find out how much damage the rat takes from her mace. Iris ends her turn, and chooses the second rat to go — the only character left unchosen (since Schadie is surprised and can't act this round).

The second rat can move in to attack Iris or Schadie, whichever the Guide chooses. The second rat moves forward 20 feet, shouts, Readies a spell to go off during the next round when either cat closes within five feet of him, and ends his turn. The next round is free to begin, and the Guide, who controlled the second rat last round, will choose who will go first in the new round. Schadie is now free from surprise and will be able to act normally in the new round whenever their turn comes, unless the rat's Readied spell inflicts a condition that prevents them from acting again.

ATTACK ROLLS

Whenever one character attacks another, the player or Guide makes an attack roll to see if she hits or misses. To make an attack, roll a d20 and add any appropriate modifiers (such as a proficiency bonus, and the Strength modifier if it's a melee attack or the Dexterity modifier if it's ranged). If the total of the roll plus modifiers equals or exceeds the target's defense, the attack hits and does damage.

Failure: Your attack misses.

Success: Roll the appropriate damage dice (p. 97), add in all modifiers (such as the Strength or Dexterity modifier, but not the proficiency bonus), modify the results if needed (such as if a character is resistant or weak to that damage type), and subtract the total from the target's stamina points.

Botch: The attack misses regardless of any modifiers or the target's defense. In addition, the Guide might give the attacker a disadvantage or her opponents an advantage on a future roll.

Triumph: The attack hits regardless of the target's defense. Double the number of the attack's damage dice and add them all together before adding any relevant damage modifiers.

ATTACK OF OPPORTUNITY

Characters can make an attack of opportunity when a visible hostile character moves away from the attacker without disengaging first (p. 105). The attacker can use his reaction to make a melee attack against the provoking character — think of it as a quick slash at the character's back before the moving character continues their turn.

If something or someone moves a character without them using a movement, action, bonus action, or reaction, then they don't provoke an attack of opportunity. Falling over from a strong gust of wind or being shoved across a room by a moving wall are a few examples.

COVER

Getting behind an obstacle, such as a rock or a door, provides *cover* against spells and attacks. A target with some (meaning partial) cover has a +2 bonus to defense and an advantage on relevant saving throws. A target with total cover can't be tar-

geted directly by an attack or spell, although indirect spells, such as those with an area of effect, may still affect her.

RANGED ATTACKS

Ranged attacks have a couple of additional considerations unique to them.

First, all ranged attacks are best performed away from opponents. If the attacker is attempting a ranged attack, and an active enemy is within five feet, the ranged attack is at a disadvantage.

Second, some ranged weapons have ammunition. If the attacker uses a ranged weapon more than once during a combat, the attacker must make an ammunition check at the end of the fight to see if they can use that weapon again (p. 93).

DAMAGE TYPES

Damage comes in many forms — although fire and a fall will both hurt, they do it in different ways. Each kind of damage is called a *damage type*. All damage has a type — if you're not sure, it's probably bludgeoning, piercing, or slashing.

The damage types are as follows:

- **Acid:** An attack that eats away at a character's flesh and possessions.
- **Bludgeoning:** A blunt, physical attack.
- **Cold:** An attack that does damage through intensely low temperature.
- **Force:** Pure magical energy focused into a damaging form.
- **Heat:** An attack that does damage through intensely high temperature.
- **Lightning:** Electrical damage, either naturally or magically caused.
- **Necrotic:** An attack through deathly energy, disease, darkness, or other entropic means.
- **Piercing:** A physical attack that does damage by piercing the flesh.
- **Poison:** An attack that does damage from inside a character over time, like an illness.
- **Psychic:** Damage done directly to the mind of the target.

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- **Radiant:** An attack through healing, purity, light, or other holy means.
- **Slashing:** A physical attack that does damage by cutting the flesh.
- **Thunder:** Sonic damage, either naturally or magically created.

Sometimes, a secret or enemy ability references being *resistant* to a particular damage type. In such cases, the final damage result is divided in half (dropping the remainder) before being applied to the target's stamina points. Conversely, if something is listed as being *weak* to a damage type, the damage result is doubled before being applied. Finally if a character is *immune* to something, all damage from that type is ignored.

ZERO STAMINA POINTS AND DYING

When a character's current stamina points drop to 0, the character falls Unconscious (p. 111) and is dying. If something (such as a healing spell or secret) raises the character's stamina points above 0, the character stops dying and is fully con-

scious again, just as if he'd never been reduced to 0 stamina points. Nothing can cause a character or enemy to fall below 0 stamina points.

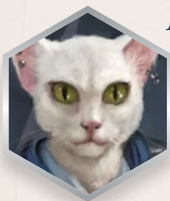
Whenever a dying character starts her turn with 0 stamina points, the player or Guide must make a *death save*. This is a Constitution saving throw at difficulty 15.

Failure: The character takes one step to the grave. She can fail three times before dying. The character can choose to spend a stamina die to prevent this death save failure.

Success: She is no longer dying, and becomes stable (see below). In addition, she can choose to spend a stamina die and roll it to recover that many stamina points.

Botch: A botch counts as *two* death save failures. The player can spend a single stamina die to prevent one of these, as with a normal failed roll.

Triumph: The character is stable and gains a stamina die (if she's used or lost any). She can use this stamina die immediately to recover stamina points, as with a successful death save.



A cat with an interesting scar usually has an interesting story to tell, am I right? And it always involves having cheated death! Telling those stories to make cats and dogs like you and buy you food and drink is fun, but first you have to survive to tell them, and dying is not fun.

If a cat is dying at 0 stamina points and somehow survives in a particularly heroic, interesting, or funny way, she can opt to take a distinctive scar to mark the occasion. Examples would include rolling a triumph on your very last death save, another character just barely healing her in the nick of time after defeating a nasty opponent, or accidentally falling into a vat of healing salve.

At the Guide's discretion, the character with this scar can use it as an advantage on an appropriate social roll. Fighters love trading war stories and intimidating people with visible scars, and who knows what kind of fur-raising stories mancercs can trade about their past injuries?

If the character takes any damage while dying, that counts as another death save failure, although the player can spend a stamina die to prevent that failure, as if she had rolled the failure herself. If the character crosses off her third death save failure, she dies.

STABILIZING

A cat can use his action to help a dying character by administering medical aid. The assisting character makes a Wisdom check at difficulty 10. If successful, the character is no longer dying. He now has 1 stamina point, and is no longer Unconscious.

CONDITIONS

Conditions alter a character's capabilities in a variety of ways. They can be the result of a spell, a secret, an enemy's attack, or some other effect.

A condition lasts either until it is removed (such as standing up after being knocked prone), or for a duration specified by the effect that imposed the condition. If multiple effects impose the same condition, each instance has its own duration, but the effects don't get any worse — you either have the condition or you don't.

- **Anosmic:** You can't smell, and automatically fail any ability check, secret, or spell that requires smell.
- **Blind:** You can't see, and automatically fail any ability check, secret, or spell that requires sight. Attack rolls against you have an advantage, and your attack rolls are at a disadvantage.
- **Charmed:** You can't attack the charmer or target the charmer with harmful abilities or effects. The charmer has an advantage on ability checks to interact socially with you. You perceive the charmer's words and actions in the most favorable way, but an opposed Charisma check is necessary to convince you to do anything you wouldn't ordinarily do. You never obey suicidal or obviously harmful orders, but you might be convinced that something dangerous is worth doing. Any act by the charmer or the charmer's apparent allies that threatens you breaks the effect.
- **Confused:** You can't make opportunity attacks or use secrets that require an action, bonus action, or reaction. Your next attack roll will be against any nearby character, determined randomly.
- **Cursed:** You have a disadvantage on attack rolls and ability checks due to bad luck.
- **Deaf:** You can't hear and automatically fail any ability check that requires hearing.
- **Incapacitated:** You can't take actions, bonus actions, free actions, or reactions.
- **Immobile:** You cannot move. Attack rolls against you have an advantage, and your attack rolls are at a disadvantage. You also have a disadvantage on Dexterity saving throws.
- **Invisible:** You cannot be sensed without the aid of magic or a special sense. Your general location can be detected by any loud noises you make, obvious tracks you leave, or powerful smells you have, but it is much harder to determine your exact position. Attack rolls against you are at a disadvantage, and your attack rolls have an advantage.
- **Paralyzed:** You can't move or speak, and you can't take actions, bonus actions, free actions, or reactions. You automatically fail Strength and Dexterity saving throws, and attack rolls against you have an advantage. Any attack that hits you counts as a triumph.
- **Petrified:** You are turned into a solid substance (usually stone), along with anything you are wearing or carrying. You can't move or speak, are unaware of your surroundings, and you can't take actions, bonus actions, free actions, or reactions. Attack rolls against you have an advantage, and you automatically fail all Strength and Dexterity saving throws. You are resistant to all damage, and immune to poison damage.
- **Possessed:** You can't attack the possessor or target the possessor with harmful abilities or effects. The possessor has an advantage on ability checks to interact socially with you. You perceive the possessor's words and actions in the most favorable way, no matter what. You will even obey suicidal or obviously harmful orders until the condition is removed.
- **Prone:** Your only movement option is to crawl, unless you use your move to stand up (which can provoke an attack of opportunity). While Prone, you are at a disadvantage on attack rolls. An attack roll against you has an advantage if the attacker is within five feet. Otherwise, the attack roll has a disadvantage.

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- **Repelled:** You must spend all your actions getting as far away from the source of the repulsion as possible. You will continue to avoid it for the remainder of the combat or until the condition ends.
- **Scared:** You have a disadvantage on ability checks and attack rolls while the source of the fear is in sight. You can't willingly move closer to the source of the fear, either staying rooted to the spot or moving away from the source.
- **Sickly:** You have a disadvantage on attack rolls and ability checks due to illness or feeling under the weather.
- **Stunned:** You can't take actions, bonus actions, free actions, or reactions. In addition, you can't move, and can speak only falteringly. You automatically fail Strength and Dexterity saving throws, and attack rolls against you have an advantage.
- **Unconscious:** You can't take actions, bonus actions, free actions, or reactions. In addition, you can't move or speak, and are unaware of your surroundings. You drop whatever you're

holding and fall prone if circumstances allow (gaining the Prone condition as well). You automatically fail Strength and Dexterity saving throws. Attack rolls against you have an advantage. Any attack that hits you is a triumph if the attacker is within five feet of you.

ADVANCEMENT

As cats go on adventures, they become more experienced and powerful. This indication of experience is called a *level*, and increasing in level is called *advancement*. Cats go up in level after an interesting story, or maybe every few sessions — it varies based on Guide desire and the logic of the chronicle. It may make more sense to go up in level when the characters are relaxing in town instead of when they're in the middle of exploring a ruin. Conversely, defeating or outsmarting a particularly powerful monster may prompt a level advancing immediately.

At each level, the player does the following:

- Adds a number of stamina points to her cat's maximum total, based on her character's calling.



ADVANCEMENT

- Gains another stamina die.
- All spellcaster characters gain two additional spell slots (plus their current Constitution modifier). This includes dabblers with the Magic Aptitude (p. 78) secret.
- Mancers and ministers choose two more spells (p.113). Dabblers only gain spells if they choose to refine their Magic Aptitude secret.

Every two levels, the character's proficiency bonus also increases by one.

LEVEL	PROFICIENCY BONUS
1-2	+2
3-4	+3
5-6	+4
7-8	+5
9-10	+6

The character also gets one *improvement* each level. This can be any of the following:

- Increase an ability score by 1 up to a maximum of 20. Also, take a new skill.
- Take a new secret your character has access to (such as an aptitude secret, or one within your calling or house).
- Refine an existing secret (if it has listed refinements).

After a cat reaches level 10, she has *gray fur*. She can continue to adventure if she chooses, but she doesn't advance in level any more.



CHAPTER FOUR: MAGIC

Cat magic is an expression of Mau lifestyle and social structures. Spellcasters find the cracks and secret methods of the world left behind, bringing forth effects that are unusual and unnatural. The workings of cat magic are not evil nor wrong, but are immediately recognizable as an aberration of the natural order. Dogs, unable to process the nuanced difference between evil and unnatural, often react poorly to these workings.

All cats can acquire a secret to utilize magic to a small degree. Some, like the mancercs and the ministers, spend their time studying the depths of those secrets, unlocking more powerful magic. Either way, magic is a flexible, useful, and sometimes chaotic ability.

How Spells Work

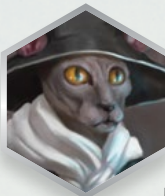
Mancercs, ministers, and other cats who take secrets that allow them to cast spells are known collectively as *spellcasters*. All spellcasters learn several spells throughout their studies. The power of a spell is enumerated in the *spell level*, with level 1 as the weakest spells, level 2 as slightly more powerful, and so on.

Each spellcaster has several *spell slots*, which determine how often she can cast spells before needing to rest. Spellcasters have two spell slots, plus an additional number of spell slots equal to her Constitution modifier, every time the cat gains a level. Casting a spell expends spell slots equal to its spell level. (The three basic spells granted with spellcasting secrets do not use spell slots when cast.) A spellcaster can spend stamina dice (p. 73) to recover

spell slots, just like recovering stamina points, and she recovers all her spell slots after sleeping. In desperate times, a spellcaster can spend fortune to cast a single spell of any level.

Most spells, once they are cast, don't require a roll — they simply happen. Some spells require a target to make a saving throw to avoid some or all of a spell's effects. The difficulty to resist a spellcaster's spells is always the same: 8 + the spellcaster's ability modifier + the spellcaster's proficiency bonus.

Other spells may require an attack roll to determine if the caster hits the intended target. Making an attack roll with a spell is much like making any other attack roll: Roll 1d20, and add the spellcaster's ability modifier + proficiency bonus (spellcasters are assumed to be proficient in magic). Ranged spell attacks are like normal ranged attacks (see p. 107) and follow all the same limitations.



Cat magic is powerful, but also notoriously volatile. More than once I have lost whiskers

when a spell has gone awry. If a cat rolls a botch on a spellcasting roll, intentionally fails the spell to gain fortune, or if their opponent rolls a triumph on his saving throw, the spell backfires.

The specific effects of a backfire are up to the Guide, but in general any harmful effects will center on the spellcaster or her allies, and any beneficial effects will center on the most likely enemy in range.

Dogs don't seem to have this problem with their spells. Perhaps our magic is simply too powerful.

Some spells require *concentration*. This means that while the spell is active, the spellcaster must use a bonus action every turn to keep such a spell active. If she doesn't use a bonus action for this purpose, the spell immediately ends.

LEARNING NEW SPELLS

At character creation, a spellcaster takes any basic spells that come with her spellcasting secret (see Magic Aptitude on p. 78, or Mancy and Given the Voice, both on p. 82). In addition, a starting spellcaster can take two first-level spells.

Each time a mancer or minister gains a level, she can choose two new spells at her current spell level. She can also choose to improve her spellcasting secrets and either take another four spells, or start taking spells at the next spell level. Cats with the Magic Aptitude secret do *not* automatically gain spells each level — they must refine their spellcasting secret to gain two more first-level spells, and can never cast spells of a higher spell level.

MANCERS, MINISTERS, AND DABLERS

Despite their similarities, how mancers, ministers, and other magicians cast spells differs significantly.

MANCERS

All mancer spells require that the spellcaster is touching their magical focus — an item that is at least partially made from the bones of an animal, monster, or person. The focus does not need to be immediately obvious that it is bone, but some part of it must be. A staff with a polished rodent skull at the end, a necklace made from some monster vertebrae, or the femur of a badger bandit shaved into an ivory wand are all appropriate. If the mancer cannot touch her focus, she cannot cast spells. Further, the resulting spell is shaped by the connection to the item. For example, Darkness does not simply appear; it seeps from the magical focus, spreading into the world from it.

One of the more closely guarded secrets of the monarchies is the method of mancer creation. Each house has their own take on the ceremony, but in all of them the apprentice is taken to a ritual

chamber where a masterwork is presented and destroyed. The energies inside the masterwork then flow into the nascent mancer and awaken her spellcasting abilities. The new mancer is typically presented with her bone focus during the ceremony. Some houses treat these foci as heirlooms and pass them from master to apprentice. Some families prefer their foci a little... fresher.

Every mancer starts with a bone focus when they take the Mancy secret. These foci are difficult to break once infused with magical potential, but it's possible that the cat may find a way to break or lose it. If so, it's assumed that the mancer will find or make a new focus before the start of the next story.

MINISTERS

Ministers don't need a focus. Instead, all minister spells require that the spellcaster vocalize or speak aloud, invoking the energies around her to create the effects she desires. The type of incantation is different for each house and each minister, but it can be anything from a bawdy song to a shouted word to a stern sermon to a poem in metered verse. If the minister cannot speak, she cannot cast spells. It does not matter if the target can hear her, only that the words are spoken.

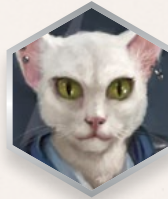
Each of the houses has their own location and style of empowering ministers, but all the methods involve three or more of the house ministers gathering in ceremony, surrounding the apprentice minister. In unison, the ministers invoke a secret chant that is specific to each house. The chant harnesses latent energy suffusing the world and wraps it into the very flesh of the minister. The ceremony never needs to be performed again, but from that moment onward, the cat is now a minister.

Each cat can choose whatever speech or song she desires for her spells — it is the act of vocalization that is more important than the specific words. The effects generated should manifest from the paws and mouth of the cat that performs them. For example, Command is not just a cat shouting, but the words spilling from her mouth and racing towards the target, binding him in magic and forcing him to do the cat's bidding.

DABLERS

Cats from the other callings who take a spellcasting secret are called *dabblers*. The inherent

magic in their bodies allows them to cast a few spells as an ace up their sleeve, but it requires both a bone focus *and* speech to cast spells — in essence, they must use the skills of both mancer and minister in order to coax magical power from their bodies. If a dabbler loses her focus or cannot speak, then she cannot cast spells until the situation is rectified.



I don't know much about chucking spells around, but I had a friend who dabbled in magic.

She told me that once she learned how to do it, she was able to keep up with others right away. If your character picks up a spellcasting secret later, calculate your spell slots just like you've been a spellcaster from first level. None of this "only from your current level onward" nonsense!

Spell Lists

MANCER SPELLS

Basic Spells: Chill Touch, Eldritch Blast, Prestidigitation

Level 1 Spells: Chaos Spray, Darkness, Detect Magic, Disguise Self, False Life, Feather Fall, Illusory Script, Inflict Wounds, Silent Image, Unnatural Rebuke

Level 2 Spells: Gust of Wind, Invisibility, Jump, Magic Armor, Mirror Image, Misty Step, Ray of Enfeeblement, Spider Climb, Spike Growth, Web

Level 3 Spells: Blink, Clairvoyance, Fireball, Fly, Haste, Lightning Bolt, Major Image, Slow, Speak with Dead, Vampiric Touch

Level 4 Spells: Animate Dead, Arcane Eye, Black Tentacles, Blight, Faithful Canine, Hold Person, Ice Storm, Polymorph, Secret Chest, Spirit Guardians

SPELL DESCRIPTIONS

Level 5 Spells: Arcane Paw, Circle of Death, Cloudkill, Cone of Cold, Create Undead, Passwall, Raise Dead, Resilient Sphere, Scrying, Telekinesis

MINISTER SPELLS

Basic Spells: Animal Friendship, Thaumaturgy, Vicious Mockery

Level 1 Spells: Calm Emotions, Charm Person, Command, Entangle, Faerie Fire, Fog Cloud, Goodberry, Healing Word, Longstrider, Speak with Animals

Level 2 Spells: Barkskin, Bestow Curse, Detect Thoughts, Enthrall, Lesser Restoration, Magic

Mouth, Moonbeam, Shatter, Suggestion, Zone of Truth

Level 3 Spells: Confusion, Daylight, Dispel Magic, Fear, Hypnotic Pattern, Mass Healing Word, Nondetection, Remove Curse, Sleet Storm, Stinking Cloud

Level 4 Spells: Dominate Beast, Geas, Giant Worm, Hallucinatory Terrain, Irresistible Dance, Legend Lore, Locate Person, Phantasmal Killer, Stoneskin, Wall of Magic

Level 5 Spells: Contagion, Creation, Dominate Person, Dream, Greater Restoration, Insect Plague, Mislead, Modify Memory, Raise Dead, Telepathic Bond

SPELL DESCRIPTIONS

The spells below are presented in alphabetical order, for ease of reference.

ANIMAL FRIENDSHIP

Minister Basic

Casting Time: 1 action
Duration: 1 day

Range: 30 feet



This spell lets you convince an animal that you mean it no harm. Choose an animal that you can see within range. It must see and hear you, and it must succeed on a Wisdom saving throw or be Charmed by you for the spell's duration. If you or one of your companions harms the target, the spell ends.

ANIMATE DEAD

Mancer Level 4

Casting Time: 1 minute
Duration: Instantaneous

Range: 10 feet



This spell creates an undead servant. Choose a pile of bones or a corpse within range. The target becomes a bone burr (p. 194) if you chose bones or a zombie (p. 208) if you chose a corpse.

On each of your turns, you can use a bonus action to mentally command any undead you made with this spell if the undead is within 60 feet of

you (if you control multiple undead, you can command any or all of them at the same time, issuing the same command to each one). You decide what action the undead will take and where it will move during its next turn, or you can issue a general command, such as "guard that chamber" or "follow that dog." If you issue no commands, the undead only defends itself against hostile characters. Once given an order, the undead continues to follow it until its task is complete.

The undead is under your control until the next sunset, after which it stops obeying any command you've given it. To maintain control of the undead for another day, you must cast this spell on the undead again before sun sets. This use of the spell reasserts your control over up to four undead characters you have animated with this spell, rather than animating a new one.

ARCANE EYE

Mancer Level 4

Casting Time: 1 action
Duration: Concentration, up to 1 hour

Range: 30 feet



You create an invisible, magical eye within range that hovers in the air for the duration. You mentally receive visual information from the eye, which has normal vision and Darkvision out to 30 feet. The eye can look in every direction.



As an action, you can move the eye up to 30 feet in any direction. There is no limit to how far away from you the eye can move. A solid barrier blocks the eye's movement, but the eye can pass through an opening as small as one inch in diameter.

ARCANE PAW

Mancer Level 5



Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 120 feet

Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute

You create a paw of shimmering, translucent force in an unoccupied space that you can see within range. The paw lasts for the spell's duration, and it moves at your command, mimicking the movements of your own paw.

The paw is an object that has Defense 20 and stamina points equal to your stamina point maximum. If it drops to 0 stamina points, the spell ends. It has a Strength of +8 (26) and a Dexterity of +0 (10).

When you cast the spell and as a bonus action on your subsequent turns, you can move the paw up to 60 feet and then cause one of the following effects with it.

- **Clenched Paw.** The paw strikes one character or object within five feet of it. Make an attack using your spellcasting ability. On a hit, the target takes 4d8 force damage.
- **Forceful Paw.** The paw attempts to push an enemy within five feet of it in a direction you choose. Make a check with the paw's Strength contested by the Strength check of the target. If you succeed, the paw pushes the target up to five feet plus a number of feet equal to five times your spellcasting ability modifier. The paw moves with the target to remain within five feet of it.
- **Interposing Paw.** The paw interposes itself between you and a character you choose until you give the paw a different command. The target can't move through the paw's space if its Strength score is less than or equal to the paw's Strength score. If its Strength score is higher than the paw's Strength score, the target can move toward you through the paw's space, but its speed is halved.

SPELL DESCRIPTIONS

BARKSKIN

Minister Level 2

Casting Time: 1 action **Range:** Touch
Duration: Concentration, up to 1 hour

You touch a willing character. Until the spell ends, the target's skin has a rough, bark-like appearance, and the target's defense can't be less than 16, regardless of what kind of armor it is wearing.



damage on a successful one. This spell has no effect on undead or constructs.

BESTOW CURSE

Minister Level 2

Casting Time: 1 action **Range:** Touch
Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute

The character touched must succeed on a Wisdom saving throw or become Cursed for the duration of the spell. A Remove Curse spell ends this effect.



BLINK

Mancer Level 3

Casting Time: 1 action **Range:** Self
Duration: 1 minute

Roll 1d20 at the end of each of your turns for the duration of the spell. On a roll of 11 or higher, you vanish completely. At the start of your next turn, and when the spell ends, you return to an unoccupied space of your choice that you can see within 10 feet of the space you vanished from. If no unoccupied space is available within that range, you appear in the nearest unoccupied space (chosen at random if more than one space is equally near). You can dismiss this spell as an action.



BLACK TENTACLES

Mancer Level 4

Casting Time: 1 action **Range:** 90 feet
Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute

Squirming, ebony tentacles fill a 20-foot square on the ground that you can see within range. When a character enters the affected area for the first time on a turn or starts her turn there, the character must succeed on a Dexterity saving throw or take 3d6 bludgeoning damage and be rendered Immobile by the tentacles until the spell ends. A character that starts her turn in the area and is already immobilized by the tentacles takes 3d6 bludgeoning damage.

A character immobilized by the tentacles can use her action to make a Strength or Dexterity saving throw (her choice) against your spell saving throw difficulty. On a success, she frees herself.



While you have vanished, characters can't perceive you or interact with you. The mancer has no memory of where she was while vanished, but she carries with her a slight feeling of dread.

BLIGHT

Mancer Level 4

Casting Time: 1 action **Range:** 30 feet
Duration: Instantaneous

Necromantic energy washes over a character of your choice that you can see within range, draining moisture and vitality from it. The target must make a Constitution saving throw. The target takes 6d8 necrotic damage on a failed save, or half as much



CALM EMOTIONS

Minister Level 1

Casting Time: 1 action **Range:** 60 feet
Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute

Each character in a 20-foot radius must make a Charisma saving throw; a character can choose to fail this saving throw if she wishes. If a character fails her saving throw, choose one of the following two effects.

- Suppress any effect causing a target to be Charmed or Scared. When this spell ends, any suppressed effect resumes, if its duration has not expired in the meantime.
- Make a target indifferent about characters of your choice that she is currently hostile toward. This indifference ends if the target is attacked or harmed by a spell or if she witnesses any of her friends being harmed.



CHAOS SPRAY

Mancer Level 1

Casting Time: 1 action **Range:** Self (15-foot cone)
Duration: 1 round

A vivid cone of clashing colors and smells springs forth from your paw. Characters in a



15-foot cone originating from you (ignoring Unconscious characters) must make a Wisdom saving throw or become Anosmic and Blind until the spell ends.

CHARM PERSON

Minister Level 1



Casting Time: 1 action
Duration: 1 hour

Range: 30 feet

You attempt to charm a person you can see within range. She must make a Wisdom saving throw, and does so with advantage if you or your companions are fighting her. If she fails the saving throw, she is Charmed by you until the spell ends or until you or your companions do anything harmful to her. The Charmed character regards you as a friendly acquaintance. When the spell ends, the character knows she was Charmed by you.

CHILL TOUCH

Mancer Basic



Casting Time: 1 action
Duration: 1 round

Range: 120 feet

You create a ghostly, skeletal paw next to a character within range. Make a ranged spell attack against the character to assail it with the chill of the grave. On a hit, the target takes 1d8 necrotic damage, and he can't regain stamina points until the start of your next turn. Until then, the paw clings to the target. If you hit a target with the Invisible condition, the target also has disadvantage on attack rolls against you until the end of your next turn.

CIRCLE OF DEATH

Mancer Level 5



Casting Time: 1 action
Duration: Instantaneous

Range: 150 feet

A sphere of negative energy ripples out in a 60-foot-radius sphere from a point within range. Each character in that area must make a Constitution saving throw. A target takes 7d6 necrotic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

CLAIRVOYANCE

Mancer Level 3



Casting Time: 10 minutes
Range: 1 mile
Duration: Concentration, up to 10 minutes

You create an invisible sensor within range in a location familiar to you (a place you have visited or seen before) or in an obvious location that is unfamiliar to you (such as behind a door, around a corner, or in a grove of trees). The sensor remains in place for the duration, and it can't be attacked or otherwise interacted with.

When you cast the spell, you can choose to see, hear, or smell. You can use the chosen sense through the sensor as if you were in its space. You can use an action to switch between senses.

CLOUDKILL

Mancer Level 5



Casting Time: 1 action
Range: 120 feet
Duration: Concentration, up to 10 minutes

You create a 20-foot radius sphere of poisonous, yellow-green fog centered on a point you choose within range. The fog spreads around corners. It lasts for the duration or until a strong wind disperses the fog, ending the spell. Its area is heavily obscured.

When a character enters the spell's area for the first time on a turn or starts her turn there, that character must make a Constitution saving throw. The character takes 5d8 poison damage on a failed saving throw, or half as much damage on a successful one. Characters are affected even if they hold their breath or don't need to breathe.

The fog moves 10 feet away from you at the start of each of your turns, rolling along the surface of the ground. The vapors, being heavier than air, sink to the lowest level of the land, even pouring down openings or rolling back onto incautious mancers who stand downhill from the cloud.

COMMAND

Minister Level 1



Casting Time: 1 action
Duration: 1 round
Range: 60 feet

You give the subject a single one- or two-word command – many minsters prefer to use the an-

SPELL DESCRIPTIONS

cient commands of the Old Ones, but any command will do. The target must succeed on a Wisdom saving throw, or she must obey the command to the best of her ability at her earliest opportunity. If the target is unable to follow your command, the spell ends. The spell has no effect if the target is immune to being Charmed, or if your command is directly harmful to her.

Some typical commands and their effects follow. You might issue a command other than one described here. If you do so, the Guide determines how the target behaves.

- **Come!** On her turn, the subject moves toward you as quickly and directly as possible. The character may do nothing but move during her turn.
- **Drop It!** On her turn, the subject drops whatever she is holding and ends her turn. She can't pick up any dropped item until her next turn.
- **Heel!** The subject stands in place. She may not take any move actions.
- **Lay Down!** On her turn, the subject falls to the ground and remains Prone until the spellcaster's next turn.
- **Run!** On her turn, the subject moves away from you as quickly as possible until the spellcaster's next turn. She may do nothing but move during her turn, and she provokes attacks of opportunity for this movement as normal.

CONE OF COLD

Mancer Level 5

Casting Time: 1 action **Range:** Self (60-ft cone)
Duration: Instantaneous

A blast of cold air erupts from your paws. Each character in a 60-foot cone must make a Constitution saving throw. A character takes 8d8 cold damage on a failed saving throw, or half as much damage on a successful one.

CONFUSION

Minister Level 3

Casting Time: 1 action **Range:** 90 feet
Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute

This spell assaults and twists characters' minds, spawning delusions and provoking uncontrolled actions. Each character in a 10-foot radius centered on a point you choose within range must succeed on a Wisdom saving throw when you cast this spell or be affected by it.

An affected target gains the Confused condition. At the end of each of his turns, an affected target can make a Wisdom saving throw. If it succeeds, this effect ends for that target.

CONTAGION

Minister Level 5

Casting Time: 1 action
Duration: 7 days

Range: Touch



You convince someone that they are sick, and disease manifests at your touch. A character within your reach must make a Charisma saving throw. If they fail, the target is Anosmic, Blind, and Sickly.

At the end of each of the target's turns, it must make a Constitution saving throw. After failing three of these saving throws, the disease gets worse, giving the character the Paralyzed condition. The character stops making these saves once Paralyzed. After succeeding on three of these saving throws, the character recovers from the disease, removing all conditions, and the spell ends.

Since this spell induces a natural disease in its target, any effect that removes a disease or otherwise ameliorates a disease's effects apply to it.

CREATE UNDEAD

Mancer Level 5

Casting Time: 1 minute
Duration: Instantaneous

Range: 10 feet



This spell creates up to three undead servants. Choose up to three piles of bones or corpses within range. Each target becomes a bone burr (p. 194) if you chose bones or a zombie (p. 208) if you chose a corpse.

On each of your turns, you can use a bonus action to mentally command any undead you made with this spell if the undead is within 60 feet of you (if you control multiple undead, you can command any or all of them at the same time, issuing the same command to each one). You decide what action the undead will take and where it will move

during its next turn, or you can issue a general command, such as “guard that chamber” or “follow that dog.” If you issue no commands, the undead only defends itself against hostile characters. Once given an order, the undead continues to follow it until its task is complete.

The undead is under your control until the next sunset, after which it stops obeying any command you’ve given it. To maintain control of the undead for another day, you must cast this spell on the undead again before sun sets. This use of the spell reasserts your control over up to six undead characters you have animated with this spell, rather than animating new ones.

CREATION

Minister Level 5

Casting Time: 1 minute
Duration: Special

Range: 30 feet



You use your voice to draw wisps of material from the very air to create a nonliving object of vegetable matter within range: soft goods, rope, wood, or something similar. You can also use this spell to create mineral objects such as stone, crystal, or metal. The object created must be no larger than a five-foot cube, and the object must be of a form and material that you have seen before.

The duration depends on the object’s material. If the object is composed of multiple materials, use the shortest duration.

MATERIAL	DURATION
Vegetable matter	1 day
Stone or crystal	½ day
Precious metals and gems	An hour
Plastic or other mystical material	Several dozen twitches

DARKNESS

Mancer Level 1

Casting Time: 1 action
Duration: Concentration, up to 10 minutes

Range: 60 feet

Magical darkness spreads from a point you choose within range to fill a 15-foot-radius sphere for the duration. A character with Darkvision can’t see through this darkness, and non-magical light can’t illuminate it.



If the point you choose is on an object you are holding or one that isn’t being worn or carried, the darkness emanates from the object and moves with it. Completely covering the source of the darkness with an opaque object, such as a bowl or a helm, blocks the darkness.

If any of this spell’s area overlaps with an area of light created by a spell of second level or lower, the spell that created the light is dispelled.

DAYLIGHT

Minister Level 3

Casting Time: 1 action
Duration: 1 hour

Range: 60 feet



A 60-foot-radius sphere of light spreads out from a character you choose within range. If any of this spell’s area overlaps with an area of darkness created by a spell of third level or lower, the spell that created the darkness is dispelled.

DETECT MAGIC

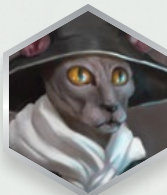
Mancer Level 1

Casting Time: 1 action
Duration: Concentration, up to 10 minutes

Range: Self



For the duration, you can see the presence of magic, the Unseen, and characters under Unseen influence within 30 feet of you. If you sense magic in this way, you can use your action to see a faint aura around any specific and visible character or object in the area that bears magic. This spell cannot be used if the spellcaster is Blind.



In my correspondence with dog spellcasters, I have learned that they consider such mystical detection to be something you smell instead of something you see. I am reluctant to tell fellow mystics their methods are faulty, but I cannot envision shoving my nose into dangerous areas to determine if they reek of the arcane.

SPELL DESCRIPTIONS

DETECT THOUGHTS

Minister Level 2

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Self

Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute

For the duration, you can read the thoughts of certain characters. When you cast the spell and as your action on each turn until the spell ends, you can focus your mind on any one character that you can see within 30 feet of you. If the character you choose has an Intelligence of 3 or lower or doesn't speak any language, the character is unaffected.

You initially learn the surface thoughts of the character – what is most on its mind in that moment. As an action, you can either shift your attention to another character's thoughts or attempt to probe deeper into the same character's mind. If you probe deeper, the target must make a Wisdom saving throw. If it fails, you gain insight into its reasoning (if any), its emotional state, and something that looms large in its mind (such as something it worries over, loves, or hates). If it succeeds, the spell ends. Either way, the target knows that you are probing into its mind, and unless you shift your attention to another character's thoughts, the



character can use its action on its turn to make an Intelligence check contested by your Intelligence check; if it succeeds, the spell ends.

Questions verbally directed at the target character naturally shape the course of its thoughts, so this spell is particularly effective as part of an interrogation.

DISGUISE SELF

Mancer Level 1

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Self

Duration: 1 hour



Your focus can make you look different, including fur, clothing, armor, weapons, and equipment. You can seem a foot shorter or taller, thin, fat, or in between. You cannot change into a character that isn't a cat, but otherwise, the extent of the apparent change is up to you.

The spell does not provide the abilities or mannerisms of the chosen form, nor does it alter the perceived tactile or audible properties of you or your equipment.

To discern that you are disguised, a character can use his action to inspect your appearance and



must succeed on an Intelligence saving throw against your spell saving throw difficulty.

DISPEL MAGIC

Minister Level 3



Casting Time: 1 action
Duration: Instantaneous

Range: 120 feet

Choose one character, object, or magical effect within range. Any spell cast by a character with a level or challenge rating equal to or lower than yours ends. For each spell cast by a character of a higher level or challenge rating than yours on the target, make an ability check using your spellcasting ability. The difficulty equals 10 + the spell's level. On a successful check, the spell ends.

DOMINATE BEAST

Minister Level 4



Casting Time: 1 action
Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute

Range: 60 feet

You attempt to beguile an animal that you can see within range. It must succeed on a Wisdom saving throw or be Charmed by you for the duration. If you or characters that are friendly to you are fighting it, it has an advantage on the saving throw.

While the animal is Charmed, you have a telepathic link with it. You can use this telepathic link to issue commands to the animal while you are conscious (no action required), which it does its best to obey. You can specify a simple and general course of action, such as "Attack that character," "Run over there," or "Fetch that object." If the animal completes the order and doesn't receive further direction from you, it defends and preserves itself to the best of its ability.

You can use your action to take total and precise control of the target. Until the end of your next turn, the animal takes only the actions you choose, and doesn't do anything that you don't allow it to do. During this time, you can also cause the animal to use a reaction, but this requires you to use your own reaction as well.

Each time the target takes damage, it makes a new Wisdom saving throw against the spell. If the saving throw succeeds, the spell ends.

DOMINATE PERSON

Minister Level 5



Casting Time: 1 action
Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute

Range: 60 feet

As per Dominate Beast, save that the target must be another character (not an animal). Further, the target is Possessed, rather than Charmed.

DREAM

Minister Level 5



Casting Time: 1 minute
Duration: 8 hours

Range: Special

This spell shapes a character's dreams. Choose a character known to you as the target of this spell when it is asleep. You, or a willing character you touch, enters a trance state, acting as a messenger. While in the trance, the messenger is aware of his or her surroundings, but is Paralyzed. If the target is awake when you cast the spell, the spell fails, but no spell slots are lost.

The messenger appears in the target's dreams and can converse with the target as long as it remains asleep, through the duration of the spell. The messenger can also shape the environment of the dream, creating landscapes, objects, and other images. The messenger can emerge from the trance at any time, ending the effect of the spell early. The target recalls the dream perfectly upon waking.

You can make the messenger appear monstrous and terrifying to the target. If you do, the messenger can deliver a message of no more than 10 words and then the target must make a Wisdom saving throw. If you have a body part, tuft of fur, clipping from a claw, or similar portion of the target's body, the target makes its saving throw with disadvantage.

On a failed save, echoes of the phantasmal monstrosity spawn a nightmare that lasts the duration of the target's sleep and prevents the target from gaining any benefit from that rest. In addition, when the target wakes up, she takes 3d6 psychic damage.

ELDRITCH BLAST

Mancer Basic



Casting Time: 1 action
Duration: Instantaneous

Range: 120 feet

SPELL DESCRIPTIONS

A beam of crackling energy streaks toward a character within range. Make a ranged spell attack against the target. On a hit, the target takes 1d10 force damage.

ENTANGLE

Minister Level 1

Casting Time: 1 action **Range:** 90 feet
Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute

Grasping weeds and vines sprout from the ground in a 20-foot square starting from a point within range. A character in the area when you cast the spell must succeed on a Strength saving throw or be restrained by the entangling plants until the spell ends. A character restrained by the plants can use his action to make a Strength check against your spell saving throw difficulty. On a success, he frees himself.

When the spell ends, the conjured plants wilt away.

ENTHRALL

Minister Level 2

Casting Time: 1 action **Range:** 60 feet
Duration: 1 minute

You weave a distracting string of words, causing characters of your choice that you can see within range and that can hear you to make a Wisdom saving throw. Any character that you or your companions are fighting has advantage on the saving throw. On a failed saving throw, the target has disadvantage on Wisdom checks made to perceive any character other than you until the spell ends or until the target can no longer hear you. The spell ends if you are incapacitated or can no longer speak.

FAERIE FIRE

Minister Level 1

Casting Time: 1 action **Range:** 60 feet
Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute

Each object in a 20-foot cube within range is outlined in blue, green, or violet light (your choice). Any character in the area when the spell is cast is also outlined in light if she fails a Dexterity saving throw. For the duration, objects and affected characters shed dim light in a 10-foot radius.

Any attack roll against an affected character or object has advantage if the attacker can see her,

and the affected character or object can't benefit from being Invisible.

FAITHFUL CANINE

Mancer Level 4

Casting Time: 1 action **Range:** 30 feet
Duration: 8 hours

You conjure a phantom canine in an unoccupied space you can see within range, where it remains for the duration, until you dismiss it as an action, or until you move more than 100 feet away from it.

The canine is Invisible to all characters except you and can't be harmed. When a character comes within 30 feet of it without first speaking the password that you specify when you cast this spell, the canine starts barking loudly. The canine sees Invisible characters, the Unseen, and it sees through illusions.

At the start of each of your turns, the canine attempts to bite one character within five feet of it that is hostile to you. The canine's attack bonus is equal to your spellcasting ability modifier + your proficiency bonus. On a hit, it deals 4d8 piercing damage.



Once, a lizard asked me why we do not summon felines, rather than canines, to do our bidding. I did not dignify the query with a response — all should know that even unevolved felines are disinclined to mindlessly take orders. Besides, ordering canines around is more fun.

FALSE LIFE

Mancer Level 1

Casting Time: 1 action **Range:** Self
Duration: 1 hour

Bolstering yourself with a facsimile of life, you gain 1d4 + 4 stamina points for the dura-

tion of the spell. The stamina points vanish with the spell, possibly leaving the spellcaster injured.

FEAR

Minister Level 3



Casting Time: 1 action **Range:** Self (30-foot cone)
Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute

You project a phantasmal image of a character's worst fears. Each character in a 30-foot cone must succeed on a Wisdom saving throw or drop whatever she is holding and become Scared for the duration.

While scared by this spell, a character must take a move action away from you by the safest available route on each of her turns, unless there is nowhere to move. If the character ends her turn in a location where she doesn't have line of sight to you, the character can make a Wisdom saving throw. On a successful saving throw, the spell ends for that character.

FEATHER FALL

Minister Level 1



Casting Time: 1 reaction **Range:** 60 feet
Duration: 1 minute

Choose up to five falling characters within range. A falling character's rate of descent slows to 60 feet per round until the spell ends. If the character lands before the spell ends, he takes no falling damage and can land on his feet, and the spell ends for that character.

FIREBALL

Minister Level 3



Casting Time: 1 action **Range:** 150 feet
Duration: Instantaneous

A bright streak flashes from your paw to a point you choose within range, then blossoms with a low roar into an explosion of flame. Each character in a 20-foot-radius sphere centered on that point must make a Dexterity saving throw. A target takes 6d6 heat damage on a failed saving throw, or half as much damage on a successful one. The fire spreads around corners. It ignites flammable objects in the area that aren't being worn or carried.

FLY

Minister Level 3



Casting Time: 1 action **Range:** Touch
Duration: Concentration, up to 10 minutes

You touch a willing character. The target gains a flying speed of 60 feet for the duration. When the spell ends, the target falls if it is still aloft, unless it can stop the fall.

FOG CLOUD

Minister Level 1



Casting Time: 1 action **Range:** 120 feet
Duration: Concentration, up to 1 hour

You create a 20-foot-radius sphere of fog centered on a point within range. The sphere spreads around corners, and its area is heavily obscured. It lasts for the duration or until a strong wind disperses it.

GEAS

Minister Level 4



Casting Time: 1 minute **Range:** 60 feet
Duration: 30 days

You place a magical command on a character, forcing her to carry out some service or refrain from some action or course of activity. If the character can understand you, she must succeed on a Wisdom saving throw or become Charmed by you for the duration. While the character is Charmed, she takes 5d10 psychic damage each time she acts in a manner directly counter to your instructions, but no more than once each day. A character that can't understand you is unaffected by the spell.

You can end the spell early by using an action to dismiss it. Removing the Charmed condition also ends it.

GIANT WORM

Minister Level 4



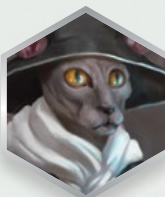
Casting Time: 1 action **Range:** 30 feet
Duration: Concentration, up to 10 minutes

You transform up to 10 worms within range into giant versions of their natural forms for the duration (statistics are on p. 191). Each worm obeys your verbal commands, and in combat, they

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act on your turn each round. The Guide resolves their actions and movement.

A worm remains in its giant size for the duration, until it drops to 0 stamina points, or until you use an action to dismiss the effect on it.



The Guide might allow you to choose different insects. For example, if you have access to Pugmire, she might allow you to use this spell to create Giant Ants, such as the ones on pp. 188-189 of that book. If she allows such changes, you can only create a total of 10 CR worth of creatures — so, a maximum of five giant ants, as they're CR 2.

GOODBERRY

Minister Level 1

Casting Time: 1 action
Duration: Instantaneous

Range: Touch

Up to 10 berries appear in your paw and are infused with magic for the duration. A character can use her action to eat one berry. Eating a berry restores 1 stamina point, and the berry provides enough nourishment to sustain a character for one day.

The berries lose their potency if they have not been consumed within a day of the casting of this spell.

GREATER RESTORATION

Minister Level 5

Casting Time: 1 action
Duration: Instantaneous

Range: Touch

You imbue a character you touch with positive energy to undo debilitating effects. You can remove

one disease, one condition, and cancel any effects that reduces the target's ability scores.

GUST OF WIND

Mancer Level 2

Casting Time: 1 action **Range:** Self (60-foot line)
Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute

A line of strong wind 60 feet long and 10 feet wide blasts from your focus in a direction you choose for the spell's duration. Each character that starts her turn in the line must succeed on a Strength saving throw or be pushed 15 feet away from you in a direction following the line.

Any character in the line must spend two feet of movement for every one foot it moves when moving closer to you.

The gust disperses gas or vapor, and it extinguishes candles, torches, and similar unprotected flames in the area. It causes protected flames, such as those of lanterns, to dance wildly and has a 50 percent chance to extinguish them.

As a bonus action on each of your turns before the spell ends, you can change the direction in which the line blasts from you

HALLUCINATORY TERRAIN

Minister Level 4

Casting Time: 10 minutes **Range:** 300 feet
Duration: 1 day

You make natural terrain in a 150-foot cube in range look, sound, and smell like some other sort of natural terrain. Thus, open fields or a road can be made to resemble a swamp, hill, crevasse, or some other difficult or impassable terrain. A pond can be made to seem like a grassy meadow, a precipice like a gentle slope, or a rock-strewn gully like a wide and smooth road. Manufactured structures, equipment, and characters within the area aren't changed in appearance.

The tactile characteristics of the terrain are unchanged, so characters entering the area are likely to notice the illusion. If the difference isn't obvious by touch, a character carefully examining the illusion can attempt an Intelligence check against your spell save difficulty to disbelieve it. A character who discerns the illusion for what it is sees it as a vague image superimposed on the terrain.

HASTE

Mancer Level 3

Casting Time: 1 action **Range:** 30 feet
Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute



Choose a willing character that you can see within range. Until the spell ends, the target's speed is doubled, he gains a +2 bonus to defense, he has advantage on Dexterity saving throws, and he gains an additional action on each of his turns. The additional action can only be used to take the following actions: Attack (one weapon attack only), Disengage, Hide, Run, or Use.

When the spell ends, the target can't move or take actions until after his next turn, as a wave of lethargy sweeps over him.

HEALING WORD

Minister Level 1

Casting Time: 1 bonus action **Range:** 60 feet
Duration: Instantaneous



A visible character of your choice within range regains stamina points equal to 1d4 + your spell-casting ability modifier. An additional 1d4 is rolled for every additional spell slot used when casting Healing Word. No stamina dice are expended, although the target can choose to spend stamina dice to recover stamina points if they wish.

HOLD PERSON

Mancer Level 4

Casting Time: 1 action **Range:** 90 feet
Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute



Choose a character that you can see within range. The target must succeed on a Wisdom saving throw or be Paralyzed for the duration. At the end of each of his turns, the target can make another Wisdom saving throw. On a success, the spell ends on the target.

HYPNOTIC PATTERN

Minister Level 3

Casting Time: 1 action **Range:** 120 feet
Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute



You create a twisting pattern of colors that weaves through the air inside a 30-foot cube with-

in range. The pattern appears for a moment and vanishes. Each character in the area who sees the pattern must make a Wisdom saving throw. On a failed saving throw, the character becomes Incapacitated and Immobile for the duration. The spell ends for an affected character if she takes any damage or if someone else uses an action to shake the character out of her stupor.

ICE STORM

Mancer Level 4

Casting Time: 1 action **Range:** 300 feet
Duration: Instantaneous



A hail of rock-hard ice pounds to the ground in a 20-foot-radius, 40-foot-high cylinder centered on a point within range. Each character in the cylinder must make a Dexterity saving throw. A character takes 2d8 bludgeoning damage and 3d6 cold damage on a failed saving throw, or half as much damage on a successful one.

ILLUSORY SCRIPT

Mancer Level 1

Casting Time: 1 minute **Range:** Touch
Duration: 10 days



You write on parchment, paper, or some other suitable writing material and imbue it with a potent illusion that lasts for the duration.

To you and any characters you designate when you cast the spell, the writing appears normal, written in your style of writing, and conveys whatever meaning you intended when you wrote the text. To all others, the writing appears as if it were written in an unknown script that is unintelligible. Alternatively, you can cause the writing to appear to be an entirely different message, written in a different style.

Should the spell be dispelled, the original script and the illusion both disappear.

INFLECT WOUNDS

Mancer Level 1

Casting Time: 1 action **Range:** Touch
Duration: Instantaneous



Make a melee spell attack against a character. When successfully laying your paw or focus on a target, you channel negative energy that deals 2d10 necrotic damage.



INSECT PLAGUE

Minister Level 5

Casting Time: 1 action **Range:** 300 feet
Duration: Concentration, up to 10 minutes

Swarming, biting locusts fill a 20-foot-radius sphere centered on a point you choose within range. The sphere spreads around corners. The sphere remains for the duration, and its area is obscured and hard to pass through.

When the area appears, each character in it must make a Constitution saving throw. A character takes 4d10 piercing damage on a failed saving throw, or half as much damage on a successful one. A character must also make this saving throw when she enters the spell's area for the first time on a turn or ends her turn there.

INVISIBILITY

Mancer Level 2

Casting Time: 1 action **Range:** Touch
Duration: Concentration, up to 1 hour

A character you touch becomes Invisible until the spell ends. Anything the target is wearing or car-



rying is invisible as long as it is on the target's person. The spell ends for a target that attacks or casts a spell.

IRRESISTIBLE DANCE

Minister Level 4

Casting Time: 1 action **Range:** 30 feet
Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute

Choose one character that you can see within range. The target begins a comic dance in place: shuffling, tapping its feet, and capering for the duration. Characters that can't be Charmed are immune to this spell. A dancing character has the effects of being Immobile.

As an action, a dancing character makes a Wisdom saving throw to regain control of itself. On a successful save, the condition is removed and the spell ends.



Jump

Mancer Level 2

Casting Time: 1 action **Range:** Touch
Duration: 1 minute

The target can jump three times as far, and gains advantage on appropriate rolls using the Traverse skill until the spell ends.



LEGEND LORE

Minister Level 4

Casting Time: 10 minutes
Duration: Instantaneous

Name or describe a person, place, or object. The spell brings to your mind a summary of the significant information about the thing you named. The information might consist of current tales, forgotten stories from the Ages of Man, or even secret lore that has never been widely known. If the thing you named isn't of legendary importance, you gain no information. The more information you already have about the thing, the more precise and detailed the information you receive is.

The information you learn is accurate, but might be couched in figurative language. For example, if you have a mysterious tome, the spell might yield this information: "Beware the cat whose paw touches this tome. The contents within lead to one cat's death, another's insanity, and a third's eternal regret."

LESSER RESTORATION

Minister Level 2

Casting Time: 1 action
Duration: Instantaneous

Range: Touch

You touch a character and can end either one disease or one condition afflicting her. The condition can be Anosmic, Blind, Deaf, Paralyzed, or Sickly.

LIGHTNING BOLT

Mancer Level 3

Casting Time: 1 action **Range:** Self (100-foot line)
Duration: Instantaneous

A stroke of lightning forming a line 100 feet long and five feet wide blasts out from you in a direction you choose. Each character in the line must make a Dexterity saving throw. A character takes 6d6 lightning damage on a failed saving throw, or half as much damage on a successful one. The lightning ignites flammable objects in the area that aren't being worn or carried.



LOCATE PERSON

Minister Level 4

Casting Time: 1 action
Duration: Concentration, up to 1 hour

Range: Self

Describe or name a character that is familiar to you. You smell the direction to the character's location, as long as that character is within 1,000 feet of you. If the character is moving, you know the direction of his movement.

The spell can locate a specific character known to you, or the nearest character of a specific kind (such as a dog or a rat), so long as you have seen or smelled such a character up close at least once. If the character you described or named is in a different form, such as a being who is Petrified, this spell doesn't locate the character.

This spell can't locate a character if running water at least 10 feet wide blocks a direct path between you and the character. Also, the spell cannot be used if you have the Anosmic condition.



LONGSTRIDER

Minister Level 1

Casting Time: 1 action
Duration: 1 hour

Range: Touch

The target's two- and four-legged speeds increase by 10 feet until the spell ends.



MAGIC ARMOR

Mancer Level 2

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Touch
Duration: 8 hours

An invisible, but tangible, field of force surrounds the target of this spell. The target's base defense becomes 13 + the target's Dexterity modifier. Since Magic Armor is made of force, incorporeal characters can't bypass it the way they do normal armor. The spell ends if the target dons armor or if you dismiss the spell as an action.



MAGIC MOUTH

Minister Level 2

Casting Time: 1 minute
Duration: Until dispelled

Range: 30 feet

You implant a message within an object in range, a message that is uttered when a trigger



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condition is met. Choose an object that you can see and that isn't being worn or carried by another character. Then speak the message, which must be 25 words or fewer, though it can be delivered over as long as 10 minutes. Finally, determine the circumstance that will trigger the spell to deliver your message.

When that circumstance occurs, a magical mouth appears on the object and recites the message in your voice and at the same volume you spoke. If the object you chose has a mouth or something that looks like a mouth (for example, the mouth of a statue), the magical mouth appears there so that the words appear to come from the object's mouth. When you cast this spell, you can have the spell end after it delivers its message, or it can remain and repeat its message whenever the trigger occurs.

The triggering circumstance can be as general or as detailed as you like, though it must be based on visual or audible conditions that occur within 30 feet of the object. For example, you could instruct the mouth to speak when any character moves within 30 feet of the object or when a silver bell rings within 30 feet of it.

MAJOR IMAGE

Mancer Level 3

Casting Time: 1 action **Range:** 120 feet
Duration: Concentration, up to 10 minutes



You create the image of an object, a character, or some other visible phenomenon that is no larger than a 20-foot cube. The image appears at a spot that you can see within range and lasts for the duration. It seems completely real, including sounds, smells, and temperature appropriate to the thing depicted. You can't create sufficient heat or cold to cause damage, a sound loud enough to deal thunder damage or deafen a character, or a smell that might sicken a character.

As long as you are within range of the illusion, you can use your action to cause the image to move to any other spot within range. As the image changes location, you can alter its appearance so that its movements appear natural for the image. For example, if you create an image of a character and move it, you can alter the image so that it appears to be walking. Similarly, you can cause the il-

lusion to make different sounds at different times, even making it carry on a conversation, for example.

Physical interaction with the image reveals it to be an illusion, because things can pass through it. A character that uses its action to examine the image can determine that it is an illusion with a successful Intelligence check against your spell save difficulty. If a character discerns the illusion for what it is, the character can see through the image, and its other sensory qualities become faint to the character.

MASS HEALING WORD

Minister Level 3

Casting Time: 1 bonus action **Range:** 60 feet
Duration: Instantaneous



As you call out words of restoration, up to six characters of your choice that you can see within range regain stamina points equal to 1d4 + your spellcasting ability modifier.

MIRROR IMAGE

Mancer Level 2

Casting Time: 1 action **Range:** Self
Duration: 1 minute



Three illusory duplicates of yourself appear in your space. Until the spell ends, the duplicates move with you and mimic your actions, shifting position so it's impossible to track which image is real. You can use your action to dismiss the illusory duplicates.

Each time a character targets you with an attack during the spell's duration, roll 1d20 to determine whether the attack instead targets one of your duplicates. If you have three duplicates, you must roll a 6 or higher to change the attack's target to a duplicate. With two duplicates, you must roll an 8 or higher. With one duplicate, you must roll an 11 or higher.

A duplicate has defense equal to 10 + your Dexterity modifier. If an attack hits a duplicate, the duplicate is destroyed. A duplicate can be destroyed only by an attack that hits it. It ignores all other damage and effects. The spell ends when all three duplicates are destroyed.

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A character is unaffected by this spell if she can't see, if she relies on senses other than sight, or if she can perceive illusions as false.

MISLEAD

Minister Level 5



Casting Time: 1 action **Range:** Self
Duration: Concentration, up to 1 hour

You become Invisible while an illusory double of you appears where you are standing. The invisibility ends if you attack or cast a spell.

You can use your action to move your illusory double up to twice your speed and make it gesture, speak, and behave in whatever way you choose.

You can see through its eyes and hear through its ears as if you were located where it is. As a bonus action, you can switch from using its senses to using your own, or back again. While you are using its senses, you are Anosmic, Blind, and Deaf regarding your own surroundings.

MISTY STEP

Mancer Level 2



Casting Time: 1 bonus action **Range:** Self
Duration: Instantaneous

Briefly surrounded by silvery mist, you teleport up to 30 feet to an unoccupied space that you can see.

MODIFY MEMORY

Minister Level 5



Casting Time: 1 action **Range:** 30 feet
Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute

You attempt to reshape another character's memories. One character that you can see must make a Wisdom saving throw. If you are fighting the character, it has advantage on the saving throw. On a failed save, the target becomes Charmed by you for the duration.

While the character is Charmed, you can affect the target's memory of an event that it experienced within the last day and that lasted no more than 10 minutes. You can permanently eliminate all memory of the event, allow the target to recall the event with perfect clarity and exacting detail, change its memory of the details of the event, or create a memory of some other event.

You must speak to the target to describe how its memories are affected, and it must be able to understand your language for the modified memories to take root. Its mind fills in any gaps in the details of your description. If the spell ends before you have finished describing the modified memories, the character's memory isn't altered. Otherwise, the modified memories take hold when the spell ends.

A modified memory doesn't necessarily affect how a character behaves, particularly if the memory contradicts the character's natural inclinations, personality traits, or beliefs. An illogical modified memory, such as implanting a memory of how much the character enjoyed dousing itself in acid, is dismissed, perhaps as a bad dream. The Guide might deem a modified memory too nonsensical to affect a character in a significant manner.

A Remove Curse or Greater Restoration spell cast on the target restores the character's true memory.

MOONBEAM

Minister Level 2



Casting Time: 1 action **Range:** 120 feet
Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute

A silvery beam of pale light shines down in a five-foot-radius, 40-foot-high cylinder centered on a point within range. Until the spell ends, dim light fills the cylinder.

When a character enters the spell's area for the first time on a turn or starts her turn there, she is engulfed in ghostly flames that cause searing pain, and she must make a Constitution saving throw. She takes 2d10 radiant damage on a failed saving throw, or half as much damage on a successful one.

On each of your turns after you cast this spell, you can use an action to move the beam 60 feet in any direction.

NONDETECTION

Minister Level 3



Casting Time: 1 action **Range:** Touch
Duration: 8 hours

For the duration, you convince the target that they cannot be located by magic. The target can be a willing character or a place or an object no larg-

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er than 10 feet in any dimension. The target can't be targeted by scrying or divination spells, such as Clairvoyance and Locate Person.

PASSWALL

Mancer Level 5

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 30 feet

Duration: 1 hour



A passage appears at a point of your choice that you can see on a wooden, plaster, or stone surface (such as a wall, a ceiling, or a floor) within range, and lasts for the duration. You choose the dimensions of the opening: up to five feet wide, eight feet tall, and 20 feet deep. The passage creates no instability in a structure surrounding it.

When the opening disappears, any characters or objects still in the passage created by the spell are safely ejected to an unoccupied space nearest to the surface on which you cast the spell.

PHANTASMAL KILLER

Minister Level 4

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 120 feet

Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute



You talk to a character within range about her deepest fears, which creates an illusory manifestation visible only to that character. The target must make a Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, the target becomes Scared for the duration. At the end of each of the target's turns before the spell ends, the target must succeed on a Wisdom saving throw or take 4d10 psychic damage. On a successful save, the condition is removed and the spell ends.

POLYMORPH

Mancer Level 4

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 60 feet

Duration: Concentration, up to 1 hour



This spell transforms a character that you can see within range into a new form. An unwilling character must make a Constitution saving throw to avoid the effect. The spell has no effect on a character with 0 stamina points.

The transformation lasts for the duration, or until the target drops to 0 stamina points. The new form can be any enemy whose challenge rating is equal to or less than the target's level or challenge

rating. The target's game statistics, including mental ability scores, are replaced by the statistics of the chosen enemy. She retains her personality (including personality traits), however.

The target assumes the stamina points of her new form. When she reverts to her normal form, the character returns to the number of stamina points she had before it transformed. If she reverts because of dropping to 0 stamina points, any excess damage carries over to her normal form. If the excess damage doesn't reduce the character's normal form to 0 stamina points, she isn't knocked Unconscious and is not considered to be dying.

The character is limited in the actions she can perform by the nature of her new form, and she can't speak, cast spells, or take any other action that requires paws or speech.

The target's rucksack melds into the new form. The character can't activate, use, wield, or otherwise benefit from any of her equipment.

PRESTIDIGITATION

Mancer Basic

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 10 feet

Duration: Up to 1 hour



You create one of the following magical effects within range:

- You create an instantaneous, harmless sensory effect, such as a shower of sparks, a puff of wind, faint musical notes, or an odd odor.
- You instantaneously light or snuff out a candle, a torch, or a small campfire.
- You instantaneously clean or soil an object no larger than one cubic foot.
- You chill, warm, or flavor up to 1 cubic foot of nonliving material for one hour.
- You make a color, a small mark, or a symbol appear on an object or a surface for one hour.
- You create a nonmagical trinket or an illusory image that can fit in your paw and that lasts until the end of your next turn.

If you cast this spell multiple times, you can have up to three of its non-instantaneous ef-

fects active at a time, and you can dismiss such an effect as an action.

RAISE DEAD

Mancer/Minister Level 5

Casting Time: 1 hour
Duration: Instantaneous



Range: Touch

You return a dead character you touch to life, if she has been dead no longer than 10 days. The character returns to life with 1 stamina point, but the mancer is reduced to 1 stamina point and is knocked Unconscious. This spell also neutralizes any poisons and cures non-magical diseases that affected the character at the time she died. This spell doesn't, however, remove magical diseases, curses, or similar effects; if these aren't first removed prior to casting the spell, they take effect when the character returns to life. The spell can't return an undead character to life.

This spell closes all mortal wounds, but it doesn't restore missing body parts. If the character is lacking body parts or organs integral for its survival – its head, for instance – the spell automatically fails.

Coming back from the dead is an ordeal. The target takes a -4 penalty to all attack rolls, saving throws, and ability checks. Every time the target finishes a long rest, the penalty is reduced by 1 until it disappears.

RAY OF ENFEEBLEMENT

Mancer Level 2

Casting Time: 1 action
Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute



Range: 60 feet

A black beam of dark energy springs from your paw toward a character within range. Make a ranged spell attack against the target. On a hit, the target deals only half damage with weapon attacks that use Strength until the spell ends.

At the end of each of the target's turns, she can make a Constitution saving throw against the spell. On a success, the spell ends.

REMOVE CURSE

Minister Level 3

Casting Time: 1 action
Duration: Instantaneous



Range: Touch

At your touch, a target's Charmed and Cursed conditions immediately end.

RESILIENT SPHERE

Mancer Level 5

Casting Time: 1 action
Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute



Range: 30 feet

A sphere of shimmering force encloses a character or object within range. An unwilling character must make a Dexterity saving throw. On a failed saving throw, the character is enclosed for the duration.

Nothing – not physical objects, energy, or other spell effects – can pass through the barrier, in or out, though a character in the sphere can breathe. The sphere is immune to all damage, and a character or object inside can't be damaged by attacks or effects originating from outside, nor can a character inside the sphere damage anything outside it.

The sphere is weightless, and just large enough to contain the character or object inside. An enclosed character can use his action to push against the sphere's walls and thus roll the sphere at up to half the character's speed. Similarly, the globe can be picked up and moved by other characters, if they are strong enough.

SCRYING

Mancer Level 5

Casting Time: 10 minutes
Duration: Concentration, up to 10 minutes



Range: Self

You can see, hear, and smell a character you choose. The target must make a Wisdom saving throw. If a target knows you're casting this spell, she can fail the saving throw voluntarily if she wants to be observed.

On a successful saving throw, the target isn't affected, and you can't use this spell against her again for a day.

On a failed saving throw, the spell creates an invisible sensor within 10 feet of the target. You can see and hear through the sensor as if you were



there. The sensor moves with the target, remaining within 10 feet of her for the duration. Instead of targeting a character, you can choose a location you have seen before as the target of this spell. When you do, the sensor appears at that location and doesn't move.

SECRET CHEST

Mancer Level 4

Casting Time: 1 action
Duration: Instantaneous

You can hide a normal-sized chest, and all its contents, in a dimension only understood by the Old Ones. You must touch the chest and an object made entirely of plastic while casting a spell. The chest can contain up to 12 cubic feet of nonliving material (three feet by two feet by two feet).

While the chest remains hidden, you can use an action and touch the plastic object to recall the chest. It appears in an unoccupied space on the ground within five feet of you. You can send the chest away again by using an action and touching both the chest and the replica.

After 60 days, there is a cumulative chance per day that the spell's effect ends — at the end of the

day, roll 1d20 against a difficulty equal to the number of days after 60. This effect ends if you cast this spell again, if the smaller replica chest is destroyed, or if you choose to end the spell as an action. If the spell ends and the larger chest is banished, it is irretrievably lost.



SHATTER

Minister Level 2

Casting Time: 1 action
Duration: Instantaneous

A sudden, loud, painfully intense ringing noise erupts from a point of your choice within range. Each character in a 10-foot-radius sphere centered on that point must make a Constitution saving throw. A character takes 2d8 thunder damage on a failed saving throw, or half as much damage on a successful one.

A character who is Petrified or made of inorganic material such as stone, crystal, or metal has a disadvantage on this saving throw. A non-magical object that isn't being worn or carried also takes the damage if it's in the spell's area.



Range: 60 feet

SILENT IMAGE

Mancer Level 1



Casting Time: 1 action **Range:** 60 feet
Duration: Concentration, up to 10 minutes

You create the image of an object, a character, or some other visible phenomenon that is no larger than a 15-foot cube. The image appears at a spot within range and lasts for the duration. The image is purely visual; it isn't accompanied by sound, smell, or other sensory effects.

You can use your action to cause the image to move to any spot within range. As the image changes location, you can alter its appearance so that its movements appear natural for the image. For example, if you create an image of a character and move it, you can alter the image so that it appears to be walking.

Physical interaction with the image reveals it to be an illusion, because things can pass through it. A character that uses her action to examine the image can determine that it is an illusion with a successful Intelligence check against your spell saving throw difficulty. If a character discerns the illusion for what it is, the character can see through the image.

SLEET STORM

Minister Level 3



Casting Time: 1 action **Range:** 150 feet
Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute

Freezing rain and sleet fall in a 20-foot-tall cylinder with a 40-foot radius centered on a point you choose. The area is heavily obscured, and exposed flames in the area are doused.

The ground in the area is covered with slick ice. When a character enters the spell's area for the first time on a turn or starts his turn there, he must make a Dexterity saving throw. On a failed saving throw, he falls Prone.

If a character is concentrating in the spell's area, the character must make a successful Constitution saving throw against your spell saving throw difficulty or lose concentration.

SLOW

Mancer Level 3



Casting Time: 1 action **Range:** 120 feet
Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute

You alter time around up to six characters of your choice in a 40-foot cube within range. Each target must succeed on a Wisdom saving throw or be affected by this spell for the duration.

An affected target's speed is halved, takes a -2 penalty to defense, a disadvantage to Dexterity saving throws, and can't use reactions. On her turn, she can use either an action or a bonus action, but not both. Regardless of the character's abilities or magic items, she can't make more than one melee or ranged attack during her turn.

If the character attempts to cast a spell with a casting time of one action, roll 1d20. On an 11 or higher, the spell doesn't take effect until the character's next turn, and the character must use her action on that turn to complete the spell. If she can't, the spell is wasted.

A character affected by this spell makes another Wisdom saving throw at the end of her turn. On a successful saving throw, the effect ends for her.

SPEAK WITH ANIMALS

Minister Level 1



Casting Time: 1 action **Range:** Self
Duration: 10 minutes

You gain the ability to comprehend and verbally communicate with animals for the duration. The knowledge and awareness of many animals is limited by their intelligence, but at minimum, animals can give you information about nearby locations and enemies, including whatever they can perceive or have perceived within the past day. You might be able to persuade an animal to perform a small favor for you, at the Guide's discretion.

SPEAK WITH DEAD

Mancer Level 3



Casting Time: 1 action **Range:** 10 feet
Duration: 10 minutes

You grant the semblance of life and intelligence to a corpse of your choice within range, allowing it to answer the questions you pose. The corpse must still have a mouth and can't be undead. The spell fails if the corpse was the target of this spell within the last 10 days.

Until the spell ends, you can ask the corpse up to five questions. The corpse knows only what it knew in

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life. Answers are usually brief, cryptic, or repetitive, and the corpse is under no compulsion to offer a truthful answer if you are hostile to it or it recognizes you as an enemy. The corpse can't learn new information, doesn't comprehend anything that has happened since it died, and can't speculate about future events.

SPIDER CLIMB

Mancer Level 2

Casting Time: 1 action **Range:** Touch
Duration: Concentration, up to 1 hour

Until the spell ends, one willing character you touch gains the ability to move up, down, and across vertical surfaces and upside down along ceilings, while leaving her paws free. The target also gains a climbing speed equal to her walking speed.

SPIKE GROWTH

Mancer Level 2

Casting Time: 1 action **Range:** 150 feet
Duration: Concentration, up to 10 minutes

The ground in a 20-foot radius centered on a point within range twists and sprouts hard spikes and thorns. When a character moves into or within the area, she takes 2d4 piercing damage for every five feet she travels.

The transformation of the ground is camouflaged to look natural. Any character that can't see the area at the time the spell is cast must make a Wisdom check against your spell saving throw difficulty to recognize the terrain as hazardous before entering it.

SPIRIT GUARDIANS

Mancer Level 4

Casting Time: 1 action **Range:** Self (15-ft radius)
Duration: Concentration, up to 10 minutes

You call forth spirits to protect you. They flit around you to a distance of 15 feet for the duration.

When you cast this spell, you can designate any number of characters you can see to be unaffected by it. An affected character's speed is halved in the area, and when the character enters the area for the first time on a turn or starts her turn there, she must make a Wisdom saving throw. On a failed saving throw, the character takes 3d8 radi-

ant damage. On a successful saving throw, the character takes half as much damage.

STINKING CLOUD

Minister Level 3

Casting Time: 1 action **Range:** 90 feet
Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute

You create a 20-foot-radius sphere of yellow, nauseating gas. The cloud spreads around corners, and its area is heavily obscured. The cloud lingers in the air for the duration.

Each character that is completely within the cloud at the start of his turn must make a Constitution saving throw. On a failed saving throw, the character spends his action that turn retching and reeling. Characters that don't need to breathe or are immune to poison damage automatically succeed on this saving throw.

A moderate wind disperses the cloud after four rounds. A strong wind disperses it after one round.

STONESKIN

Minister Level 4

Casting Time: 1 action **Range:** Touch
Duration: Concentration, up to 1 hour

This spell turns the flesh of a willing character you touch as hard as stone. Until the spell ends, the target is resistant to non-magical bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage.

SUGGESTION

Minister Level 2

Casting Time: 1 action **Range:** 30 feet
Duration: Concentration, up to 8 hours

You suggest a course of activity (limited to a sentence or two) and magically influence a character you can see within range that can hear and understand you. The target must make a Wisdom saving throw. On a failed saving throw, he is Charmed and pursues the course of action you described to the best of his ability. The suggested course of action can continue for the entire duration. If the suggested activity can be completed in a shorter time, the spell ends when the subject finishes what he was asked to do.

You can also specify triggers that will trigger a special activity during the duration. For example, you might suggest that a house guardian give his horse to the first beggar he meets. If the trigger isn't met before the spell expires, the activity isn't performed.

TELEKINESIS

Mancer Level 5

Casting Time: 1 action **Range:** 60 feet
Duration: Concentration, up to 10 minutes



You gain the ability to move or manipulate characters or objects by thought. When you cast the spell, and as your action each round for the duration, you can exert your will on one character or one object (weighing no more than four cats) that you can see within range, causing the appropriate effect below. You can affect the same target every round, or choose a new one at any time. If you switch targets, the prior target is no longer affected by the spell.

- **Character:** Make an ability check with your spellcasting ability contested by the character's Strength check. If you win the contest, you move the character up to 30 feet in any direction, including upward, but not beyond the range of this spell. Until the end of your next turn, the character is Immobile in your telekinetic grip. A character lifted upward is suspended in midair. On subsequent rounds, you can use your action to attempt to maintain your telekinetic grip on the character by repeating the contest.
- **Object:** If the object isn't being worn or carried, you automatically move it up to 30 feet in any direction, but not beyond the range of this spell. If the object is worn or carried by a character, you must make an ability check with your spellcasting ability contested by that character's Strength check. If you succeed, you pull the object away from that character and can move it up to 30 feet in any direction but not beyond the range of this spell. You can exert fine control on objects with your telekinetic grip, such as manipulating a simple tool, opening a door or a container, stowing or retrieving an item from an open container, or pouring the contents from a vial.

TELEPATHIC BOND

Minister Level 5

Casting Time: 1 action **Range:** 30 feet
Duration: 1 hour



You forge a telepathic link among up to eight willing characters of your choice within range, psychically linking each character to all the others for the duration. Characters with Intelligence scores of 2 or less aren't affected by this spell. Until the spell ends, the targets can communicate telepathically through the bond. The communication is possible over any distance.

THAUMATURGY

Minister Basic

Casting Time: 1 action **Range:** 30 feet
Duration: Up to 1 minute



You manifest a minor wonder, a sign of supernatural power, within range. You create one of the following magical effects within range:

- Your voice booms up to three times as loud as normal for one minute.
- You cause flames to flicker, brighten, dim, or change color for one minute.
- You cause harmless tremors in the ground for one minute.
- You create an instantaneous sound that originates from a point of your choice within range, such as a rumble of thunder, the cry of a raven, or ominous whispers.
- You instantaneously cause an unlocked door or window to fly open or slam shut.
- You alter the appearance of your eyes for one minute.

If you cast this spell multiple times, you can have up to three of its one-minute effects active at a time, and you can dismiss such an effect as an action.

UNNATURAL REBUKE

Mancer Level 1

Casting Time: 1 reaction **Range:** 60 feet
Duration: Instantaneous



You point your finger, and a visible character that damaged you is momentarily surrounded by unnatural flames. The character must make a Dex-

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terity saving throw. He takes 2d8 fire damage on a failed saving throw, or half as much damage on a successful one.

VAMPIRIC TOUCH

Mancer Level 3

Casting Time: 1 action **Range:** Self
Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute

The touch of your shadow-wreathed paw can siphon life force from others to heal your wounds. Make a melee spell attack (using your spellcasting ability) against a character within your reach. On a hit, the target takes 3d6 necrotic damage, and you regain stamina points equal to half the amount of necrotic damage dealt. Until the spell ends, you can make the attack again on each of your turns as an action.

VICIOUS MOCKERY

Minister Basic

Casting Time: 1 action **Range:** 60 feet
Duration: Instantaneous

You unleash a string of insults laced with subtle enchantments at a character you can see within range. If the target can hear you (though it need not understand you), he must succeed on a Wisdom saving throw or take 1d4 psychic damage and have disadvantage on the next attack roll he makes before the end of his next turn.

WALL OF MAGIC

Minister Level 4

Casting Time: 1 action **Range:** 120 feet
Duration: Concentration, up to 10 minutes

A wall of fire, ice, stone, or invisible force springs into existence at a point you choose within range. You can make the wall up to 60 feet long, 20 feet high, and one foot thick, or a ringed wall up to 20 feet in diameter, 20 feet high, and one foot thick.

When the wall appears, each character within its area must make a Dexterity saving throw. On a failed saving throw, a character takes 5d8 damage of the chosen element (heat for fire, cold for ice, bludgeoning for stone, or force), or half as much damage on a successful saving throw.

Web

Mancer Level 2

Casting Time: 1 action **Range:** 60 feet
Duration: Concentration, up to 1 hour

You conjure a mass of thick, sticky webbing at a point of your choice within range. The webs fill a 20-foot cube from that point for the duration. The webs are hard to move through and partially obscure their area.

If the webs aren't anchored between two solid masses (such as walls or trees) or layered across a floor, wall, or ceiling, the conjured web collapses on itself, and the spell ends at the start of your next turn. Webs layered over a flat surface have a depth of five feet.

Each character that starts her turn in the webs or that enters them during her turn must make a Dexterity saving throw. On a failed saving throw, the character is Immobile if she remains in the webs or until she breaks free. An Immobile character can use her action to make a Strength check against your spell saving throw difficulty. If she succeeds, she is no longer Immobile.

The webs are flammable. Any five-foot cube of webs exposed to fire burns away in one round, dealing 2d4 heat damage to any character that starts her turn in the fire.

ZONE OF TRUTH

Minister Level 2

Casting Time: 1 action **Range:** 60 feet
Duration: 10 minutes

You create a 15-foot-radius magical zone that guards against deception. A character that enters the spell's area for the first time on a turn or starts his turn there must make a Charisma saving throw. On a failed saving throw, a character can't speak a deliberate lie while in the radius. You know whether each character succeeds or fails on his saving throw.

An affected character is aware of the spell and can thus avoid answering questions to which he would normally respond with a lie. Such a character can be evasive in his answers if he remains within the boundaries of the truth.

GUIDE'S TOME OF SECRETS

Sabian von Angora shivered in his heavy robes, despite the heat of the rising sun. "I don't like it out here, Monifa," he said quietly, shifting the pointy hat on his head as he tried to keep up with his companion's long strides.

"Your concern is noted, Sabian, but we simply can't ignore a summons by the Ruling Council," Monifa von Mau said without breaking her stride. Cats crowded the streets, but after a glance at the small bronze skulls adorning Sabian's cloak, they scurried out of their way.

"But there are..." Sabian hurried to her side so he could whisper in her ear, which was flipped back in determination. "There are a lot of people around here."

She glanced back at the mancer but kept her pace. "It's morning. Cats must go to work, or go home, or to or from the market."

"Do they? I don't get out much." Sabian tapped his chin with a finger, thinking as he walked. "It's possible that this phenomenon is more common in Mau than in Angora. We generally tend to be more contemplative."

"Also," Monifa added, mostly to herself, "you tend to prefer the company of bones."

"This is also true," Sabian nodded, missing Monifa's sarcasm. "The dead are much less likely to wander around when you don't want them to."

Monifa stopped at this and turned to look at Sabian. "Those kinds of comments you might want to keep to yourself when we get to the meeting."

Sabian cocked his head, and his hat slid over one eye. "What comments?" he asked, adjusting his hat again. "I was just remarking on how I prefer peace and quiet to..." He waved his paws vaguely at the crowd. "People," he added.

"The dead. The comment about the dead. That part."

"Ah, I see." He paused a moment, thinking. "I suppose 'undead' is the more accurate term..."

"No. Say nothing about the dead, un- or otherwise. It... unnerves people."

"Does it? I never noticed."

Monifa shook her head and continued her brisk pace. "Come on. We're almost there."

Urbo Hall was not the tallest building in the capital, but it was one of the most splendid. Monifa had spent many days and nights walking its corridors as her mother taught her the finer points of diplomacy and politics. Seeing it again after her mother's death made Monifa's blood run cold. She pushed it down and walked



to the nearest guard, who was trying desperately to keep his fur from sticking out of the gaps in his plate armor.

The fluffy guard led her and Sabian away from the main chambers where the Mau representatives to the Council met. Instead, they walked through a series of similar-looking corridors before they came to a door simply marked "Library." The guard saluted, adjusted his fur again, and marched off. Sabian rubbed his paws together, both in delight and to improve his circulation. "A library! Things are certainly looking up."

Monifa opened the door. Inside, every wall was covered floor to ceiling with shelves, and each shelf was packed with leather-bound books, scrolls in ornate cases, and stacks of parchment carefully bound with fading ribbon. In the center of the room was a table with four cats. One looked annoyed as he sat with his arms folded across a red-lacquered breastplate. Another sat wearing a rough leather vest, her eyes closed as a contented smile pulled at her lips. The third cat was a contrast of pure white fur and dark leather armor, carelessly carving into the surface of the table with her dagger. The fourth and final cat stood up. He wore green minister's robes, and the Cymric house seal dangled around his neck.

"Ah, you've both arrived," the cat from House Cymric said in a serious voice. "Welcome to the first meeting of the Irregulars of Mau. Please have a seat. We have a serious situation to address, and not much time to convey it."

Sabian poked his head into the library. "This serious situation doesn't happen to involve the undead, does it?"

Monifa put her paw over her eyes. This was going to be a long day.

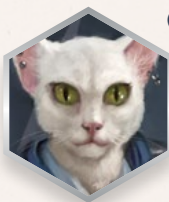


CHAPTER FIVE: THE MONARCHIES OF MAU

In this chapter, we pull back the curtain and reveal the secrets of the world of *The Monarchies of Mau*. We'll discuss the ancient world, the cats and their views on other species, and their enemies. We'll expand upon the history touched upon in Chapter One, and delve more deeply into cat culture. Lastly, we'll take you on a tour of the monarchies themselves and point out some of the interesting places in each one that may inspire you as a Guide.



If you're a player in a Monarchies of Mau chronicle, you might want to skip this chapter. The information in here is intended for Guides, and may contain spoilers and secrets that are more fun to discover as you play the game!



Guides, the information in this chapter is intended to help you with your stories, but all of it is changeable. If you need two monarchies to be located side by side in your game rather than far apart, go ahead and declare them neighbors. You're the best judge of what your story needs, so take the information that inspires you, and have fun!

THE ANCIENT WORLD

Long before the monarchies were formed, there was the world of Man. The cats call our time the ancient world of the Old Ones, or the Ages of Man. Their world exists in our distant future. No cat knows exactly how much time has passed since the Old Ones walked the world, but it's quite possible that *thousands* of years have gone by since humans disappeared. Between our present day (in which you're reading this book) and the time that cats, dogs, and other uplifted species rule the world (the present day of *Monarchies of Mau*), human beings created wondrous things and terrible things.

Then we vanished.

It's possible that a plague ravaged the globe and killed off all human life. Perhaps a natural or technological disaster made the planet uninhabitable for us, or perhaps we fought a war that brought about the end of everything. Maybe humans still exist in some form — we might have climbed into generation ships and headed off to explore distant galaxies, or developed a technology that allowed us to leave our bodies behind and live on in a virtual world. Ultimately, there's no way to know where we went, only that by the time the monarchies formed, we were long gone.

However, our technology and knowledge stayed behind as evidence of our existence. This in-

cludes nanotechnology, the ability to manipulate genes (and the results thereof), quantum computers, artificial intelligence, and even stranger devices. Technology on this scale is well beyond what we're capable of here in the early 21st century, though some of it is recognizably descended from devices we use today, and is the result of theories and experiments today's scientists are researching.

Many animals have evolved to have higher brain functions. Some of this is natural evolution, taking place over the centuries. Others were improvements made by human technology, done to benefit humans. Imagine cats working side by side with exterminators to suss out where mice had made their nests, or police dogs giving testimony. Consider the comfort of chatting with your animal companion after a bad day, or how useful it would be if a service animal could call for help when their master was in need.

Such animals are called "uplifted." They use tools and speak a universal language. Uplifted cats also had many common feline medical issues fixed — no more diabetes or hyperthyroidism, kidney disease or heart problems. Not every animal was uplifted, however: Many still resemble the pets we have today.

The world inhabited by the cats in *Monarchies of Mau* is not a post-apocalyptic wasteland. Though some of the Old Ones' structures still exist as ruins, cats don't understand what they were or what purpose they served. In fact, cats rarely consider Man in an archaeological light. They have little interest in the jobs humans held or what their daily rituals entailed. Cats are aware that different artifacts hail from different eras (for example, that e-books came from a later age than a newspaper), but they have little information beyond that. Those cats who *do* decipher the Old Ones' ancient texts are able to piece together certain broad concepts like democracy or medicine, but they don't always have the context surrounding those ideas. Much of cats' understanding of Man is cobbled together in whatever way seems to make the most narrative sense, leading them to conclusions that are often far different from the reality.

To the cats, Man is more important from a mythical perspective: The Old Ones worshipped cats, and uplifted the very best of them to show their love and devotion. When they depart-

ed from the world, they made sure to leave their relics behind for the cats to discover and use in their efforts against the Unseen.

Currently, the cats' society operates at a roughly medieval level of technology and culture, though there are some examples of extremely advanced technology to be found. What might be anachronistic to us — picture a cat with a quantum computer in one paw and a crossbow in the other — is normal to the cats. To them, advanced artifacts are magic left by the Old Ones, and the cats accept it as their due. They view such devices with a mix of religious reverence and intellectual curiosity.

CATS

Cats are the focus of *Monarchies of Mau*. The cats' culture is based on their perceived superiority and their belief in their own past and future lives.

PHYSICAL FORM

Not all animals were uplifted, though cats have no explanation for why some other species were uplifted and others were not (outside of their own folklore stating that the Old Ones only uplifted the very best cats). Cats make a very clear distinction between themselves and felines, who are much like the housecats we keep as pets today. In fact, many cats keep felines as pets of their own, and find nothing odd about it.

Cats are about the size of humans, ranging between five and six feet tall. This has led to heated debates among scholars: Ancient texts suggest that cats were significantly smaller than the Old Ones. While some believe that cats have grown taller over the centuries, others insist that cats have always been their current height, and therefore the humans were giants who towered over 12 feet tall.

When the Old Ones uplifted cats, they made cats more human-like than their former feline counterparts. Cats can stand on two legs, and their paws have fingers that can use tools and manipulate objects. They are also able to extend and retract claws from their fingertips. Cats are mostly bipedal, though they have retained the ability, when necessary, to run on all fours (but not as well or as fast as felines can). The Old Ones also granted cats the ability to see in full color. Their skin is covered in fur. Most cats have tails, which can be a vulnerability on the battlefield. Therefore, sets

of armor usually include a piece that protects its owner's tail.

A cat's average lifespan is 50-60 years. Cats under 10 years old are considered kittens. Between 10 and 15, they are young adults, then are adults until 30, and mature adults until 45. Cats over 45 are considered old. Of course, what stage of life a cat is in varies by the individual. Some cats of advanced age still have young souls, and kittens are occasionally wise beyond their years. Most cats set out to explore when they're young adults, but no cat is too old to start.

houses

Centuries ago, cats formed six alliances, based both on the cats' families and those who shared similar beliefs. Those allies built cities, which grew and expanded until they became monarchies. When the leaders of those monarchies signed the Treaty of Unification, their ruling alliances became the great houses that the Monarchies of Mau know today, consisting of Angora, Cymric, Korat, Mau, Rex, and Siberian.

A cat's house allegiance carries more weight than their family name. The complex tangle of intrigues and alliances among the houses make it essential for one cat to know where another's loyalties lie before they begin their dealings. Therefore, a cat's house name is appended to her family name, and is often shortened to her first name and house. So Zola Mau von Korat, for example ("Zola of the family Mau, sworn to House Korat"), is frequently referred to simply as Zola von Korat. Cats who live outside of the monarchies, or who have forsworn — or been disowned by — their houses are called "moggies" or "outsiders," and have no house name. These moggies, plus members of some smaller factions and minor houses, have banded together to form the Shadow Bloc, and have recently (and surprisingly) won a place on the monarchies' Ruling Council.

When Trillani Persian von Mau brought the houses together under the Treaty of Unification, she had to contend with the intrigues and rivalries among them all — many of which had existed for hundreds of years. The houses' secrets and grudges were (and still are) more tangled than the knottiest skein of yarn, but Trillani persevered — thanks in no small part to her skills as a negotiator. Even then, it took her a full year to accomplish her goals.

Unification didn't bring about an end to these inter-house conflicts, of course. Today's cats must also learn to navigate those complex webs of intrigue when dealing with cats from other houses. And few of them are as skilled as Trillani was.

Trillani died last year, leaving the nation's leadership in the paws of Ruling Council. No new monarch has been elected, nor has a vote been called. For the moment, the Dynasts on the Council are handling the day-to-day issues and running the monarchies, but they will eventually need to fill the void left by Trillani's death. Every house has its own preferred candidate, and works behind the scenes preparing for the day they can put that cat forth as the next potential Monarch.

ENEMIES

Cats have enemies all around, seeking to stop them from exploring the world and recovering the artifacts and knowledge left behind by the Old Ones. Some of these enemies are rival species, who seek the same treasures the cats do, or who wish to conquer the same territories to expand their own. Others are the monsters that lurk in the wild, forces of chaos and strange horrors that live in the ruins cats wish to explore. Worst of all are the minions of the Unseen, bold enough to attack cats in their cities, twisting their spirits and turning them against their friends and loved ones.

RIVAL SPECIES

Cats share the world with other uplifted species. Each has its own culture, very different from the cats'. The other species also have their own agendas, which are frequently at odds with those of the monarchies. Dogs, rodents, badgers, and lizards are the species cats contend with the most often, but they are not the entirety. Birds control the air, and there are rumors of fish ruling the seas, though the cats have limited (and sometimes violent) interaction with either.

DOGS

The cats' main rivals are the dogs. Dogs have a strong focus on their communities and are fiercely loyal to their families, which is nearly unfathomable to individually minded cats. Though the war with Pugmire has been over for decades, cats and dogs have never fully trusted one another since. Old tensions still linger, and each species watches

the other carefully for signs of impending betrayal.

Of the two major dog kingdoms, Pugmire and Houndton, Pugmire is the stronger power. The crown there has a firm control over its subjects, which the cats both admire and envy. The Church of Man — the dog's faith — encourages its adherents to work together for the betterment of society. The combination of church and crown enables the dogs to accomplish many things, though cats who observe those accomplishments wonder if it's worth sacrificing one's individuality to do so. Dogs' loyalties are also complicated by their ties to their birth families. If their families' aims are at odds with the Church's goals, for example, dogs are torn between the two. This steadfast loyalty mystifies cats, whose allegiance lies with their chosen house rather than their littermates.

Nor do the cats understand the dogs' devotion and subservience to Old Ones, who they call "Man." Cats believe the Old Ones worshipped and served them, and left their artifacts behind for cats to use. Dogs, on the other paw, insist on putting those artifacts in museums where they remain untouched and inaccessible rather than putting them to use against the Unseen. Some cats believe that, since dogs worship Man, and Man worshipped cats, the devotees of the Church of Man should shift their adoration to the cats. Most cats who think this way express those views in the safety of taverns in the monarchies. To say such a thing to a dog's face would invite bared teeth and a low growl at the minimum.

Some dogs leave the walls of Pugmire and Houndton to live in the monarchies, but work is often scarce. Rare is the house that would invite a dog into its ranks, and few fashionable business owners wish to have a stray on the payroll. Dogs are therefore forced to take lower-class positions, which reinforces the cats' belief that they are the superior species.

RATS AND MICE

Rats and mice live on the margins of civilization. They have no great cities — in fact, they have no cities at all. Rumors tell of a once-thriving rodent kingdom that fell to ruin centuries ago, though whether it succumbed to plague or was overrun by monsters varies from tale to tale. This leaves them with little leverage when it



comes to negotiating with the dogs and cats, and leads to those species dismissing the rodents' potential as allies or equals.

Since the loss of their city (if it ever existed, which many cats doubt), rats and mice make their homes in maze-like mineshafts and cave systems, carve out places among the ruins, or live among the refuse in the cities. They are also explorers, though their methods are different than the cats'. Rats are always on the lookout for "shinies" they can trade for food and shelter. Those rats and mice living in the monarchies tend to be criminals, making a living doing the types of jobs cats and dogs don't want to dirty their paws with. The rodents trade their hard-earned treasures for power and leverage. They believe cats will never treat them fairly, and have long since stopped trying to change cats' minds. Instead, they embrace the stereotype of the shifty rat, and use it to their advantage.

Rats and mice are *good* at going unnoticed. In fact, they excel at espionage, much to the cats' despair. Footpads and trackers alike hiss at the thought of a mouse getting away with their houses' secrets. Rodents also seem to have some strange magical tricks of their own, although no cat has been able to reverse-engineer it.

The Cult of Labo Tor is a group of fanatics within rodent society whose abhorrent actions contribute to their bad reputation. These cultists have dubbed themselves White Mice, bleaching their fur and donning white robes to show their allegiance. The Cult worships Man's 100 Theories, which can only be discovered by replicating the science of the Old Ones. That "science" involves kidnapping unsuspecting people and subjecting them to horrific experiments. Although most rats and mice denounce the cult, their species' secretive nature makes it hard for cats and dogs to determine which rodents are trustworthy and which would like to dissect them.

BADGERS

"Badger" is a catch-all term that also encompasses otters, polecats, weasels, ferrets, and Wolverines. Together, these species are conquerors and consumers. Badgers don't build; they take. They have no cities that didn't belong to another species first. When they plunder relic caches, they are only interested in how those objects might benefit the band in the short term — if they have any curiosity about the Old Ones or the ancient world, cats are unaware of it.

If badgers overthrow a town, they move in, fortify their position, take the supplies they need, and look for the next target. They do not seek to settle down, though whether that's because it's their nature to keep moving or because they want to clear out before the cat army descends is a matter of debate. Most badgers act like lawless villains, but that isn't a universal truth. Some are merely trying to provide for their families or protect their children from larger predators. There's often safety in the band that they can't find on their own. Those badger tribes who do try to settle down usually seek out abandoned places. Unfortunately, this often puts them in competition with the rats and mice.

Badgers are notoriously terrible at communication between the tribes. A minister in the monarchy of Korat has written a popular ballad based on one of these storied failures, in which a group of ferrets assaulted a castle that had been taken by polecats only a few days before. Such tales are a source of amusement for the cats, but those are tempered by rumors of the badger king Kibu the Red. Scuttlebutt says Kibu wishes to unify the tribes, and lead a charge against the monarchies. It's hard to know how much of this is the truth and how much is a story intended to frighten kittens, but many houses have sent scouts to try to confirm the rumors, and groups of Trillani's Trailblazers have been told to keep an eye out.

LIZARDS

Lizards travel in nomadic tribes that come to the monarchies from more arid parts of the world. They are traders and messengers, bringing rare goods and interesting news from all over. Their colorful caravans are a welcome sight at a city's gates, drawing cats from noble mansions and cramped apartments alike out to view their wares. Lizards share tales of the places they've been, including intriguing stories from foreign lands. Many noble cats wish to visit such places, but content themselves with hearing the lizards' version.

A few lizard tribes, like the geckos, settle in cities that sit on the outskirts of the desert, but most prefer to move from location to location throughout the year. Lizards' cities travel with them, a collection of tents springing up when they stop for a few days to trade. They make their living bartering and scavenging, and performing odd jobs for other species. Although they tell stories of adventures

in foreign lands, lizards are private and insular when it comes to personal and community matters. Many of them cover their faces outside their own communities, and a few have been known to travel with birds. When the need to defend themselves arises, lizards employ strange magics against their attackers.

ANIMALS

Less-evolved animals share the world with uplifted people. Cats ride horses into battle, herd cattle for milk and meat, and use oxen to plow their fields for planting. They hunt deer and rabbits, and use their skins for clothing. Cats keep felines as pets and companions — they view them in much the same way humans look at apes. They're our cousins, of a sort, but they're on a lower rung of the evolutionary ladder.

Some animals border on the monstrous, and have been twisted into strange abominations. They might be huge, towering beasts that threaten a village. Some of them have high intelligence, or can even communicate. Cats call these animals "half-lifted." Their existence troubles many cats — is this the Old Ones' gift gone wrong? Or worse, did the Old Ones create these animals on purpose? Most encounters with half-lifted animals end poorly for that animal.

MONSTERS

Many strange and unusual creatures roam the wilds. Silver-scaled etherkesh, who seek out living flesh. Giant worms that burrow beneath the ground, their eyeless faces turned toward sources of warmth and the scent of flesh. Breath-takers that adopt a cat's form and steal the breath from sleeping, immobilized victims. These creatures are frightening, insane, and destructive. Chaos follows in their wake. Here be monsters.

Though some cat scholars group them into similar types ("shadow monsters," "giants," and so on), monsters have no actual species. Neither do they have a discernable culture or common language, though some do seem to speak tongues of their own devising. If the monsters have a goal, cats have not discovered one beyond their propensity to spread fear and chaos and destroy any civilizations that lay along their path. Monsters range from simpleminded beasts to hyper-in-

telligent horrors. The ones with the ability to reason are often the most frightening: Their intellect is focused solely on the hunt, never on peaceful negotiations. The only parley a monster can hear comes at the end of a blade.

Monsters dwell in forgotten places. They make their nests high in the Old Ones' abandoned towers, or old cat buildings. Some of them sleep deep underground, in caves and mines, waiting for explorers to happen upon their lairs. Others create their own macabre dwellings, lining the walls of their nests with their victims' soft fur, or fashioning massive honeycomb-like cells to store their food for later – sometimes while it still lives.

Many monsters were not meant to be monsters at all. These were the products of failed upliftings or experiments gone awry, animals who escaped from their labs and fled into the wild, where they passed their mutations on to future generations. Others are animals and people who have been twisted by one of the Old Ones' deteriorating relics. As ancient materials break down and safeguards fail, weird energies wash over the local area and settle into the soil. Some monsters' origins are unknown: Horrors exist in the world, and that's all cats can say. All of them are dangerous.

DEMONS AND THE UNSEEN

Demons. The Enemy. The Unseen. All are names for the cats' most ancient of foes. Out of all the Precepts of Mau, *Always Pounce Upon the Minions of the Unseen* was the one that needed no further debate upon its proposal. Much can be said about how no two cats are alike, but the imperative to root out and destroy the Unseen is what ties all cats together. These invisible enemies can go undetected in the cats' midst, but when they strike, destruction follows in their wake.

Dogs view the Unseen as a type of monster, but cats know it's more complicated and subversive than that. To cats, the Unseen are everywhere, all the time. They lurk just out of the corner of your eye. They are in the shifting air currents that tickle your whiskers, and they are behind that crawling feeling that puts your hackles up and bends your ears flat. The Unseen are always waiting for an opportunity to cause devastation, and even a momentary slip in vigilance gives them a chance to strike.

Sometimes the Unseen manifests as a disease that turns even the most mild-mannered

cats against their allies. These mangy, rabid cats are open to being possessed by demons, who drive them to attack the unpossessed or seek out others of their kind and work toward the Unseen's nefarious goals. The ministers have learned how to exorcise these demons, but the process is dangerous and painful, and usually must be performed at a temple.

Other enemies exist within the ranks of the Unseen that have corporeal forms yet are invisible. These monsters sometimes work with demons and possessed individuals to carry out the Unseen's plans. Others pursue their own agendas. Very few of these entities are mindless, and all are extremely patient. They are always lurking among civilized people, waiting for a cat or a dog or a rat to become vulnerable. The Unseen are the epitome of evil. There is no redemption for them, no future lives waiting for them to atone their sins, no bargaining with them in this life.

HISTORY

Six different city-states comprise the Monarchies of Mau, and thus have six separate histories leading up to their unification. Each great house, as they're known today, keeps its own records dating back to their founding, though most houses are extremely selective about who gets to view them. These accounts alone could – and do – span volumes. Below is a shorter, simplified version of events.

SEPARATE MONARCHIES

Each of the great houses declares it was founded before the others, and the houses' archivists can all produce documents to back up their claims. Every now and then, one house will "discover" a letter or a diary that predates the oldest evidence from other houses, and the cycle of one-upmanship begins anew. While some of these documents are obvious forgeries, others are either very well-crafted or might be the real thing. Which of those claims are true is mainly an exercise for academics to debate. To the cats of the monarchies, whichever house they're sworn to is the oldest, and that's all they need to know.

Before the monarchies were formed, cats were scattered throughout the lands. Many of them traveled together in small, tight-knit colonies, seeking

HISTORY

out places where the hunting was good and the sunlight was plentiful. As they discovered the best places, cats from those colonies built permanent structures to stake their claims, which over time grew into towns. The towns eventually became cities as more cat families arrived and stayed on. Cats found that there was strength in numbers, especially when it came to rooting out the Unseen. Rather than a small pawful of cats keeping an eye on one another, the entire community could be on alert for cats acting demon-haunted.

Despite their similar beginnings, the monarchies themselves varied widely on a cultural level. Cats with complementary interests banded together to found their city-states, and the strengths, skills, and beliefs of those cats deeply informed the direction their respective monarchies took as they expanded.

To the east of the Fearful Forest, Griff von Korat established his family's outpost. The cats of Korat chose to settle here intentionally. The woods were rumored to be full of monsters and home to bandits, the perfect place to send cats who needed to prove their loyalty and earn a place in the house. Their location also meant that enemies would be

unlikely to attack from the west, unless they were foolish enough to expose their backs to the forest's horrors while they threw themselves at Korat's heavily defended walls.

Far to the east, where the rolling plains eventually give way to desert sands, Priscilla von Angora established the first library. While the Korats were busy fortifying their settlements, the Angoras drew in scholars and mancers to help increase the house's knowledge. Cave systems twist below the Angora lands, providing perfect spaces for the monarchy's secret laboratories, and cool places to store sensitive (and occasionally volatile) materials.

The cats of House Rex originally made their homes along the southern coast. They began as a string of small fishing villages, and their black and blue sails were a common sight on the rivers that wend their way inland. Tarquin von Rex, famed for making his way back and forth among the villages over the course of the seasons, is credited with formally founding the house.

In the mountainous north lies the monarchy of Siberian. Much like Korat, Siberian's cities are well-fortified. However, Kira von Siberian kept her house's growth measured and slow, making certain



the lands her comrades set their sights upon could be taken with minimal cost to the house.

It's for this reason that modern-day Siberian commands a smaller territory than some of the other houses who expanded first and worried about maintaining their borders later. The desert on Siberian's eastern border is home to several lizard tribes. Early in the house's history, Siberian established relationships with their traders and amassed a fortune by having first pick from the caravans passing along their roads.

Bounded by all the other monarchies except Rex, Mau sits in the middle of the cats' territories. Shelby von Mau founded the city-state with the intent to make its cities bastions of learning and places all cats were welcome. Her close advisor, Trina Maincoon, was wise in the ways of magic and its use against the Unseen.

For many years, the cats of House Cymric traveled between the existing monarchies, entertaining cats of all kinds and offering up their services as fair but firm negotiators. Decades spent on the road had their disadvantages, and the Cymric elders decided it was time to leave the traveling to the younger cats and kittens. Karenine von Cymric and a troupe of his closest advisors set up a meeting with rulers from Mau and Rex, negotiating with them for rights to the unsettled land between the other two territories. Their requests were granted, with the other two houses bestowing the land upon Cymric for services rendered.

With Cymric settled, the cats had laid claim to all the easily accessible available lands. They were bounded on all sides: by the forests, the mountains, the desert, and the Acid Sea. The only way the monarchies could expand was inward, toward territories other houses had claimed. Though it happened over several generations, the monarchies began encroaching on one another's borders, and before long, the fighting began.

Several towns changed paws frequently, when they lay on the border between two monarchies. One unlucky village at the intersection of Korat, Cymric, and Mau lands was conquered and retaken so many times that, after a year of constant struggle, the original villagers abandoned their homes and farms in the dead of night rather than spend one more month under siege.

The Siberian town of Rosewater was a testament to its monarchy's strategy of slow but

careful growth. When General Bella von Korat began her siege, she expected that Rosewater would fall to Korat within a matter of days. Instead, under the leadership of Dusty Calico von Siberian, Rosewater's fortifications and food stores held out for months. Bella and her troops were eventually recalled.

In addition to physical battles, the cats began sending spies into their rivals' territories to learn their weaknesses. Webs of allegiances and intrigue spun their way through the monarchies. The cats grew more distrustful of outsiders, worried that visitors from other monarchies were there to gather intelligence. Many of them were. This wariness left cats more open to corruption from demons and the Unseen. Some cats forgot their very first duty: to pounce upon those evil forces.

THE FALL OF SMILODON

Although the official histories only mention six monarchies, in truth, there once existed a seventh.

Smilodon.

Say the name now, and upstanding cats will have one of two reactions: Some will hiss softly, cursing the fallen family beneath their breath. The rest will stare at you blankly, as though the name doesn't register. For some — kittens especially — this is because they *haven't* heard of the family. Over the centuries, the name has been erased from the monarchies' records and teachings. Scholars who have delved deeper into their houses' archives and learned the truth still might feign ignorance, but it's the type of blank look given to a cat who has just revealed a secret in public. That polite, vaguely embarrassed stare that says, "Let's pretend you didn't say that, and I'll pretend I didn't hear it."

The Smilodon family's origins are lost to history. If they were once a branch of one of the noble houses, that house has eradicated all mentions of them from their archives. In fact, the best evidence that Smilodon existed is the gaps in the histories. It's in missing records and pages torn from yellowed diaries. It's in ink smudged to illegibility from a convenient spill of catnip tea. No house would admit to Smilodon being part of their own. No monarchy would admit to funding their fatal expedition.



Smilodon's origins are left intentionally obscure here. If you wish to use Smilodon in your chronicle, feel free to let your characters uncover the unsettling proof that the disgraced family was once part of their own history.

No matter who founded it, the cats of Smilodon set off on an expedition over the northern mountains. The last person to see them go was a Siberian kitten, who watched their train of supply carts and people and horses wend its way into the hills. No one knew what lay beyond the mountains, whether monsters ruled the land on the other side, or whether there might be an endless sea, or whether the Old Ones might even be on the other side, awaiting their joyous reunion with the cats they'd served so long ago.

Cats in the monarchies spent months waiting for the expedition to send word of what they'd found.

They spent *years*.

When Smilodon hadn't been heard from in a generation, the cats of the monarchies deemed them lost and assumed the lands beyond the mountains were simply too treacherous to be settled. Until the day the son of that Siberian kitten who'd watched the caravan leave spotted several figures picking their way down the mountain trails. Smilodon had survived.

While a pawful of the house's members returned to the monarchies, most remained in their new home beyond the mountains. Yet something was odd about the cats who had returned. Those who'd known them before couldn't quite tell what it was, but they set their former acquaintances' hackles up. Suspicions grew, and the cats were watched carefully. Emissaries that the monarchies sent over the mountains returned *wrong*, if they returned at all.

Despite those misgivings, cats from House Smilodon resumed their place within the monarchies. The other houses traded with them. Cats

from Smilodon defected to join other houses, and cats from houses both great and small left their own to append "von Smilodon" to their names. Though those names have been stricken from their histories, every house in the monarchies has ties to Smilodon in its past.

Eventually, a coalition of the wisest cats from across the monarchies investigated the cats of Smilodon and came to a grim conclusion: To a cat, they'd been corrupted by the Unseen. Ministers and mancens drew the truth out of their captives, and learned that it was the same on the other side of the mountains: Every cat in Smilodon had succumbed. The ministers tried valiantly to exorcise the possessed cats, but they were too far gone.

With heavy hearts, the rulers of the monarchies knew what must be done. One last expedition went over the mountains, guarded by champions from across the lands, outfitted with relics wielded by the most formidable mancens. A passel of ministers traveled with them, to heal their allies and fend off the Unseen. Half a year later, they returned, fewer in number, but uncorrupted.

All of them claimed that Smilodon was no more. But many cats quietly joined other houses and prepared for the time when they would return.

EXPLORATION AND THE WAR

For a long time, cats stopped exploring beyond the boundaries of the monarchies. Plenty of artifacts could be found in the Old Ones' ruins within the monarchies, enough to keep researchers busy for generations. Cats accepted this unspoken decree until a few generations ago.

Even when the cats were actively exploring the world, the Acid Sea was a vast barrier to their south. The waters ate away at ships' hulls, dooming any expedition before its sails could ever unfurl. Until one cat, experimenting with Man's miracle substance, plastic, discovered that it could withstand the corrosive effects of the Acid Sea. Ships' hulls coated in it would survive. Caesar von Rex allowed cats to finally conquer the sea.

This discovery revitalized cats' desire to explore, and suddenly House Rex — who controlled the coasts — found itself awash in new offers of aid and alliances. The monarchies raced to be the first to set sail. Whoever set foot on new lands first would have the pick of ruins to explore

and would have a jump on trading with any species they might encounter.

The hidden cats of Smilodon attempted to gain control by encouraging Caesar to defect to their monarchy — his name in later years was stricken from all records for his betrayal. Others bribed or flattered Rex into gaining a portion of the potential profits and rewards from exploration. Rather than compete with the other monarchies, though, Korat made other plans. Why owe favors to Rex, the weakest of the monarchies, when there was a perfectly good port on the other side of the Fearless Forest? Waterdog Port had the unfortunate complication of being a part of Pugmire, but Korat preferred dealing with the dogs to bribing another monarchy.

Official accounts between Pugmire and the Monarchies of Mau disagree on how the tensions between Waterdog Port and Korat started. According to the dogs, Korat wanted access to the port but refused to pay to build ships. Korat's accountants show them funding the creation of a pawful of vessels, but list exorbitant fees from the dogs for use of the docks. Hostilities increased on both sides over the course of decades, until dogs and cats began openly fighting in the streets of Waterdog Port.

Pugmire's Queen Lilly Springer II banned all cats from the city. Though she claimed it was done to deescalate the situation and give Korat a chance to rein in its citizens' behavior, the monarchy took it as an insult. Other cats agreed, and all six monarchies joined together to try to force Pugmire to relinquish control of the port. The dogs defended their city, and the War of Dogs and Cats began.

For a brief time during the war, the monarchies *did* gain control of Waterdog Port. The endless, bloody siege had grown too expensive for the dogs to afford, and they yielded the city. The cats seized it immediately, renaming it "Mau's Glorious Waters." However, the cats' grasp on the port was as tenuous as the dogs' had been. In the few brief months they controlled the city, no new ships were built. No expeditions sailed. The cats had to devote all their resources to holding the port against the dogs who'd been left behind by the crown and were fighting back from within. Eventually, the cats ceded control and withdrew from the port. Presently, Waterdog Port is its own entity, bound to neither the Monarchies of Mau nor Pugmire.

THE MONARCHIES TODAY

While the War of Dogs and Cats raged on, one cat saw how disastrous its long-term effects could be, not only for the six monarchies, but for the known world. Trillani Persian von Mau watched as cats joined together to fight the dogs, while at the same time undermining each other. Her research into the Unseen made her keenly aware how easy it would be for their ancient enemy to take advantage of the weak and wounded. With the backing of Mau's ruling council, Trillani began a quest to unite the disparate monarchies as one great cat nation. After months of cogent arguments and exhaustive negotiations, the cats signed the Treaty of Unification and elected Trillani the first Monarch of the Monarchies of Mau.

Several years into the war, with no end to the bloodshed in sight, Queen Lilly died unexpectedly. Her successor, King Charles Pug I, reached out to open talks with the newly-formed nation. It seemed like an impossible task. Neither side had good reason to trust the other, but the nations couldn't sustain the fighting forever. After a year of fraught negotiations, with both the Ruling Council and the dogs' royal court objecting to one another's proposals, King Charles and Monarch Trillani met in secret and signed a peace agreement. At long last, the war was over.

Since the war ended, relations between the monarchies and Pugmire have been tense but stable, thanks in large part to Trillani's efforts. Cats and dogs take easy offense at perceived slights, but none have escalated into major conflicts. The dogs' new king, Puckington I, lobbies for expanded trade and political relations with the monarchies, but has gained little traction.

Now, decades later, exploration flourishes. New avenues of trade with the lizards have opened up as the bravest cats ventured across the seas. Reports from the trailblazers suggest that monsters are getting bolder, leaving their lairs in the wilds to prowl the countryside and attack innocents. Likewise, the ministers warn cats to heighten their vigilance toward the Unseen. Closer to home, badger tribes are growing more aggressive, and the Cult of Labo Tor has increased its gruesome activities, sometimes right under the monarchies' noses. Recent underground excavations by House Angora reveal that there might be an massive ancient cat-

acomb twisting underneath the monarchies, containing unknown dangers and potential.

Nearly a year ago, during these escalating troubles, Monarch Trillani von Mau died. She was old even by cat standards, but citizens across the Monarchies feel her loss deeply. The Ruling Council has yet to elect a new Monarch with their paws full making sure the monarchies' most pressing needs are met. Even now, there are rumblings within the great houses about who might take Trillani's place, and what her absence means for the monarchies in days to come.

CAT CULTURE

Cat culture is always evolving, but certain elements remain similar enough to their original forms that even cats who eschew "civilized" society will recognize them. Whether those cats agree with them is a different ball of yarn.

SPIRITUALITY

The dogs' veneration of Man is in direct opposition to cats' spiritual views. Cats believe that the Old Ones worshipped cats and devoted their lives to serving them. As proof of their adoration, many cats believe the Old Ones gifted them with nine lives so they could spend more time in their service. It is a cat's duty to be worthy of that gift, and they strive to act in ways that are honorable. This leads them to draw upon their past and future lives for guidance.

Each cat's spirituality is a private and extremely individual matter. However, since their formation, the monarchies have built Temples to the Nine as state-sanctioned houses of worship. Their prayers and meditations are their own, but cats take comfort in the presence of others as they seek out the wisdom of their past selves. The Temple is a safe and controlled environment. Ministers at the Temples help cats call upon their past lives, and can aid them in interpreting the answers that come from beyond.

Some cats question the ministers' roles in the process. It seems odd that a cat can't know where they are in their allotted number of lives without a minister confirming that they're a "young soul" or an "old soul" — phrases that sound ponderous without telling the cat much at all. Still, some cats believe they inherit powers from past lives, or are

wise beyond their years, and many consider this proof enough. Whether a cat believes in their abilities or not, ministers can hold sway over a crowd by channeling the voices of their other lives while mancers use the bones of the dead for their spells.

In truth, cats *don't* have nine lives. Neither do they reincarnate. Ministers can sometimes find strange patterns or fragmented memories inside a cat's mind, but those could come from the odd connections cats have to magic and the Old Ones, or from inherited remnants of power absorbed from destroyed relics. Some cats are aware of this, and recognize the belief as an excuse for cats to worship themselves. For others, the belief grants them comfort and purpose, and cats who are in the know keep the truth to themselves — both because of the cats' reverence for secrets, and because they find it needlessly cruel to disabuse others of their faith.

PRECEPTS OF MAU

When the six monarchies signed the Treaty of Unification, one of the first acts of the Monarch and the Ruling Council was to set down a standard of behavior. What might be acceptable conduct in one monarchy could be a faux pas or even a punishable offense in another. Thus, the Accepted Precepts of Mau could guide the cats toward the correct actions.

ALWAYS TRUST YOUR INSTINCTS

The Old Ones worshipped cats, because cats' actions made them worthy of said worship. On the surface this sounds like circular logic, but on a deeper level it reveals the faith cats place in the Old Ones, and the power they believe the Old Ones were capable of bestowing. If cats acted in ways that were unworthy, their servants might withdraw their worship, and thus their gifts. Unlike the dogs, no one can reliably tell a cat she is a "good cat." She must instead rely upon herself, and what she knows to be true deep down, to guide her toward the correct actions.

ALWAYS POUNCE UPON THE MINIONS OF THE UNSEEN

When cats and Man were companions, it was a cat's solemn duty to protect Man from invisible dangers: ghosts and spirits, people of ill intent,



or anything dire that might happen. Cats yowled and hissed and chased after the demons, but Man never listened, and now Man is gone.

For a long time after Man's disappearance, cats lost the ability to sense the Unseen. Perhaps this was because they no longer had Man to protect, or because they'd failed them in their time of greatest need. In the centuries since the monarchies formed, demons have set their sights on cats the way they once did on Man, infiltrating cat society and fomenting destruction and betrayal. The Unseen twist cats' minds, making their friends appear as enemies, spurring the cats to attack.

In recent years, cats have renewed their resolve to be vigilant and root out the Unseen in all its forms. The ability to detect the Unseen has been slowly returning in recent years. Some cats speculate that the Old Ones have seen their diligence and rewarded its resurgence with the return of this gift.

Out of the four Precepts, this one received little debate and is the most consistently enforced among the houses.

ALWAYS REWARD LOYALTY

Very few dogs understand the power of loyalty. They give it freely, with little thought as to

whether the recipient deserves such a gift, and are surprised when it turns out he doesn't.

Before the monarchies united, cats rarely offered their loyalty, and only to those who had truly proven themselves worthy. Ever wary that it might be used to exploit a weakness, cats wanted to be *certain* before swearing to a person or a cause. There was also the small problem that the cat who swore received nothing in return.

The six houses decided that rewarding loyalty would strengthen the union. If loyalty came with a reward, cats would offer more of it in return — to their superiors and the Monarchies of Mau, of course, and (most importantly to the Dynasts) to their houses.

In the years since the Precepts were set down, this rule has worked well. Kittens accept it as a given, never having known the wariness their grandparents felt about offering loyalty, or how they looked for ways around it. Some ministers teach that there was power in the Old Ones' loyalty to the cats they worship, reinforcing the concept.

ALWAYS RESPECT AN HONEST DUEL

Trillani von Mau was an idealist and a visionary, but she was never naive. Even as she attempted

to unite the monarchies, she knew that conflict between cats was not only a reality, but was viewed by houses such as Korat as a way to build strength and test another cat's mettle. Dueling was an honored art in all the monarchies throughout the centuries, and Trillani embraced it rather than try to abolish the practice.

However, dueling rules differed from one monarchy to the next, so she set about standardizing them, and created a formal code for participants to follow. In some cases, she offered alternative methods to traditional duels to reduce instances of injury and death. The code is lengthy, spelling out rules for every scenario, anticipating exceptions and edge cases. Most houses keep a copy on paw, to refer to in case a member of the household is challenged, or for cats to page through over a cup of catnip tea. Cats who often find themselves challenged tend to carry their own private copies on their persons. Whatever quibbles a cat might have with obscure sections of the code, the core tenet is sacrosanct: If the duel was conducted honestly, then the results are to be respected.

When two cats have a disagreement that discussion and debate can't resolve (or when the participants refuse to have the discussion in the first place), they may choose to duel to determine which party is correct. If a duel is honest and fair, the cat who wins the duel is deemed to be correct, and that should be the end of the argument. Speaking out in favor of the losing cat suggests that the duel was not honest and fair, and may land the cat speaking out in a duel herself!

Duels do not have to involve weapons or violence. The code offers many alternatives, and as long as the opponents or their representatives agree that the terms are fair, the duel may proceed. Older cats don't always see the merit in these types of duels – the scars you earn are marks of honor; what do younger cats have to show their future kittens if they settle their disagreement via a game of cards?

Elaborate rituals and structures make duels seem more honest to observers. For example, an old tradition requires the aggrieved party to show up at her rival's home and accept a formal offer of hospitality from the rival. She then seeks a fragile object her rival values, and deliberately shoves it to the floor. When the item shatters, the rival can

honorably call for a duel, without revealing the true (and potentially scandalous) nature of the disagreement.

DISPUTED TENETS

Several additional precepts have been proposed by the houses, though none have been formally adopted, and not all houses agree with them. How and whether these tenets are enforced varies from house to house. These are known as the Disputed Precepts of Mau:

- Always pursue knowledge
- Always operate with discretion
- Always strike when least expected
- Always act with honor
- Always push boundaries
- Always revere the past

Each house embraces one of these tenets, and treats the others as guidelines – some useful, others pointless. As such, application and interpretation of the Disputed Precepts depends on the opinions and experiences of the individual cat.

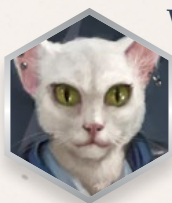
CAT RELATIONSHIPS

Cats approach new acquaintances with a measure of aloofness and caution. As opposed to the dogs, who begin with the assumption that everyone is a friend, cats expect everyone to be seeking the upper paw and act accordingly. This is viewed as polite rather than rude – in fact, cats who act too familiar too quickly are eyed with suspicion, causing their companions to spend the rest of the interaction wondering what the ebullient cat *wants*.

Perhaps ironically, "What do I get out of this?" is exactly what every cat is asking herself when it comes to friendship, even if asking that question directly is a serious breach of etiquette. This ingrained wariness and calculation proved useful when cats began traveling into other house's territories. Most cats were fully aware that any friendships they struck up with cats from other monarchies could and almost certainly *would* be used as sources of information for the benefit of their own. What information was she willing to divulge about her own house? How did that weigh against the information she'd bring home?

This doesn't mean that cats have no genuine friendships, or that they don't feel affection for other cats. Those friendships are the ones with the greatest reward for the cat's time, the ones where she feels she is receiving the same amount of effort from the other cat as what she puts in. A true friend hears a cat's secrets and *keeps* them, rather than using them against her.

Some cats realize their interest in one another is romantic rather than platonic, and choose to become lovers. Cats who tangle themselves in espionage may be warier of getting involved with other cats, and nobles expect a degree of scrutiny and speculation when they enter into a romantic relationship. Some houses insist on vetting a cat's partners, especially if they wish to marry, but the rules aren't nearly as rigid in the monarchies as they are for the royal dogs of Pugmire. "Always trust your instincts" applies just as much to love and friendship as it does to other aspects of cats' lives.



Whenever I bother to check out my family's library, I've come across mentions of the Old Ones restricting marriage to be between a man and a woman alone, or stating that the number of people in a relationship should be no more than two. This is absurd, and proves cats had a lot to teach the Old Ones who worshipped us. Always trust your instincts. Love who you love.

HONOR

Although cats throughout the monarchies behave similarly when it comes to protecting secrets in public, the ways in which cats from different houses approach matters of honor and face vary widely. The nuances and shifts are spreading

slowly as newer generations learn one another's ways, but it's a long process. In the years since the Treaty of Unification was signed, cats have learned to tread carefully when questions of honor arise.

What constitutes a grievous insult to a member of one house might not even register as a slight to a representative from another. Due to many such misunderstandings over the years, cats have learned to be quick with apologies if they've unwittingly given offense. This often deescalates the insulted party's desire to declare a duel, and — if instinct tells the insulted party the apology was offered sincerely — the cats proceed as though no offense was made.

After the meeting ends, the onus is on the cat who slipped up to find out where they made their mistake, either by researching the other house's customs or asking an expert on that culture. It is never up to the insulted cat to explain where his companion erred. Cats who insist on making the offended explain their misstep may find themselves invited to duel after all.

TECHNOLOGY AND MAGIC

Let's pull back from the world of the *Monarchies of Mau* for a moment. As the reader, it's clear the items the cats view as magical are pieces of advanced technology. The cats of the monarchies, however, have only achieved a level of technology equivalent to our 14th or 15th century. In some ways, they're a bit more advanced — better farming and irrigation techniques, or the ability to smelt and mold plastic — but otherwise, the cats' technology stops somewhere in the 1400s.

To a cat, then, devices we take for granted today appear to them to be powered by mystical energies. As Arthur C. Clarke stated, "any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic," and that applies to the monarchies. The ability to send messages instantaneously across a room or to another town is a kind of sorcery, though we recognize it as bits and bytes of information stored and sent electronically. And, further, that information gets sent through thin air and bounces off satellites to get to its destination. Imagine explaining all those concepts to a cat: electricity, telecommunications, spaceflight. How is "magic" any less valid an explanation?

The line between technology and magic may blur over the course of your game, which is how it is for the cats themselves. A cat who reverse engineers one of the Old Ones' inventions will be praised for uncovering one of their secrets. How that discovery advances society might not be recognized until much later. As magical items become commonplace and reproduced, cats accept them as technological advancements instead. Some older cats may be wary, but most chalk these discoveries up to offerings from the Old Ones, and take it as their due.

Where technology and magic meet and cats are close to a new technological discovery, they tend to view those things as everyday items enhanced by magic, but don't believe they're inherently magical on their own. Cats are also more likely than dogs to dig into the relics the Old Ones left behind. Dogs will study an artifact from the outside, and learn how to use it based on the state they found it in. Cats, on the other paw, are far less reverent. Figuring out what an item is used for is only the first step. They want to know *why* it works. What it does if you push all the buttons at once. What's *inside*, how to take it apart, and how to put it back together. If a cat breaks an artifact while studying it, she feels no remorse, especially not if she's gained an understanding of what made it tick.

Technology and magic aren't two separate concepts, but are points at opposite ends of a spectrum. Where one mixes into the other, that's where the neat stuff happens. You can play with that scale in whichever ways work best for your chronicle.

TIME AND MONEY

Neither time nor money have precise or constant measurements in cat society.

Cats use plastic for currency much like dogs do. They mine it from the earth and smelt it into shards, chunks, and coins, which can be exchanged for goods and services throughout the monarchies. In most places, 10 shards equal a chunk, and 10 chunks equal a coin. However, prices and the conversion rate between shards and chunks, and chunks and coins, vary depending on where in the monarchies a cat finds herself.

Plastic is a relatively new currency for the cats as well as the dogs. Until recently, most of the monarchies had a barter-based economy, but the

discovery that plastic could be used to create boat hulls made cats scramble to mine more of the Old Ones' curious material and put an influx of it into the houses' coffers. The Ruling Council has attempted to regulate the size and values of plastic currency, but some houses are strenuously opposed to switching over to it in the first place. Conservative, cautious Siberian certainly recognizes plastic's value, and stockpiles coins in its vaults, but the house is hedging its bets in case something happens to make its price plummet. Villages in Siberian territory still rely on barter, which confuses the occasional travelers passing through with pockets full of coins who are asked to pitch in on the farm or in the tavern's stables. Cats in Korat territory are more likely to trade for a well-made dagger or helm than they are for a pile of coins.

Time is also not measured in precise intervals, though cats are slightly more accurate than dogs at measuring it. A *day* lasts from one sunrise to the next. *Morning* is when the sun rises in the sky, and *evening* is when it lowers. *Night* is when the sun is gone. During the day, cats measure *hours* about the same way dogs do: when the sun has moved noticeably in the sky, but less than a full change from morning to evening, or evening to night. At night, however, cats can measure the passage of an hour more precisely. They have observed the movement of stars against the sky, and worked out a way to calculate the time based on where the constellations appear.

Like dogs, cats have yet to figure out time on a more granular scale. The only unit of time shorter than an hour is a *twitch*, which is a bit shorter than a dog's *wag*, but is still based on the movement of one's tail.

LOUNGES

One venue every city and town in the monarchies boasts is the local lounge. It's the central gathering place for cats of all stripes to meet over a steaming mug of catnip tea or a saucer of milk — warm or honey-spiked, as you please — to discuss the day's events, exchange gossip, or simply share a meal in the company of one's comrades. The best lounges have large south-facing windows that let the sun stream in during the day, and plenty of cushioned spots for cats to recline and soak in its warmth. The middle of the day is especially busy, and coveted spaces are snatched up fast.



At night, cats prefer to sit near the fireplace and warm their paws. This is also the time rats and mice slink into the lounge, looking to make or complete their shady deals. The rodents stick mostly to the darker corners, which is fine by the cats: more room by the hearth for them.

As with any large establishment, especially one that serves fermented milk by the bowlful, scathing comments are often exchanged. Some of the choice insults a cat might hear are:

- **Hairball:** An insult, similar to “peabrain.”
- **Mutt-lover:** A cat who prefers the company of dogs to other cats.
- **Runt:** A weak cat, prone to being beaten up.
- **Tail-chaser:** A cat known to waste his time on futile pursuits.

ORGANIZATIONS AND FACTIONS

The Monarchies of Mau are made up of many different organizations and factions, some of which are better known than others.

THE RULING COUNCIL

Since Trillani von Mau’s death, the Ruling Council has spent much of the last year making sure the monarchies run smoothly. The sheer amount of effort that takes leaves them little room for other lawmaking, and many of the Dynasts wonder whether Trillani had the aid of some wonder of the Old Ones that allowed her to accomplish so much in one lifetime.

Of course, Trillani had no special magic other than her own adroitness at getting things done. She knew when to gently steer debate to a close, which matters she could handle without asking for the Council’s input, and which decisions of theirs should be deftly overturned in favor of a better option. Without her, the Council tends to review every request with equal care and endless discussion. The dynasts are so concerned with each monarchy having a say that progress has virtually ground to a halt. Though this secretly delights some members of the Council and their houses, it is untenable for the nation.

Something needs to change, and soon.

THE DYNASTS

- **Angora:** Stories say that Dynast Priscilla von Angora had her bed built into a set of book-

shelves in the Angora manor house in the heart of the monarchy's capital, so she could drift off to sleep surrounded by her favorite books. This paints a rather cozy picture of Priscilla, which House Angora rarely bothers to dispute. In truth, she is a skilled mancer and a shrewd politician, a quiet but formidable force on the Ruling Council.

- **Cymric:** Dynast Bricu von Cymric spent his kittenhood as part of a troop of wanderers, learning at the right paw of the great orator Uth von Cymric. He learned the fiery bits of famous speeches, and how to deliver a cutting aside, but soon realized his passion was in politics rather than playacting. Bricu is known to be blunt and brash, but his years in the troupe taught him how to be charming as well.
- **Korat:** Dynast Kyr von Korat is old enough now that the fur around her eyes has turned from dark gray to white. She remembers meeting the newly-elected Monarch Trillani von Mau when Kyr herself was still a kitten. The awe she felt in Trillani's presence didn't dissipate when Kyr rose through the ranks to become the house's Commander and join the Ruling Council. Once, she was a scrapper, quick to knock over her rival's valuables and challenge them to a duel, but old age has shown her the wisdom of restraint, and she counsels that to her house's younger, more hot-headed champions.
- **Mau:** Dynast Threnody von Mau bears a strong resemblance to her aunt Trillani, which can be disconcerting to older cats. She works tirelessly with the rest of the Ruling Council, offering to help mediate disputes and make sure every cat gets their fair share. While she might not be the military mastermind her aunt was, Threnody has a head for numbers, and watches the reports that come across the Council's desks. Some think she might know the needs of the other monarchies better than their own Dynasts do. And that she knows how to provide them.
- **Rex:** Dynast Tirian Rex von Rex is highly amused at the knots the other houses turn themselves into hoping to catch Rex in the act. Some days he contemplates leaving clues behind, just to give their spies something, but

other members of his house cautioned against doing so. Tirian concurs with his house's belief that continued peace and better relations with Pugmire are essential, though getting the rest of the cats to agree makes him miss his old friend Trillani painfully.

- **Siberian:** Dynast Naiara von Siberian serves as a minister, using the power of her voice to address the nobles of her house and speak to them of the glories that will soon return to them. She's one of the younger members on the Ruling Council, but other ministers have confirmed that the brilliant young girl possesses an old soul, and Naiara intends to use that wisdom to her benefit.
- **Shadow Bloc:** Shadow Dynast Dowe Tabby is as-yet uncorrupted by the scions of Smilodon, and is unaware of the threat lurking among his own people. He has spent years earning both the trust of his fellow dynasts and that of the myriad groups that make up the Shadow Bloc. Many of the guilds and organizations he represents drop opposing demands on his table at the Sunbeam Lounge in Mau City, and he must finesse his way through them, making what strides he can without making the Ruling Council think he's trying to wrest power away from them.

TRILLANI'S TRAILBLAZERS

Trillani's Trailblazers are a vital and vibrant part of the monarchies' plans to grow trade, expand their borders, and recover artifacts left by the Old Ones for the fight against the Unseen. After the War of Dogs and Cats ended, many cats who no longer had enemies to fight signed up to be trailblazers.

Any cat may volunteer to join the trailblazers, from the most pampered nobles to the lowliest moggie. Trailblazers are provided with bedrolls, simple meals, and basic supplies, making their ranks a draw for down-on-their-luck cats. Once a cat has been accepted, she is placed with a group of other trailblazers, all of whom report to a castellan. The castellan's duty is to seek out missions for the party, offer advice, and run interference with other castellans and politicians. He also usually owns a safe house for the party to treat as their home base between missions, where they can

replenish supplies and rest after a hard journey. The safe house is also where the trailblazers can store any relics they find, knowing the castellan will protect them in the party's absence. House Rex is quick to point out the similarities to Pugmire's own organization of royal pioneers, but the other houses simply ignore the insult. Clearly whatever dogs can do, cats can do better.

Some of the houses are uncomfortable leaving relics in the trailblazers' paws. They think the Old Ones' artifacts belong in vaults, where members of the relic-finder's house can study it or destroy it to increase their own knowledge. Or, for those relics found by unaffiliated cats, where it can be kept safely until their return. Though a scant few fall to their houses' pressure and return the relics, most trailblazers elect to keep them in the storehouse, or carry them back out into the wilds to wield against monsters and the Unseen. In general, trailblazers who hold on to their relics are more likely to find *additional* relics, to the benefit of all.

On occasion, a noble house has sent a pawful of its toughs to raid the storehouses and lay claim to the relics they believe rightfully belong to their houses. Unfortunately for those toughs, trailblazers and their castellans aren't pushovers. Most of those raids end unsuccessfully, with the toughs limping back empty-pawed to the noble who hired them.

Being a trailblazer is a thankless job, with poor pay, mediocre food, and few opportunities for political gain. And the cats love every minute of it.

The Seekers of Ubaste

Some cats wish the War of Dogs and Cats were still raging on today. Even more, they wish the dogs had been eradicated, or at least thoroughly and completely vanquished, with the cats left in charge. One such group wants to take that desire even further, to achieve what they believe is a cat's true destiny: to rule unopposed over all things and all peoples. The monarchies. Pugmire. The wild lands and the Acid Sea.

This group, which calls itself the Seekers of Ubaste, believe that humanity worshipped cats because it is a cat's right and due, and that the time is right for today's cats to rise and rule the world as Man intended. Membership to the Seekers is by invitation only, though chapters of the organi-

zation have spread to all the monarchies. Meetings are held in nobles' drawing rooms, or in luxurious private rooms in upscale lounges, where the Seekers discuss new developments over delicate finger foods and cups of catnip tea, certain they won't be disturbed by moggies or other rabble.

While this alone is disturbing, even more so are the directions the conversation takes as the nights wear on. The Seekers know there must be a way to help bring about the cats' ultimate victory, and they intend to find it. They uncover tomes they've stolen from their houses' archives, or unfurl spells written in spidery scripts. Some of the rituals in these purloined tomes are harmless, or are spells the houses' mancercs already have in their arsenals. Others, though, describe ways to call upon the Unseen and command the demons to do a cat's bidding. Victory at any cost, whisper the Seekers. Even our own souls.

The Monarchies

The Monarchies of Mau span a huge amount of territory, from the mountains in the north to the Acid Sea in the south, and from the Fearless Forest in the west to the desert in the east. The six monarchies fill in the land, each one its own culture and aesthetic.

ANGORA



Angora is farthest east of the monarchies, on the edge of the desert. It shares borders with Cymric and Mau to the west, Siberian to the north, and Rex to the south. Some cats joke the bookish house valued the westernmost forests in their territory less for the houses they could build from cutting down the trees, but more for the paper they could make from the wood pulp, and the bookshelves they could carve from the logs. Some even whisper that Angora's bookish desires led to deforestation, and the creation of the desert to the east. While this isn't *entirely* true, the monarchy is renowned for its libraries. Angora is also home to deep networks of caves and mines, some of which the house uses for its belowground laboratories.

Angora is known for its hot sunny days and sharply cold nights. Cats in Angora tend to wear

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loose, breathable clothing during the day to keep them cool. Though, while the brims of their hats and the legs of their trousers are wide, their sleeves gather tight at the wrists – preventing the fabric from smudging one’s painstakingly written notes. This certainly doesn’t mean all cats’ cuffs are clean: A cat who can reliably get ink stains out of silk and linen in Angora is a rich cat indeed. Most cats carry a shawl or jacket with them if they’re going to be out after the sun sets, to keep the biting cold from the desert wind at bay.

LIBRARY IN THE TREES

One among Angora’s many libraries, perhaps the most restful is the Library in the Trees, on the road to House Angora’s manor. This library is open to all, and commemorates the site where the first Angora settlement is rumored to have stood. A redwood tree stands there now, its trunk as thick around as a medium-sized castle. Architects hollowed out parts of the trunk, carving a spiral stairway inside, leading up to three landings. Each one is filled with floor-to-ceiling shelves, also carved into the tree. The builders cut windows and nooks all around, so a cat might curl up in the sun with a book in her lap.

MADAME TILENE’S

In the bustling streets of Angora’s capital, tucked in between a tailor’s and a tea shop, rests Madame Tilene’s cottage. The squat little building is nearly swallowed up by its three-story neighbors, but it’s stood 100 generations, and will stand that many more, if Madame Tilene has anything to say about it. She sets her rocking chair in her open doorway on nice days and knits, or sits in her window if it’s foul, and watches people pass by. How easy it is, to dismiss an aging old calico. But Madame Tilene lives across from the manor house where visiting diplomats like to stay, and beneath the pile of yarn on her lap is an artifact from her days as a trailblazer that lets her hear through walls. She’s one of the best sources of information in Angora, for cats who can meet her price.

NEATHWARDS

With proper provisions and a map from a trustworthy cartographer, a cat could traverse most of Angora’s length underground. One enterprising Angora noticed how many explorers emerged from the caverns beneath the monarchy half-starved and sleep-ragged because they hadn’t gone in properly equipped. Betts von Angora seized the opportu-



nity and set up shop for herself in a cavern deep within the cave network. She founded her camp, named Neathwards, at the intersection of several tunnels. It's a place where lost cats can get their bearings, hungry cats can restock their rucksacks, and cats with the correct codewords can gain access to one of Angora's hidden belowground labs. Betts employs both guards and guides for cats who can pay.

ROSETOWN INN

Rosetown sits on the border where Angora, Mau, and Cymric meet. The quiet little farming town changed paws time and again when the monarchies were fighting one another for land. In one particularly contentious month, the townspeople fled in the dead of night and left their homes and farms to the invading armies. Word of the citizens' dramatic action made it back to the monarchs, who came together at the town's inn to forge a temporary truce. Rosetown itself was declared neutral ground, under the protection of all three monarchies. Feuding cats often choose to meet here to work out their differences, especially since the innkeeper (the ominously named "Troublemaker") and his three grandkittens can be counted on to enforce the age-old truce.

CYMRIC



The monarchy of Cymric spans the center of the monarchies, bounded by Mau to the north, Korat to the west, Rex to the south, and Angora to the east. House Cymric spends a hefty portion of its resources on upkeep for its roads: Not only do important trade routes run through its lands, but the house wants to be sure visiting diplomats feel safe and welcome, their journeys free from bandit attacks and bumpy carriage rides. Cymric also sponsors the performing arts, and in its largest city, a visiting cat could see a different play every night for a month if he so wished.

Cymric is the flattest of the monarchies, its fields and farmlands stretching out far as the eye can see. While it means the blue skies stretch on forever during the day and great skeins of stars cover the skies at night, in the summertime, the flat land and open spaces lend themselves to violent thunderstorms and tornadoes. Cymric has

built waystations and shelters along its major roads for cats caught in such storms.

BUBASTIS LOUNGE

Most cats in Cymric's political circles have heard of Bubastis Lounge. Only a select few get an invite to the private club, located in the heart of the capital's richest district, though many aspire to be on the guest list. Everyone's talked to someone who knows someone who claims to have been, but the club's actual members keep their visits very, very secret. Bubastis Lounge is only a cover, its heavy oak doors leading to a secret temple for the Seekers of Ubaste beneath the street. Inside, disciples gather on luxurious velvet cushions and discuss their proposals to make cats the ultimate — perhaps only — power. Ritual spaces have been carved into the granite walls, where cats may practice spells and make offerings to entities that can aid their agenda.

THE CHIPPED SAUCER

The Chipped Saucer is a lounge in Cymric's capital. From the outside, it looks like any other lounge, but it is the preferred haunt of politicians and diplomats, and the place where cats go when they want to be seen. Several of the city's lawmakers like to share cushions with the working cats, asking their opinions on matters of policy over a mug of catnip tea or honeyed milk. Dynast Bricu von Cymric himself is a regular, and can occasionally be coaxed into declaiming a speech from his traveling days.

KARILDA THEATRE

Down the street from the Chipped Saucer is the oldest theater in the capital. Its beauty has faded over the years, but every actor aspires to star in a production there. An actress whispering on stage can be heard even in the cheapest seats in the back, so perfect are the acoustics. Some theatergoers are surprised to learn that most of the stage workers are rats and weasels, but Karilda von Cymric herself (may her next life be good to her) felt they did the best job. The theater is one of the few places in the capital where those species can make a decent wage.

TREMAVNE'S FINE HATS

While Tremayne's front window is, indeed, filled with very fine hats, no sales have been made from the haberdasher's shop in two months, and

a thin coat of dust lines the hats on display. Cats who own neighboring shops haven't seen the cantankerous old proprietor in nearly as long, but they are fairly certain he isn't dead. (The *we couldn't be so lucky* goes unstated, but is heavily implied.) In truth, old Tremayne has joined Trillani's Trailblazers, and returns occasionally in the dead of night to store his relics in the hat shop's basement. He has no plans to die anytime soon, and might be willing to take worthy adventurers with him on his next expedition.

KORAT



On its northern and eastern sides, Korat shares a border with every other monarchy except for Angora. It is bounded by the Fearful Forest on the west, but roads lead through the woods toward Pugmire and Houndton on the other side, and those roads were cut, cleared, and defended by Korat armies. The territory is well-fortified, with many of its cities built for function rather than form. However, the buildings' interiors are works of art, as though to make up for all the squat gray stone outside, the architects decided to create beauty inside. People who suggest this is a metaphor for members of House Korat are asking for a bloodied snout.

Citizens of Korat pride themselves on wearing clothing made from fabrics and materials sourced from their own farms and forests. They prefer sturdy garments of locally spun wool to the showy silks coming in from Angora. This doesn't mean Korat style is simple or plain. In fact, intricate Korat embroidery is in demand throughout the monarchies.

CASTLE KORAT

Castle Korat is short and square and ugly at first glance, but the closer one gets, the more details reveal themselves in the architecture. It's a sea of gray on gray until the visitor nears the portcullis, but then shadows resolve into shapes, and the faces of past Korat generals glower down from the stone. Once a year, Korat challenges its kittens to sneak over the walls without being caught, and invites the local citizens to watch, and even place bets. It is as much a test of the kittens' resourcefulness and stealth as it is a reminder that Castle Korat can't

be breached. No kitten has made it past the guards in the last 12 generations.

DELNIR'S MINE

Delnir's Mine sits in the northeastern part of the monarchy of Korat. It is the main source of plastic for the house, or it was, until miners accidentally opened a shaft that held a sleeping horror. Now, the giant serpent-thing — what the mancercs call "coat!" — lurks in the dark, and production has halted. Korat has sent three expeditions in to root it out or kill it. None have returned.

THE IRON FANG MAZE

About a half mile into the Fearless Forest lies the entrance to a labyrinthine set of ruins. Within, plants have overgrown old walls, dead ends, and deep gullies. Here and there, tendrils wind around the bones of forgotten victims. Once, Alia Smilodon stalked the maze, hunting her prey until they fell to one of the many traps she'd set, or succeeded in making a panicked escape. Today, House Korat has laid claim to the area. Korat kittens and cats who hope to join the house know this place well. They test their mettle among the ruins and learn to trust their instincts. Some whisper that if you listen closely, you can still hear the screams of Alia's victims on the wind.

SUNSPOT LOUNGE

Few cats from other houses expect there to be anything cozy in Korat. This is their loss, as the Sunspot Lounge is the monarchy's most comfortable secret. The lounge boasts large windows with several tiers of seating so there are no cold spots in the house. The cushions are soft and kneadable. The milk is spiked with the sweetest honey. Because its building's exterior is as gray and square as the rest of its surroundings, most visitors aren't aware of the lovely lounge within. The locals are perfectly happy to leave it that way.

MAU



The monarchy of Mau lies in the middle of the cats' territories. It shares a border with four of the five other monarchies, with the exception of Rex to the far south. Since the Treaty of Unification was signed, the city of Mau has



become the political hub for all six monarchies. Outside the capital, Mau has many small farming towns and fewer big cities than some of their former rivals.

Mau is the rainiest of the monarchies. In the southern parts of the territory, cats carry umbrellas with them as both useful tools and fashionable accessories. To the north, where thawing ground and spring rains create a messy mud season, cats keep spare sets of boots for visitors to wear. The cats of Mau prefer plain clothing, inspired by Trillani von Mau's own style, though younger cats and kittens have begun adding a bright splash of color or interesting accessory – particularly when they're out in Mau's cold, dark, and rainy nights.

THE DYNASTY'S MANOR

In the heart of Mau City sits the manor house where the Ruling Council stays while they are in session. The house is larger than the Monarch's dwelling at Urbo Hall, a decision made by Trillani von Mau when she was first elected as a gesture of humility. Twice a month, the Dynasts receive visitors here, to meet the cats they represent and listen to their concerns.

EDGEWOOD LYCEUM

Edgewood Lyceum is as far removed from Mau City as you can get and still be in the

monarchy. It sits on the eastern edge of the territory, just outside a quiet town. Here is where Mau's mancercs go to study some of the larger artifacts the house has in its possession and experiment with magics of their own. The town of Edgewood itself is either empty or abandoned, though no one in neighboring towns can quite remember which it is.

JANUS HOUSE

In Mau City's Rat Quarter, warm light and laughter spills out from the windows of a small stone house. The rats inside Janus House run a small but successful gambling establishment, and carry messages for Bantus, one of many self-proclaimed rat kings. Bantus runs a sprawling criminal empire, and insists he can acquire anything a cat may dream.

THE WELCOMING HOME ORPHANAGE

The War of Dogs and Cats left many kittens without parents. An emissary from Pugmire, an elderly shepherd named Father Eddie Pug, saw both the war orphans' need and an opportunity to extend a paw in peace and sympathy to the Monarchies. Father Eddie founded the Welcom-

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ing Home Orphanage in Mau City, and opened its doors to dogs and cats in need. Today, many of the staff at Welcoming Home were orphans Father Eddie took in after the war.

Rex



Rex has controlled the coasts for hundreds of years. It is bounded by the Acid Sea to the south, Korat to the west, and Cymric to the north. Rex' lands are divided into three equal parts, split where deltas from two different rivers –

The Shiver Water and Hopewell River – spill into the Acid Sea. Port Matthew is Rex' largest city, and it is from here that many of the monarchies' seafaring expeditions launch.

Though not all cats who live in the monarchy of Rex are sailors, their styles are heavily inspired by them. Light fabrics that can withstand a soaking and dry quickly are always in fashion, and very few outfits have ribbons, belts, or tails that trail behind and might get caught in the rigging. On the coast, where winds off the Acid Sea carry spray that eats away at delicate fabrics, cats wear oiled cloaks to protect their clothes.

Whether they learn to sail or not, kittens in Rex learn how to tie every kind of knot known to cats. From this, a language of knots sprang up. While it was initially used by kittens to mark secret hideaways or leave notes for their friends, today they're used by spies to pass coded messages. Nobles have adopted them as well, wearing a knot on their lapels to signal any number of moods or affiliations.

BEE BONNET

The floating market of Bee Bonnet travels up and down the Shiver Water, piloted by Phyala von Siberian. She crafts exquisitely woven textiles for the cats who live in river towns, and regales them with news of the world over a hot mug of catnip tea. Other merchants ride along with her, some for only a few stops, others the entire length of the river. For a few plastic shards, Phyala will also take passengers aboard Bee Bonnet and transport them up or downriver.

THE CROOKED WHISKER

There has always been a Cally von Rex behind the bar of the Crooked Whisker. The cat who runs

it today is the 18th cat of that name, and she knows all the best gossip. Cally doesn't much care whether the rumors she repeats are true, or whether they aren't worth a wet ball of yarn. All that matters to her is if they tell a good story. Spies and trailblazers frequent the bar, as much to hear Cally spinning her tales as to suss out the useful information from the merely amusing.

DOCK ELEVEN

The ships tied up at Port Matthew's dock eleven are moored there permanently. Colorful paper lanterns sway in the breeze, and a ragged flag flies high on a mast that is broken halfway up. The vessels once hailed from Waterdog Port, but were taken during the War of Dogs and Cats. They now belong to the moggie family that rowed them back to port. The moggies offer berths on their ships and a hot meal to travelers who can't afford to stay at an inn.

OASIS IMPORTS

Lady Pixel von Outremere opened Oasis Imports several years ago, appearing from seemingly nowhere to purchase most of a city block for her business. She is a skilled bargainer, well-connected with the lizard folk. Oasis Imports contains both a warehouse for wholesale business, and a storefront for individual customers, where those interested can acquire rare goods from the desert and beyond. Lady Pixel dresses in the style of the desert people, favoring silken robes that complement her tortoiseshell beauty. Her towering, gray-furred companion Ash von Siberian is often mistaken for her guard, when in truth he is her accountant.

SIBERIAN



Siberian is the smallest of the monarchies, bounded by the mountains in the north, Korat to its west, and Mau to the south. It also shares a shorter border with Angora to the east. Siberian is also the coldest of the monarchies, its lands covered in snow nearly three quarters of the year. While it may be unsurprising that its citizens favor warm clothing – furs and heavy boots and thick hats and gloves – they also have wardrobes full of lighter clothing for the brief flashes of summer weather.

Intricate beadwork adorns warm- and cold-weather outfits alike. Siberian kittens learn the art while they sit by the fire in the heart of winter. Though cats don't trace their family lines the way dogs do, scholars who study Siberian beadwork can trace the patterns cats have passed down through the years.

BARROW AND SONS ARMORY

The forges in the Ironworks neighborhood ring out from dawn until dusk, as blacksmiths create their wares. While one smithy usually resembles the next, Barrow and Sons is easy to spot by the crowd that gathers to watch these master craftsmen at work. Their blades are strong, sturdy, and light, and each one is a work of art.

THE LAST PASS

If you stand at Siberian's northernmost point, where workers stop clearing the roads in winter, about a mile away you can see the dark line of the path leading into the mountains that House Smilodon followed all those centuries ago. Siberian kittens dare one another to run to the trailhead and bring back a pawful of dirt. They've heard claims that it's haunted, but don't know why or by whom.

SWEETLING MEADERY

Sweetling Meadery is a sprawling establishment on the western side of Siberian's capital city. It takes up four floors and half a city block, and its head chef, Bina Korat von Siberian, caused quite a scandal several years ago when she broke with the Korats to come cook for the nobles of House Siberian. The top floor is reserved for the leadership of House Siberian and their esteemed guests. The three floors below are always filled with lower-level bureaucrats enjoying a tipple.

THE TEMPLE OF THE NINE

The Temple of the Nine in Siberian's capital is a study in hard and soft. Its plain stone walls seem chiseled from the mountains themselves. Statues glower down from alcoves, their marble faces grim and cold. Yet, their sculptor carved their robes so exquisitely they seem to ripple like silk stirred by a breeze. Huge rugs cover the floors, providing warmth and comfort to the worshippers. Soft murmurs echo through the temple: the sounds of other cats offering prayers, or the hushed tones of cats in conversation with ministers.

OTHER NOTABLE LOCATIONS

THE ASHLANDS

This necropolis was once a city of the Old Ones. Powerful artifacts lay scattered throughout, there for the taking. That is, if the cats who venture into its towers can best the demons who have claimed the city for their own.

No one knows what kind of ash blows along the desert outside the Old Ones' ancient necropolis. Some trailblazers insist it *must* be composed of Man's remains. Others shudder at the thought and speculate that a mighty forest burned so bright and hot nothing ever grew back. Whatever the case, adventurers who seek the treasures hidden in the city must first cross the ashlands surrounding it. Wise cats cover their mouths and shield their eyes when the wind stirs up the ashes.

THE DEEP RIVER

Born from snowy runoffs in the mountains above Siberian, sweeping down through Mau and Cymric, then out to sea on Rex' coast, the Deep River spans four of the monarchies' lands. Its waters provide a steady trade route for enterprising cats, and cities and towns thrive along its banks. The river is wide as well as deep, and although it exists firmly within cat territory, dogs, lizards, and rodents conduct business along it as well.

The river is also home to several bandit crews: badgers who hide their sleek-hulled boats in the shallows and give chase to passing merchants, rats who hide beneath docks and sneak onto unsuspecting vessels, even a ghost ship that flies a curious blank flag.

THE RUINS OF SMILODON

North of the mountains lie the lands House Smilodon once claimed. Getting to them requires a long, treacherous climb over rocky peaks and over bottomless crevasses. Explorers who arrive safely on the other side find the ruins of the monarchy of Smilodon. It is clear the settlers established a small city at the base of the mountains, and spent the next two decades building it up. Now the towers sit as empty as any ruin left over from the Old Ones, some of them scorched by mancer spells or



still flecked with trackers' arrows loosed in Smildon's final battle long ago.

The city is as dead as the cats who once inhabited it, and that feeling sets cats' hackles on end. Not even the badgers and rats choose to live in the strange, twisted ruins. There's a whispered legend of a cat who wandered into one of the towers and

was able to walk in a straight line for days without ever seeing the other tower wall. One trailblazer's diary suggested she felt ghostly eyes on her back the entire time. She felt the need to pounce, but stood frozen, unable to choose *where*.

Because the Unseen were all around.



CHAPTER SIX: GUIDE ADVICE

Taking on the role of Guide in a game of *Monarchies of Mau* is a journey in storytelling, improvisation, and delivering fun for both yourself and your group of players. The role comes with demands, but few parts of roleplaying are as rewarding as the organization and delivery of an enthralling, exciting adventure. This chapter offers advice and guidance on how to Guide *Monarchies of Mau*. The tricks, tips, and suggestions within will provide the tools you need to increase your confidence and help make chronicles you will remember forever.



Most roleplayers start by playing and take on the role of Guide later, but it doesn't have to be this way. You may feel nervous about organizing a game for your friends, but the truth is, it's not so hard if you follow the Golden Rule: Fun comes first. If you struggle with any rules, take the path of fun. If you find your game too lethal on the protagonists, choose the method that makes it more fun for them. If the plot is too serious, if there are too many moving parts, if anything gets in the way of a game's success: Make it fun.

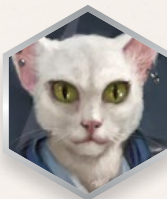
The Role of the Guide

The Guide in a roleplaying game is a special role. A mixture of player, host, storyteller, referee, and audience member, the Guide is an individual with many hats and more talents. Let's break down those component roles and how to master them.

PLAYER

The part most Guides forget is that the individual running a game is also playing it. Guides don't exist to simply serve a group. Guides should have as much fun as the players, participating on the same level as the group at the table. Guides should understand the game, know how to play it, take their turn on time, and be a good sport when things don't go their way. Anything the Guide expects from her players, the Guide should practice in turn.

Monarchies of Mau works best as a collaborative experience, where players can freely express their opinions about character direction, including mysteries they want to solve, quests they would like to undertake, and personal goals their characters wish to achieve. By gaining this investment from the players, a Guide can voice her opinion about game direction without being dictatorial, and create a story all the players — the Guide included — value and appreciate.



Guides should not make the mistake of thinking they only act to please their audience. As much as the core story is their responsibility, the game exists for them to have fun, too. Don't get caught in an adversarial relationship where you as Guide want to oppose the players' actions! Guides should facilitate fun for the whole table, not prevent it.

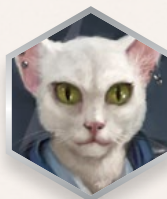
host

Some Guides play the role of host for their gaming groups, whether inviting the players to her house or setting up the group on a website. The Guide often takes on the task of organizing the group, scheduling sessions, making sure everyone stays fed, watered, and comfortable. The Guide also thanks people for coming, checks that they enjoyed their time, and most often cleans up after the players. These tasks may sound onerous, but rarely involve more than when inviting any guests to a house for a party or function.

Online games still require host duties, such as setting up a website, along with logins, online resources such as character sheets and handouts, and perhaps even the operation of hardware such as webcams, microphones, and speakers. It benefits an organized host to become familiar with different online packages such as Skype, Google Hangouts, Roll20, and Fantasy Grounds. Each offers a different service, with differing levels of complexity helpful for different styles of games.

Guides may host games at conventions. These sessions play differently, as the host may not be responsible for environment. Rather, the Guide oversees an intense period (often three to four hours) of gaming time. Due to lack of foreknowledge of the players, it behooves a responsible Guide to discover player limits, interests, and game familiarity before launching straight into play.

Sometimes it benefits the Guide to establish *table rules*, regarding etiquette, humor, phone use, and off-topic chat. Especially at conventions, player time is limited. Setting these rules does not limit the fun of the game: it facilitates it. All experienced roleplayers will have taken part in at least one session where one player constantly makes jokes, another keeps responding to his phone, while a third handles a further player's dice or books without asking. Set rules simply, at the very start, and the players will adhere to them.



Don't be mistaken into thinking you're alone as the Guide! Not only can you visit helpful online forums and speak to your fellow

Guides of other games, you can ask your players for help if you need it. You needn't always cook, you needn't always keep time, you needn't always bring the paperwork. Players will often enjoy taking on the role of time-keeper, librarian, or chronicler of the game so far. You can even reward them in-game for doing so!

STORYTELLER

Monarchies of Mau is primarily a collaborative storytelling game, but the Guide takes on the role of chronicle architect. Whether acting to facilitate conflicts, interactions with intriguing non-player characters, or embedding mysteries in the game, the Guide takes on the role of telling a story to keep players captivated and coming back for more. Every player may know the basic plot, but the Guide knows the identity of the murderer, the location of the stolen treasure trove, or the weakness of the prowling Unseen monstrosity, and must drip-feed the players this intelligence throughout the chronicle's course to make it an enriching experience for everyone in attendance.

Some Guides run chronicles with a very firm concept of how the story is going to start and progress, while others only have a vague idea and rely on the other players to bring their own creativity to the table. Maintaining a balance between the two is an excellent way to run a chronicle, allowing for player improvisation and encouraging them to affect the storyline. A good Guide pays attention during character creation to ensure plot seeds tailored to each character are planted throughout the chronicle.

The Guide's responsibility extends to the chronicle's momentum. Sometimes it's fun for the characters to just sit around and talk in the tavern, but they need something interesting to talk *about*.

That something interesting is usually a problem of some kind, an interesting non-player character, or an event fed to them either by involving them as witnesses or as fringe participants. When players want their characters to go out and respond to seeds the Guide lays before them, the Guide has done a good job.

REFEREE

Try as we might to provide a simple, comprehensive set of rules, there will always be some rules that confuse, or a rule missing for the highly unusual situation your cadre of cats just entered. In such a case where this book doesn't cater to the situation at hand, the Guide must improvise or adjudicate, depending on the mood of the group. It may be that the players look to the Guide for authority, or a debate rages across the table and the Guide needs to decide one way or the other.

Action always commands respect and keeps the game moving, but some Guides will make that action decisive, while others research and deliberate before taking a stance. Neither stance is incorrect, so long as the players feel the decision is fair.

The Guide as referee is permitted mistakes. Sometimes she will make the wrong call, but if fairness is kept in mind, few players should take issue. If the players retrospectively discover that a decision was incorrect, one of the best things a Guide can do is admit to it, and reward any unfairly penalized players. If a player benefited from a rules error, the Guide should congratulate them on their luck, but make no punitive actions. Keeping the game moving is the objective of any refereeing.

Some groups create house rules, either when they disagree with content in the book or because they feel something is missing that makes their style of play more fun. Perhaps a player invents a new calling, or a new spell. In any case where someone introduces a new house rule, it's the Guide as referee who needs to record and maintain these new rules. Such rules may result in long-term system amendments to the game. There are some ideas on how to do this under "Hacking the Game" (p. 179), but it's up to the Guide to make sure players know about any rules changes, and that they're applied fairly.



That's all well and fine, but what is "fair?" I know some cats who believe fairness is when the croupier rolls dice for all players to see, while others who believe the person in charge should keep the rolls to herself, and tilt them to whatever makes a stronger game. A Guide will have to adjust fairness to match the group. It doesn't always equate to following the letter of the law.

a larger narrative arc. While we sometimes watch shows with "monster of the week" episodes, disconnected from a serialized story, the modern story tends to rely heavily on constant viewer engagement. Players, like viewers, want to find out what happens next to their favorite heroes and villains, and the repercussions of actions taken in the last session. Chronicles can have seasons just as television shows do.

The construction of a chronicle may take the form of an organic evolution, based on player actions and their characters' objectives. Alternatively, a Guide may form a chronicle with a clear structure visible to all players. Some Guides will use a white board, sticky notes, and pieces of string connecting points on a map, while others might use a notebook or a piece of software to track key events and characters. No matter how thorough or simple, there are some key elements worth considering across a chronicle's length.

AUDIENCE

Sometimes the Guide's best role is as audience. While the Guide should always be active to an extent, the ability to watch the players respond to her profound plot elements, make humor from tense situations, and interact with each other in character, is a delight only Guides can truly experience. The ability to observe a chronicle's growth in this way is one of the most enjoyable parts of being a Guide.

Much as with a pantomime, the audience should occasionally throw in an opinion to steer the action. A Guide should be careful to not dictate from the sidelines, but can prepare to throw in an interesting non-player character, sudden event, or message from one of the monarchies to pull the party on track. Remember that in an urban chronicle, few actions go without witnesses. The players will feel as if their characters are part of a living world if the Guide occasionally weighs in with an onlooker's support or haranguing.

The Guide is audience to the players just as she is the audience to all character actions. Remember to congratulate players on entertaining play.

The Chronicle

If a chronicle is like a television show, each session could be compared to an episode forming

The Premise

A chronicle's *premise* sums up the aim of a Guide's story. It may seem a simple decision, but the premise informs about the kind of characters perfect for the chronicle, the story's layout, and the kind of rules the Guide will need to know. A premise based around an inevitable war between cats and Unseen will likely carry a heavy combat flavor, putting emphasis on the more martial protagonists. A chronicle based at a local level, where a player can expect to roleplay her cat in domestic disputes and social quandaries, will probably not contain quite as many high-explosive spells or a significant degree of personal threat. Guides may set up open premises such as "your characters are all cats dedicated to exploration of hidden tombs and the retrieval of powerful relics," which would be in keeping with the default set up where all characters are members (or aspiring to be members) of Trillani's Trailblazers. Alternatively, the premise may be something specific, such as "you all play members of House Rex, assigned to map the route from Port Matthew to the Oasis of Clarity." In setting the premise, the Guide should consider the following questions.

First, *what kinds of characters are the players making?* Though many chronicles allow players to make a random assortment of interesting

characters, the Guide should keep party cohesion, chances of success, and (most importantly) fun in mind. If the party comprises three footpads and one champion, a grand mystery involving ancient languages, spells, and dusty libraries may hold less appeal than if one or two mancers made an appearance. Conversely, if the Guide establishes the premise before character creation and it involves daring swashbuckling, stealing from corrupt banks, and transporting a chest of coin to an elusive benefactor, a group entirely comprising ministers may be ill-suited. It is not cheating for the Guide to put restrictions on character concepts, or to change the chronicle premise based on player choices. Sometimes Guides put restrictions on character ideas beforehand, while others encourage players to find reasons why their characters get along, particularly through their personality traits. *Monarchies of Mau* works best when all cats work together, so the premise needs to help find ways for them to stick together. In-party disagreements and conflict can be fun, but will rarely act as one of the chronicle's objectives.

The premise should answer *what kinds of stories will we be sharing?* Again, the premise could be very wide, or it could focus in on specific kinds of stories. *Monarchies of Mau* is built as much for politics and intrigue as it is exploratory adventures in the wild. Most players enjoy a balance of the two, especially when the party contains socially focused characters alongside physical powerhouses. Guides should ensure the premise does not disenfranchise a single character. Every player deserves a good time, and the Guide will enjoy her task far more if everyone around her is having fun. Guides should keep in mind the characters' favored locations (urban or wild?) as well as any shared character aims (political harmony, peace between cats and dogs, the search for wealth and reputation, or maybe even revenge against a greater foe) and tailor the premise to suit. This is far easier if the Guide sets the premise before characters are created, but sometimes players need to create characters before they decide if the game is for them.

The last question is *when does the chronicle end?* Chronicles may run until the players get bored and want to play a new game, but ideally, the Guide will have one of several endings in mind for their chronicle. The premise may establish the game's approximate length, whether in sessions, weeks,

or in-game objectives. Importantly, this deadline should never be so committed that it cuts a chronicle short or makes it last longer than anyone wants. Also, many times players and the Guide will enjoy a chronicle so much, they want it to go on with new adventures and stories. The Guide benefits from knowing where all the stories in the chronicle are leading. All characters should gain at least one moment of achievement during a chronicle, whether through personal development, acquisition of a unique treasure, or maybe something unexpected like falling in love or making a new philosophical realization. Players benefit from a premise with a timescale because they can anticipate the major beats and the conclusion, just as with a movie or TV series of limited episodes. For the Guide, an end date allows her to plan and pace stories better.

USING THE TRAILBLAZERS

Several premises appear throughout the book, though Trillani's Trailblazers make a perfect starting set up premise for any group. Throughout *Monarchies of Mau*, the trailblazers are referenced and explained. At their core, the trailblazers are a group of explorers and relic hunters, with backing from the Ruling Council. Here's how the premise of a trailblazer-focused chronicle may look:

What kinds of characters are the players making? The characters are all members of Trillani's Trailblazers. They work with cohesion for a greater cause, exhibiting bravery in their quest to explore, map, and discover wonders both new and old. Trailblazers still proudly display their house heritage, but cats within the Shadow Bloc are also permitted. Therefore, any cat can be a trailblazer, if they are willing to act on behalf of the monarchies. A wide variety of characters can exist on the same team and know they each serve a unified goal, while all possessing personal motivations.

What kinds of stories will we be sharing? Trillani's Trailblazers are explorers, so players can expect the Guide to send their characters to exciting, dangerous locations, untouched by cats for generations. The group's members are the monarchies' subjects, and may all represent different houses. It's possible they will attempt to serve their houses as well as the trailblazers, so we may see some in-party conflict and jockeying for the greatest reward. Adventures are as likely in urban areas as they are in the wilderness. After all, the trailblazers delve deep



under their ancient cities almost as often as they head out into the great beyond.

When does the chronicle end? Most trailblazer stories end shortly after they retrieve a fabulous relic and return it to their castellan, though trailblazing isn't without danger. It's possible some cats may suffer injuries and require escorting home, while others may die during their intrepid adventure. As such, the chronicle ends when the trailblazers decide to retire, or if too many characters die. The Guide will have a view of the chronicle's danger level, and should set an accurate expectation for the players. The premise will explain how lethal a chronicle appears, enabling the players of the trailblazing cats to prioritize character actions and motives in this story.

CHARACTER CREATION ASSISTANCE

While players often enjoy making characters on their own, bringing them to the first session, it benefits a Guide to have foreknowledge of the characters in play. An even better route for the Guide is to chaperone players through character creation. While it's ultimately the players' choice regarding their character callings, house, and secrets, a Guide

should suggest the kinds of features and traits she feels would work best in the upcoming chronicle.

The best possible route sees players making their characters as a group. If character creation is completed communally, all players will feel like they have an investment in their peers' roles. The Guide will play a part in the group activity, influencing players, and taking notes from their decisions so she can alter the upcoming chronicle if necessary. Assigning the entire first session to character creation (and possibly a chronicle prologue) helps a chronicle form organically, a group to bond, and the Guide to pick up all manner of hints about player expectations, to cater to in future sessions.

A balanced party containing a range of callings, abilities, and secrets enables the players to take on a variety of challenges. The Guide should suggest the players keep their abilities in mind. While balance is not essential for a good time, new players find it useful to have a "strong" character, an "intelligent" character, a "quick" character, and so on. While their abilities won't stereotype the way the players act out their roles, they help players easily identify which character is good at what task.

The Guide should consider not discouraging players from taking on roles from the same calling or house. One champion is very different from another, and the cat individualism defines them more than the title of their house. Each calling has *two* primary abilities, so where one footpad focuses on her dexterous prowess, another may be skilled in deciphering codes and unraveling mysteries.

AWARDING LEVELS AND CHRONICLE LENGTH

There are no set criteria for level awards in *Monarchies of Mau*. We designed the game in a way where characters advance at Guide discretion, or after discussion between the Guide and players. How often characters improve sets tone, pace, and difficulty of the chronicle. There are two different criteria for gauging if it's time to award a level: *narrative success* and *chronicle pace*.

Narrative success ties in to accomplishments at a player and a chronicle level. If a character impacts and experiences an important event in a chronicle, an advancement may be required. Accomplishing a task or significant goal, reaching the natural conclusion of a chronicle, or failing spectacularly at a quest all lead to personal growth for a character. Cats learn from failure as much as they do success. Additional levels are rewards, so Guides should try to avoid offering them in exchange for trivial activities. Different characters may earn rewards for different acts: A minister's adherence to the Precepts of Mau is more critical than that of a wanderer, while a footpad's successful theft of a rare jewel is more important to her than to a champion. Rewards validates and encourage the actions leading to that level being awarded.

Character advancement helps define a chronicle's pace. The Guide could award a level at the end of every single session, but that means the characters will be at their maximum level after only 10 sessions, and there might still be a lot of story left to tell after that point. On the other hand, waiting a dozen sessions before awarding a single level may cause frustration at the table.

Awarding a level at the end of a major chronicle arc over a span of three to four sessions is a good basis. This gives the players a few games to play with their new secrets or increased abil-

ities before making another improvement choice. If games are sporadic, the Guide should consider awarding levels with increased regularity, matching the pace of the chronicle.

DIFFERENT APPROACHES TO STORY

With the characters, scheduling, and plans for rewards in place, the Guide needs to consider how best to build and deliver the story. The Guide should think about the blocks making up her story's foundations. Right now, the premise is the foundation, but layers need adding to make a complete structure.

PREPARATION OR IMPROVISATION

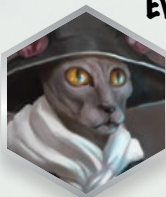
Many Guides start out running games after hours or days of game preparation. They make pages of notes, transcribe useful pieces of information from rulebooks, and prepare handouts for their players. Other Guides rely more on the ability to improvise a dramatic scene or their memory of existing rules. Neither way is incorrect.

Preparation helps a Guide build confidence, presents the image of preparedness that might reassure a table of players, and most importantly, gives the Guide a helpful assortment of notes she can refer to during play. The flip side of preparation is an over-reliance on notes. Some Guides will panic if the players take the story in a direction their notes do not cover. Guides can avoid this uncomfortable stage by accepting that occasionally, players will make the story their own. At that point, it's time to improvise.

Improvisation is arguably harder than preparation, though it takes considerably less time out of the Guide's schedule. Guides benefit from preparing the first few sessions of a chronicle in detail, easing into improvised responses, enemies, locations, and mysteries as the chronicle goes on, undoubtedly slipping farther and farther away from the initial plan. This is no reason to panic: Games are often at their most exciting when the people around the table are "freeforming."

Guides should prepare to take extensive notes following any long stint of improvisation introducing new characters, secrets, or similar, as it's easy in a three- to four-hour session to forget some things

that took place. With improvisation, it's a good idea to keep paper handy or a digital document open, ready to record anything of note arising from freeform play. With preparation, this is less of an issue.



Even the best improvisational Guide does well to record spells her casters will use, and details of anticipated creatures with resistance or weakness against certain damage types, as well as walls, poison traps, diseases, and other elements in a scene where the protagonists could bypass or nix them with a certain spell. It's easy to forget some of the less straightforward magics at paw, and providing challenges that relate to them will make magicians less likely to rely on only damage-dealing spells.

BUILDING SCENES

Stories are made from scenes, taking place at a time and in a location. These scenes can be elaborate or simple, but they will be the segments of time in which the protagonists attempt to achieve something. When preparing a story, the Guide will find it helpful to make brief notes about each anticipated scene. These notes may be detailed, or could be a simple bullet-pointed list.

How did the player characters get to this scene? Knowing how the characters get to this scene will remind the Guide how it fits into the overall story. If the party needs to speak to a wandering mystical cat before being able to take on the creature in this scene, then it's clear the scene where the party meets the mystic should come first. Sometimes

the players have a choice between different scenes — there might be a scene at the tavern and one at a noble estate, with no requirement that players go to one over the other — so it's good to know how players need to get into a scene, in case you have to shuffle them around.

What do the player characters need to accomplish in the scene? Usually this is a key roll or decision in the scene. Sometimes it's a fight, but combat might be only one potential option to accomplish the real goal. The party may need to cross a bridge to reach the land on the other side, but perhaps there's an obstacle in the way. The Guide should write down what the player characters need to do to progress to another scene, and the repercussions for following each choice. The clearer that goal, the easier it will be to adapt to new situations at the table.

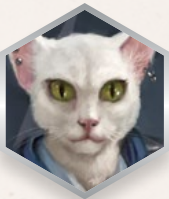
Who or what is keeping them from accomplishing it? These are the characters and obstacles that will get in the player characters' way. Sometimes what's in the way of the goal is obvious, but other times it's not clear to the characters at first. The Guide should know about the barriers, so they should be listed in the story's preparation or noted as part of the improvisation. For instance, a badger may be blocking the bridge in the previous example, and challenges anyone attempting to cross to a duel. Combat may be the obvious route, but canny cats may choose to use magic on the badger from a distance or bluff their way past.

If there's nothing stopping the party from achieving their goal, then it's possibly part of a larger scene rather than being a scene in its own right. If nothing happens to the characters as they ride to their destination, then there's no need to have a scene for each day's worth of travel — the Guide should make a few rolls for the characters if needed, but otherwise it's all part of the larger scene that happens at the destination.

What scene or scenes should logically happen next? Once the characters succeed or fail to accomplish their goal, what follows? There's usually a logical next scene, but sometimes there may be several options for what happens next, depending on player decisions. It's also entirely possible scenes might be repeatable, such as if the characters are tracking a creature and fail to kill it the first couple of times they engage in battle. Writing down how things progress from each scene helps a

Guide remember the order of the story and the importance of each scene. Constructing the order like a flowchart with branches, and odd scenes noted as potential butterfly effects if a character does something unlikely, are excellent thought exercises as well as a great assist to the prepared Guide.

Some Guides believe in planning the finale, in which players experience the very last thing their characters do following the resolution of the story's main challenge. A better route is to not plan much beyond the main challenge. Players can make surprising decisions following a story's climactic scene, and sometimes they happily leave it open for the next story. Guides should not feel the need to arrange a prize-giving ceremony or forest picnic to celebrate the destruction of a major foe. If the players want their characters to do something like this, they have the right to say so. The Guide should encourage her players to narrate any actions they wish their characters to take, putting them in the driver's seat of the story. It'll be their decisions and actions that resolve the story, not a preplanned scene. A surprising ending can be a wonderful thing to a Guide who planned everything until that point.



Index cards, flowcharts, brainstorming... There are many ways to plan a story's order, and emphasize which scenes are completely essential. Don't be afraid of embracing a little chaos, however. Say the scene in play involves a pickpocketing attempt, and the scene you'd planned to follow it involved guards pursuing the player character. Well, let's move the guard interception until later! Have the footpad think she's

got away with the crime until she feels completely safe, then have her feel the heavy paw of the city guard on her shoulder! It doesn't really matter what order scenes happen in if the game remains fun.

INTRODUCING NON-PLAYER CHARACTERS

One of the most daunting tasks to a new Guide is the question, "how do I populate the world with interesting characters?" It can be tricky enough being a player in a new game, unfamiliar with rules or setting. The Guide controls a cast of hundreds, maybe thousands for chronicles of considerable length. Fortunately, there are ways to discern how much work is required for each non-player character.

Background characters exist for color or to add context to a scene. Guides don't need to come up with statistics for every single cat living in the monarchies. Naming background characters is not essential, but having a list of good names for multiple genders and backgrounds is helpful in any event. Inevitably, a character will start engaging the local butcher in conversation and the Guide will need to refer to the list. In that case, the Guide should just note down next to the selected name, "butcher."

Minor characters have a mild impact on the story, but usually not more than a couple of scenes. If you check out the Enemies chapter (starting on p. 190), you'll see there are some generic statistics for cats, dogs, and other characters a party might encounter. These work perfectly for minor characters, though Guides should feel free to assign interesting names, quirks to make them distinctive, or slight adjustments to the published statistics to make one minor character stand out from her neighbor. Distinction is more important than uniqueness.

Major characters are the ones requiring a Guide's attention. They will be the main antagonists, the po-

tential allies that protagonists can recruit, the castellan assigning the quest, and the characters' closest friends and loved ones. If a character impacts the whole story, or even multiple stories, she's a major character. These should probably be given a full character sheet or at least be modified from the statistics listed in the Enemies chapter. They should definitely have a name and a short background. Major characters should be memorable, complex, and interesting. The Guide should consider how to make playing these characters as fun as can be, as they will be around for the long haul.



It's no hassle if the players decide to "elevate" a background character to prominence through repeat interactions or use of secrets. It usually means you've portrayed this character so well, they want her to stick around. Take it as a compliment!

GUIDING THE TABLE

There are a lot of ways to approach Guiding. Some Guides use a spare amount of scene description and focus on adjudicating the rules, while others enjoy the storytelling and don't worry so much about the refereeing. Both sides are important and valuable to keep in mind.

BEING A STORYTELLER

This is the part of Guiding closest to pure storytelling. Guides get to describe the world around the player characters, and the results of their actions, good or bad. Guides can use funny voices, don hats and other minor costume pieces, gesticulate wildly, play backing music appropriate to the scene in play, or they can carefully explain what the characters see, hear, smell, and touch. Guiding is fun on a separate level to playing. Some revel in

it, others struggle, but being the storyteller around the metaphorical campfire provides a thrill. There are several pieces of advice to consider when embarking on Guiding:

- **Thoroughness is good, but don't drown the players in information.** When describing a scene, the Guide needs to hit key impressions, and then move on. Whether the Guide focuses on character emotions, the color garb the background characters wear, or the music playing in the throne room, it's not worth going beyond the main points of note. If a Guide starts explaining the characters' emotions by going into their experiences as kittens, the fabric types on the background characters' backs, or the origins of the tune being performed, the Guide has gone too far. Let the players ask questions if they want more information. If they do not, the Guide should only focus on the important parts of the scene.
- **Aim for consistency over authenticity with voices and physical traits.** A Guide may love adopting a voice for the blustering merchant, enjoy waving her finger whenever she plays the minister, or wearing a pair of fine white gloves each time she takes on the role of the most infamous assassin in town. These theatrics can really help boost a game's immersion. The key to doing this successfully is consistency. Much as an antagonist can be heralded with the same piece of suspenseful music, a character's voice must remain similar each time the protagonists meet her, otherwise they won't recognize her.
- **Clarify complex situations.** Some players and Guides prefer to describe everything in the third person (such as "Blayne elbows the bandit in the nose"), while others use the first person (like "I elbow the bandit in the nose"). Guides must make it clear who is doing what, particularly in combat or other scenes with lots of characters. Reiterating current events is a good thing if it helps embed it in players' minds. Sometimes it helps to illustrate a complex situation in the form of a map.

PACING SCENES

Scenes in *Monarchies of Mau* almost never take place in real time. Time slows down as the Guide describes a situation or the characters engage in combat, or it can speed up to cover several days of travel. Even a conversation might have breaks as players make Charisma checks or use their secrets on non-player characters, while research runs quicker than in real time, as a character makes an Intelligence check to rummage through an archive. Guides have say over when a scene starts and ends, so it's useful for them to understand pacing.

A scene typically starts when something interesting happens, and it ends when interesting things stop happening. What constitutes “interesting” varies wildly among groups and even among stories in the same group. It's time to move on when players all agree on a course of action or when they don't have anything important to roll about.

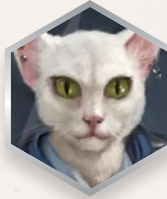
Sometimes, players will really get into character and have lengthy conversations about something in the story. This is usually a great sign that the players are having fun, but such conversations can drag on for a long period of time. This is particularly detrimental if only part of the group is involved in the conversation. If her scene plan says the Guide has a lot to play through and not much time left in the session, the conversation may need a third party to arrive to move it along. This can either be the Guide wading in with a non-player character or event, or even one of the other protagonists, if there's a valid reason for their appearance. The Guide should always remember that the game is for her as much as it is for the players, so as long as everyone is having fun, nobody needs to stick to a schedule.

The Guide should avoid making rolls every day the characters are on the road — particularly long trips. Journeys can become bogged down in rolls to avoid getting lost, and further rolls to get back on track. If they add nothing, eschew the rolls and opt to describe the complexity of the route, and the party getting turned around several times. If the group has a map or a good sense of where they're going, the Guide can skip the rolls for getting lost. Further, if they're fully rested, the Guide can skip the recovery rolls. Travel should only be important if it adds tension or stress to the journey

in a fun and interesting way — otherwise, skip it and get to the next interesting part.

DIFFICULTY NUMBERS

Sometimes the rules will confirm the difficulty number for a task, but most of the time the Guide needs to use her judgement. Consider this: A roll of “10” or higher on a d20 is slightly more than a 50/50 chance. If the Guide chooses a difficulty number of 15, for example, that means a talented first-level cat (+3 ability modifier) skilled in the task (+2 proficiency bonus) has a roughly 50/50 chance of succeeding. The same cat has about a 75% chance of succeeding if the difficulty is only 10 (they would need to roll a “5” or higher on the die). So, 10 is a good number for an easy task, and 15 is good for tasks specialized characters might fail about half the time. As characters go up in level, they'll be able to more consistently succeed, but even a specialized 10th-level character (+3 ability modifier and +7 proficiency bonus) would beat a 15 only 75% of the time. So, all in all, 10-20 is a good range of difficulty numbers to use.



Don't be afraid of assigning high difficulty numbers! The players have many ways of hitting those targets, whether through adding advantages or use of fortune. Cats have many secret ways of achieving success.

GUIDING FORTUNE

Fortune is an effective way of pacing the story and rewarding players. If the Guide can find a valid reason to award fortune, it enables players to push the story forward when facing an adverse situation. Handing over a fortune from her own pile, or that of the fortune bowl, allows a reroll of any die. The Guide should encourage this kind of play, as it maintains dynamism around the table and ups the ante.

GUIDING THE TABLE

A Guide can add fortune to the bowl once per scene on behalf of a non-player character, allowing rerolls, and the other benefits of using fortune (see p. 98). If a Guide believes the protagonists are defeating an antagonist too easily, her addition of fortune to the bowl will act as a signal to the players of an increase in intensity in this encounter.

The more fortune the Guide gives out, the more players will use it. If the group seems to be struggling to move the story forward, encourage them to intentionally fail rolls or play to their personality traits to add more fortune. Conversely, if things seem too easy, make them work a little harder for the fortune.

If the players follow the Guide's clues, their characters follow the Precepts of Mau, or they simply keep the fun going, adding a fortune is a way of telling them "keep it up."

COMBAT

Guiding combat can be fun, but it can also be challenging. There's a lot of information to keep track of during a fight (particularly a big one), but there are a few tricks to help you keep on top of everything.

For initiative, playing cards or simple flash cards are a simple timesaver and reference tool. The Guide can deal one card to each player face up, and keep one card for each major character or group of minor characters. Once that character or group takes their action, the player flips their card and decides who goes next. It might take a round or two to get used to, but it's helpful to be able to look at the table and see who has acted and who has not.

Flash cards serve multiple purposes, including listing conditions, secrets, and spell effects. The Guide can encourage players to destroy the card if effects are no longer in play, which may make it worth having a separate card for each effect. There are official *Monarchies of Mau* initiative and condition cards for sale, along with cards for each secret, so players can quickly reference their rules during play (though you may not want to encourage players to destroy these cards!).

Players should keep track of their own stamina points and dice, but it's helpful for the Guide to have a scrap of paper or a spreadsheet to keep track of non-player character stamina points. The Guide can number and name the enemies, and cross the name off or delete the row when that enemy expires.



Some groups like maps to keep track of where everyone is. It can be as simple as sketching a rough map on a piece of graph paper or a tablet and using Xs and Os to mark every character's location. Some people like to use special miniature figures along with gridded maps where every square equals five feet in the game world. Everything in *Monarchies of Mau* is listed in increments of five feet, so it should work fine for a detailed map.

The Guide should ensure the players understand the purpose of any tools, reference documents, or props she brings to the table. Clarity helps a group play together, and increases player confidence in the Guide!

STUFF AND THINGS

Characters often use items in their rucksack to overcome obstacles and accomplish their goals. There are three elements of equipment to consider: managing the rucksack, the use of money, and handing out masterworks.

Overall, mundane items in the rucksack are easy to come by. Players can choose one item if they have a chance to equip their characters before they travel, and players can make a Wisdom saving throw while on an adventure to see if their character remembered to pack something. The key here is whether either of these options are plausible. Having rope available is understandable — it's something that a cat might reasonably expect to have packed while preparing for an adventure. Asking to add the Dynast of House Korat's crown to someone's rucksack when they've never met the noble, nor have any reason to have ever gotten their paws on his crown isn't plausible, and shouldn't be allowed. But in general, err on the side of allowing a character to have something in their rucksack. Ultimately, if a character struggles in a way that appears foolish due to not owning mundane equipment, it detracts from the fun of the game.

Much like equipment, the use of money is very abstract in *Monarchies of Mau*. Rather than counting coins, characters have a general amount of coins. These are ranked in a ladder, starting from "no coins" and ending with "lots of coins:"

- No coins
- A few coins
- Some coins

- Many coins
- Lots of coins

Money only matters when it's narratively important. Trying to bribe a guard with a few coins might work, but if you have lots of coins, that might give an advantage. Two or three cats need some coins to stay at the local inn, but one cat with many coins can cover the tab for the entire party. In general, use money like any other piece of equipment — sometimes it allows or restricts what kinds of checks a player can make, and other times it offers an advantage or disadvantage. If a player character gains or spends a lot of money, the Guide might want to move them up or down the ladder — a cat with no coins who stumbles on a treasure chest might now have many coins shoved into her rucksack! Likewise, a cat with lots of coins becomes a prominent target for bandits and worse. When in doubt, the Guide can always ask for a Wisdom saving throw to determine if a character has spent enough money to drop in the ladder.

Characters who rarely leave the monarchies might have fewer masterworks than those who actively explore the world — but getting access to one or two a story is a good rate. Relics that offer secrets and can be improved should be particularly rare; by the time all the characters reach level 10, each one shouldn't have more than one improvable relic secret.

POLITICS

Houses in the monarchies clash as often as they work in harmony, but not all Guides and players want the political struggles at the forefront. On the other hand, some groups love political play. It need not lead to combat, but philosophies and political leanings benefit from debate among the group, and may fuel intense roleplay. A cat of House Mau likely finds it hard to relate to a fellow cat from the Shadow Bloc.

Involving the setting is the kind of activity the Guide should reward with fortune. Discussing in-game politics, debating the rights and wrongs of the current dynastic setup in the monarchies, the fate of House Smilodon, and whether House Rex is hiding anything, make for an immersive gaming experience. The world will feel more alive. The Guide should take note of players who have their character exempli-

fy house traditions, and have them meet non-player characters of the same house, or possessing conflicting ideologies. Roleplay breeds further roleplay.

Tracking politics in a chronicle is a simple case of making a record of all influential political figures the protagonists have encountered, and will encounter. Designate these characters with their titles, and give each an Ideal, Mystery, and Flaw. Beneath each titled cat, state the names of the rivals or pretenders to their roles, including the player characters if necessary. A visual representation of hierarchy and the relationships of those involved is incredibly useful. Draw lines between each related party, and use simple sentences along these arrows to state one character's opinion of or designs on another.

If the players in a chronicle wish to pursue political plots, encourage them to make their character Ideals political in nature. This allows the Guide to keep a record of each character's primary objective, and deliver content to match. Guides need to figure out what all the characters want — power, title, a relic, vengeance, or any number of things — and what they are willing to do to achieve their aims. This research will provide guidance on how politics will play out in a chronicle. Playing up to the extremes of political desires can lead to intense, suspenseful games where characters sacrifice everything for just another rung on the political ladder.

For the players who do not want politics in their game, it is a simple thing for the Guide to state that house conflicts will not be a part of the chronicle, and all characters can consider themselves friends and colleagues above house affiliation. In such a chronicle, the Guide should push for other aspects of the setting to come to the foreground, such as the Unseen, and the mysteries mancers love to uncover.

HACKING YOUR GAME

The only limit to a roleplaying game's scope is the imagination of the Guide and the players. That may sound trite, but it's true: nearly every group has at some point modified the game they're playing, creating a new calling, spell, or secret (or equivalent) with which to play. Sometimes the rules don't suit the group, while other times the setting requires amending. There are several hacks an enterprising group might undertake.

MONARCHIES OF MAU AND PUGMIRE

There's little to stop dogs and cats joining the same party and embarking on the same adventure, beyond historical prejudice that players are not obliged to use. The setting for *Monarchies of Mau* is ultimately malleable, so in one Guide's game, the two kingdoms may coexist peacefully. If the Guide only owns *Monarchies of Mau*, use the rules in this book for both cats and dogs. If she owns both this book and *Pugmire*, it will not harm the game to make dog and cat players utilize their own separate rules. Cats only have a few core rules changes from *Pugmire*:

- Cats can keep fortune for themselves, and don't have to ask to draw from the fortune bowl (p. 98). Dogs always pool fortune, and must ask permission.
- Cats gain an extra advantage if they take the Ready action (p. 105).
- Cat magic is more powerful, but also more prone to disastrous results (p. 113).
- Dogs can improve relics, while cats can destroy relics to gain new secrets (p. 183).

In general, cats are not as robust as dogs — they have fewer average stamina points than equivalent dogs. Further, their secrets are more likely to help allies indiscriminately, while dogs can specifically target allies.

Since these two games are built on the same system, it's easy to exchange rules from one book to the next. If you want to use *Pugmire* callings or spells in *Monarchies of Mau*, the Guide should review whether having, say, a cat guardian or shepherd would benefit or hinder the game. The likelihood is, if the player and Guide both want it, it will be fun.

A clever Guide running games in both settings can have events that take place in *Pugmire* have a knock-on effect to chronicles of *Monarchies of Mau*. For instance, let's say a group of dogs inadvertently sets off one of the Old Ones' explosive devices in a quest to find out about "Man" in a chronicle of *Pugmire*. The Guide can mention a mushroom cloud on the horizon, or the effects of the shockwave, in her next game of *Monarchies of Mau*.



Interlinking different settings in the world is fun, and provides greater options for play.

NO DEATH

Some groups want to play chronicles of high adventure where character mortality is at no risk. These players would rather embark on exciting journeys, engage in a battle or two, but importantly, never feel the worry that their character may eventually die.

In such cases, Guides can “fade to black” when characters reach 0 stamina points, allowing them to wake up elsewhere in a state of ill health (perhaps 1 or 2 stamina points). Whether chained in a dungeon, seized by a monstrous spider, or magically appeared somewhere unknown, this allows the game to continue without making players feel their characters are invulnerable.

HIGHER DAMAGE

If you want characters to do a more damage as they increase in level, try this modification: Every time the character increases their proficiency bonus, they also do an additional die of damage with melee and ranged weapons — simply pick

another die of the weapon type, and add it to your roll. (If you prefer, you can also think of this as “roll a number of damage dice equal to your proficiency bonus minus one.”)

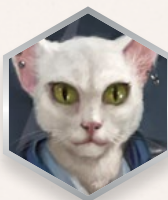
CROSS-CALLING SECRETS

You might to try and mix up the callings a little, such as having a champion that knows martial arts or a footpad that learns a fighting style. If you like that idea, consider this: After a cat has chosen two calling secrets and refined at least one of them once, the player can choose one secret from a different calling. The player can never take more than one secret from a different calling, but he can refine the cross-calling secret like any of his other secrets.

Note that this hack makes the Magic Aptitude secret redundant. If you don’t mind cats slinging spells as well as mancers and ministers, simply get rid of the Magic Aptitude secret. Otherwise, you might want to disallow Mancy and Given the Voice as cross-calling options.

PLAYING BEYOND LEVEL 10

Sometimes, players just don’t want the game to end. All the player characters have reached lev-



Remember that any sort of conversion to new rules is for personal use only! Excellent cats do not try to make their own version of *Monarchies of Mau* to sell. Keep it for the fun of your group alone!

el 10, but the players want to keep playing and, more specifically, keep improving their characters. On the surface, there's nothing stopping this – it's easy enough to allow players to keep taking improvements for their characters, and to keep increasing their proficiency bonus every two levels. Some games break down after level 10: Enemies become easier and easier to defeat, and characters end up with so many different secrets and abilities that it can be hard to keep track of them all. But if the group wants to play a group of old, grizzled veterans ready to take on the most dangerous and powerful things in the world, the Guide shouldn't stop them! It's worth considering a time jump by several years, and if the Guide has the inclination, the design of greater threats than exist in this book.

REINCARNATION

In *Monarchies of Mau*, as written, cats believe they reincarnate, but it's not true. But what if they are right? An alternative to continuing to play after level 10 is to run interconnected chronicles, with reincarnation as a key theme. In reincarnation play, once the player characters reach level 10, the players create the kittens related to or mystically tied to the original (now deceased) party. Referencing events and characters from the previous chronicle is considerable fun.

Importantly, reincarnated characters should pass on at least one secret (with improvements) from their previous identity to the new one, no matter her calling or house. This can lead to inter-

esting characters possessing powers usually limited to other origins.

USING OGL SRD MATERIAL

Monarchies of Mau is based on an open game license, called OGL for short. There have been a lot of great games built on the license, and many of them have released a variety of free resources called system reference documents (or "SRDs"). Not all of them work exactly as written for *Monarchies of Mau*, but most can be easily converted with a little work. SRDs are particularly useful if you want to include new spells, enemies, and masterworks in your chronicle.

CONVERTING TO OTHER SYSTEMS

If the group decides the setting for *Monarchies of Mau* is excellent but the rules just don't sit well, many other systems and games exist with rules that can easily be adapted to this world.

- Storypath system by Onyx Path Publishing
- *Fate Core* by Evil Hat Games
- *Savage Worlds* by Pinnacle Entertainment Group
- *Apocalypse World* by Vincent Baker
- *Pathfinder* by Paizo Publishing
- *13th Age* by Pelgrane Press



CHAPTER SEVEN: MASTERWORKS

When the Old Ones left the world, their relics and items of wonder remained behind. These artifacts are called many things, but the cats of Mau generally refer to anything created by the Old Ones as “masterworks.” Such masterwork items are coveted by many cats and other races, whether it’s so they can learn more about the Old Ones, gain respect in society, or purely for the power such objects contain. There are three different kinds of masterworks: relics (powerful artifacts), fixes (consumable items of magical power), and wonders (strange things that have limited utility).

USING A MASTERWORK

A masterwork’s description explains how the item works. Handling a masterwork is enough to give a cat a sense that something is extraordi-

nary about it. A cat can attempt to discern the nature of one masterwork after an hour of careful study, if she is in physical contact with the item. Such study is best completed during periods of downtime, such as rest, so there is uninterrupted concentration on the item.

Once the study is complete, the cat learns the item’s initial properties, as well as how to use it and potentially how to break it if it has power to be unlocked within. Fixes are an exception: a quick look, a little taste, or a careful sniff is enough to tell the tester what the fix does. Fixes have only just enough power for their obvious purposes.

Those cats with the secret Masterwork Knowledge (p. 88) can immediately discover the uses and properties of a masterwork.

ATTUNING A MASTERWORK

Some masterworks require a cat to form a bond with them before their magical properties can be used. This bond is called *attunement*, and certain items have a prerequisite for it, such as armor or weapons, where a more intimate knowledge is needed for proper use.

Like studying to discover how to use a given masterwork, attuning to a masterwork requires a cat to rest for an hour while in physical contact with it, focused on only that item. Because this is a deeper study of the masterwork, this can't be the same time that a cat initially studies the masterwork to learn the item's properties. This focus can take the form of carefully examining the masterwork, weapon practice, meditation, or some other appropriate activity depending on the item and the cat's own skills or calling. A mancer could choose to hold the object while researching, while a champion might spend time swinging a masterwork sword to get a feel for how they might work together.

If the rest is interrupted, the attunement attempt fails. Otherwise, at the end of the rest, the cat gains an intuitive understanding of how to activate any magical properties of the item, including any necessary command words. Masterwork Knowledge can speed this process along.

ABSORBING A MASTERWORK

Some relics contain more intriguing secrets that are only revealed once the item's magic is loosed through breaking it. When a powerful artifact is destroyed in the proper way — not through an accident or impulsive smashing, but deliberate breaking after study — the magic inside it can be absorbed by the cat doing the breaking. This grants the cat a new secret which can be refined just like any other. Only certain relics offer this opportunity at personal power — fixes and wonders don't contain enough magic. Relics with this property are labeled as such in their descriptions later in this chapter.

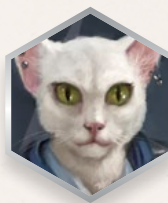
BREAKING MASTERWORKS

Not every masterwork can or will be broken in the same way. Some might be deliberately tak-

en apart, piece by piece, and their inner workings studied to unlock the magic and power within. Others might be broken as easily as pushing them off a surface to shatter onto the floor, if that is the only way to unlock their secrets. A masterwork weapon, for example, might need to be carefully smelted, or snapped at a specific point, while an amulet might require a hole bored through or a destructive spell unleashed on it.

Any cat who has studied the masterwork will know how to break it. Actually breaking the item with the intent to absorb its secret, however, will require making either an Intelligence or Strength roll against a difficulty of 12. Which ability check is rolled depends on the method needed to destroy the masterwork, which the Guide determines. Having a related skill or secret, such as Know Arcana or Masterwork Knowledge, grants an advantage to the roll. Once the masterwork is absorbed, its original abilities are lost. Generally some lesser version of those abilities will be absorbed, with the opportunity to obtain refinements that will allow the cat to regain the full potential of the original abilities.

While the time needed to break a masterwork can vary, depending on how the item has to be destroyed, that time must be uninterrupted or it will automatically fail. A cat under the influence of a condition that does not impede movement (such as Blind, Deaf, or Anosmic) can still attempt to break a masterwork, but he will do so with a disadvantage.



What you see here is just an example of what you can bring into your adventures! There will always be some ruin uncovered, some new secrets of the Old Ones unearthed, and those are great opportunities to “discover” (make your own) masterworks. Any spell could be an inspiration for a relic. Anything that a cat can drink,

stick her tail into, or otherwise use and discard for a one-time bonus or ability are your fixes. And wonders? Well, wonders might be useful, but not always and in limited ways, and they are often very strange.

Relics

Relics or *artifacts* are items that give adventurous cats some consistent benefits. They can be straightforward, such as armor or weapons made from mysterious metals or (miraculously!) built with the mystical element of plastic. Others are less obvious, such as boots that aid cats in climbing or a cloak that boost a cat's ability to hide. Either way, relics are often jealously guarded by house cats or dismantled and converted into personal power, as they offer a powerful edge in dangerous situations.

Armor

Requires attunement; can be Absorbed

Coming in a wide variety of styles, the user has an additional +1 bonus to defense while wearing this armor, if she has the appropriate Aptitude secret. Some forms of masterwork armor are lighter than normal, or are even made from plastic, making them immensely valuable.

Absorbed

- The cat's defense is permanently increased by 1, even if the cat is not wearing any armor.

Refinements

- The cat's defense is permanently increased by 2.
- This secret will grant a +1 bonus to defense against attack rolls of one damage type (chosen at the time of refinement). This refinement can be taken multiple times.

BANDOLIER OF AMMUNITION

Requires attunement

This item is meant to be used in tandem with a regular or an exotic ranged weapon, and is able to carry a wide variety of ammunition (arrows, needles, pellets, and so forth) and speed the process of loading. Having this item additionally grants a +3 bonus to the ammunition saving throw (p. 93).

Belt of Might

Requires attunement; can be Absorbed

This belt, once activated, seems to enhance the user's ability to fight. It provides a +2 bonus to melee attack rolls while worn.

Absorbed

- The user now has a permanent +1 bonus to all melee attack rolls.

Refinements

- This secret can grant one Weapon Aptitude secret that the user does not already possess.
- The secret grants a permanent +1 bonus to attack rolls with the user's favored weapon.

BOOTS OF CLIMBING

Requires attunement

While the user wears these boots, she can use a bonus action and stomp the boots' heels on the ground. If she does, the boots will become very heavy on the ground, but as soon as the soles are placed against a wall or ceiling, they will allow the user to "walk" on these surfaces at a normal pace. When the cat reaches her destination, she can kick twice on the floor or ground to deactivate the effect, and the magic will not function again until after she sleeps.

BRACELETS OF PARRYING

Requires attunement

This matched set of bracelets grants a cat the ability to more effectively defend himself in physical combat (armed or unarmed). It does not grant any defenses against magical attacks. The bracelets



allow the cat to instinctively evade or turn aside weapons that will smash, slice, or pierce, giving a +2 to defense rolls while worn.

CHAMELEON CLOAK

Requires attunement

While the user wears this cloak with its hood up, Wisdom checks made to see or smell her are at a disadvantage. Further, she has an advantage on Dexterity checks made to hide, as the cloak's color shifts to camouflage her and exudes confusing scents. Pulling the hood up or down requires an action.

CHARGED COLLAR

Requires attunement; can be Absorbed

This close-fitting band worn about the neck is adorned with runes that, when a command word is spoken, activate a barrier that lasts for 1d6 rounds. This barrier grants a +2 bonus to defense against attacks using bludgeoning damage while the band is being worn. Additionally, if a living creature comes into contact with this barrier, it inflicts 1d4 lightning damage.

Absorbed

- The user is resistant against bludgeoning damage.

Refinements

- The cat is now immune to bludgeoning damage.
- The cat can manifest the lightning barrier, which inflicts 1d4 lightning damage if the cat is touched. The barrier lasts for 1d6 rounds, and it can be summoned a number of times equal to the cat's Constitution modifier before she has to sleep.
 - If taken again, lightning damage from contact with the barrier is increased to 2d4.
 - If taken a third time, lightning damage from contact with the barrier is increased to 2d6.

EXOTIC WEAPONS

Requires attunement

Some masterwork relics are strange weapons that resemble metallic wands or staves

made of slate-like material. These artifacts use triggers, buttons, or pure thought to activate their abilities. Cats must have the Exotic Weapon Aptitude secret to utilize the ranged effects of such weapons — otherwise, they're just very rare clubs.

All exotic weapons have the loading quality, which represents the fact that they can only be fired once every few seconds. They also have the ammunition quality; if the weapon runs out of ammunition, it can't be fired again until the following morning. If the ammunition saving throw results in a botch, the exotic weapon crumbles to dust.

Here are some examples of exotic weapons.

- **Wand of freezing:** 2d6 cold damage, ammunition, range 40/120, loading
- **Wand of stunning:** 3d6 force damage, ammunition, range 40/120, loading
- **Wand of hammering:** 4d6 bludgeoning damage, ammunition, range 40/120, loading
- **Wand of searing:** 5d6 fire damage, ammunition, range 40/120, loading
- **Wand of dissolving:** 6d6 acid damage, ammunition, range 40/120, loading
- **Staff of freezing:** 2d10 cold damage, ammunition, range 120/360, loading, two-pawed
- **Staff of stunning:** 3d8 force damage, ammunition, range 120/360, loading, two-pawed
- **Staff of hammering:** 3d10 bludgeoning damage, ammunition, range 120/360, loading, two-pawed
- **Staff of searing:** 5d8 fire damage, ammunition, range 120/360, loading, two-pawed
- **Staff of dissolving:** 6d8 acid damage, ammunition, range 120/360, loading, two-pawed

FRIGHTENING COUNTENANCE

This mask can project a frightening visage, requiring viewers to roll a Wisdom saving throw versus a difficulty of 15. Failure inflicts the Scared condition and a botch means the victim is Stunned for one round. This ability can be used once before the cat needs to sleep.

HEADBAND OF GRAY FUR

Requires attunement; can be Absorbed

The user's Wisdom score is +4 (18) while he wears this headband. It has no effect on him if his Wisdom score is already 18 or higher.

Absorbed

- The cat immediately adds two to his Wisdom score, to a maximum of 20.

Refinements

- The cat's Wisdom score can be increased by an additional two, to a maximum of 20.

LADYBUGS

Requires attunement

"Ladybugs" refers to a matched pair of crafted little bugs meant to be used as clandestine communication devices. One ladybug can be directed to a chosen location while the other can be kept on the controller's person, or in some other secured location. When activated, the controller of the bugs will be able to listen in on conversations happening within a 10-foot radius.

Should a bug be detected by anyone but the user, it will immediately scramble toward "home."

LASSO OF IMMOBILITY

When activated, this black plastic box will shoot out a coil of rope to ensnare one chosen target. The victim must roll either a Dexterity saving throw to evade or a Constitution saving roll to resist (difficulty 15), or they will be immediately afflicted with the conditions Prone and Immobile until the lasso is deactivated or the victim breaks free. Each round the victim can attempt a Constitution saving throw at decreasing difficulty (12 per round) to escape.

LENSES OF SUPERIOR VISION

This set of lenses allows the user to see and sense in much more detail than usual, both passively and actively. Tapping on one edge of the lenses allows the cat to switch vision modes from close up to far away. This item provides a +2 bonus to both Notice and Search skills while being worn.

PHYLACTERY OF FAITH

Requires attunement

Upon softly intoning the command word, this charm glows. In nighttime conditions, this grants Low-light Vision (p. 102) to all people within touching distance. Otherwise, it grants a +1 bonus to saving throws for conditions such as Charmed, Confused, Possessed, Repelled, or Scared to all persons within touching distance of the user. This item is highly valued by the Church of Man in Pugmire.

RING OF RETREAT

Requires attunement

When activated, this ring allows the cat to move up to twice their normal pace. As a bonus action during each of the cat's turns, they may choose to take an additional movement action. When deactivated, this ability cannot be used again until the cat has slept.

ROBE OF MAJESTY

Requires attunement; can be Absorbed

This resplendent robe boosts a cat's Charisma score to +4 (18) when worn. It has no effect on her if her Charisma score is already 18 or higher.

Absorbed

- The cat immediately adds two to her Charisma score, to a maximum of 20.

Refinements

- The cat's Charisma score can be increased by an additional two, to a maximum of 20.

SIMPLE AND MARTIAL MASTERWORK WEAPONS

Requires attunement; can be Absorbed

Masterwork weapons come in a variety of styles and appearances, but many resemble familiar simple and martial weapons. Users with the appropriate Aptitude secret gain an additional +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this

masterwork weapon. Some are weighted unusually, or are made of a very durable plastic (making them very expensive). Some also have buttons or functions that cause them to generate unusual forms of damage.

Absorbed

- Any weapon attack using the appropriate Aptitude secret gains an additional +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls.

Refinements

- The bonus to appropriate weapon attacks is increased to +2.
- Any weapon attack using the appropriate Aptitude secret has a number of damage dice equal to the user's proficiency bonus. For example, if the user's proficiency bonus is +2, then successful attacks roll two damage dice instead of one.

SPIDERSILK GLOVES

Requires attunement; can be Absorbed

These gloves are made of a material so soft they resemble spider's silk, hence the name. When they are activated, any spellcaster has access to his choice of one Spellweaver secret (p. 82) style for one round. Afterward, the user needs to sleep before they can be activated again. If an attempt is made to use the gloves again before the user sleeps, she must make a Constitution saving throw versus difficulty 18 or the gloves crumble to dust.

Absorbed

- Non-spellcaster cats receive the Magic Aptitude secret for free.
- All other spellcasters can reroll a single failed spell as if they had spent fortune before the cat needs to sleep.

Refinements

- The spellcaster can access a Spellweaver style of spellcasting once before the cat needs to sleep.
 - If taken again, this is increased to twice before the cat needs to sleep.

FIXES

Occasionally, the masterwork is consumable, rather than persistent. Some masterworks left behind by the Old Ones fall into this category, but some cats have discovered ways to recreate the magic of Man in these disposable forms. These are often called *fixes* (or *potions*, if the fix is something the cat drinks). Fixes are useful bits of magic, but they aren't as highly desired as relics.

ALARMING RUNES

These little square tablets are etched with strange bits of writing. Whatever the original intention of these items, they have become portable and noisy systems of alert. Activating and placing a rune on your cat's door or tent flap can provide an advantage to a surprise roll: when certain conditions are met (such as "anyone but me tries to get in"), the tablet will hiss and spark and set off shrieking whistles before going inert.

CRYSTAL OF RECALL

This small stone stores one basic or level 1 spell, chosen ahead of time by the user. Once the stone is activated, the spell goes off and renders the stone inert. Many crystals are discovered with spells already "preloaded" — once primed, a crystal of recall cannot change the spell it contains. Some can be found empty and simply waiting for a spellcaster to prime it with a chosen spell.

It is generally not advised to have more than two of these items in contact at any time, as close proximity renders them unstable. Every time three or more are in contact, make a Wisdom saving throw against a difficulty of 15 every round. Add one to the difficulty each round that is successfully resisted until there are two or fewer stones. Any failure creates a magical explosion, doing 3d8 damage in a 10-foot radius.

EXPLOSIVE EGGS

These hard plastic or metal fixes are thrown by a cat after they are activated, using a Dexterity check (difficulty 12 to get them in the right area). If successful, the egg explodes, causing a variety of effects depending on the nature of the egg.

- **Acid egg:** 3d6 acid damage in a 10-foot radius.
- **Confusion egg:** All targets have the Confused condition in a 10-foot radius.
- **Force egg:** 3d6 force damage in a 10-foot radius.
- **Ice egg:** 3d6 cold damage in a 10-foot radius.
- **Noise egg:** All targets have the Deaf condition in a 10-foot radius.
- **Shrapnel egg:** 3d6 slashing damage in a 10-foot radius.
- **Smoke egg:** All targets have the Blind and Anosmic conditions in a 10-foot radius.
- **Stone egg:** All targets have the Petrified condition in a 10-foot radius.
- **Toxic egg:** All targets have the Sickly condition in a 10-foot radius.

HEALING POTION

This glass phial contains one dosage of an earthy herbal fluid. As an action, this dose can be swallowed and the user can regain one stamina die and 1d6 stamina points. This item can also stabilize a dying character.

POTION OF HASTE

Kept in a sealed clay container, this dark and bitter concoction sends the user into a frenzy of speed when swallowed. One dose doubles the user's speed, gives them an advantage to Dexterity saving throws, gives them a +2 bonus to defense, and they gain an additional action on each of their turns. The additional action can only be used to take the following actions: Attack (one weapon attack only), Disengage, Hide, Run, or Use.

The effects of this dosage wear off in 1d4 rounds. When this happens, the user is Incapacitated until after his next turn, due to exhaustion.

STONE OF HARDINESS

This glass jar contains five (or fewer) small chalky pebbles. As an action, one of these little stones can be swallowed. The character that receives it can reroll a failed Constitution save. Further, she ceases to be Sickly and immediately stops taking any poison damage.



WONDERS

Sometimes, cats may also come across items that are bizarre and magical, but don't offer any obvious or substantive benefit. These are called *wonders*, and they may be valuable in strange, unusual ways.

FLAME TWIG

This plastic twig has a small button hidden on the base. Once its button is depressed, it produces a steady flame that cannot be extinguished unless the user depresses the button a second time. The flame is too small to be used as a weapon on its own, but can be used to ignite flammable substances, thereby creating a flame weapon. It finds most use in the paws of trackers spending copious amounts of time in the wilderness, however.

PICTURE OF HEALTH

This humming metal picture frame, once it has been activated and placed on top of a body, can provide a brief summary as to the health of the person so framed. It can disclose all conditions and ailments suffered, the extent of their injuries, and how much rest they need. Afterward, this item cannot be used again until the owner of the item has slept.

VISIONS

These little plastic cubes rotate and project a very small selection of chosen illusions. Usually these are images meant to entertain, but some creative cats sometimes use them as a distraction tool or decoy for less-than-legal activities. They can be activated and deactivated at will.



CHAPTER EIGHT: ENEMIES

The cats of *Monarchies of Mau* may encounter many different enemies during their adventures; rival species, insane animals, and far stranger things roam the world, and not all of them are willing to have a civil conversation. This chapter details some of the various enemies that characters may come across during their travels, and provides Guides with the tools to make their own enemies for their stories.

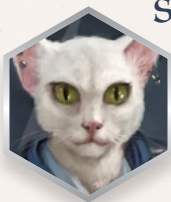
Like player characters, enemies have ability scores in Strength, Dexterity, Constitution, Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma. These abilities act as they do for player characters, including adding their modifiers to appropriate ability checks, saving throws, attack rolls, and damage rolls.

A few enemies will have a 0 score for an ability. In such cases, the enemy can't make any rolls with that ability, but they also can't have anything

involving that ability targeted – for example, an enemy with an Intelligence score of 0 doesn't have a mind, per se, and as such cannot be the target of spells that require a mind or an Intelligence score.

Further, all enemies have a *challenge rating* (CR for short). This acts somewhat like an enemy's level – the higher the challenge rating, the more powerful the enemy. In general, a character with the same level as an enemy's challenge rating will have a moderately difficult time defeating that enemy in combat. Enemies use their challenge rating as a proficiency bonus for appropriate rolls, such as those in which they have a skill.

Finally, enemies can have secrets, just like cats, although their secrets are often unique. These secrets can be used as often as the description says they can be used (usually by using an action). Some common secrets are:



Some of the statistics here aren't what player characters get. The secrets work a little different, or the armor doesn't quite work the same way. That's okay! Enemies don't play by the same rules as heroes do — sometimes it's more important to get the idea across instead of modeling the numbers exactly.

- **Darkvision:** The ability to see in the dark (p. 102).
- **Immunity:** A particular type of damage is ignored by the enemy — it causes no stamina point loss.
- **Low-light Vision:** The ability to see in dim light (p. 102).
- **Resistance:** All damage of a particular type that is done in a turn to the enemy is reduced by half at the end of the turn.
- **Scent:** Acts like Darkvision, but used via smell instead of sight.
- **Weak:** All damage of a particular type done in a turn to the enemy is doubled at the end of the turn.

ANIMALS

There are many animals in the world. Some will work with cats, while others will fight them in order to protect themselves. Many are the same as their forebears in the time of Man, but others have been changed by magic, mutation, or some other factor that makes them different and deadly.

BEAR

(CR 2)

Defense: 14 (thick hide)

Stamina Points: 22

Speed: 40 feet

Proficiency Bonus: +2

Abilities: Strength +4 (19), Dexterity +2 (14), Constitution +3 (16), Intelligence -4 (2), Wisdom +1 (12), Charisma -2 (6)

Attack: Two claws (+6 melee, 1d4 + 4 slashing) and bite (+4 melee, 1d6 + 4 piercing)

Secrets: Low-light Vision, Scent

CANINE

(CR 0)

Defense: 13

Stamina Points: 4

Speed: 20 feet

Proficiency Bonus: +2

Abilities: Strength +1 (13), Dexterity +3 (17), Constitution +1 (13), Intelligence -4 (2), Wisdom +1 (12), Charisma -2 (6)

Attack: Bite (+3 melee, 1d4 + 1 piercing)

Secrets: Low-light Vision, Scent

FELINE

(CR 0)

Defense: 13

Stamina Points: 4

Speed: 20 feet

Proficiency Bonus: +2

Abilities: Strength +1 (13), Dexterity +3 (17), Constitution +0 (10), Intelligence -1 (8), Wisdom +1 (12), Charisma -2 (6)

Attack: Claw (+3 melee, 1d4 + 1 piercing)

Secrets: Low-light Vision, Scent

GIANT WORM

(CR 1)

Defense: 12 (thick hide)

Stamina Points: 11

Speed: 10 feet/30 feet burrowing

Proficiency Bonus: +2

Abilities: Strength +3 (16), Dexterity 0 (10), Constitution +3 (16), Intelligence -2 (6), Wisdom -1 (8), Charisma -3 (5)

Attack: Maw attack (+5 melee, 1d6 + 3 piercing)

Secrets: Vibration sense (worms always attack the characters that moved the farthest in the turn)

- **Burrow:** Once per round, the worm may either come above ground or burrow below ground. It must be above ground to use

CHAPTER EIGHT: ENEMIES

its maw attack. When burrowing underground, it disturbs the ground where it moves. An opponent may attack the worm while burrowing, at a disadvantage.

HORSE

(CR 1)

Defense: 12

Stamina Points: 12

Speed: 40 feet

Proficiency Bonus: +2

Abilities: Strength +3 (16), Dexterity +1 (13), Constitution +2 (15), Intelligence -4 (2), Wisdom +1 (12), Charisma -1 (8)

Attack: Two hooves (+5 melee, 1d6 + 3 bludgeoning)

Secrets: Low-light Vision, Scent

BANDIT

Not all cats and dogs live in civilization, nor do they all respect others. Some are so desperate, greedy, or downright malevolent that they lurk near the roads and the outskirts of cities, waiting for the right opportunity to attack a party of cats and steal their possessions. Anyone can be a bandit, but there are three common types: moggies (cats), strays (dogs), and road rats.

MOGGIE HIGHWAYCAT

(CR 1)

Defense: 12 (leather armor)

Stamina Points: 9

Speed: 30 feet

Proficiency Bonus: +2

Abilities: Strength +0 (11), Dexterity +2 (15), Constitution +1 (12), Intelligence +0 (10), Wisdom +0 (10), Charisma -1 (8)

Skills: Sneak

Attack: Mace (+2 melee, 1d6 bludgeoning) or javelin (+3 ranged, 1d6 + 1 piercing)

Secrets: Darkvision

- **Nimble Escape:** The moggie can take the Disengage or Hide action as a bonus action on each of its turns.

STRAY BANDIT

(CR 1)

Defense: 11 (leather armor)

Stamina Points: 10

Speed: 30 feet

Proficiency Bonus: +2

Abilities: Strength +2 (15), Dexterity +0 (10), Constitution +2 (14), Intelligence -1 (8), Wisdom +0 (11), Charisma -1 (8)



BANDIT – BADGERS

Skills: Notice

Attack: Battleaxe (+4 melee, 1d8 + 2 slashing) or shortbow (+2 ranged, 1d6 piercing)

Secrets: Darkvision

- **Power Attack:** If the bandit has an advantage in melee, it can forfeit that advantage. If it does so and the attack hits, treat the hit as a triumph.

ROAD RAT (CR 1)

Defense: 13 (leather armor)

Stamina Points: 4

Speed: 10 feet

Proficiency Bonus: +2

Abilities: Strength –1 (8), Dexterity +2 (15), Constitution +0 (10), Intelligence –1 (8), Wisdom +1 (12), Charisma +0 (10)

Skills: Sneak

Attack: Bite (+1 melee, 1d4 – 1 piercing) or dagger (+4 melee or ranged, 1d4 + 2 piercing)

Secrets: Darkvision

- **Swipe Attack:** The road rat can spend its move action after a successful melee attack to pick something out of the target's rucksack. The rat may take a single one-pawed item the target is not already holding in their paws.

BADGERS

To the outside observer, the badger tribes are barbarians that have lawless, brutal lives and bloody deaths. Those who study or trade with the badgers know that tribal loyalty matter above all else. They can be bargained with by shrewd cats, but any bargains should be made with caution. Badgers take what they need to live through force. They launch devastating raids on trade caravans. They dam rivers to give themselves much-needed water. They burn forests to cover their retreat. Their relentless need to do whatever it takes to survive sets them at odds with anyone not considered part of their tribe, who are then marked as targets the next time the badgers need something.

Badger tribes break down along species lines like weasels and ferrets. They use primitive weapons, communicating with a strange language comprising barks and squeals. The few words of common language they know are used to scare enemies or command prisoners. Though the bands squabble with each other as much as with the civilized

world, those who study the badgers speak of the badger king, Kibu the Red, who will one day unite them into a fearsome army.

BADGER SLASHER (CR 1)

Defense: 12 (leather armor)

Stamina Points: 14

Speed: 30 feet

Proficiency Bonus: +2

Abilities: Strength +3 (16), Dexterity +1 (12), Constitution +3 (16), Intelligence –2 (7), Wisdom 0 (11), Charisma 0 (10)

Skills: Intimidate

Attack: Battleaxe (+5 melee, 1d8 + 3 slashing) or javelin (+3 ranged, 1d6 + 1 piercing)

Secrets: Darkvision

- **Vicious:** As a free action once per turn, the badger slasher can move up to its speed toward a hostile character that it sees.

BADGER HEADSPLITTER (CR 2)

Defense: 14 (scale mail)

Stamina Points: 20

Speed: 30 feet

Proficiency Bonus: +2

Abilities: Strength +4 (18), Dexterity +1 (12), Constitution +4 (18), Intelligence +1 (12), Wisdom +0 (11), Charisma +1 (12)

Skills: Intimidate

Attack: Battleaxe (+6 melee, 1d8+4 slashing) or javelin (+3 ranged, 1d6+1 piercing)

Secrets: Darkvision

- **Vicious:** As a free action once per turn, the badger headsplitter can move up to its speed toward a hostile character that it sees.
- **Battle Frenzy:** The badger headsplitter makes two battleaxe attacks with one action.

BADGER CHIEFTAIN (CR 4)

Defense: 14 (scale mail)

Stamina Points: 48

Speed: 30 feet

Proficiency Bonus: +3

Abilities: Strength +4 (18), Dexterity +1 (12), Constitution +4 (18), Intelligence +1 (12), Wisdom +0 (11), Charisma +3 (16)

CHAPTER EIGHT: ENEMIES

Skills: Intimidate

Attack: Greataxe (+7 melee, 1d12 + 4 slashing) or spear (+4 ranged, 1d6 + 1 piercing)

Secrets: Darkvision

- **Vicious:** As a free action once per turn, the badger chieftain can move up to its speed toward a hostile character that it sees.
- **Battle Frenzy Master:** The badger chieftain makes two greataxe or javelin attacks per action.
- **For Kibu!** Once per battle, the badger chieftain may select as many allies as it can see within 30 feet of it. These allies gain advantage to attack rolls until the start of the chieftain's next turn. The effect ends if the chieftain is reduced to 0 stamina points. The chieftain may also make a single melee or ranged attack after using this ability.

BREATHAKER

Cats keep watch during the night for creatures like the breathtaker. What looks like a normal cat, a lone traveler in the woods, is something far more sinister. The cat steals the breath of the living. It does its best to catch a victim that's asleep or by using its dark magic to freeze the target in place with a powerful cloud of icy breath. Once the victim is immobilized, the breathtaker pounces on their chest and pulls the breath out of the living to sustain itself.

BREATHAKER

(CR 4)

Defense: 14

Stamina Points: 44

Speed: 30 feet

Proficiency Bonus: +3

Abilities: Strength +3 (16), Dexterity +0 (10), Constitution +3 (16), Intelligence +0 (10), Wisdom -2 (6), Charisma +0 (10)

Attack: Ice claws (+6 melee, 2d4 + 3 piercing) and ice blast (+3 ranged, 1d10 frost)

Secrets: Resistance to all damage except radiant, weak to heat damage, Darkvision

- **Dehydration:** After an ice blast, the target makes a difficulty 15 Constitution saving throw. Failure indicates the target is Immobile until the end of her next turn. A botch on the saving throw means the target is Petrified into ice. The character makes new saving throws

every turn. The condition ends when she can make the saving throw or the combat ends.

- **Battle Frenzy:** The breathtaker makes a claw and blast attack with the same attack action.

BONE BURRS

Small, silver insects often infest bones scattered in the wilderness. Through some sort of strange magic, the bugs animate the bones and attack anyone who comes too close. Bone burrs pull together shard of bones in round, spiked configurations. They detect cats through sound vibrations in the walls and floors of their nests and then roll toward their victims with sudden speed.

BONE BURRS

(CR 1)

Defense: 13 (hardened bone)

Stamina Points: 13

Speed: 30 feet

Proficiency Bonus: +2

Abilities: Strength +0 (10), Dexterity +2 (15), Constitution +2 (15), Intelligence -2 (6), Wisdom -1 (8), Charisma -3 (5)

Attack: Slam (+2 melee, 1d6 piercing)



BREATHTAKER – CULT OF LABO TOR

Secrets: Resistant to piercing and slashing damage, Darkvision

- **Reconfigure:** At the end of the round, bone burrs reconfigure their remaining bones into a new form and regain 2 stamina points.

CATS

Thanks to the longstanding rivalries of the houses, cats often find themselves at cross purposes with each other. All cats strive to be the best cat, which means that other cats must take the fall.

HIRED KILLER

(CR 2)

Defense: 14 (leather armor)

Stamina Points: 22

Speed: 30 feet

Proficiency Bonus: +2

Abilities: Strength +3 (16), Dexterity +0 (11), Constitution +0 (10), Intelligence +0 (10), Wisdom +0 (10), Charisma +0 (10)

Skills: Sneak

Attack: Dagger (+5 melee, 1d6 + 3 piercing) or crossbow (+2 ranged, 1d6 piercing)

Secrets: Darkvision

- **Battle Frenzy:** The hired killer makes two dagger or crossbow attacks with one action.
- **Sudden Strike:** The killer does an extra 1d6 damage on any target on which she has advantage.
- **Prime Target:** The killer gains advantage on any opponent in a combat that has not yet taken an action that round.

COCKY BRAWLER

(CR 3)

Defense: 14 (leather armor)

Stamina Points: 30

Speed: 30 feet

Proficiency Bonus: +3

Abilities: Strength +2 (14), Dexterity +0 (10), Constitution +2 (14), Intelligence +0 (10), Wisdom +0 (10), Charisma +0 (10)

Skills: Sneak

Attack: Club (+5 melee, 1d6 + 2 bludgeoning) and unarmed strike (+5 melee, 1d4 + 2 bludgeoning)

Secrets: Darkvision

- **Paws of Fury:** As an attack action, the brawler may choose to make two unarmed

strikes. He may do so as a free action if he has advantage on the target.

- **Now It's On:** Once per battle, the brawler can take a bonus action to regain 1d8 + 2 stamina points.
- **Paw to the Eye:** When making a successful unarmed strike, the brawler can force the target to roll a difficulty 14 Constitution saving throw instead of rolling for damage. If the target fails the saving throw, she gains the Blinded condition until the end of her next turn.

INSANE MANCER

(CR 4)

Defense: 15 (spell of protection)

Stamina Points: 35

Speed: 30 feet

Proficiency Bonus: +3

Abilities: Strength +0 (10), Dexterity +0 (10), Constitution +0 (10), Intelligence +2 (14), Wisdom +2 (14), Charisma +1 (12)

Skills: Notice, Know History

Attack: Burning touch (+3 melee or ranged, 2d8 heat)

Secrets: Darkvision

- **Shield of Earth:** Once per battle, a wall of stone appears at a point the mancer chooses within 120 feet. Each character within the area affected by the spell must make a difficulty 13 Dexterity saving throw or suffer 5d8 points of bludgeoning damage. The wall lasts until the mancer drops the spell or 10 minutes, whichever comes first.
- **Blast of Frost:** The mancer casts an icy fog from its paw into a 20-foot sphere which solidifies and then explodes. Targets within the sphere take 6d6 cold damage, though if they make a difficulty 13 Dexterity check they take half damage. Anyone reduced to 0 stamina points by the attack also takes the Petrified condition until they regain 1 stamina point.
- **Gust of Wind:** The mancer may push or pull a target by 20 feet in any direction. If the target makes a difficulty 13 Constitution check he is unaffected.

CULT OF LABO TOR

Though most rats and mice eke out a living in the gaps of the monarchies, there are a few who have found a higher purpose. They seek out

CHAPTER EIGHT: ENEMIES

unusual artifacts of Man for study, claiming an understanding of Man's intent that cats are unwilling to hear. They venerate Labo Tor, the first of their kind who led the cult through the Maze of Ignorance to their revelations. Cats believe in their excellence, but these rodents know that Man was the most excellent of all. To become like Man, the White Mice must experiment on lesser beings to satisfy the 100 Theories. Only then can they be rewarded by Labo Tor with divine power.

Cult members can easily be identified by the bleached white patches of their fur. Those members who practice magic wear stitched-together patchwork robes with spell formulae scrawled all over the surface.

WILD-EYED OBSERVER (CR 2)

Defense: 15 (leather armor)

Stamina Points: 16

Speed: 30 feet

Proficiency Bonus: +2

Abilities: Strength +0 (10), Dexterity +3 (17), Constitution +0 (10), Intelligence +0 (10), Wisdom +1 (12), Charisma +0 (10)

Skills: Intimidate, Sneak, Spot, Traverse

Attack: Bite (+2 melee, 1d6 piercing), dagger (+5 melee, 1d6 + 3 piercing), or small crossbow (+5 ranged, 1d8 + 3 piercing)

Secrets: Darkvision

- **Theory of Shadowtivity:** When in dim light or darkness, the cultist may teleport up to 60 feet to another area of dim light or darkness. The first attack the cultist makes after teleporting is made with advantage.

DISSECTION DISSERTATOR (CR 2)

Defense: 14 (leather armor)

Stamina Points: 14

Proficiency Bonus: +2

Speed: 30 feet

Abilities: Strength +3 (16), Dexterity +0 (10), Constitution +1 (12), Intelligence +0 (10), Wisdom -1 (8), Charisma +1 (12)

Skills: Intimidate, Sneak, Spot, Traverse

Attack: Bite (+5 melee, 1d6 + 3 piercing), large scalpel (+5 melee, 1d6 + 3 slashing), or thrown blade (+2 ranged, 1d6 piercing)

Secrets: Darkvision

- **Curious Blade:** The cultist gains advantage on any target at full stamina points.
- **Sudden Strike:** The cultist does an additional 1d6 damage to targets against which they have advantage, including the advantage they gain from Curious Blade.

ILLUMINATED BUN-SEN (CR 2)

Defense: 13 (leather armor)

Stamina Points: 18

Proficiency Bonus: +2

Speed: 30 feet

Abilities: Strength +1 (12), Dexterity +0 (10), Constitution +1 (13), Intelligence +2 (14), Wisdom +0 (10), Charisma +0 (10)

Skills: Intimidate, Sneak, Spot, Traverse

Attack: Burning paws (+3 melee, 1d6 + 1 heat damage), fire blast (+2 ranged, 1d10 heat damage)

Secrets: Darkvision

- **Fire Breeds Fire:** A target must make a difficulty 13 Constitution saving throw after this white rat's fire attacks to skip the spread of the fire. Failing the saving throw does an additional 1d4 heat damage every turn, until the saving throw is successful.
- **Turn Up the Burner:** The damage of the fire blast increases by 1d10 for every round it goes unused. Once an attack roll is made, the damage reverts to the original 1d10 and the process begins again.

COCORANITES

These large, dark birds believe themselves to be the vessels that carry animals from this life to wherever they go after death. They look like large hooded figures when standing on the ground or perched in trees with their wings folded around their bodies. These creatures paint their bodies with skeletal marks, using white dust, that reveal themselves when they swoop down on their victims. Without the hand of the Old Ones to control them, cocoranites feel free to take souls whether they are ready to die or not. They mimic the last words of their previous victims, changing the tone and inflection of the words spoken to communicate with one another.

COCORANITES

(CR 3)

Defense: 14 (thick feathers)

Stamina Points: 72

Proficiency Bonus: +3

Speed: 30 feet/10 feet flying

Abilities: Strength +3 (16), Dexterity +1 (12), Constitution +0 (10), Intelligence -1 (8), Wisdom +1 (12), Charisma +0 (10)

Attack: Beak attack (+6 melee, 2d6 + 3 piercing damage)

Secrets:

- **Battle Frenzy:** The cocoranite makes two beak attacks on the same target with one attack action.

COATL

This majestic serpent often circles a mountain on the edge of the lands of Mau. Its mirrored scales change color as its body moves through the air. Burning wings ignite when the coatl takes flight and disappear in a cloud of black smoke when it lands. Magicians prize the flaming feathers it leaves in its wake. Days after the coatl appears, rumors filter through taverns everywhere of the hoard of artifacts the creature keeps under the mountain. Those foolhardy enough to seek these artifacts head off to explore the mountain and are never heard from again.

COATL

(CR 8)

Defense: 19 (natural armor)

Stamina Points: 112

Speed: 20 feet/50 feet flying

Proficiency Bonus: +5

Abilities: Strength +2 (15), Dexterity +0 (10), Constitution +2 (15), Intelligence +1 (12), Wisdom +1 (12), Charisma +2 (15)

Attack: Bite (+7 melee, 2d10 + 2 piercing), claws (+7 melee, 2d6 + 2 slashing)

Secrets: Immunity to heat damage

- **Battle Frenzy Grand Master:** The coatl makes three attacks for one attack action. It attacks with its bite once and its claws twice. If the coatl hits with its bite attack, it may forego one or both of its claw attacks. The target of the bite attack takes 1d10 heat damage for each claw attack the coatl sacrifices.
- **Feathers of Flame:** The coatl uses its action to radiate a 20-foot sphere of fire and feathers. Anyone caught in the sphere takes 6d6 heat damage. If a target makes a difficulty 16 Dexterity saving throw they take half damage. Once the coatl has used this attack, roll a d6 at the end of every turn. The coatl may use this secret again if the number rolled is equal to or less than the number of rounds since this secret was last used.



DEATH HEARSE

Cats scan the skies to make sure they are clear of these shimmering beasts. Their long, thin shape make it easy for them to drift and hide in clouds. Foggy days are often considered ill omens that the death hearses are coming to swoop from the sky. They make the sound of 1,000 hungry insects as they dive. These strange, solid clouds attempt to catch cats out in the open. Spring-coiled snakes suddenly snap from the hearse to wrap around arms, legs, and necks. These arms slam the victim to the ground and any nearby scenery. Once the cat is unconscious, the death hearse pulls the limp body inside its form, never to be seen again.

DEATH HEARSE

(CR 7)
Defense: 17 (natural armor)

Stamina Points: 112

Speed: 50 feet flying

Proficiency Bonus: +4

Abilities: Strength +3 (16), Dexterity -2 (6), Constitution +4 (18), Intelligence +0 (10), Wisdom +0 (10), Charisma +0 (10)

Skills: Notice

Attack: Slam (+7 melee, 4d10 + 3 bludgeoning)

Secrets: Resistance to bludgeoning damage

- **Wrapped Up:** After a successful slam attack, target must make a difficulty 13 Strength saving throw. If failed, the target is wrapped up in the cables of the death hearse with the Immobility condition. The target may attempt to clear the condition by making the same saving throw at the beginning of their turn.
- **Reeled In:** As a bonus action, the death hearse can pull an Immobility target 10 feet into the air. Next round, the death hearse drops the target, and she takes 2d8 bludgeoning damage from the fall. If a target loses the Immobility condition, she may make a difficulty 13 Dexterity saving throw to take half damage.

DEEPSKIN

Cats stay away from large bodies of water for many reasons, but the deadliest ones are the deepskins. Deepskins have muscled, scaly bodies and mouths that drip stinking, slimy fluid as they emerge from the sea. These walking fish crea-

tures live beneath the surface of the water waiting to ambush any cats curious enough to walk to the edge. The deepskins believe the Old Ones live under the water and drag any surface creature into the depths to let them see for themselves.

DEEPSKIN

(CR 1)
Defense: 13 (thick skin)

Stamina Points: 13

Speed: 30 feet

Proficiency Bonus: +2

Abilities: Strength +2 (15), Dexterity +2 (14), Constitution +3 (16), Intelligence 8 (-1), Wisdom 8 (-1), Charisma 5 (-3)

Attack: Trident (+4 melee, 1d6 + 2 piercing)

Secrets: Darkvision

- **Amphibious:** The deepskin can breathe in both air and water.
- **Barbed Trident:** After a successful attack, the deepskin can force the target to make a difficulty 12 Strength saving throw. If unsuccessful, the target is unable to use the Disengage action on the deepskin until the end of her next turn.

DEMONS

Nearly every cat sees the value in fighting the demons of the Unseen. Such demons come in a wide variety.

SMOKE DEMON

(CR 2)

Lesser Unseen spirits like to possess unintelligent felines and send them into cat settlements in an unassuming manner. If confronted after causing trouble, they attempt to confuse any attackers by exhaling clouds of black smoke.

Defense: 12 (cloud of smoke)

Stamina Points: 12

Speed: 20 feet

Proficiency Bonus: +2

Abilities: Strength +2 (14), Dexterity +4 (18), Constitution +2 (14), Intelligence -4 (2), Wisdom +1 (12), Charisma -2 (6)

Skills: Sneak

Attack: Claw (+4 melee, 1d6 + 2 slashing), smoke breath (+6 ranged, 1d6 + 4 heat)

Secrets: Low-light Vision, Scent



- **Death Cloud:** When the smoke demon is reduced to 0 stamina points, it releases a five-foot sphere of acrid smoke centered on its final position. Anyone moving through the sphere must make a difficulty 13 Constitution saving throw or take the Sickly condition until the end of their next turn. The smoke lasts one minute but may be dispersed earlier by a strong wind.

FRENZY DEMON

(CR 4)

These nefarious demons are known to maneuver their hosts into crowded spaces like marketplaces or town squares and then do their best to hurt as many cats as possible before their vessel is taken down. Those who study the Unseen are aware of a subtle sign of possession; these demons unconsciously unsheathe and sheathe their claws on a regular basis before unleashing their red-eyed fury.

Defense: 15 (feels no pain)

Stamina Points: 30

Speed: 40 feet

Proficiency Bonus: +3

Abilities: Strength +4 (19), Dexterity +2 (16), Constitution +4 (19), Intelligence -3 (4), Wisdom

-3 (4), Charisma -2 (7)

Attack: Longsword (+7 melee; 1d8 + 4 slashing) or small crossbow (+5 ranged, 1d8 + 2 piercing)

Secrets: Resistance to all damage (except attacks with silver weapons, which count as a weakness), Darkvision

- **Battle Frenzy Master:** The frenzy demon makes two longsword or small crossbow attacks per action.
- **Cleave:** The frenzy demon may make an additional attack as a bonus action when it reduces a target to 0 stamina points. It must use the same type of attack for the bonus action.

WINGED DEMON

(CR 6)

The Unseen sometimes pulls cats into the ground to possess them. Once the transformation is complete, a winged demon bursts forth, clad in strange earthen armor and flapping brutally carved wings. Unlike many of its brethren, this type of demon is rarely subtle in its attacks or approach.

Defense: 16 (stone armor)

Stamina Points: 90

Speed: 40 feet/60 feet flying

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Proficiency Bonus: +4

Abilities: Strength +3 (16), Dexterity +0 (10), Constitution +5 (20), Intelligence +0 (10), Wisdom -3 (4), Charisma +1 (12)

Skills: Intimidate, Traverse

Attack: Mace (+7 melee; 1d8 + 3 bludgeoning)

Secrets: Resistance to all damage (except attacks with silver weapons, which count as a weakness), Darkvision

- **Swoop Attack:** If the winged demon moves at least 40 feet during a round, it may make an additional melee attack as a bonus action.

WITCH DEMON

(CR 8)

These major demons can absorb and reflect the magic spells of mancers and ministers. When they possess a cat, strange symbols sear themselves into its fur and glow whenever the demon uses their abilities. Rival houses put aside their differences to make sure that a demon such as this is sent back to whatever dark place spawned it.

Defense: 20 (eldritch force field)

Stamina Points: 72

Speed: 30 feet

Proficiency Bonus: +5

Abilities: Strength +0 (10), Dexterity +0 (10), Constitution +1 (12), Intelligence +2 (14), Wisdom +1 (12), Charisma +1 (12)

Skills: Notice, Search, Sneak, Survive

Attack: Unseen force (+7 melee or ranged, 2d6 + 2 bludgeoning)

Secrets: Resistance to all damage (except attacks with silver weapons, which count as a weakness), Darkvision

- **Absorption:** If the witch demon is successful with a melee attack against a target with spell-casting ability, it can force the target to make a difficulty 16 Intelligence saving throw. If the saving throw fails, the target expends 1d4 spell slots and the demon regains stamina points equal the lost slots.
- **Battle Frenzy:** The witch demon may make two unseen force attacks with one attack action.
- **Reflection:** When the witch demon successfully saves against a spell, they may copy that spell and hold it in reserve. The witch demon may cast the spell as an action against an opponent. If the witch demon is targeted by a spell while it has one in reserve that it success-

fully saves against, it may choose which spell it holds.

DECAYER BEAST

This glossy, black insectoid creature emits a strange magnetic field that warps weapons, bends the path of arrows, and interferes with spells attempting to affect it. It also secretes a blue, acidic liquid that can eat through the stoutest of Man's ancient artifacts.

DECAYER BEAST

(CR 5)

Defense: 15 (natural armor)

Stamina Points: 72

Speed: 30 feet

Proficiency Bonus: +4

Abilities: Strength +2 (14), Dexterity +0 (10), Constitution +1 (12), Intelligence +1 (12), Wisdom +1 (12), Charisma -1 (8)

Attack: Mandible bite (+6 melee or ranged, 2d6 + 2 piercing)

Secrets:

- **Magnetic Field:** All attacks on the decayer beast have disadvantage due to the magnetic field it produces affecting the metal in most normal weapons and armor. If it is hit by an attack, the field is disrupted and all attacks on the beast are made normally until the end of its next turn.
- **Masterwork Malfunction:** When the decayer beast loses stamina points from an attack or spell, all characters within a five-foot radius of the beast must choose one of their relics and roll a d20. If the roll is 11-20, nothing happens. If the roll is 1-10, the device stops working or is unable to provide any bonuses to the user until the end of their next turn. If a masterwork item malfunctions three times during a battle, it is destroyed. This has no effect on fixes and wonders.

DOGS

Dogs are the closest thing to rivals cats have for the masters of civilization. They blindly worship Man and their clumsy attempts to venerate the ancient servants of cats often put them at odds with the Monarchies of Mau. Still, their naïve nobility is sometimes useful.

PENITENT MUTT

(CR 2)

Defense: 12 (leather armor)

Stamina Points: 16

Speed: 30 feet

Proficiency Bonus: +2

Abilities: Strength +0 (11), Dexterity +0 (11), Constitution +0 (10), Intelligence +2 (14), Wisdom +1 (12), Charisma +0 (10)

Skills: Handle Animal, Survive

Attack: Mace (+2 melee, 1d6 bludgeoning) or holy flame (+3 ranged, 1d8 + 1 heat)

Secrets:

- **Healing Bark:** Once per battle, the penitent mutt may target itself or one of its allies to regain 6 stamina points.

GRUFF WIZARD

(CR 3)

Defense: 12 (thick robes)

Stamina Points: 18

Speed: 30 feet

Proficiency Bonus: +3

Abilities: Strength +0 (10), Dexterity +0 (10), Constitution +0 (10), Intelligence +2 (14), Wisdom +1 (12), Charisma +1 (12)

Skills: Know Culture, Persuade

Attack: Lightning blast (+5 ranged, 1d8 + 1 lightning)

Secrets:

- **Ward of Protection:** Once per battle, the gruff wizard casts this spell to give anyone who attacks him disadvantage on those attacks until the start of his next turn.
- **Acid Burst:** Once per battle, the gruff wizard targets an enemy with a spray of acidic globs that do 4d4 acid damage immediately and 2d4 additional damage at the end of the target's turn. If the target makes a difficulty 14 Dexterity saving throw when hit by the spell, the acid does 2d4 acid damage immediately and no additional damage.

STUBBORN SENTINEL

(CR 4)

Defense: 15 (heavy armor)

Stamina Points: 48

Speed: 30 feet

Proficiency Bonus: +3

Abilities: Strength +2 (14), Dexterity +0 (10), Constitution +2 (14), Intelligence +0 (10), Wisdom +0 (10), Charisma +1 (12)

Skills: Intimidate, Sense Motive

Attack: Spear (+5 melee or +3 ranged, 1d8 + 2 piercing) or shield bash (+5 melee, 1d6 + 2 bludgeoning)

Secrets:

- **Shield Bash:** If a melee attack misses the sentinel's defense by more than five points, the stubborn sentinel may make a shield bash attack as a reaction. If the melee attack is a botch, the shield bash attack automatically succeeds.
- **Cleave:** The stubborn sentinel may make an additional attack as a bonus action when it reduces a target to 0 stamina points. It must use the same type of attack for the bonus action.

ETHERKESH

These silvery coils of snakes writhe and entangle with each other when first encountered. They often look like inert coils of electronic cable when first seen, but as soon as they detect a nearby life, they start to slither and tumble toward it. They move toward living flesh to probe and prod their way inside, collecting information in a violent lashing attack and sending it back to their master, the Nagayaga. To keep their victims docile during the process, they often entangle themselves around the cat's arms and legs or, if desperate, hit the cat with a lightning blast at the expense of the target's own vitality.

ETHERKESH

(CR 6)

Defense: 16 (tough hide)

Stamina Points: 55

Speed: 30 feet

Proficiency Bonus: +4

Abilities: Strength +2 (14), Dexterity +1 (12), Constitution +1 (12), Intelligence +2 (14), Wisdom -1 (8), Charisma -1 (8)

Skills: Notice, Sneak, Survive

Attack: Slam (+6 melee 1d10 + 2 bludgeoning) or lightning blast (+6 ranged, 1d8 + 2 lightning)

Secrets: Resistance to bludgeoning, weak to cold, Darkvision

- **Entangle:** Once per turn after a successful slam attack, the etherkesh may attempt to entangle a target. The target must make a difficulty 14 Strength saving throw

or become Immobile. The target may lose this condition by attempting the same saving throw at the start of subsequent turns. If the etherkesh has sustained damage that turn, the saving throw is made with advantage.

- **Pacification:** The etherkesh may inflict 1d8 + 2 lighting damage on an immobile target as a bonus action.
- **Bioelectric Drain:** Once per battle, the etherkesh may force an Immobile target to spend one of their stamina dice. The etherkesh gains the number of stamina points rolled and the target is no longer Immobile.

EXCORIATES

These strange floating skulls are from no animal recognized by cats. What seem to be three eyeholes glow with a shifting-color light and the jaw extends back over the upper lip of the mouth. Excoriates are just as curious as some cats are about how and why animals gained intelligence. Their method of experimentation is more violent, however; tentacles erupt from the eye holes and latch on to the animals. The tentacles do their best to worm their way inside the cat's head to destroy the brain within and take another sample for their data.



EXCORIATES

(CR 4)

Defense: 12 (thick bone)

Stamina Points: 18

Speed: 30 feet

Proficiency Bonus: +3

Abilities: Strength +2 (14), Dexterity +0 (10), Constitution +1 (12), Intelligence +2 (14), Wisdom +0 (10), Charisma +0 (10)

Skills: Know Culture, Persuade

Attack: Two tentacle slams (+5 melee, 1d6 + 2 bludgeoning)

Secrets: Resistance to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage

- **Brain Extraction:** Once per turn, the excoriate may attempt to extract the brain of a target hit with a tentacle attack. The target of the extraction must make a difficulty 13 Constitution check. If the check fails, the target suffers 3d10 psychic damage. If a target is reduced to 0 stamina points in this way, the brain has successfully been extracted by the excoriate.

JACKALOPE

The first sign that a cat has encountered a jackalope is when light glints off the creature's shiny antlers. These small, rabbit-like creatures have fur that changes color with the seasons. The older the jackalope is, the stranger the pattern formed by its antlers. Some antlers form shapes, numbers, and even words. The jackalopes are a bad luck curse made flesh, and they pass that curse on to any cat that crosses their path. Killing the jackalope that inflicted the curse is one way to remove it, but if a cat can't or won't do that, there are rumors they can pass the curse on to their next life. Two jackalopes will be born when the cat returns, one to return their curse and one to curse a new cat.

JACKALOPE

(CR 5)

Defense: 15 (entropy field)

Stamina Points: 40

Speed: 20 feet

Proficiency Bonus: +4

Abilities: Strength +2 (14), Dexterity +0 (10), Constitution +2 (14), Intelligence +0 (10), Wisdom +1 (12), Charisma +0 (10)

Attack: Antler gore (+6 melee, 1d8 + 2 piercing)

Secrets: Resistance to heat damage

- **Jackalope Curse:** At the beginning of the jackalope's turn, roll 1d4 to determine what attacks against it have disadvantage.
 1. No attacks have disadvantage.
 2. Melee attacks have disadvantage.
 3. Ranged attacks have disadvantage.
 4. Melee and ranged attacks have disadvantage.
- **Passing the Curse:** The jackalope may pass its Jackalope Curse secret to an ally within five feet when it is reduced to 0 stamina points.

LIZARDS

The lizards that wander through cat lands in their colorful tent cities speak of ruined kingdoms destroyed by great worms burrowing under the sands. Lizards claiming noble titles demand duels held inside salt circles. Some claim that the written word has a life all its own. Many halls in the monarchies still ring with these fantastic tales, but cats have yet to verify the truth of any of them.

Lizards are usually dressed for long-term survival, meaning airy cloth in warm climates and heavy furs in cold with covered faces no matter the weather. A lizard speaking to a cat with an uncovered face bestows a great honor. Their curved blades complement their mobile, athletic fighting styles.

STICKY-FINGERED FOOTPAD (CR 3)

Defense: 14 (leather armor)

Stamina Points: 24

Speed: 30 feet

Proficiency Bonus: +3

Abilities: Strength +1 (12), Dexterity +3 (16), Constitution +0 (10), Intelligence +0 (11), Wisdom +0 (10), Charisma +1 (12)

Skills: Notice, Sense Motive, Traverse

Attack: Dagger (+4 melee or +6 ranged, 1d4 + 1 piercing)

Secrets:

- **Second-Story Rogue:** The footpad's climbing speed is equal to their regular speed.
- **Surprise Strike:** The footpad does an extra 1d6 damage to any target she hits while she has advantage on them.

THOUSAND OATH DUELIST (CR 4)

Defense: 14 (leather armor)

Stamina Points: 24

Speed: 30 feet

Proficiency Bonus: +3

Abilities: Strength +0 (12), Dexterity +3 (16), Constitution +0 (10), Intelligence +0 (11), Wisdom +0 (10), Charisma +2 (14)

Skills: Intimidate, Sense Motive, Traverse

Attack: Rapier (+6 melee, 1d6 + 3 slashing) or tail strike (+6 melee, 1d4 + 3 bludgeoning)

Secrets:

- **Prepare to Die:** As a bonus action, the duelist makes an opposed Charisma check against a target (the duelist rolls with +5). If the duelist wins, he gains advantage against the target until either side disengages.
- **Nimble Escape:** The duelist can take the disengage or hide action as a bonus action on each of her turns.

MYSTIC CALLIGRAPHIST (CR 5)

Defense: 13 (painted robes)

Stamina Points: 40

Speed: 30 feet

Proficiency Bonus: +4

Abilities: Strength +0 (10), Dexterity +0 (10), Constitution +0 (10), Intelligence +2 (14), Wisdom +2 (14), Charisma +2 (14)

Skills: Know History, Persuade, Sneak, Traverse

Attack: Club (+4 melee, 1d6 bludgeoning) or ink fling (+4 ranged, 1d6 acid)

Secrets:

- **Web of Lies:** Once per battle, the calligraphist paints a shimmering web in the air that expands to fill a 20-foot cube. Any characters in the cube or moving through it must make a difficulty 15 Dexterity saving throw or gain the Immobility condition. To break free, the target must make a difficulty 15 Strength saving throw. Either saving throw is made with advantage if the webs have taken at least one point of heat or acid damage.
- **Acid Tongue:** The calligraphist paints their own tongue with mystic ink and spits acid at 1d4 adjacent targets. These targets suffer 4d4 acid damage and must make difficulty 15 Constitution saving throws. Failure means they take another 2d4 acid damage at the end of their next turn.



- **Doorway to Legend:** Once per battle, the calligraphist paints a doorway in the air and may teleport to a predetermined location up to one mile away. Others may pursue the mystic through the doorway, but must make difficulty 15 Wisdom checks or be Stunned until the end of their next turn after they come out of the other side.

MICE

Although mice and rats often inhabit the same position in cat settlements, they are not the same rodent. While rats believe their great city fell, mice think their great city still exists somewhere. Mice work hard in the hopes of earning enough money to mount a great expedition to find this lost city. When they do, they will take their rightful place with the other animal civilizations. Some mice, however, are not content to serve other animals. They actively seek their birthright and take the materials they think they need to find their lost home.

MOUSE RECRUIT

(CR 0)

Defense: 11 (leather armor)

Stamina Points: 6

Speed: 20 feet

Proficiency Bonus: +2

Abilities: Strength +2 (14), Dexterity +1 (12), Constitution +0 (10), Intelligence +0 (10), Wisdom -1 (8), Charisma +0 (10)

Skills: Traverse, Sneak

Attack: Bite (+4 melee, 1d4 + 2 piercing) or short sword (+4 melee, 1d6 + 2 slashing)

Secrets:

- **Tiny Tactics:** The mouse has advantage on an attack roll against a character if at least one ally is within five feet of the target and not Incapacitated.

MOUSE GLIDE BOMBER

(CR 1)

Defense: 12 (hide armor)

Stamina Points: 6

Speed: 20 feet/10 feet flying

Proficiency Bonus: +2

Abilities: Strength +1 (12), Dexterity +2 (14), Constitution +0 (10), Intelligence +0 (10), Wisdom +0 (10), Charisma +0 (10)

Skills: Traverse

Attack: Rock drop (+4 ranged, 1d6 + 2 bludgeoning) or spear (+3 melee, reach, 1d6 + 1 piercing)

Secrets:

- **Tiny Tactics:** The mouse has advantage on an attack roll against a character if at least one ally is within five feet of the target and not Incapacitated.

MOUSE MARINE**(CR 1)****Defense:** 12 (hide armor)**Stamina Points:** 6**Speed:** 20 feet**Proficiency Bonus:** +2**Abilities:** Strength +1 (12), Dexterity +1 (12), Constitution +0 (10), Intelligence +0 (10), Wisdom +0 (10), Charisma +1 (12)**Skills:** Notice, Traverse**Attack:** Short sword (+3 melee, 1d6 + 1 slashing) or spear (+3 melee or ranged, reach, 1d6 + 1 piercing)**Secrets:**

- **Tiny Tactics:** The mouse has advantage on an attack roll against a character if at least one ally is within five feet of the target and not Incapacitated.

NAGAYAGA

The nagayaga claims to be the oldest cat there is, having long ago made a mystic pact to replace its lower torso with a strange snake-like appendage that keeps it bound to its subterranean lair. It jealously guards its secrets and collection of ancient artifacts, believing that no cat is worthy enough to possess the items promised to it by the Old Ones. When word of a new powerful device slips out into the monarchies, the nagayaga sends its etherkesh out to collect it and kill anyone that might keep the device from its ancient paws.

NAGAYAGA**(CR 9)****Defense:** 18 (mystic armor)**Stamina Points:** 90**Speed:** 40 feet/10 feet flying**Proficiency Bonus:** +5**Abilities:** Strength –1 (8), Dexterity –1 (8), Constitution –3 (4), Intelligence +2 (18), Wisdom +4 (18), Charisma +3 (16)**Skills:** Know History, Intimidate, Notice, Persuade, Traverse**Attack:** Elemental paws (+4 melee, 1d8 – 1 heat) or elemental ray (+4 ranged, 2d6 – 1 heat)**Secrets:**

- **Battle Frenzy:** The nagayaga may make an elemental paws and elemental ray attack with its action.
- **Master of Fear:** As a bonus action, the nagayaga may target an enemy with a Charisma check (+8) opposed by a Charisma saving throw. If the nagayaga is successful, the target suffers the Scared condition until the nagayaga uses this ability on a different target.
- **Elemental Master:** As a bonus action, the nagayaga may change the type of damage done by its elemental paws or elemental ray attack. Options include acid, cold, force, heat, lightning, necrotic, radiant, and thunder.
- **Mastermind:** As a bonus action, the nagayaga may target an ally with a Charisma check (+8). If the nagayaga is successful, the target gains advantage on their next attack, ability roll, or saving throw.
- **Adaptive Mystic:** When the nagayaga suffers damage from a spell, it may make an Intelligence saving throw against the spellcaster's saving throw difficulty. If it's successful, the nagayaga gains resistance to that type of damage until the end of the battle.

POLYHYDRA

This shimmering shape often appears as a pool of harmless liquid. When a cat foolishly walks into it, the polyhydra solidifies and traps the cat within itself. The shape it takes determines what sorts of attacks and defenses the creature uses to protect its lair. It drains the stamina of the cat inside to transform between these shapes. The sooner the cat's friends can defeat the polyhydra, the better off they will be when they are expelled, wet and slimy, from the creature's innards.

POLYHYDRA**(CR 2)****Defense:** 13 (gooey hide)**Stamina Points:** 32**Speed:** 40 feet**Proficiency Bonus:** +2**Abilities:** Strength +4 (18), Dexterity –3 (5), Constitution +4 (18), Intelligence nil (0), Wisdom –2 (6), Charisma –5 (1)**Attack:** Slam (+6 melee, 1d6 + 4 bludgeoning, reach five feet),

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Secrets: Immunity to Blind, Charm, Deaf, and Prone

- **Engulf:** The polyhydra may move through any occupied five-foot square if it has not engulfed anyone. Whatever occupies the square must make a difficulty 13 Dexterity saving throw. A successful saving throw allows the target to move five feet away from the polyhydra, and she is unable to be targeted by Engulf again this round. An unsuccessful saving throw means the target is engulfed by the polyhydra. The target is Paralyzed and remains inside the polyhydra until she can make a difficulty 13 Constitution saving throw on her turn.
- **Shape Shift:** As a bonus action, roll 1d6. The polyhydra shifts into the corresponding shape, gains the resistance listed, loses all other resistances, and forces any engulfed victim inside of it to make the corresponding saving throw.
 1. **Frozen Pyramid:** The polyhydra gains resistance to cold. The target makes a difficulty 13 Constitution saving throw. Failure indicates the target takes 1d8 cold damage.
 2. **Thunder Cube:** The polyhydra gains resistance to thunder. The target makes a difficulty 13 Wisdom saving throw. Failure indicates the target takes 1d8 thunder damage.
 3. **Heat Diamond:** The polyhydra gains resistance to heat. The target makes a difficulty 13 Constitution saving throw. Failure indicates the target takes 1d8 heat damage.

4. **Poisonous Sphere:** The polyhydra gains resistance to poison. The target makes a difficulty 13 Wisdom saving throw. Failure indicates the target takes 1d8 poison damage.
5. **Acidic Dodecahedron:** The polyhydra gains resistance to acid. The target makes a difficulty 13 Constitution saving throw. Failure indicates the target takes 1d8 acid damage.
6. **Icosahedron of Doom:** Reroll twice, giving the polyhydra both resistances and forcing the engulfed target to make both saving throws. Ignore this result if it comes up again this turn.

SMILODON'S SHADOW

It is said that while the monarch of Smilodon died, his shadow still lives on. The shadow pools out onto the wall, eventually forming a cat shape with a crowned head and a body that seems to shift into other creatures when viewed out of the corner of the eye. It spawns terrifying shadow felines that plague the lands of other animals (such as the dog kingdom of Pugmire), but saves its wrath for the cats who slew him with their own paws. Some cats believe this story as just a myth, but on cold nights when the wind winks out all the candles in the room at the same time, even they must confront the fear that Smilodon's shadow is real.

SMILODON'S SHADOW

(CR 9)

Defense: 19 (shadowy flesh)

Stamina Points: 108

Speed: 30 feet

Proficiency Bonus: +6

Abilities: Strength +3 (16), Dexterity +4 (18), Constitution +4 (10), Intelligence -3 (4), Wisdom +1 (12), Charisma +2 (14)

Skills: Spot, Search, Sneak, Survival

Attack: Freezing Touch (+9 melee, 2d10 + 3 cold), Shadow bolt (+10 ranged, 2d8 + 4 cold)

Secrets: Immunity to cold and slashing damage, weakness to radiant damage, Darkvision

- **Battle Frenzy:** Smilodon's shadow can make a freezing touch and shadow bolt attack with a single action.



POLYHYDRA – THRUMMYCAPS

- **Nightmares Made Real:** All characters within line of sight must succeed on a difficulty 16 Wisdom saving throw or become Scared for 2d6 rounds, tormented by horrifying visions of violence and bloodshed. Whether or not the saving throw is successful, an affected character is immune to the shadow's visions for 24 hours. Using this requires an action.
- **Shadow Blend:** In any condition of illumination other than full daylight, Smilodon's shadow can disappear into the shadows as a bonus action, making it effectively Invisible until its next turn. Artificial illumination does not negate this secret.
- **Smilodon's Darkest Secret:** If Smilodon's shadow is reduced to 0 stamina points, it transforms into a hideous half-cat, half-demon shadow beast with glowing yellow eyes. Smilodon's shadow regains all its stamina points and can attempt to freeze a target as a bonus action by looking at it – the target must make a Wisdom saving throw at difficulty 16 to avoid his gaze. If successful, the opponent is Paralyzed.

Sphinx

This large creature has the body of a cat, the wings of a bird, and an unusual, featureless head. The sphinx speaks with two voices, one that asks curious questions and one that answers questions asked of it.

Cats who know of the sphinx know of its unusual knowledge of the world. To ask the sphinx a question, the asker must first answer a riddle posed by the beast. If the answer to the riddle is incorrect or the speaker asks a question before answering a riddle, the sphinx attacks the offender to teach any companions the rules of its games.

SPHINX

(CR 10)

Defense: 20 (immortal hide)

Stamina Points: 140

Speed: 60 feet/30 feet flying

Proficiency Bonus: +6

Abilities: Strength +3 (16), Dexterity +0 (10), Constitution +4 (18), Intelligence +1 (12), Wisdom +2 (14), Charisma +0 (10)

Skills: Know History, Notice, Survival, Traverse

Attack: Massive claws (+9 melee, 3d10 + 3 slashing)

Secrets: Immunity to bludgeoning, slashing, and piercing attacks from non-masterwork weapons.

- **Battle Frenzy:** The Sphinx can make two claw attacks with a single action.
- **Inscrutable:** The Sphinx is immune to any effect that can sense emotions or read thoughts, including Wisdom checks to analyze the sphinx's behavior.



- **Horrific Roar:** Once per day, the sphinx emits a terrible roar. All who hear it must make difficulty 18 Wisdom check or become Scared until the sphinx leaves or is reduced to 0 stamina points.

THRUMMYCAPS

The twisted blooms known as thrummycaps lie dormant as large, brightly colored flowers and vines. They hide themselves in a strange fog that's several inches deep when they sense a meal is near, which pours out of the center of the flowers and quickly fills the air. It lures prey close with spinning, whirling blips of light within the fog and then unleashes a second cloud of a tasteless, odorless gas that puts the victim to sleep. Once the victim sinks into the strange cloud, the plant's tendrils and teeth tear the creature into pieces tiny enough to digest. Dispersing the fog often causes thrummycaps to flee and set up new nests elsewhere, but if the creature feels trapped it may stand its ground and fight.

THRUMMYCAPS

(CR 3)
Defense: 14 (tough hide)

Stamina Points: 140

Speed: 20 feet

Proficiency Bonus: +3

Abilities: Strength +3 (16), Dexterity +0 (10), Constitution +3 (16), Intelligence +0 (10), Wisdom +2 (14), Charisma +0 (10)

Skills: Notice

Attack: Bite (+6 melee, 3d10 + 3 slashing)

Secrets:

- **Distracting Swirl:** As a bonus action, the thrummycap emits a flurry of red lights that distract a target. The target must make a difficulty 13 Wisdom saving throw or become Confused until the end of their next turn.
- **Sleepy Cloud:** A 10-foot cloud of gas surrounds each thrummycap. Anyone moving through or into the cloud must make a difficulty 13 Constitution saving throw or become



BRYAN SYME

Stunned until the end of their next turn. A botch on this saving throw gives the target the Unconscious condition.

THUNDERBEAST

These giant beasts, according to some cat scholars, roamed the land before the time of Man. Their bony headplates, pale scaly skin, giant size, and vicious roars made them kings of the world until they were tamed by Man. Whether Man upgraded the thunderbeasts with metal skeletons and laser eyes or these traits naturally evolved after Man disappeared is the topic of heated debate in scholarly salons across the Monarchies of Mau.

THUNDERBEAST

(CR 3)

Defense: 15 (bony plates)

Stamina Points: 50

Speed: 50 feet

Proficiency Bonus: +3

Abilities: Strength +5 (20), Dexterity +0 (11), Constitution +5 (20), Intelligence –2 (4), Wisdom +0 (11), Charisma –3 (5)

Attack: Gore (+8 melee, 2d8 + 5 piercing)

Secrets: Resistant to bludgeoning and piercing damage, Darkvision

ZOMBIE

Occasionally, the spirits of the dead can reclaim their original bodies, whether through a mancer's spells or the machinations of the Unseen. Occasionally, some strange magic left behind by the Old Ones gets into the dead and animates them for bizarre and alien purposes. Whatever the method behind their resurrection, the walking dead are monstrosities that many adventurers face.

ZOMBIE

(CR 1)

Defense: 10

Stamina Points: 13

Speed: 20 feet

Proficiency Bonus: +2

Abilities: Strength +2 (15), Dexterity –1 (8), Constitution +5 (20), Intelligence –5 (1), Wisdom +0 (10), Charisma –5 (1)

Attack: Slam (+4 melee, 1d6 + 2 bludgeoning)

Secrets: Resistant to bludgeoning and piercing damage, Darkvision

MAKING MORE ENEMIES

There are more enemies, monsters, and opponents in the world of *Monarchies of Mau* than we can fit in one book. Here are some guidelines for a Guide to create more enemies to challenge the players.

STEP 1. CHOOSE A CONCEPT

What type of enemy is it? A frontline fighter? A skirmisher that strikes and then fades into the background? A leader that helps its minions? There are plenty of places to seek inspiration for a new enemy concept. Your favorite fiction is a good place to start, as is one of the many monster books released for other fantasy games.

STEP 2. CHOOSE CHALLENGE RATING

Challenge ratings run from 0 to 10. Challenge rating 0 is used for cannon fodder and other “disposable” enemies that are unlikely to be fatal, but are there to make things more difficult, whereas challenge rating 10 enemies are powerful entities that are likely to be the focus of an entire chronicle. The chart below illustrates the general areas of enemies' abilities within a challenge rating. Specific enemies may differ from what's presented in the chart – it's just a guideline. Making an enemy better than average in one area should also make it worse than average in another.

CR	PROFICIENCY BONUS	DEFENSE	ATTACK BONUS	DAMAGE PER TURN	SAVING THROW DIFFICULTY
0	+2	13 or less	+3 or less	0-8	13 or less
1	+2	13	+3	9-14	13
2	+2	13	+4	15-20	13
3	+3	13	+4	21-26	14
4	+3	14	+5	27-32	15
5	+4	15	+5	33-38	15
6	+4	15	+6	39-44	16
7	+5	15	+6	45-50	16
8	+5	16	+7	51-56	17
9	+6	16	+7	57-62	17
10	+6	17	+8	63-70	18

Step 3. Choose Abilities

All ability scores should equal 65 + the projected challenge rating. Ability scores range from 1-30 individually.

Step 4. Choose size

The size of the enemy determines its speed and stamina point base.

SIZE	STAMINA POINT BASE	SPEED
Tiny	4	10 feet
Small	6	20 feet
Medium	8	30 feet
Large	10	40 feet
Huge	12	50 feet
Gargantuan	20	60 feet

Step 5. Calculate Defense AND Stamina Points

Defense: If the enemy is unarmored, assume 10 + Dexterity modifier + any natural armor bonus (natural armor equal to the enemy's challenge rating is a good rough metric). Otherwise, as per armor aptitude secrets (pp. 77-78).

Stamina points: Add the stamina point base to the enemy's Constitution modifier. Multiply that total by the challenge rating of the enemy (or 1, if the challenge rating is 0).

Step 6. Calculate Attack Bonus AND Saving Throws

Attack bonus: The enemy's melee attack bonus is equal to its proficiency bonus plus its Strength modifier. The enemy's ranged attack bonus is equal to its proficiency bonus plus its Dexterity modifier.

Saving throw difficulty: Difficulties for any saving throws related to enemy abilities are equal to 8 plus the enemy's proficiency bonus plus the relevant ability modifier for the secret.

Step 7. Pick Skills AND Secrets

Pick appropriate skills. In addition, pick or create secrets for the character. Particularly powerful secrets might raise the effective challenge rating. A general guideline is one secret for every other challenge rating after 1.

OPTIONAL Rules

Mixing and matching enemies to challenge your players is fun, but some Guides like to get under the hood and customize their stories. Here are some rules for Guides that want epic battles where their players mow through dozens of enemies to show off their skills, as well as single enemies that can provide a challenge to good dogs all on their own.

MINIONS

Minions are smaller, less consequential versions of enemies. They're the large hordes of minor characters that get knocked out or dispatched

MAKING MORE ENEMIES

quickly. Five minions have the same number of stamina points as one regular version of the same enemy.

Instead of tracking damage against individual minions, all the stamina points of the mob of minions are tracked as a single number. As characters roll damage against minions, it decreases the pool, and excess damage to one minion is taken by another active minion in that same mob, even if the other targets aren't in attack range.

MINION EXAMPLE: ETHERWYRMS

Bridget decides when her players explore a lost Old One vessel, it will be infested with Etherkesh. Smaller bundles of wire called etherwyrms will also drop out of the ceiling and crawl out of the walls to further confuse and attack her cats. Each etherwurm has 11 stamina points and she plans to drop a few swarms whenever the cats are detected by the residents of the ship.

LEGENDARY ENEMIES

The Guide may decide to make a larger, more terrifying version of an enemy. These are called *legendary* enemies, as they are often found at the end of an adventure, manipulating the events (or minions!) seen earlier. Legendary enemies have twice or three times the number of stamina points, and deal twice or three times the damage when they attack.

Some legendary enemies also have special abilities or attacks that they can use once they reach certain stamina point amounts (such as at half or one-third the total). These are called *legendary ac-*

tions, and are often large, area-effect attacks, but can also be effects such as becoming resistant or immune to certain kinds of damage.

LEGENDARY EXAMPLE: THUNDERBEAST REX

Bridget decides she wants her players to discover the source of the thunderbeasts and face a giant version of one that she calls the Thunderbeast Rex. She considers it a legendary encounter, taking some inspiration from giant monster movies. She starts with the stats for a thunderbeast, but adjusts the size of the beast and then doubles his stamina points. She also changes the gore into a nasty bite attack, doubling the dice rolls when Rex chows down. Lastly, she decides to give him a legendary ability to make multiple attacks a turn due to its rage and pain.

Here's Bridget's creation in full:

Defense: 15

Stamina Points: 150

Speed: 60 feet

Proficiency Bonus: +3

Abilities: Strength +5 (20), Dexterity +0 (11), Constitution +5 (20), Intelligence -2 (4), Wisdom +0 (11), Charisma -3 (5)

Attack: Chomp (+8 melee, 4d8 + 5 piercing)

Secrets: Resistant to bludgeoning and piercing damage, Darkvision

- **Pain Frenzy:** The thunderbeast rex makes two chomp attacks with one action once it is below 75 stamina points.

All hail The Rat King!

"I *told* you that you should have let me do the talking," Blayze said, gently turning an inebriated cat with a deft touch of her paw. He staggered, confused for a moment, then wandered off into the smoky air of the Rusty Nail.

"It's not as though I said anything untoward," Malcolm grumbled. "I simply asked if she knew anything."

"And you looked as though you were going to launch yourself over the bar at her if you didn't like the answer," Blayze said, rolling her eyes. "Besides, I wouldn't be surprised if she made the whole thing up to be rid of you. My friend, if there's one thing I've learned in this life, it's that if you want to know what the mice are up to, you have to ask the mice." She nodded at a small table in the corner — three mice, all clutching mugs of frothing beer and speaking in low tones.

"Very well, take the lead," Malcolm said. "I'll watch the master at work." There was a quirk of his whiskers that many might read as irritation, but Blayze knew it was what passed for amusement on Malcolm's dour face.

The footpad strode over to the table with the confident unobtrusiveness of a cat who had spent her life mingling with the criminal element, but as she approached the table the three mice all went silent, stiffening and looking her over.

"Whaddaya want?" the largest of the three, which made him only a head shorter than Blayze, hissed.

"Easy, friend, easy," Blayze said, leaning on the table in a casual manner. "I'm in the same line of work as you."

"And what line of business would *that* be?" said the mouse, frowning his brows.

Blayze laughed. "Thievery, of course. What else? I happen to be an uncommonly good cutpurse, I'll have you know. And my friend here," she added, nodding over her shoulder at Malcolm, "he's more your garden-variety thug, but he means well, and he takes direction like a champ. Don't you?"

Malcolm said nothing, only shifted his gaze for a moment from the mouse to Blayze, and then back again. The mice shivered.

"You don't look much like a cutpurse," the big mouse said, somewhat chastened.

"If you want to cut a fine lady's purse strings, my friend, you must be able to get close enough to do it," Blayze said. "And even in this town, there's plenty of those. But there's one thing I *don't* have, and that's a fence, which is where *you* come in!" She smiled and leaned in. "Just let me know who's running the show around here. I can take it from there."

The big mouse snorted, and looked as though he was going to say something else, but Malcolm's steady gaze seemed to paralyze him. He looked away and took a hasty drink, his tail twitching. "You must be new in town, alright. Everyone around here knows Luka Berkshire runs this town. She's the Rat King, don't you know?" He raised his mug, and the others did the same. "All hail the Rat King!"



“The Rat King!” they said in unison, and drank.

“Luka Berkshire?” Blayze’s ears pricked up. “Well, that’s interesting. I suppose you know her well, then, a gentlemouse of your connections.”

“Oh, well, ah, you could say that,” the mouse said.

“Met her once,” one of his fellows piped up.

“Well, saw her,” the other said.

“Giving a speech, she was,” the first said.

“Oi, shut up, you two,” the big mouse hissed, backhanding one of the others, making him spill beer down the front of his threadbare shirt. Blayze was already leading Malcolm away.

“Did you hear that? Luka Berkshire, the Rat King,” Blayze said.

“I do believe the bartender told us that Kola Rump-White was the Rat King,” Malcolm said.

“Who are you going to trust about this, some cat whose only interaction with rodents is slinging flat beer in filthy mugs at them, or three actual real dyed-in-the-wool criminal mice?” Blayze said. “Trust me, I know how criminals work, and I’d bet every bit of plastic I have on this Luka Berkshire *actually* being the Rat King.”

“Mmmm.” Malcolm was silent for a moment. “You didn’t have to call me a thug, you know.”

“Oh, you know I didn’t mean that! You’re practically the least thuggish cat I know!” She clapped Malcolm on the shoulder and beamed up at him.



CHAPTER NINE: ALL HAIL THE RAT KING!

Aleksei Skaukatt von Cymric's life is falling apart, and in desperation he's made alliances he would never have dreamed of making otherwise, turning against his closest friends in the name of preserving his image (to say nothing of his finances). In the process, he's fomented chaos unknown since the War of Dogs and Cats, and started something that he will not be able to stop.

The rats of Mau, for their part, have their own plans – as do those who hide amongst them. In the tunnels of the Old Ones, deep below Strudniksburg, Aleksei's plans are coming together, and all he need do is eliminate one last obstacle – the adventurers that his well-meaning friend called in to clean what she doesn't know is his mess.

“All Hail the Rat King!” is an introductory story for first-level cats, such as the ready-to-play

characters provided starting on p. 33. Before the game, the Guide should take the time to read over the entire story. Any scenes and characters within can be updated or changed to better suit your characters and chronicle – after all, this is your game – so taking notes is a good idea.

Before the story is a brief section detailing the non-player **characters** central to the story. If you find you need statistics for a character that doesn't have any provided, you can use an appropriate example from the Enemies chapter beginning on p. 190.

The **synopsis** is a brief overview of the story, providing a bird's-eye view of the plot and how the scenes interrelate.

The **introduction** is designed to quickly get the player characters on board with the story and

CHARACTERS

informed about what's to come – without spoiling things, of course! If you need to modify the introduction to fit your chronicle, feel free. It helps for the players to not have a pounce-first-and-ask-questions-later attitude towards rats and mice, but isn't necessary.

The story itself is presented in **scenes**, which don't need to be run as written or even in the order they're presented. You can add scenes if it makes sense, change parts of them, or skip scenes entirely if your players find an unexpected way around them. Do whatever is necessary to help your game flow more smoothly.

CHARACTERS

These are some notes on all the significant non-player characters in the story.

THE RAT KINGS

Rats and mice occupy the same rung in both cat and dog society – which is to say, the lowest. With no home of their own, they live among (and frequently beneath) other peoples, favoring towns and cities which provide an opportunity to trade “shinies” for food, clothing, and other necessities of life. Some make their living at odd jobs, while others turn to crime to provide for themselves and their expansive families. Rats are tarred by this implied association with criminality, ultimately making it even harder for them to secure respect from their larger, more fortunate neighbors.

It is the intention of the Rat Kings to upend the status quo. They spread rumors in the shadows, legends of the Great Rat King returning from exile, attracting throngs of rodents with the promise of a better life, of a say in affairs, of *anything* as long as it's better than *this*. The trouble is that the Mau-raised rodents lack the temporal power of their cat neighbors, and so their schemes are often, by necessity, reliant on others. Perhaps it was inevitable that they'd find themselves being manipulated by more than one shadowy patron.

LUKA BERKSHIRE



Before she became a Rat King – and even now – Luka was a heavyweight in the local shinies racket in Strudniksburg, a town in the hinterlands of Cymric, near the border with Ko-

rat. She offered protection, smuggling, and even gambling to her fellow rats. She's always on the lookout for another way to bring more wealth into her organization, the most recent of which is the Cult of Labo Tor. She's the oldest of the three Rat Kings in Strudniksburg, and to hear her tell it, that makes her the *real* boss.

If necessary, use the Illuminated Bun-Sen (p. 196) for Luka.

MEEKA CHASE

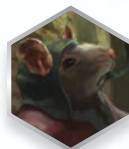


Small and younger than her fellows, Meeka makes up for it with a spirit and a will that has few rivals among her people. She is kind, especially to children – she calls herself

Rat King in the hopes of making a better world not just for her own, but for all generations of rodents to come. Her message is popular, and it's given her a larger following than the other two Rat Kings of Strudniksburg. She's a true believer, she'll never back down, and to hear her tell it, that makes her the *real* boss.

If necessary, use the Mouse Recruit (p. 204) for Meeka.

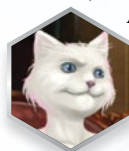
KOLA RUMP-WHITE



The peacemaker among the three, this middle-aged mouse has seen enough guard crackdowns to know that, Rat King or not, he doesn't want to be on the receiving end of one ever again. When he gathers rodents around, it's to organize, yes, but also to caution them – to keep them from criminality, from aggressive action, from anything that might provoke Mau into full-scale suppression of the Rat King movement. He's a little in over his head, and never expected to be as popular as he is, but he's keeping calm and pressing on despite it all, and to hear him tell it, that makes him the *real* boss.

If necessary, use the Mouse Recruit (p. 204) for Kola.

MAYOR MISTY VON MAU



A genial woman with perfectly coiffed fur, Misty is at home in any social situation, being it commiserating with the wealthy or appealing to the

common folk. She is known for making decisions and sticking to them without fail, and it usually works out for her — if only because she has friends in all the right places (and a few of the wrong ones, too).

If it comes that — and hopefully it won't! — use the statistics for a *Hired Killer* (p. 195) to represent Mayor Misty. She hasn't spent her entire life attending parties, after all.

Aleksei Skaukatt von Cymric



Tall, burly, and gifted with fur that artists can only dream of in oils and watercolors, Aleksei is a stoic cat known in the community for sound business dealings, charity, and — for his longtime friendship with Mayor Misty. Unfortunately, his business dealings aren't so sound as the community might be led to believe — in fact, he's overleveraged and deep in debt. He's concealed this from everyone, even his daughter, Harley, and has quietly reached out to the criminal element — Luka Berkshire in particular — in a desperate scheme to place himself in the office of Mayor. He's hoping the position will give him a chance to use his skill at forging a ledger to balance his debts with the community's taxes.

Aleksei Skaukatt von Cymric

Defense: 15

Stamina Points: 14

Speed: 30 feet

Proficiency Bonus: +2

Abilities: Strength +2 (14), Dexterity +0 (10), Constitution +1 (11), Intelligence +1 (12), Wisdom +1 (11), Charisma +1 (11)

Skills: Sneak, Intimidate, Traverse

Attacks: Concealed Blade (+5 melee, 1d6 + 3 piercing)

Secrets: Darkvision, Precise Attack

Harley Skaukatt von Cymric



Harley is Aleksei's young and somewhat rebellious daughter, who believes rodents should be integrated into cat society instead of simply being left to form a sprawling underclass. The Cult of Labo Tor (disguised as a

rodent organization calling itself the Pipers) takes her prisoner when they discover her associating with the Rat Kings.

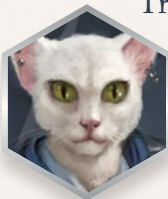
Use *Cocky Brawler* (p. 195) to represent Harley — while she's not as trained as her father, she's just as big as he is, and not nearly so old.

SYNOPSIS

The trailblazers are sent to Strudniksburg to help keep the peace in the wake of a massive rat immigration wave, at the request of Mayor Misty von Mau. The rats are being led by a mysterious and charismatic figure known as the Rat King (actually three rats using the same title), and have taken up residence in the ancient tunnels beneath Strudniksburg. The Rat Kings, and their attendant movement, are mainly centered on improving the lives of rats themselves (whether that be the individual Rat Kings themselves or their followers as a whole). Aleksei Skaukatt von Cymric has been conspiring with the Rat Kings to unseat Mayor Misty, with the aid of a cabal of strange rats who call themselves the Pipers: secretly, rodents from the Cult of Labo Tor in disguise!

INTRODUCTION

The party has been summoned by their Castellan, Mischa von Angora, and charged to investigate some strange actions in Strudniksburg — it seems the mayor sent a rather frantic letter to the Ruling Council, and the Dynast of House Cymric advocated that the trailblazers should investigate the situation. Mischa gives them a small, jewel-like bauble, a fix that will carry a short message from the holder to his ears before dissolving, to be used in case of emergencies.



Trailblazers may hail from a variety of backgrounds and serve a variety of interests (to say nothing of their own!), so managing group cohesion is essential for a smooth experience. The Guide may wish to provide a few sample origins for the

group, or ask the players to come up with a few ideas of their own — or, if she wants the group to be a disparate group of strangers, more or less, she might have them simply have been assigned by the trailblazers to the same Castellan. This story makes no presumptions about player loyalties or history.

SCENES

Below are the major scenes that make up this story. While they're numbered, they don't need to be presented in this order during the game itself. As long as the story keeps flowing, everything's fine!

SCENE 1:

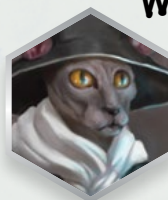
THE MAYORAL RESIDENCE

- How did the player characters get to this scene? From the directions of Castellan Mischa von Angora.
- What do the player characters need to accomplish in this scene? Meet Mayor Misty von Mau and Aleksei Skaukatt, and to learn what's transpired in Strudniksburg.
- Who or what is keeping them from accomplishing it? Aleksei's lies and Mayor Misty's negative feelings about rats.
- What scene or scenes should logically happen next? Scene 2: "The Rusty Nail"

The journey to the town is quiet enough, bar a bit of rain. You look forward to the mayor's invitation into her own home to explain the town's situation, hopefully with a nice fire. Once you enter the town, however, it's clear enough what the problem is. You see a rat or mouse on practically every corner — far more than in most other towns in Cymric.

After the streets of Strudniksburg — far more crowded than they were ever meant to be — the entryway of the mayoral residence is a breath of fresh air. Instead of the cobblestones and

sidewalk planks of the street, there are cool, perfectly set squares of polished stone beneath your feet, and beyond, in the house proper, floors of hardwood. Despite being finely and expensively appointed, it nonetheless feels open and welcoming, as if one might drop in on the mayor for catnip tea.



When you see a sidebar like that one, it means that it's meant to be read aloud. But you don't have to if you don't want to. If you feel more comfortable paraphrasing or improvising the content of the description or speech, go right ahead. They're just there to give you something to fall back on and to give you an idea of what the players need to know.

Cymric servants welcome the trailblazers into the mayoral residence and quickly usher them to a sitting room, where two cats sit waiting for them — Mayor Misty von Mau and Aleksei Skaukatt von Cymric. If the players attempt to wander, the servants will politely but firmly steer them back towards the sitting room — they especially won't allow anyone upstairs or into the kitchens.

THE SITTING ROOM

Three walls of the sitting room are lined with paintings and shelves full of books, and an impressive chandelier hangs from the ceiling. Three plush sofas surround a small, finely polished table — the open side faces a large fireplace, which pops and hisses quietly when the conversation lulls.

Two cats, both middle aged, share one of the sofas. Misty von Mau, the mayor, has a bright smile on her face that doesn't reach her eyes, and silky white fur that must take hours to brush; her dress is silk, stained with oranges and



reds to resemble the dawn. Next to her, Aleksei Skaukatt von Cymric makes her look positively tiny by comparison, both because of his sheer size and because of the mane of fur that sticks out wildly from his head and face, tapering out to fine points; he wears well-tailored trousers and a jacket that accommodates his voluminous coat.

When the party is announced, Mayor Misty will come to her feet, all smiles, and warmly greet each cat in turn. Her affection is entirely calculated, but it has the feel of habit rather than condescension. She'll introduce Aleksei Skaukatt, who is stoic, even dour, and responds to greetings with a nod and perhaps a soft grunt. When he does speak, it's in a deep, rumbly voice. The pleasantries concluded, she gets down to business.

The mayor offers you all a seat. She remains standing.

"No doubt you have some better understanding of our situation, now you've seen the state of our streets. Believe it or not, it's worse at night! Some streets, you take your life in your paws! Our guard is used to chasing off wild felines who stray into town or taking drunkards into custody so they don't cause trouble – and they haven't

the foggiest idea where the rats disappear to whenever they crack down on them. I hear of some sort of rodent whisper network known as the Pipers, but no one seems to know anything about them besides the name – they're far too good at hiding!

"But a team of trailblazers, ah, that's different! I have no doubt that individuals of your caliber will have not the slightest difficulty in discovering where these ruffians are hiding and driving them out of our town. With any luck, things will be back to normal before the month is out! I'm so thankful you're here, really and truly. Couldn't be more grateful!

"But, unfortunately, a mayor's work is never done, and with all these rats in town there's even more than usual to take care of, and so I must take my leave. Aleksei here has offered to answer any questions about the town you might have."

With this, she excuses herself, leaving the party alone with Aleksei and a few servants, standing unobtrusively just out of sight. Aleksei takes up the conversation, answering any questions the players may have about Strudniksburg. He will especially offer information about the Rusty Nail, a low-class bar in a lower-class neighborhood known as

Smoke Alley. The bar was a haven for criminals even before the rodents came along, and it's become known as their favorite watering hole. If he is asked whether anything lies under the town, his demeanor changes slightly.

Aleksei looks surprised, and twitches his whiskers. "By my ninth life, I hadn't considered that—but you're right. There are ancient tunnels down there, beneath even the sewers. But those are dangerous. Things of the Old Ones, you understand. The guard won't have anything to do with those tunnels, nor will anyone who wishes to avoid a particularly terrible death. I can't imagine the rats are down there, if even brave and upstanding cats decline to venture to such a place!"

Aleksei is lying, for he knows very well that the rats are in the tunnels — he suggested it to them as a hiding place. Characters may make a Wisdom check at difficulty 13 to sense that Aleksei is playing up the danger. A triumph on the roll allows a deeper reading — that he is being deliberately evasive. If they persist in questioning him about the tunnels, he will admit his mistruths, but obscure his true motives. He'll stick to this explanation hereafter, and absolutely will not tell the party where the tunnels can be accessed from.



There will be many opportunities throughout the story for players to roll checks against stated difficulties. You can adjust these numbers however best makes sense to you. Don't forget to remind your players about their skills — for example, this Wisdom check would certainly benefit from the Sense Motive skill.

Aleksei sighs. "I confess to a slight — slight! — exaggeration. Indeed, I myself have been in those tunnels, when I was younger and

a good deal more foolish. I consider it my responsibility to discourage young and ambitious cats from repeating my mistake. You may not be able to see them, but I assure you that I bear scars from the misadventure."

Once the players have exhausted their questions, Aleksei will offer to see them to the door and wish them luck.

SCENE 2: THE RUSTY NAIL

- **How did the player characters get to this scene?** They heard about the Rusty Nail from Aleksei Skaukatt, or discovered it on their own.
- **What do the player characters need to accomplish in this scene?** Find a lead on the rats and the tunnels under the city.
- **Who or what is keeping them from accomplishing it?** A rowdy bunch of ne'er-do-wells, cats and rats included.
- **What scene or scenes should logically happen next?** Scene 3: "The Hunt Begins"

Once the group walks into the Rusty Nail en masse, read the following.

The inside of the Rusty Nail is dark, lit only by a few lamps and candles on tables, but it doesn't quite hide the dinginess, the feeling that every surface is covered in an imperceptible but ineradicable veneer of dust, debris, or general filth.

If the trailblazers haven't made any preparations prior to coming to the bar, read the following.

When you walk in, all conversation ceases abruptly a moment later, as every head in the place — cat and rodent alike — turns to look at you. Then, the talk resumes, but quieter than before, and the denizens of the Rusty Nail keep throwing wary glances in your direction.

If any members of the party have the Criminal background, they may attempt to disguise the other characters or otherwise coach them on not sticking out in such a locale, making an Intelligence check at difficulty 12. Alternately, she

CHAPTER NINE: HAIL THE RAT KING

may simply present herself as the leader of the party, and trust her Criminal demeanor to assure others that her friends are “all right,” a difficulty 14 Charisma check. If successful, instead of the previous sidebar, read the following.

When you walk in, there’s a brief lull in the conversation as the locals glance at you, but they quickly go back to their business.

Color all interactions the characters have with non-player characters in the bar appropriately, depending on which avenue they take.

The patrons of the Rusty Nail are a diverse lot, with cats of all kinds as well as mice and even a dog or two. Most keep to their own, but there are a few tables where cat and mouse sit together, talking in hushed tones. In the back, a bar stretches along the wall, watched over by a grizzled-looking cat with a few earrings in one ear, which pull it just slightly out of symmetry with the other. One table has three mice, looking nervously at you.

The TABLES

If the players approach mice directly, read the following.

The mice, for the most part, seem to be occupying the darker corners of the Rusty Nail, either for privacy or to keep out of the way of cats. The three mice stiffen and hush up when you come near. All three wear clothes that only don’t qualify as rags by virtue of having been sewn together, and none of them look like they’re happy to see you.

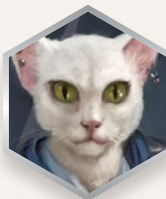
“Eh? Whaddaya want?” one of them grunts. Perhaps the leader, if the jaunty hat he clearly rescued from a rubbish pile is any indication.

When the group approaches, the mice will act aggressive and try to convince the party to leave the bar. They’re unwilling to talk about anything criminal unless a player makes a Wisdom check, difficulty 12, to convince the mice that they’re fellow cutpurses and thugs with business to offer. If successful, they’ll intimate that they might be willing to make introductions if given suitable assurances — in other words, they want

a bribe. On a triumph, they’ll take simple plastic; otherwise, they want “shinies,” objects of obvious value and luster.

Alternately, a difficulty 11 Strength or Charisma check will intimidate the mice into silence, and while they won’t admit to any specific criminal activities, they will affirm that they work (in a very nebulous sense) for one Luka Berkshire, the Rat King, and that they have friends among the Pipers. This bolsters their confidence somewhat. If pressed, they’ll say they’ve never actually spoken to Luka, but they will excitedly proclaim that they’ve seen her speak to a crowd.

Should the party express confusion about a female rat using the title “Rat King,” the rats fail to understand the nature of the question.



For an added bit of humor, every time someone says the words “rat king,” one of the mice will assume it’s a toast, raise their drink, and say “The Rat King!”

The BAR

If the players head for the bar, read the following.

The bartender looks up at you as you approach, with a dismissive look on her face. The older cat continues polishing a pint glass with a rag that, if anything, is making the glass dirtier.

The bartender, Alice, is an older cat with no tolerance for nonsense. If the party doesn’t order drinks, she’ll be visibly irritated that they’re wasting her time. She’s evasive about anything criminal, and refuses to name names. A Charisma check at difficulty 12 convinces her to open up a little, and if nothing else to be surprised that someone working in Strudniksburg hasn’t heard of the Rat King, Kola Rump-White.

"He's quiet, Kola is. Cautious. Never does anything without thinking it through twice. Three times, if he feels like it. I see his people in here, sometimes. More respectable-like, you could say. Suppose you could call him a gentlerat." She snickers.

If asked about the Pipers, she responds without needing to be convinced.

"You must be new in town. Pipers are rodents, organized-like. Always have an ear to the ground, lots of secrets, that sort of thing. Couldn't tell you anything more — they don't take kindly to cats snooping."

THE BATTLE OF THE BAR

When the party moves to leave the Rusty Nail, they're confronted by a small band of tough-looking rats, all armed, looking to teach the party a lesson for sticking their noses where they don't belong. Use the statistics below, and don't use more than one or two Rat Brawlers — fill out the rest, about as many as there are characters in the party, with Rat Thugs.

RAT BRAWLER

Defense: 12 (leather armor)

Stamina points: 9

Speed: 30 feet

Proficiency bonus: +2

Abilities: Strength +1 (12), Dexterity +0 (10), Constitution +1 (11), Intelligence -1 (9), Wisdom +2 (13), Charisma +1 (11)

Skills: Sneak

Attacks: Bite (+3 melee, 1d4 - 1 piercing), dagger (+3 melee or +2 ranged, 1d4 + 1 piercing)

Secrets:

- **Precise Attack:** Once per turn, the rat brawler can add 1d6 to a melee attack damage roll if she has advantage for any reason, or if an ally of the brawler is within five feet of the target.

RAT THUG

Defense: 11 (padded armor)

Stamina points: 6

Speed: 30 feet

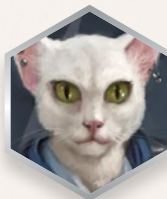
Proficiency bonus: +2

Abilities: Strength +1 (11), Dexterity +1 (12), Constitution +0 (10), Intelligence -2 (8), Wisdom +2 (13), Charisma +0 (10)

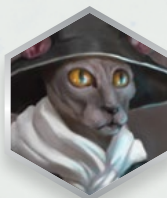
Skills: Sneak, Traverse

Attack: Dagger (+3 melee or ranged, 1d4 + 1 piercing)

Secrets: Double proficiency bonus on rolls using Sneak or Traverse



This is a low-stakes fight, and a great way for players new to the game to learn how the systems fit together in practice and get a little experience rolling dice. Encourage them to make use of the various options their characters have, and present situations that provide a perfect opportunity for them to do so. Part of being a Guide is helping your players get the most out of their characters!



When fights start in a bar like this, they usually spread quickly — which is great for a Guide who wants to provide lots of exciting set dressing for her game! Even if the players are only concerned with a few of the many rodents present, don't let them forget that this is a crowded, chaotic bar brawl.

SCENE 3: THE HUNT BEGINS

- How did the player characters get to this scene? Following rats from the Rusty Nail.



- **What do the player characters need to accomplish in this scene?** Find evidence that leads to the ancient tunnels beneath Strudniksburg.
- **Who or what is keeping them from accomplishing it?** The labyrinthine tunnels themselves, and the things that still live in isolated chambers.
- **What scene or scenes should logically happen next?** Scene 4: “Beneath Strudniksburg”

After the fight—regardless of how it comes out—any rats left standing break and run, even those who weren’t involved in the brawl. Make Notice checks for the party secretly, against difficulty 16. Any who succeed hear one of the rats hiss to another, “Quick, to the tunnels! The Pipers will hide us.” Additionally, a Wisdom check at difficulty 13 can be used to track the debris and any other evidence the rats left behind them as they skittered away through the alleys of Strudniksburg. Success on this check adds +1 to the player’s next check, +2 if they rolled a triumph.

The rats will be doing their best to shake any pursuit as they flee to their hideaways in the

tunnels. Smoke Alley is a dingy street full of dead ends, confusing turns, and unfriendly locals — there’s plenty of potential places for the players to search!

EMPTY STOREHOUSE

A storehouse stands empty — whether it’s moldy because it’s disused or disused because it’s moldy, who can tell? The stone tiles on the floor are cracked, and every so often the building shifts slightly in the wind, creaking. A few abandoned pallets and crates are littered about the place, and look as though they’ve been there for some time.

There’s nothing of interest to the chase in the storehouse. However, one of the crates does hold an unprimed Crystal of Recall (p. 188) along with a small quantity of stale catnip, apparently forgotten.

STABLE

A small stable, with no more than a few stalls and a loft for hay tucked behind a muddy fenced-in run, fills the street near it with the scent of grass and manure. The tack room,

SCENES

just inside the door, holds several saddles and smells strongly of leather. The horses inside are skittish, pawing at the floors of their stalls and whinnying loudly.

The stable hides a small trapdoor sewer access in the tack room, dating to before the stable's construction, hidden beneath a chest full of tools — a Wisdom check, difficulty 13, will reveal it. The stable workers, who know full well about the old sewer access, have been bribed by the rats to say nothing, but a Strength or Charisma check at difficulty 12 will convince them to loosen their tongues. They'll do their best to turn the party away, but a pair of young stable workers are not about to pick a fight with a party of trailblazers.

The trapdoor beneath the stable leads to Sewer Access B in Scene 4: "Beneath Strudniksburg."

ABANDONED HOUSE

An abandoned house is nestled just off the street, the entryway half hidden in an alley. The insides have been long since cleared of anything valuable, including some of the floorboards. The walls have been graffitied in a loose, unschooled paw, and while there are

many messages written here (some quite crude), a prevailing theme is commonly seen throughout: "All hail the Rat King!"

Rats have been squatting in these houses for some time — no roll is necessary to discern this, as it's obvious even to the untrained eye. What is not obvious is the hidden message in the graffiti, partially obscured in places by newer messages scrawled over it. With a Wisdom or Intelligence check, difficulty 13, the message can be decoded: "Seek us where flame dies." Players are encouraged to work it out for themselves, but if they're stumped, offer them a Wisdom check — whoever rolls higher wins the honor of "figuring out" the riddle. Flame dies, naturally, in the hearth, cold and disused as it is. A Dexterity or Wisdom check, difficulty 12, reveals that the base of the hearth is covering a hidden stairway — if a player examines the hearth on their own without solving the riddle, let them make the check.

Read the following if the hidden stairway has been revealed.

Beneath the hearth is a cramped tunnel, with stairs carved from the stone and the earth leading downwards. The sound of rushing



water can be heard coming from below, but it's too dark to see the bottom.

The hidden stairway leads to Sewer Access A in Scene 4: "Beneath Strudniksburg."

TANNERY

The stench of the tannery assaults your noses before you pick it out among the other buildings, toward the outskirts of the neighborhood. Dung, urine, and rot all compete for attention. Inside, the smell is somehow worse. Steam rises from vats where leftovers are being boiled down for glue.

The master tanner, whose fur is matted down on his extremities, stomps out to greet the party when they enter. "Are you the ones who chased off my apprentices?!"

Characters entering the tannery gain the Anomalous condition, which ends when they leave or go underground.

The tannery has been employing mice for some time for the more distasteful tasks of leather production. Those mice have, in turn, been leaving doors unlocked and windows unlatched, allowing other rodents to come and go through the sluicagate in the back, which leads to the sewers. The master tanner, unfortunately, is wholly unaware of this — all he knows is that every mouse in his employ vanished in the wink of an eye, leaving him in the lurch. A Charisma check at difficulty 12 or a Strength check at difficulty 13 convinces the master tanner to let the party into the actual tannery operation to search for the escaping rats.

The sluicagate in the back is still ajar, and obvious to anyone who enters. However, it's a steep drop-off to the sewers, and a Dexterity check at difficulty 12 is necessary to avoid slipping and falling. Failure deals 1d4 bludgeoning damage as the unfortunate cat slips, slides, and slams into the next sluicagate along the way, which overlooks the subterranean river that the sewers empty into. This is Sewer Access C in Scene 4: "Beneath Strudniksburg."

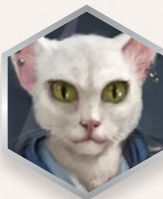
SCENE 4: BENEATH STRUDNIKSBURG

- How did the player characters get to this scene? By successfully tracking the runaway rats to one of the tunnels into the sewers.

- What do the player characters need to accomplish in this scene? Find the rats — especially their ringleader, the Rat King!
- Who or what is keeping them from accomplishing it? The labyrinthine nature of the tunnels, the creatures that have taken up residence in them, and of course the rats themselves.
- What scene or scenes should logically happen next? Scene 5: "Dawngate Barrow"



There are several different ways the party could arrive in the sewers of Strudniksburg, so make sure you start in the right room. Each has different challenges the party will have to overcome to progress, and different dangers along the way.



Aleksei wasn't kidding when he said the tunnels were dangerous, so I've gone ahead and numbered all the important rooms and passages to make it easier for you to find your way. Getting lost is the last thing you want down there!

(1) NORTH SEWER TUNNEL

A channel full of knee-deep water flows through the center of the sewer, with two walkways set into the brick walls at either side. Moss and mildew is everywhere. The sewer is dimly lit and curves gently, so the far ends aren't visible from the middle. A tunnel branches to



To Stable

Sewer Access A

Sewer Access B

Sewer Access C

2

1

Cavern

3

Sewers

4

5

Ancient Cache
7

6

8

Ancient pipes

Ancient Devices

9

Altar
10

To Dawngate
Barrow

11

ANCIENT TUNNELS

the west, and stairs lead up out of the sewers at the northernmost end of the tunnel.

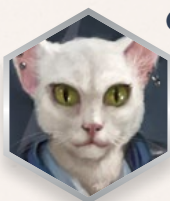
The north tunnel hides a rockfall trap in the ceiling. Characters should make a Wisdom or Dexterity saving throw at difficulty 10 when passing under it, with those that fail taking 1d6 + 2 bludgeoning damage.

The branching tunnel leads to the *north sewer branch* (2) and the main tunnel leads to the *main sewer* (4).

(2) NORTH SEWER BRANCH

This end of the sewer has very little walkway to speak of, and it's full of knee-high water and other, fouler things as well. Suddenly, with a terrific splash, three giant worms erupt from the water, their maws wide and hissing!

Three giant worms (p. 191) lurk here — an aquatic variety that, rather than tunneling, swims through the sewer water. The only exit leads to the *north sewer tunnel* (1).



Giant worms are a fearsome opponent, so if you have fewer than four cats in your party this fight will be a tough one. You might consider only sending out two giants worms in such a situation.

(3) SUBTERRANEAN RIVER CAVERN

A dark cave full of rushing water extends beyond the boundaries of what little light there is. Craggy rocks rise from the choppy surface of the water here and there, like jagged teeth in some great beast's jaw. Numerous sluiceways from the various branches of the sewer empty into this underground river.

The subterranean river cavern is large and may be approached from three separate directions:

from the tannery above, from the *main sewer* (4), and from the secret tunnel to the *gathering place* (6). The secret tunnel is hidden behind a sluiceway, and with a Wisdom check at difficulty 12, it becomes apparent that this secret tunnel is the only sluiceway water isn't flowing from. Edging along the cavern's walls requires a Dexterity check at difficulty 14. Characters that fail make a Dexterity saving throw at difficulty 12 to avoid smashing into one of the rocks below. If they fail, they take 1d6 bludgeoning damage. If they succeed, they only get wet.

(4) MAIN SEWER

The smaller tunnel widens out into a much larger one, where several other pipes all discharge their water. Down a short passage, a veritable waterfall can be seen, flowing into the same central pool as the north branch of the sewer, and all of it ultimately flowing in a torrent down an even larger tunnel.

The largest tunnel of the main sewer carries a tremendous amount of water out through the largest tunnel, which flows to a large sluiceway that dumps it out into the *subterranean river cavern* (3). The water flow in here is extremely strong, and any characters caught in the flow (or who waded into it) must make Strength checks against difficulty 14 or be carried away by the current. This sluiceway is locked, but can be dislodged with a Dexterity check at difficulty 12 or a Strength check at difficulty 14.

The waterfall at the end of the shorter tunnel hides a hidden door. Whoever rolls the highest on a Wisdom check discovers the door. This hidden door opens into the *central cavern* (5).

(5) CENTRAL CAVERN

This chamber was clearly carved by paw, and tool marks are visible on the walls, ceiling, and floor. Debris and refuse are scattered throughout the room, gathered into little piles here and there. The east side of the room is a massive pile of boxes, crates, sacks, and other containers, haphazardly stacked one on top of the other. To the south is a sturdy door, clearly assembled from debris and scavenged wood.

An open tunnel leads to the west, and voices can be heard coming from it.

The cavern has all the telltale signs of being lived in, albeit in a fashion no cat would voluntarily descend to. The pile of crates and boxes on the eastern wall hides a series of tunnels, one which leads into the *ancient cache* (7). A Wisdom or Intelligence check at difficulty 14 will reveal the truth.

The door to the south, which leads to the *ancient tunnels* (8), is locked, with a complex mechanism that requires a Dexterity check at difficulty 16 to unlock. With a triumph, it makes no sound when unlatched; otherwise, there's a loud metallic ping.

(6) GATHERING PLACE

The gathering place is a large chamber with a raised platform at the far southwest end, where Meeka Chase is speaking to her fellow rats. She is passionate about her cause and it shows in her voice. Her audience is 20 to 30 rats, and are generally non-aggressive. If the party acts aggressively, most will flee, but a few, including Meeka herself, will stay behind to delay the party so the rest can escape.

This part of the cave is much cleaner, and the hissing of voices is audible even from the tunnel. As you get closer, one voice predominates over the others — one rat is speaking to a crowd of rodents.

"For too long we have been cast aside! For too long we have been treated as lessers only because we must make our homes in the homes of others! Told we ask too much when we only wish to share! We ask and we ask and we ask to be treated as brothers, as sisters, by the cats, but never do we receive an answer! My friends, we must make our own answer!"

The crowd chitters excitedly, and a few begin a chant that the rest of the crowd quickly takes up. "All hail the Rat King!"

If the party shows itself and is not aggressive, the crowd quickly quiets down and backs away from them. Meeka, however, will speak to the party without fear.

The rat who was speaking to the others jumps down off the raised platform and marches toward you, unafraid.

"And I suppose you've come to give us what you expect are our just desserts, to take what little



we have from us?! Very well! I am Meeka Chase, the Rat King! Take me if you will, but another will rise in my stead! There has always been a Rat King! There will always be a Rat King! There must always be a Rat King!"

Meeka is certain that the party has come to wipe out the whole colony, and intends to sacrifice herself if need be to keep them safe – it wouldn't be the first time she and her family have had to flee aggressive cats. It's for this reason that they made their home in such a dangerous series of tunnels in the first place. If the party adopts a peaceful attitude, Meeka will warily welcome them, but make it clear that their presence makes the rats a bit uneasy.

"I've no quarrel with cats who've no quarrel with me – but you've intruded on our home, you know! And the Pipers do not take well to cats in any case. According to them, no cat can truly be a friend to rodentkind. In fact... well, I'm not certain I should be telling you this, but it's been sitting quite wrongly with me. Earlier today, another cat was down here. She's been a friend to us for some time, but when the Pipers heard about it, they insisted on – oh, how did they put it – 'removing the dangerous element.' I've never seen them so wrath. They're usually quite calm! They took Harley away, back into the big tunnels. Said she'd be fine, that they would let her go once they ensured she wouldn't speak – but she never would! And it's been hours and hours."

She trails off and shakes her head. "They've been so helpful – clearing out these tunnels for us, making connections with rats elsewhere – but if they're going to start sabotaging the organization, I have to wonder if their usefulness isn't at an end. I'd rather have one Harley than a dozen Pipers! Every cat that supports the cause makes it even more powerful!" There is a chorus of agreement from the assembled rodents – it looks like the Pipers are none too popular.

"What do you say? Are you with us? Drive out the Pipers, and I'll consider you a friend of all rodents!"

If they agree, Meeka gives the party the key to the wooden door in the central cavern (5).

(7) ANCIENT CACHE

This ancient room was carved in the shape of a perfect cube, save for the haphazard tunnel someone's dug into the western wall. To the south is a collapsed tunnel, utterly impassable. The entire room is limned in spiderwebs, some of which stretch across the entire chamber. There is a soft skittering from above.

A giant spider lives in this chamber – whether it found its way in before the tunnel collapsed or whether the ancients put the monster here, no one knows, but it's still here, and it's hungry. Anyone moving through the room must make a Dexterity check at difficulty 12 to avoid disturbing the webbing. Most of it isn't sticky, but it will alert the spider that prey has arrived, and it will immediately descend and attack. On a botch, the character stumbles into one of the sticky portions of the web – in addition to alerting the spider, she is trapped until she or another member of the party spends an action freeing her.

ENORMOUS SPIDER

Defense: 14 (chitinous exoskeleton)

Stamina Points: 42

Speed: 40 feet/20 feet climbing

Proficiency Bonus: +3

Abilities: Strength +2 (14), Dexterity +4 (18), Constitution +2 (14), Intelligence -3 (4), Wisdom +1 (12), Charisma +0 (10)

Skills: Balance, Sneak

Attack: Bite (+5 melee, 1d6 piercing + 1d4 poison), slam (+5 melee, 1d8 bludgeoning)

Secrets: Darkvision

- **Webbing:** If the enormous spider rolls a triumph on any attack roll, rather than doubling damage the target is webbed to the closest surface and has the condition Paralyzed until either she or an ally spends an action to free her.
- **Venom:** If the victim takes 2 or more points of poison damage from the bite of the enormous spider, she must make a Constitution saving throw against difficulty 14. If the throw fails, she gains the Sickly condition until the end of her next turn.

(8) ANCIENT TUNNELS

Unlike the cave, these tunnels are perfectly carved from the stone without a single tool mark. The smooth walls and floor rise to a vaulted ceiling, and every sound echoes down the tunnel and back again multiple times. There is a strange, oily smell in the air, like freshly maintained clockwork. To the west, down a short length of the tunnel, is a tall grating blocking the way – in the other directions, the tunnels fade to darkness.

The tunnels stretch off into the far distance, but are closed off before they go too far. One door is open, but only because the tunnel behind it has collapsed, sealing it off from this side – this tunnel would have led to the *ancient cache* (7). To the west, the tunnel leads into the *ancient hall* (9), and to the south lies an elevated *ancient altar* (10) overlooking that hall. Just beyond it is a sealed door blocking a tunnel that will eventually lead to Dawnsgate Barrow (11)

(9) ANCIENT HALL

The approach to the room is blocked by a heavy grating, with holes just large enough to put a paw through.

If the characters approach without stealth, or if they begin to attempt to open the grate, a cat appears quickly on the other side – this is Harley Skaukatt, who Meeka mentioned earlier. She also happens to be Alexsei Skaukatt's daughter.

"Oh, bless you for coming!" comes a voice from behind the grate. It belongs to a tall cat with wild, bushy fur and enormous paws. "I don't suppose it opens from that side? I've tried lifting it over and over but it just won't budge! Look!" She grabs the grate and strains, but only succeeds in shifting it slightly before it comes to a jarring halt.

The grating is very heavy, and any attempt to lift it finds it striking a heavy bolt. A Strength check at difficulty 15 will force the bolt, allowing the grating to rise. The mechanism behind the bolt is extremely complex, requiring a Dexterity or Intelligence check at difficulty 14 to trick it into opening. Other means of destroying the bolt, such

as an extremely hot flame, may also work, at Guide discretion.

Harley is desperate to escape, but will answer whatever questions the party wishes to ask of her. However, all she knows is that she was invited to meet with the rats in the tunnels, and was subsequently taken away by the Pipers when they emerged from the hidden tunnels. After that, her memory is hazy – the next thing she recalls is waking up in the ancient hall. Even after being imprisoned, though, she's still very much a believer in the Rat King cause, and is sure this is just a misunderstanding – she'll happily explain what she knows of the Pipers, if the players didn't get it from Meeka in the *central chamber* (5). If the characters have already dealt with the rats from the Cult of Labo Tor in the *ancient altar* (10) and tell Harley about them, she'll be shocked and appalled.

Straddling this enormous room is a trio of strange metallic structures, curved arches filled with pipes, ductwork, and other things of unknowable provenance. The floor is lined with gratings with trenches beneath them, and the smell of oil is overpowering. Above, high on the eastern wall, is a window, where moving figures can be dimly seen through the grime coating it and practically every surface in the room.

The ancient hall is a dead end, with the only entrance through the *ancient tunnels* (8).

(10) ANCIENT ALTAR

A narrow set of stairs cut through the wall of the tunnel, as immaculately engineered as everything else, leads up to a room where wide windows are smeared with decades of dirt and smoke. Along the window is an ancient altar, inclined at an angle and rising to waist level – 100 candles, their flickering light illuminating the chamber, line its top, dripping wax down its surface. Between you and the altar are two rats, their white robes stained and tattered at the edges. One, his red eyes wreathed with a mask of bleached fur, hisses to his fellow, "Look, brother! We are positively beset with fresh subjects! The Illuminated will be pleased with us! Praise the 100 Theories!"



The rats — two Wide-Eyed Observers and a Dissection Dissertator (p. 196) — waste no time in attacking the party. If the party has already rescued Harley, she joins in the fighting as a Cocky Brawler (p. 195). She has little formal training in combat, but plenty of strength to back up what she does have.

Once the party has dealt with the cultists, further examination of the room reveals a series of mechanical levers along the wall. These levers operate doors within the *ancient tunnels* (8), including the door to the *ancient hall* (9) and the door to the *tunnel to the south* (11), which leads to Dawngate Barrow.

SCENE 5: DAWNGATE BARROW

- **How did the player characters get to this scene?** By traveling through the ancient tunnels below Strudniksburg.
- **What do the player characters need to accomplish in this scene?** Learn that Aleksei is backing (and being taken advantage of by) the Pipers, who are secretly agents of the Cult of Labo Tor, and by Luka Berkshire, Rat King.

- **Who or what is keeping them from accomplishing it?** The hired thugs and cultists guarding the meeting.
- **What scene or scenes should logically happen next?** Scene 6: “The Parliament in the Pit”

(11) TUNNEL TO THE SOUTH

Beyond the now-open door, the tunnel stretches off into the darkness. The tunnel slowly shifts upward, and eventually terminates in a set of stairs that leads up into the open air amid bushes and shrubs, all overgrown. Nearby is an ancient wall emblazoned with the words of the ancients themselves. The air is thick with mist, and it’s difficult to see very far, but there is a gate in the wall very close by.

Any characters with Know Arcana can read the script of the Old Ones: It says “Dawngate.” If Harley is with the group, she can offer some context. If she is not, either because the party left her behind or told her to go back to stay with the rats, an Intelligence check at difficulty 12 reveals the same information — ancient cats buried their dead here, though all anyone’s ever found are ashes and

bone. The barrow is wreathed in a fog that never lifts, even in summer.

There are two ways into Dawngate Barrow – through the gate nearby, or over the wall, which is nearly twice the height of the average cat. A Strength check at difficulty 12 will suffice to climb the wall. Either way, read the following once characters have an unobstructed view of the other side.

Hidden in the thick mists are a series of thick pillars, spaced equidistantly, that rise some 10 feet into the air. Each is large enough that, if it was hollow, a cat could stand within one with arms outstretched. The surface of each pillar contains innumerable drawers, all locked, though some have been opened, revealing empty spaces within.

If any characters attempt to open other drawers, a Dexterity check at difficulty 15, they find urns filled with ash and bone within, and occasionally small trinkets. On a triumph, one of the trinkets within is a Flame Twig (p. 189).

Once the party enters Dawngate Barrow, make Wisdom checks on their behalf at difficulty 14. On a success, they can hear voices through the fog, the words reduced to a dull murmur, but on a triumph they can make out what is being said. These voices belong to Aleksei Skaukatt and more cultists. Luka speaks with a smooth, confident voice; the lead cultist speaks in a whisper, and cannot be heard from a distance.

As you advance through the fog, you hear voices ahead.

You recognize the first – Aleksei Skaukatt! “No, no, I warned them off. And in any event, even if they did enter the sewers and find the tunnels, your fellows down there ought to make quick work of them, yes? Come now, you called me all the way out here, Luka, let’s talk business – when will the tunnel be completed? These delays are intolerable!”

Another voice, that of a rat, pipes up. “Well maybe if you kept the guard off us, I wouldn’t have to pull my people from tunnel duty to start barfights, now would I? Aren’t you supposed to be all chummy with the mayor?”

Aleksei responds, “By the time she told me she’d sent for a band of trailblazers, the messenger was already too far away to catch! Have you forgotten

my Cymric name? I’ll not dive headlong into foolish and futile acts!”

If the characters approach, have them make Dexterity checks against an opposed Wisdom check (+1 for the conspirators). Apart from Aleksei and Luka, there are a pair of rough-looking cats with Aleksei (two Hired Killers, p. 195), and a pair of cultists flanking Luka (two Rat Brawlers, p. 221).

If the party openly confronts the group, Luka and Aleksei will each turn on the other, hurtling blame before ordering their toughs to stop the party. Luka will use her mental powers to force Aleksei down, giving him the Prone condition and making him easy to capture. Luka and her cultists will use the confusion to escape. If Harley is present, she’ll aid the party in the fighting, and Aleksei will call off his thugs for fear they’d hurt her.

Go to Scene 6: “The Parliament in the Pit.”



Be sure to provide evocative description when characters succeed and fail. The Barrow is a creepy place, full of obstacles and scenery to jump over or crash through. An exciting chase should never just be a series of dice rolls.

SCENE 6: THE PARLIAMENT IN THE PIT

- How did the player characters get to this scene? By learning the truth about Aleksei Skaukatt and the Pipers, and surviving the battle thereafter.
- What do the player characters need to accomplish in this scene? Return through the tunnels to Strudniksburg.
- Who or what is keeping them from accomplishing it? The two remaining Rat Kings, who are at an impasse over what to do in the wake of Luka’s betrayal.

- **What scene or scenes should logically happen next?** Scene 7: “Aleksi’s Ambitions Thwarted”

If she is with the party, Harley will inform the group that the quickest means of returning to Strudniksburg is through the tunnels. They can choose to go overland, but night is falling and the brush is very thick. If the party captured Aleksei, he’ll attempt to explain, in the process spilling the beans about his plot to remove the mayor from power, but Harley refuses to listen to anything he has to say. If the party left her with the rats, he’ll do so when the players return.

The tunnels are deserted, but the caves beyond are anything but — a raucous debate is taking place between Meeka Chase and Kola Rump-White, both Rat Kings, both determined to steer the cause in their direction.

As you pass through the echoing tunnels, the sound of voices slowly rises. By the time you reach the hole that leads to the rats’ caverns, it’s loud enough that you can make out words — Meeka Chase and a mouse are arguing.

Meeka says, “Kola, if anything, this intrusion proves that we have to be more open about what we’re doing! If the cats will even come into our own homes, there’s nowhere in their towns that’s safe! If they’re going to treat us this way, we need to stand up, fill the streets, and demand justice!”

The mouse — Kola — says, “If we do that, we’ll do nothing but convince them we’re a threat! We’ve got to take this carefully, Meeka, or we’re going to lose everything we’ve worked for!”

The argument cuts off as soon as the party enters the chamber. It’s crowded full of rats, but they make space for the party to pass. If the party tells the rodents about Luka joining the Cult of Labo Tor, there will be widespread dismay, and both Meeka and Kola will be quick to condemn Luka. If the party captured Aleksei, a good deal of abuse will be heaped upon him as well.

Meeka says, “This is terrible, absolutely terrible! To think we’d been infiltrated by those — those beasts!”

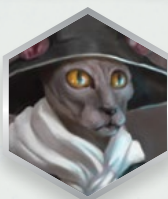
Kola nods solemnly. “In the light of this, we really must proceed with care.”

Meeka shakes her head. “No! In the light of

this, we need to be taken seriously more than ever! We need to be the kind of group the cult would never dare to associate themselves with!”

The argument resumes. The party can side with Meeka or Kola, though individual party members may well disagree with each other on the subject. If the party supports one or the other wholeheartedly, it turns the argument in that Rat King’s favor. If the party support neither Rat King, or disagree, the argument continues, even after they press on with Aleksei. Finally, if they try to evict the rodents, there’s little struggle; with multiple cats in their caves, there’s little will to protest or protect it. One of the rodents will show the players the quickest way to the secret door beneath the fireplace in the abandoned house — it’s the easiest (and least smelly) way out.

Regardless of how the party decides, the caverns will be abandoned by morning.



This is one of those moments that affect events far down in the line in a chronicle, so if your party

continues adventuring after this story, be sure to bring up the results of a pivotal moment they were present for! Don’t forget that whoever wins this argument — if anyone does! — the defeated party or parties aren’t going to go away, or necessarily change their minds; this will provide lots of fodder for drama down the line as the echoes of this event come back again and again.

SCENE 7: ALEKSEI’S AMBITIONS THWARTED

- How did the player characters get to this scene? By capturing Aleksei at Dawngate Barrow.

- **What do the player characters need to accomplish in this scene?** To convince Mayor or Misty of Aleksei's wrongdoing.
- **Who or what is keeping them from accomplishing it?** Her affection for Aleksei and Aleksei's dissembling and misdirection.
- **What scene or scenes should logically happen next?** Nothing – the adventure is over!

The party has had a thoroughly exhausting adventure, and it's late into the night when they return to the mayoral residence. Harley insists upon accompanying them – she's shamed by her father's dealings with the cult and Luka's criminal empire.

The servants open the door for you despite the late hour, though your appearance after two treks through the sewer gives them pause. The interior is dimly lit, but it isn't long before Mayor Misty comes downstairs in a dressing gown. "Oh my, Aleksei, what's happened to you? You all look rather the worse for wear. I'll have my servants bring you a change of clothes, but I want an explanation!"

Mayor Misty is exceptionally fond of Aleksei, and initially disbelieves the charges against him. However, the detail of the party's tale, plus the corroborating evidence given by Aleksei's own daughter, eventually convinces her that the entire story is true. She all but collapses into a chair.

"Oh Aleksei, I can't believe you'd be capable of all this. You always seemed so kind, but all this time, it was a lie? Something like this, it can't be overlooked. I'm afraid I'm going to have to ask you to stay here for a while, while I get to the bottom of this. I want messengers, ink, and paper! This letter is going out tonight!"

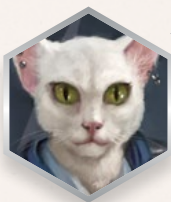
If the characters include the Rat Kings in their story, Mayor Misty is shocked she has not one but three Rat Kings in her town. Once Aleksei has been led away by servants (including his daughter, who intends to keep a watchful eye on him), she bids the party to sit. Depending upon the results of the

decisions the party made in Scene 6: "The Parliament in the Pit," this scene can end one of two ways.

- If the party drove the rats out of the tunnels, and presumably out of Strudniksburg, she thanks the party and assures that her house will remember the worthy deed in the future. She insists upon holding a dinner in the party's honor the following day, which will give the characters an opportunity to make connections with other local luminaries – from Misty, this is intended to be a gift.
- If the party sided with one Rat King or the other, or were divided amongst themselves, she thanks the party for bringing Aleksei and driving off the Cult of Labo Tor, but is upset that the rats are not only still below Strudniksburg, but are organizing and agitating each other to who-knows-what ends. Nonetheless, she credits the party with discovering the rats and passing the word to her. In the morning, she'll order the town guard into the tunnels to clear out the rats, but will find nothing but empty caverns.

"I'm sure this has been very trying for all of you. Please, stay the night – after a march through the sewers, a little luxury will do you good! We can discuss this further in the morning, but I think even now we can agree that this affair is best kept quiet. It wouldn't do for word to get out that the rat problem got as bad as it did here in Strudniksburg. It would reflect poorly on everyone, as would the business with Aleksei. Now don't worry, I'll see that he doesn't go unpunished, but making a public thing of it does no one, least of all you, any favors. I'm sure we agree?"

This adventure ends here – the party has made a potential ally in Mayor Misty, and may well have made connection with a pair of Rat Kings. However, they've also earned the enmity of Aleksei von Cymric, not to mention any in House Cymric who take offense at seeing the failure of one of their own dragged out into public.



A good Guide is always learning, so pay close attention to the things your players liked and the things they'd rather do differently next time. Don't take criticism personally — they're not telling you that you did a poor job, they're telling you where the game could be even better, and they're telling you that they trust you. Trust is hard-earned and easily lost, so listen up when your players have advice for you!

FUTURE STORIES

After this adventure is complete, there are several plot threads that the group might choose to pursue. They could dig deeper into Aleksei Skaukatt's ties to the Shadow Bloc, or for that matter try to find Aleksei after he flees Strudniksburg and goes into hiding. They could also be drawn into an ongoing fight to prevent the Cult of Labo Tor from establishing a foothold in the region — after all, where there's one, there's always more. Whether or not the party sided with the Rat Kings, the

cause will go on, and whether the party chooses to aid or oppose it provides fertile ground for storytelling. Each of these could be single adventures, or they might tie together. The Rat Kings are a useful instrument for both the Shadow Bloc and the Cult of Labo Tor, not to mention anyone else who cares to influence the rat population en masse.

Characters should gain a level for completing the adventure. Guide them through the advancement process, and make sure to ask your players what they enjoyed about the game.

KICKSTARTER BACKERS

CLOWDER OF MAU

Banjo and Noctis
Dan Wilson
David Tveraas
Elaine cu
Jens Alfke
Jere Manninen
Jim Ryan

Joyce Ann Garcia
from McAllen Texas
Leron Culbreath
Lotte
Luiza
Matt M McElroy
Mephisto

Mike McMullan
Miss KT
Nicole Wilkinson
Pepita y Ashley
Serenity Casas
Torradin341

William "Midnight Fox" Coleman

Michelle Webb
Millie Fajkiel
Tara Fly
William Craig

KITTEN

"Big Head" Zach Gaskins
"Elmo" Yönkuningas Benjamin
"Fluffy" Maya
"Mittens" Price
Aaron Potheccary
Abby and her People
Abigail Crittenden
Adam "Magus" Rogue
Adam Kanuchok
adumbratus
Alcethenecromancer
Alessandro Vario
Alethia
Alexander Krumbach
Alexis Lockwell
Alieria Carroll
Anastasia "Odd Eyes" von Angora
Andrea Migone
Andrew McGregor
Andrew McWhirter
Andrew Peregrine
Andrew Persaud
Andrew Rawlings
Andrew Rose
Andrew Wilson
Andy L
APinkFluffyDog
Arlo
Ash Walter
Asparigus "Gus" Brewer
B. E. Hollenbeck
Ben Bartell
Ben Perkins
BigBadGarou
Bilious "Exploding Frogs" Slick
Bill Bridges
Blackjack
Blaine Conner and his cat
Chicken
Blazmew
Blue, Blue II, and Fly
Bobbi Lutz
Boots, the General
Brendan Hutt
Brent A. Nellis
Brett Bowman

Bruce Paris
Brutus
Bryan Kennedy
Bunny Carlson
Cait Sidhe
Caitlin McKenney
Cali and Wiggs
Cameron "The Owl" McDowell
Cargo Manshark
Carlos Flores
Carol Darnell
Cecelyne
Celebrian
Celine E.
ChairKat Meow the 3rd
Choochoo
Chris Handforth
Chris Pramas
Chris Stewart
Chris Volcheck
Chris Wolfe
Christope Bellangeon
Christy Shaver
Clyde Lee Graham
Codruji & Soul
Cole F.
Colin Urbina
Contessa de Carabas
Coraline Tabby
Corey Elliott
Coru & Dollen
Craig Huber
Cyndi, Tigger, and Mittens
Magnusom
Daisy Mancillas
Dan Summers
Daniel Purrdy
Darien
Dave W. and his pup Bard
David E. Mumaw
David Fergman
David Paul & Alfador
Delilah
Digitalsocrates
Dmitry Petrov
Dot Tory
Drew Taylor

Dyno
E. Boecklin
Elaine "Chiga" Hinman-Sweeney
Ella Ragowsky
Ellie
Emily Lin
Erica Schoonmaker
Erich Eichner
Erwin Burema
Esme
Federico Pancin
Felix Adam
Fergus McCool
Finn & Poe Delamar
Fiona
Florian Hollauer
Flot Fishkins Kennedy
Fluff
Frank McCormick
Fritzi Schwartz
Genevieve cogm
Geoffrey Chaucer Pfeil
Gideon Kalve Jarvis
Gilbert Podell-Blume
Gizmo
Glenn Hardy
Graeme Lewis
Gre7g Luterman
Greg Atkinson
Gregory A Lusak
Gunnar Wright
Guy A. Burns
Guy Reece
Harley Quinn
Icarus, Turk, Olive, Montgomery,
& Wendy of the family Fidget
Ickle & Bean
Imran Inayat
Isis and Raven
Ivan the Blue
J. Linthicum
Jacob Thompson
Jake Mandel
Jame Scholl
James Bastian
James Knupp
James Mosingo

Jason Barker
Jason italiano
Jason Petry
Jason Vines
Jeremias
Jeremy Ryan
Jérôme "Khea" Devie
Jim Montgomery
Jinx Medder
Jinxy P. Johnson
Jizo Sia
Joanna and Desha O'Neil
Joe Edge
John C Barstow
John Veltman
Jonathan D. Harter
Jonathan Heitz
Jordan Etherington (and Riot)
Jordan Lennard
Jordi Rabionet
Jörg Fick and Isabell Düwel
Joshua Ayakatabby
Joshua Cameron
Joshua Edwards
Joshua Pluta
JThistle
Juliano de Miranda
Justin Delaney
Justin LaRue
Justin Scott
Karen & Brandon Ryan
Kevin Shinnors
Kirk Brownridge
Kitty Mont
L Sparkman
Lee Brewer
Leland Pierce Jr
Lelleh
Leonidas Martin
Lester Ward
Lilith Hariton
Link Hughes
lobachevsky
Loki Cat
Lola Cat-Face Meowmers
Luca Beltrami

MONARCHIES OF MAU

Lucky	Nyarlahotep	Stacy Forsythe	Audrey Seymour
Lucy Fur	Olive	Stefan Katzi	Belle, Cinder, Jessica, and Daniel Pitherin
Lyon Ramsey	Oliver Alfredo Ronaldo the First	Stefanone	Ben "Plucky Hero" Tresman
Malkin	Oliver, Vox and Kaar	Stentor Danielson	Blair Bell
Manhunt	Owen, Peter, and Wendy Weiss	Stephan Dante 121 Alomène	Brian Fine
Marc Collins	Ozzy Beck	Stephen Lewis	Button Button Miazga
Marco	Pablo Valcarcel Castro	Steve Lord	C. B. Ash
Marco Generoso	Pangoban Monroe	Stilldormant	Captain Fang!
Maria Cambone	Parker Cestaric	Stormy & Mist	Cat Forbes
Mark	Parlaient	Sunshine the Home-Finder	Catalina the Calico ccarreer
Mark Knewstubb	Patrick & Sarah Pilgrim	Sylvester of the Three-Legs	Ceres Snaggletooth
Mark Solino	Patrick Knowles & Tyler Lominack	Tabitha Baberini	Chad "Doomedpaladin" Middleton
Mark W Roy	Patrick Müller-Best	tanukisan	Charles Strange
Martin Supercat	Patusca	Tememn	Charlotte Satan
Martin Trudeau	Paul Hayes	Terry L Gilbert Jr	Chris Avery
Masyanya	Peregrine Dace	Tesla & Schrodinger Collum	Chris Blanchard
Matteo "Fairdragon" Palombelli	Peter Gates	The Awesome Goliath	Christmas, Disco, Max, Billy, & Houston
Matthew Hedge	Phil Hattie	The Evil Dr Homey	Cleo
Matthew R. Martinez	Philippe Devillé	The Sir Himself	Coalhouse
Matthew Rewis	Piper	The Wrecking Crew	Cody Holden
Matthew Swinburne	Princess Grace Von Fussenstein	Thiago Fazolari Meyer	Colin Jessup
Max Christy	Princess Miri	Thomasina and the Boys	Daggothus
Maxime Lemaire	Pumpkin Ginger Von Mau	Thoth and Osiris	Dale Hirt
Megan Wiseman and Pixie (RIP)	Qin-Qin and Ai-Ai	Thoth and Osiris	Dan Perrine
Mephit James	Quinn Adams	Tim Mitchell	Dane "Noctis" Madsen
Mercury Courington	Quinn Jean	Timex Karpolorich	DarleyFarlig
Merlin the Merciful, Who Dried the Tears Of the Old Ones.	Randy Allen	Toby	David "Draca" Rose
Mewgle von Kupo d' Maine	Ranma & Tigger	Tomm Svensson	David Ginsburg w/ Tales from the Fandom Podcast
Mewz	Richard Baldwin	Tommie Boatwright	David Lucardie
Michael Cantin	Richard Pleyer	Trenton Vartabedian	Dirk Rugged
Michael McAvoy	Richard Wilson	V Husson	Domineaux the Blessed
Michael Pruitt	Robert "Luca" Tu	Vicky D. and Nikos Ts.	Dominic Zucco
Mici Litvan	Robin Powell	Volke - Alex Borromeo	Doyle
Mikailos	Rocket	W. Robert "Mynex" Reed III	DracoDruid
Mike mon	Rocky and Alice	Waffles	Duke
Mike Spector	Roll Polls	Walter Setzer, the tuxedo cat	Dukes of URL
Mike Zwick	Ron Searcy	Warr Byrd	Dustin Rector
Misu	Ross Chongson	Weltwandler	Eðvarð Arnór Sigurðsson
Moni	Russell Ventimeglia	William Heffer	Elizabeth Sawyer
Moorka	Ryan McWilliams	Wisebrook Elliott Ness	Enkufka the Lovely Fox
Morpheus and Pita	Ryan Walker	Wyss	evilhomer10
Mr Tibbs	Ryan-O, Lord of the Thunderbats	Yarr & Prince	FelTK
Murphy	Sammi	Zeven	Frankie von Rex
Nabi the Korean Short hair (Dani Jang)	Scarlett Norwig	Zhivko Yakimov	Fränky Geyer
Nadav Ben Dov	Scott C	A. W. W. Wollknäuel	Friskers Perkins
Naga	Scott Kelley Ernest	Adam Daniel-Wayman	George Chao
Naughty Nymph	Sean and Cheyanne Lovellette	Adam Marrow	Golden Dragoness
Neil Coles	Sean Leffler	Alan Albano	Griffon
Nergatar	Ser Daveid of Davie	Alasdair Rennie	H. Rasmussen
Nicholas A. Tan	Seth Klein	Alex	Hayley E Smith
Nicholas Pilon & Sasha Dillman	Shaye Alsatian	Alex Villemure	I am allergic to cats
Nick W.	Shery R. Hayes	Amra Conanson	Irey
Nicola Went	Silver Ziauddin	Amy Veeres	Isn0th
Nicole Mezzasalma	Silvio Herrera Gea	Andrija Popovic	Ivo Goudzwaard
Noah Mecham	Skye Spade	Angus Abranson	James Stephens
Noddy	Smudge	Anthony Bolan	
Noodle (secretly a Shih Tzu)	Snickers & Watson	Arthur Adams	
	Sooty	Ashran Firebrand	
	Spike	Astoril	

KICKSTARTER BACKERS

jamie
 Jani Rounds
 Jared Rascher
 Jared Tinker and
 Finnegan the Maine Coon.
 Jason & Luna Ambrose
 Jason C Marshall
 Jason Ramboz
 Jaume Barallat
 Jayne Fett Malone I
 Jeff Kramer
 Jeffrey Hathorn
 jeremy "quire" Pignat
 Jess Hartley
 Jesse Rosen
 Jezbot
 Jimmy "evilblade" Rodrigue
 Joerg Sterner
 John "Lord Shadowcat" Ickes
 John Wancho
 Jona Littler
 Jonathan Spira
 Jordan White
 Joseph Virnig
 Kaela Woolsey
 Kansas, Caleb, and Urd
 Karl de Vries
 Katie
 Kelly Keimer
 Kika Asylum
 Killrog
 Kody Atkinson
 Kristian Mjaum Pettersen
 Kyle P Cinelli
 Kylie Alvear
 Lachlan Atcliffe
 Ladies Moon & Wobbly Boots

Lance LeDuc
 Lester Frederick Scar
 von Kittenstein
 Letterio Mammoliti
 Logan Wyrn
 Lord Faust
 Luna from Thai
 Madelyn C
 Maki the Witch
 Malcolm Jackson
 Marc-Andre Perreault
 Mark & Miriam Rae
 Mark Carter
 Mark R. Lesniewski
 Mats "Xats" Dahlström
 Matthew Brooks
 Matthew Earlywine
 Melani Weber
 Meriwether
 Mia 'Bunni' Duff
 Michael Beck
 Michael De Rosa
 Mini Agnew
 Mischief Hood
 Miss Kitty
 Montgomery Xavier
 Mor Meshulam
 My buddy Narco RIP
 Nathan G
 Nathan K.
 Nebel Reyn
 Neeko
 Nekko Midnite Rocky
 Nico
 Nicolas April Dufour
 Nicole & Cannon Benson
 Ohsoe & Moe

Oliver Briese
 Onyxia
 Oreo
 Paolo Biggio
 Patches
 Patrice Mermoud
 Patrick & Samantha Harris
 Pazuzu
 Peter Mazzeo
 Poncho
 RabidSouthernCrossFan
 Rachael Hixon
 Rafe Richards
 Randy Heathcoe
 Ria MacCaskill
 Rich Warren
 Rob Bessey
 Robert DeBroeck
 Rochiel Silverfire
 Rrok Anrolle
 Ryan Elliott
 Ryan Kent
 Ryan W. Taylor
 Ryan Wolf
 Sanguinus Shibolet
 Sarah Titus
 Scout and Stormy Betts
 Sean O'Neill
 Shi-Hung Chen
 Silver Goldie
 Sir Hamish the Insistant
 Sloopy Jones
 Sophie
 Stacie Winters
 Star Eagle
 Stephen Giles
 Stolichnaya Monkeypants

Stormageddon Mayzes
 Su alteza peludísima
 señor don gato Zorbas I
 Sunny Labridorius
 tavernbman
 Taz West-Arnold
 Thaddeus Carey
 Thayne Blake
 The Ben Hatton
 The Fat Cat of Mau
 The McEwen Family
 The Rev. Martin A. Milne
 & Andretti
 The Roach
 The Talkbox Podcast
 thelibrarycat
 Tiger the Tomcat
 Tim Burr
 Tim Rudloff
 Titan
 Tom Ladegard
 Tony Ferrannini
 Trey Mercer
 Troubles Van Every
 Vishal Murthy
 Vivienne
 Weston Hughes
 Wheezer and Cleo Feig
 William Guyaux
 WTP
 Xavier Spinat
 Yara Ohrt
 Zac Robertson
 Zach Theis
 Zampano
 Zork

BEST CAT

(\$) stephendann

@Panzix

Aaron J. Schrader
 Achilles
 Adam
 Adam Debus
 Adam Hanson
 Adam Kutter
 Adam Pecar
 Adam van Breen
 Adam Whitcomb
 Adela Mugres
 Aggie Montgomery
 Ahrtimmer
 Ailish Brundage
 Akari Surma
 Aleister LaFountain
 Alex Gagnon

Alex Gutierrez
 Alex the Cat
 Alexander "Xan" Kashev
 Alexander Chimento
 Alexie_D
 Alexis "poetfox" Long
 Alice, Olamina & Piper Welser
 Allan Bray
 Amanda Green's Roy & Hughes
 Amber Grace (Williams)
 Ambrosius Buchanan
 Jones Esquire
 Amelia Calico von Thomding
 Amy Vorpahl
 Andara Shadowfang
 Andrew and Monica Marlowe
 Andrew Benn
 Andrew DeLorenzo
 Andrew Hislop

Andrew Whitby
 Andy Blanchard
 Andy Zeiner
 Angel the White
 Apollo Moore
 Apollo Two-Fang
 Apollo Wright
 Aressel
 Artemis Collins
 Asher Holy & Kael
 Ashes Hubbard
 Ashitonka
 Ashley & Jack the Cat
 Astro the Vicious
 Aximili-Esgarrouth-Isthill
 Bailey Waltodoni von Rodoni
 Bandit
 Barbarella
 Ben "Damocles Thread" Walker

Ben Hutchings
 (and Madison Staffordshire)
 Ben McCracken
 Benjamin L. Liew
 Blarghedy
 Bob Ferry
 Bootsie
 Brad D. Kane
 Bradford Elliott
 Brandon Gehringer
 Brandon Stalnaker
 Bri Starr aka Caticorn
 Brian Griffith
 Brian H. Wilson
 Brian Misamore
 Brindle
 Bruno Pereira
 Bryan 'Darnivar' Bailey
 Bryan Kern

MONARCHIES OF MAU

Bryce Percy	Daniel Desserich	Franco Superman Dodd	Jarlath Ciardha
Bubbles Smith	Daniel Flood	Fred and Victor	Jason "Monster" Incauskis
Bubby Ridens	Danielle Harper	Frederik aka "Mulle"	Jason Ho
C Canadian	Daphne & Lady Boots Denton	Froggy the Bow-Legged	Jason Shuey
Caleb the Monogamy Cat	Darcey W.	Gabriel Miller	Jasper and Luke
Callum Roper	Darkshifter	Galaxy Baldbelly	Jayna Pavlin
Camilla Chalcraft	David Doucey	Gary "Pezz" Hicks	Jean-François Dufresne
Cap'n Kyrie	David Duncan	Gata	Jeddy Kight
Captain Chardonnay	David Horton	Gazmer	Jeff Painter II
Carolyn Neumann	David N Dow	GCR	Jeff Scifert
Casper & Ringo Grim	David Wild	Gelstomina	Jeff Tressler
Cassy Shaw	Dawn Hammett	General Kittimar	Jeffrey Fowler
Cate Crowley	Dead Gamers Society	Geoffrey (Jetstream) Walter	Jeffrey Taylor
Catoichi	Delilah Ford	Geordi, Dexxy, and Spot Koenig	Jen Kuipers
Cats Drool!	Delilah Pinder	George Stefanowich	Jenevieve "Tasha" DeFer
Chad Justice (for bright-eyes)	Derek Guder	Goonygoon	Jennell Jaquays
Charles Shropshire	Derek Knutsen-Frey	Gorelli	Jeremy Kostiew
Charles Wulff, MD	Derek the Bard (and Kit-Kat)	Greg & Sorbet	Jerry J. Chubb
Chase M. Walker	Dewey Ross	Greg Moritz	Jesse Burcar
Cheryl Calico	Dirty Hairy	Gregg Marshall	Jesse Morgan
Chief	Donde & Baño Rakitjak	Griffin D. Morgan	Jesse Thacker
Chris Chambers	Doug B	Gustopher A. McQuiston	Jim Austerman
Chris Greene	Dougal Scott	H Alexander Perez	Jim Fisher
Chris Hartford	Douglas Peacocke	Hachi Cranford	Jim Terwilliger
Chris K. Cook	Dovah, my little dragon.	Halfbeard the pirate	Joan Anonical Sartori
Chris Larrabee	Dr. Donald A. Turner	Harvey Dent	Joe Rixman and Miranda T. Van
Chris Mobberley	Dr. J	Henning "Auglim" Elfwerking	Joe Snedden
Chris Sears	Draco Hunter Pavel	Her Majesty	John A. Cohen
Chris Slazinski	Drew Hallum	Queen Lee Lee of House Moore	John and Melissa Shaw
Christian Lindke	Drew Humberd	Hickman polydactyl	John Lambert
Christopher Pelletier	Drunken Oracle	High Charity	John Morel
Christopher Shields	Dufflepud	Hiryu, Kitsune Legend	John Wick
Cindy, Alex, Samson, Rambo, Buffy, Muse, Casper, Caesar, Cubs, Kitkat, Achilles, Gabriel, Luna, Jupiter, Samuel, and Shy Parsons	Ed Reinhardt	Honeybun Pogue	Jose Luis Perez Zapata
Claribell & Rosalind	Edward MacGregor	Huevos' servant anpu	Josephine "Pookins" Lord
Cleopatra, Queen of the Cheese Whisperers	Edward Monical-Vuylsteke	Ian "Thunder Cats HO" Sargeant	Josh Brock
Clint Hauser	Elmosservant	Ian A. A. Watson (and all my cats past and future)	Joshua Benjamin (Artimus)
Clint Williams	Emery Goss	Ian C.C. Pachomius Kellam	Joshua Machonga
Clyde O'Kitty	Emily Ott	Ignatius Montenegro	Justin Foster
Cody Landis	Emily S.	Illiad Smith-Glauner	Justin White
Colin Wixted	Endre Linea	In memory of Lilly Bogue	Kafzeil Harkonnen
Count Davé Blancvipere	Eric Mauer	In Memory of Prince Nog and Princess Pris.	Kali and Marc Anthony Peiffer
Cripps Clan	Erik Sieurin	India Opal Tabby von Mau	Kallisto Tortie von Korat & Adonis Flamepoint von Rex
Crow	Erin Ratelle	Irian	Kate Bullock and Gizmo
Cupcake	Esben Mølgaard	Ivan Van Norman - Sir Albert Corgi	KedMo
D. Claude Kitty	Esben Sonne	J Thornburgh	Keith Ernesto Ingram Simanca
D. Cobb	Esterita Rosiana	J.C. Hutchins	Kepler
D. Hunter Phillips	Etienne Olieu	Jack & Oskar	Kevin "Shitty Kitty" Warmerdam
Dale Pahls	Evan "Cenobite" Johnston	Jack Gulick	Kevin Ennis
Dame Gir von Meowington	Evan Sala	Jade Wallace	Kevin Pope
Damien C.	Eve "Evelyn" Smith	Jae and Osiris	Khaleesi Hobbs
Dan "Dioxie" & Max "Carver"	Ezra & Lori	James "Squeaker and Zuzu" Foster	Kiki, Kiba & Bear
Dan "Sandwich" Adams	Falafel, Duchess of KB	Jamie and Jonathan Gilmour	Kincsem Toth
Dan Proctor	Falka Saovine	Jamie Manley	Kirt "Suki Spirit" Dankmyer
Daniel "He Who Hunts The Moon" Weber	Felicity "Fifi" Rogers	Jared Fattmann	Kitiara and Claudius Lewis
	Felix	Jared Koon	Kittichai Sobel
	Finning	Jargogle Bamboozle	Kitty McFlufficans
	Flint Olsen		Kjatar Tavishen
	For my son David and his cat Sammy		Kotche Cats

KICKSTARTER BACKERS

Kote the Conniving
 Kurt Fastiggi
 Kvitebjørn Kong Valemon
 Kyle Wiley
 (and Noob Saibot the cat)
 Kythera and Jackson
 Lady Maira of Tunt
 Lane Carman
 Lapsus Linguae, in memoriam
 Laura Dasnoit
 Lauren Peterson
 Lawjick & Rigby
 Layne Cosmo Barton Delp
 Lee Davis-Thalbourne
 Lee Rosenbaum
 Leo Byrne Jenicek
 Leonard G
 Leslie Dancye VonBeerstein
 Lewis Davies
 Liam Meowry
 Liliana
 Liliith G.N. Matriarch
 Lily Cat Prowl
 Lily Liaw
 Little Miss Valanth
 Lizz Rushing
 Load Protector
 Puckington Von Sigglesticks III
 Lock Watson
 Loki & Ramses
 Looie von Loaf
 Lorcan Mullally
 Lord Beerus Tyrion Von Legato
 Lord Uraxys
 Loren and Brandi Small
 Lorenzo Bandieri & Giulia Duranti
 Lorgenz Valcatta
 Lucas Cooperberg
 Lucas Greene
 LUCHO CASTRO
 Lucky Kitty Sass
 Luke 'Mechafox' Giesemann
 lusciouspear
 Magnavox Cantori and Robinson
 Livingston Crusoe Redman
 Malice A. Bengal
 Mallorie Siano
 Manager of "Reaching Moon"
 Marc Seidel
 Marius B
 Mark Coutu
 Mark Ferguson
 Marshall Smith
 Marshmallow the Ancient One
 Martin Greening
 Marty the Wise
 Matiukas
 Matron Blackpaw of Clan Quigg
 Matt Duggan
 Matt H
 Matt Hirth
 Matthew & Elizabeth Parmeter
 Matthew K Galloway
 Max
 Max Bertso
 Max Herzl-Betz
 Max Vaillancourt
 Meatsock Tiberius Chance
 Megan Hoffman
 Mello & Stephanie
 Memnoch
 Mercury Baker
 Merry Palin
 Mesa
 Mia McDermott
 Mia, Worf, Jadzia,
 Kurn and Odo Oestrich
 Michael Buchheim
 Michael Bukraba
 Michael Cieslak
 Michael Laitinen
 Michael Stevens
 Midnight(mare)
 Mike Shema
 Miki McGuckin
 Miki the Dog slayer
 Miko Meowflinger
 Minerva Dummy Fuzzbutt
 Miracle, Peggy, and Dottie.
 Miss Chevious Botz
 Mister, Scaredy Cat
 Mochi Pug
 Mogli
 Monsieur Mustache
 Montague Contento,
 Prince of Cats
 Morgana Von Stucker
 Mowgli
 Mr. Fluffekins
 Mr. Thirty-Sixer
 Neko and Nezumi Mahadeo
 Nels Fishdinner Benson
 Nermal Gregoire
 Nette Edge, Azumi & Mikasa
 Nicholas Stylianou
 Nick Barnett
 Nick Fallstar
 Nicole Porter
 Nimbus
 Ninja, miniature
 black house-bear
 Nyght Panthyr
 Oddie
 Odin Urven
 Odysseus and
 Voldemora Holland
 Ogre & Faust
 Oliver Lucero
 Orca
 Otto
 Ozymandias
 Pablo "Hersho" Dominguez
 Pascale McDuff
 Patches
 Patrick & Puppy
 Patrick McMullin
 Paul Lukianchuk
 Paul 'Polly' Stephenson
 Paul Thompson
 Peanut
 Penny Horne
 Pete and Jennifer Apple
 Pete Houtekier
 Peter Troia
 Phantom and Arya Diva
 Phantom Botterill
 Phil Ward
 Phineas
 Phoenix Gravin
 PickleTheCat
 Pirate Somogyi
 Pixel, James and Sheila Davis
 PlagueRat
 pookie
 Poppy Locke
 Preston Lee Bobo
 Princess Mia Tillmam
 Princess Wren
 Pudge
 Puffball Conley
 Purrsephanie the
 Ma'am of House Smallwood
 Queen Parma I
 Quinn Turner
 Quinton P. Kittycat
 R. Derek Pattison, in memory
 of Zeke, Phoebe, Mel & Lana
 R. L. King
 Raina Wolfe, servant to
 Thalestris von Empyreal
 Raphael Bressel
 Raymond M Slover Jr
 Richard C Plemons
 Rick James Short
 Rizza, Lady Blackfur
 Rob Abrazado
 Rob Andre
 Rob Doss
 Rob Lowry
 Robert Bass
 Robert C Miller III
 Robert Gilson
 Robert Maxwell
 Robert Newman
 Robert Poulin
 Roger Semerad
 Romana Herold
 ron beck
 Ron Oakes
 Ron Schmidt
 Rooney Russell
 Rose Bailey and Lucifer
 Ross Thompson
 Rudy Rudd
 Russ Desman
 Rusty the Orange,
 First of His Name
 Ryan Preston Fraedrich
 Ryoko Guillette
 Sakura Bellatrix
 Saleem Halabi
 Samson the pug Chang
 Samuel "DMSamuel" Dillon
 Sarah Gulbrandson
 Sarah Kelly
 Saxum Caribetum
 Schmee, Bean & EB
 Scott Banks
 Scout and Harriet Jackson
 Sean Flaherty
 Sean Kita
 Sekdar Hackholm
 Selma & Luis (RIP)
 Seraphim Town
 Shadow "Brown Maow" Olvey
 Shannon Keniry
 Shawna McManis
 Sierra and Otto
 SignificantOtter
 Simon & Calvin
 Simon "Beldro" Boucher
 Simone Matzanke
 Sir Henrik von Gato of Bedelland
 Sir Lennon Underfoot & Arthur
 the Twit (of beloved memory)
 Sir Reginald von Snugglebottoms
 Sir Twitchifer
 Slagthor the annihilator
 Smirkles the Clever
 Sneesus Negezzar
 Moogle Pertzborn
 Snowy
 Spartanus Rex
 Spot
 Squiggly Tubbs
 Stefan Feltmann
 Steven Fader
 Steven K. Watkins
 Stiker
 Stirling The Corgi
 Sundown Kitty
 Sway & Bacardi Shirley
 Tadgh (Lyon) Pound +Tink
 Taliesin Van Meter
 Tanya Perez

MONARCHIES OF MAU

Tarl "Bo" Johnson AKA: Tags Dad	Alexander the Great "Xander" and Night Fury "Furiosa"	Goat Kaiser	Michael Jacobson
Tasha	Allister Mitchell	Grant G. Gruenbaum	Michael James Cullen
Tassie	Amy "YeeTsun" Morgan	H Dalton	Michael Petrovich
Tawiscara Blackwing	Anna J Henkin	Harry Lyzniak	Michael-Lover
Terry J. Deibler Jr	Anthony Jennings	Hung-Yang Shen	Midnight Harrison
Tesla C. Hall	Arnaud "Nitro" PICHON	Imposter Felcyn	Midnight V
Thalji	Arthur Boff in honour of NJPW cat Daryl Takahashi	James "Jimbojones" Robertson	Mike Holmes
The Binxster	Ash, Gavroche, and Nimi	James Lowder	Morgan Weeks
The Freelancing Roleplayer	Astrid Portner	Jan "Helm" Richter	Mr. Noodles
The Gluttonous Geek	Aurélien LENGRAND	Jeremiah "Br. Saul" McCoy	Nadia "Atarun" Cerezo
The Lord Triky	Bacardi	Jimmy Plamondon	Nameless
The Scruffman	Banshee Longhair	Jody Bowman	Nicolas "Eklyps" Flagey
The Tynes Family	Benjamin Kubczak	Joe Aponick	Norrin Disa Kidd
Thomas Armstrong	Brian A Smith	Joe Parrino	Nyriis and Loreador Robeson
Thomas Charlie Federico	Burke and Dan	John Dewey Bradford	Patrick & Joanna Wedding
Peppercorn Zaldivar	Casey Corbin	John Sturkie	Paul Allen Timm
Tiger D. Swan	Cat named Cat	John, Jennifer, and Dora Atkinson	Paul 'Ogrebear' Baker
Tim Luttermoser	Ceaser, Hoole and Alyss.	Jorge E. Leal Reyes	Pawka Edwards
Timothy Doughty	Charles Felix	Joseph Homer	Peter Pedone
Tinker Armstrong	Charlie Hawkins	Josh Heath	Pierre Chaloux
Tippy Bramwell	Chimera Cape	Joshua C Martin	Pilsner von Angora Abruzzo
Tobi Tigger Mouse Ross	Chris Constantin	Joshua K. Martin	Prince Willow
Tobias & Turbo	Civ Light	Josie Wicker	Quill Smith & Bonnie
Toby Spiderslayer Sherman	Cleo Smithson	Justin Mohareb	Rachel James
Tori	Conan Shafer	Jyan Delamotte	Raja
Tori Lantz	Cookenfold Mittens	Kallisti	Randy Duncan
Travis Olson	Count Floydcula of Fangdale	Keiser Söze	Raven Cornelius
Trevor "Cat Hater" Christensen	Daisy Shute	Keith A. Garrett	Rene Hatch
Tubstout	Dame Castellan Avalon	Keith E. Hartman	Robert Burr
Turner's Tokens	Tortie-Calico von Korat	Kenshin	Robert Kupcek & Erin Durdy
Tyler Brunette	Damien & Echo	Kerry Birmingham	Robin E. Head
Tyrant	Damien Starlurker	Ket	Rogue Kitten
Urien Valarian	Dan Mewis	Kevin Hislop	Romeo
Usagi	Dan Niekerk	Kittenmancer	Ron James
Victoria Witten (Torikitty)	Dances with Chickens	Kyle Monroe	Scarl
Vincent Vermeowvven	Daniel, Absinthia, and Gustavus Peterson.	Lachrymite	Seth Hartley
Vitrbjorn	Dante Cotton-Blue	Lady Mustache of Grump	Seth Spurlock
Wade "ThatWadeGuy" Cottell	Dave Ballard	Lance F. Rodriguez	Shawn P
Walter F. Croft	David Hobson	Larry David Napier II	Sherman
whitewer	Dragonsrage	Laurie and Geneviève	Sir Meowkins
Whitney and Loki Accardo	Duke	Layne Gold & Andrew Wilson	SprySam
Will M., Oren, and Jiji	Dylan "ExoByte" Mayo	Lifestealer	Stefano Monachesi
Willard Nations	Edouard Contesse	Lisa Qualls	Tailchaser Cave
William Cappelletti	Eevee	Lord Labyrinth, Masked Troubadour	Taurus Occulus (Torrie)
Willow j Shaplend	Emmanuel AKA Mr Moe	Louie Sawyers	The Foxhouses Bandit
Willow Lemmi	Eric Brown	Lt. Remus "Fatty" Snorrington, Ret.	The misses Tanuki and Cinder
Windthin and Kassiana	Eric Snugglebear	Lucas & June	Thimo Wilke
Winnie aka Fat Bear	Erik Welehodsky	M McClelland	Thomas Pontette
Wusster Patches Kitten Harris	Ernesto & Ghost "Nusbaum"	Malfeas	Thor Fesper
Z and Smalls Tankersley	Erykah Fasset	Martin Coulter	Tigress and Fiona, beloved sisters and friends
Zeke Ellison	Evenrude Shumate	Matthew Trent	Tilly the silly kitty
Zeus	Faticus Frank Ballentine	Matthias Pettersson	Timothy Mushel
Ziggy Ramone	Firefly Meatball Dumpling	Max	Tracy Pinkelton
Zipper	Pokorny-Williams	Max Pimentel IV	Trunks Jonas
Zoe Elizabeth "Meow" Stanton	Freya Rabbit's Bane	Maximus Haas	Tucker Rugg
Zoe, Dax, and Pudge Gilman	Giannicola Stellino Cuboni	MC Schoopadoop	Tyler Rice Adams
	Glenn Clifford	Meow Gin	Victoria Elizabeth Tenney Salem
		Michael J. Kruckvich	Maiya Marquis Elsa Finn Dix

KICKSTARTER BACKERS

Edmonton Dodson
 Voidhunter
 Warren P Nelson
 Wednesday and Westcat
 Werekit
 Whiskers and Rusty
 Willoughby "Willow" Wallace
 Yiodan
 Yona A.k.a. niespoe & Stijn C.

(un)reason
 @hamildong
 "Mittens" Leisemann
 Abby the Dog
 Abraham Q. Lincoln
 Aileen Milles
 Alex Kuhn
 Alisa "Tigress" Frisch
 Alison Carmack
 Anastasia the Proud
 Andrew Fitzgibbons
 Andrew J. Roberts Van Alstyne
 Andy Jackson
 Angel Garza
 Angelo Diego Crabolu
 Anne & Zak Becker
 Apollo and Pagan,
 always & forever
 Arck
 Arthur "Torakhan" Dreese
 Athena Nike
 Austin "Servant to many cats
 1975-2005" Loomis
 Baby Siberian
 Bael the Cruel
 Beachfox
 Bentley W. Chism
 Bill Shaffer
 Bluegrass Geek
 Brothers Baron Tonkatsu &
 Prof. Tiger Shrimp Deluxe
 Callie McDowell
 Cannoli, Baklava, & Éclair
 Cassandra Castaneda
 Cassandra de Kanter
 Chairman Mao the Redistributor
 Chanski
 Chip pavlack
 Chris Eggers
 Chris Huddl
 Chris MacGregor
 & Sonia Michaels
 Chris Raub
 Chris Sturdy and Earl
 Chris Sweet
 Christian Topp
 Christina Settingiano
 Christine Beard
 Christoph Schulz
 Clover of the Hungry Jaws

Constable Yum-Yum
 Cora Anderson
 Corey Davidson
 Cornelius Milertens
 Coyotekin
 Crüjen A. Geist
 Damon Wilson
 Dan Panamaroff
 Daniel Browne
 Daniel Mann
 Daniel Ruperto M. Gaerlan
 Darran MacMaghnusa
 Dave Elder
 David "JustDave" Talboj
 David Bigg
 David Bjorne
 David D.
 David McKie
 Diana Hauer
 Dolan Ross Scherfel
 Dominic "The Fuzzy One"
 Gaghan
 Donnie "Lord Aludian" Roos, Jr.
 Dootle
 (the pudgiest dog-cat ever)
 Doug "DJ Eternal
 Darkness" Carter
 Doug Atkinson
 Douglas Snyder
 Drewbacca
 Duncan
 Dylan Siegenthaler
 Eevee
 Eilistraee Fort
 El-Daeb Derfire
 Elkovash
 Emery Steffen
 Eric C. Kiefer
 Erin Bonelle
 Erin Ruston
 Ernie Sawyer
 Evan "JabberWokky"
 and Sarah Edwards
 Evil Jenny & Gir
 Faye
 Felicity
 Fiske
 Francesco Bergamini
 GatoGato
 Geoffrey and Fish-Bunny
 Glenda Hildegard
 Mazikeen Grandison
 Goldie Dobr
 HatefulSage
 Helen
 Henry F. Bruckman Vargas
 Hildegarde
 Hugh Guthrie
 In loving memory of Bix Upson
 Incandescent Dragon Creations

Isaac Carlos
 J.D.
 J.V.Thomas
 Jacob K. Bauch
 Jake, Britt and Alyx
 Jamie Prentice
 Jared Mau Batora
 Jay "Grumblecakes" Shannahan
 Jay Sparke
 JD "The Moo King" Kamont
 Jeff Robinson
 Jennifer Anfeldt
 Jennifer Fuss
 JENNINE
 Jeremy Brown
 Jesse Goble
 Jessi (SpazzyNek0)
 Jet Bundy
 Joe Wolz
 John "Wolfe" Kelley
 John Robertson
 John Rummage (for Bit)
 John Vikør Green
 John W. Luttman Jr.
 Jonathan David Rust
 Jordan Flash Paulson
 Joshua Wright
 Juniper the Jasper Mage
 Kaeli Chambers
 Kenneth & Piper Letteer
 Kenneth von Übelmann
 Kevin James Machado and
 Captain Hector Barbossa
 Kielo Maria Maja
 Kitty McNasty
 Kris Ketchersid
 Labyrinth
 Leo D Pug
 Leslie and Marcus Arena
 Lionel M. Worman
 Little Guy, Ferdinand, Spot,
 Ashan, Mat, Mojo, Augusta,
 Callie, London, Tigger
 Liz Rogers
 Logan Spangler
 Lola
 Lord Chuck
 "The Ambivalent One" Ruggles
 Louis
 Luckyblaze Mindel
 Mais
 Marcus Ström
 Marjorie Young
 Matteo Tirelli
 Maynard
 Meitreyia Mayako
 Meowza Fluffelpants
 Merlin
 Michael Feldhusen
 Michel Foisy

Michelle Flamm
 Midnight VanDeBrook
 Mike "DaiTengu" Miller, Cringer,
 Oliver, Gypsy, Trance, Omen
 and Luna
 Mike "Shack" Shackelford
 Mike Staton and Apollo
 Milagro
 Mimi and Porthos Hauptman
 Mistress Treble the Kind
 Ms. Honey Morris
 Myra "Zolexa" Hall
 Nathaniel Harscher
 Nicholas D. Dragisic
 Nike Reimink
 Ostaf Holmes
 Outfit!
 Owen Milton
 Patrick Hutchison
 Patrick, Minnie and Max Kingsley
 Paul Ryan
 Pepper
 Percy Manley
 Persona Wyatt
 Peter Korcz
 peter peretti
 Petunia
 Philipp Neurohr
 Phillip "Chairman Meow"
 Malerich
 Phillip Palazuelos
 Picpic, Kaylee, Orangejello &
 Kavash
 Podcast: The Wreckening
 Princess Casper McNab
 Princess Fluffernutter Fancypants
 Puck Asmodeus and Titania Lilith
 Suchor
 Quimby, Shadow, Gypsy, Terry,
 and Kyle Broekers
 Renha
 Rev. Kathryn Ernst
 Reyos Blackwood
 Richard "Butch" Cornman
 Richard Frost
 Richard Stratton
 Robert "Ayslyn" Van Natter
 Rodger S Graham Jr
 Rommel
 Ron "Phantom" Smay
 Ron Mcilroy
 Russell Olszewski
 Ryan Gerlach
 Sam R. Burnes
 Samregard Alatiosius
 Cotton Candy Lickybuns
 Santo ^=(w=)^
 Scott "Oz" Milner
 Scott Haring
 Scotty theunissen
 Sekhmet, Todd, and Chelsea

MONARCHIES OF MAU

Hickel	Andy and Cat Wilson	Grumpy Needlepaws	Luke, Leia, Mittens Lee
Shadow McLaughlin	Angelus Morningstar	Guillaume Hatt	Luna
Shadow Prince Ballance	Ardis Mithee-Colson	Harald Hellerud	Luna
Shadowberry & Sylvester	Artemis, Ulysses, and Clementine	Harold Tessmann III	Luna Octavia
Shady	Bertrand Russell	Heidi Shelton	Luna Techera De Armas
Sharon and Jake	Coulton-Ford-Baggins	Hroth'ger	M.P.T.H.
Shawn Campbell	BlueSkyWolf09	Ian A. Richmond	Magus
Shea Anderson	Bobby V. Berry, Jr.	Ian Hamil	Mark Kerr Jr
Shinku Liddell	Brandon Draga	In Memory of Puzzles, 1993 - 2017	Martin Bugge
Sir Hunter Zee Rollo	Brandon Roberts	Inna Gato DaVida	Matt Piasecki
Sir Toby of House Crooks and his hooman Phil	Brannen	Isabell of the Polls	Maureen
Spoticus Marie Gieseke	Brendan A. Truett	Ivan V. A. N. Slipper	Maximillion Young
Squiggy	Brennan Willingham	J. Pollard	Melinda Hawes
Star Fulton	Cake and Fionna	J. Stewart	Meowthaw Tait
Starlight	Caleb Kokura	Jackson Tetrick von Rex	Merry
Stefan Lundsby-Thomsen	Casey Coon	Jasper "Wubbiekins" Yarbor	Michael Hording
Stéphane "Je ne suis pas goth" Zuckerman	Cassidy "Squeaktoy" von Garber	Jean-Philippe Malouin	Michelle Haward
Stewart Gilligan	Cassiopiae (in memoriam)	Jeffery Harte	Midnight
Griffin Schmidt III	Cathi Gertz	Jellicle Furi-Chan	Mikko Rautalahti
Sumo Neko	Caviar Hawkins	Jennie Toombs	Miss Cricket Wilgus
Sutekh	Chris Bekofske	Jerry L Meyer Jr	Mittens
Sylyle	Chris Whittle	Jessa Michalek	Moe Gray
Tali Ironclaws	Christian Lacroix	Joanie Bones	Molly
Tempest	Christina Stiles	Joel Morgan	Muffin
Terja "Kurr?"	Christopher A. Bell	John A W Phillips	My cat and I are super excited to start our first adventure!
The Bowman-Curtis Family	Cierra Bruggeman	John Doyle	Myrsky
The Psionic Bard	Cleopatra the magnificent	John J Gillick & Balinor	Nathan Brown
Thomas Martin	Copcar Quiverstache the 3rd	John/Gwynn Templeton	Neal Mertens
Thunder SpirigCat	Corwin Drew Barre	John-Michael Thiesen	Nicola Hawke
Tim 'PopeTim' Hart	Czarn Czarn	Joseph Oliveira	Nullpunkt
Tony "Angelicus" Liell	Dame Luminara Coker, Protector of Ceridwyn	Joshua Davis	Octavian Düm
Trixi D'Emilien	Daniel, Trista, Eleanor, Mamalade, Sappho, Ned, and Snoogans Robichaud	Julie Syler	Pamela, Nami and Toby
Vincent Price	Darren Johnson	Justin Mabry	Paul B. Currie
Violet and Julia	Darth Turnip	Karen Montgomery	Paul Fritschle
Wendigo Lynema	David Ruskin	Katerich	Paul Singleton
Will Toohey	David Stephenson	Kelgamum	Paw Holdsworth
William F Scrimsher III	David Williams	Keltie C Jea	Pedro(ite)
WillyKaceres and Sharpty	Digit Amelia Anastesia	Kevin Schreur	Peter Dean
Xiong-ie Chew	Djinnna and Cutecifer	Kevin Wine	Peter Fleshman
Yoshi & Sterling Gould	Ekorren	King Bohdi	Phervor
Yue & Zuko Goodwin-Harrison	Enkidu Black	Kit of Highgrounds	Phil Jack
Zoe and Zelda Sauter	Eric Haste	Kitty Quatermain, Intrepid Explorer	Philippe Marciel
	Eric Laughry	Kitty the cat	Pia & Penny
~April~	Eric Meader	Kjell Kenneth Moens & Saga	Pinephrine
"Old Man Schwa" Joshua - For Gizmo & Teo The Evil One	Erik Elgerot	Kyle Takamoto	Poko O'Connell
Aaron Mackie Braegen	Falconette Faughx	Kyra Hayden	Preston Richards
Adam Caverly	Felix Shafir	Lachlan passed away on the 28th July.	PsyberOwl
Adam Pecar	Fenix	Lady Mina Whiskers, the Wild	Psyche, A great cat
Adam Waggenpack	For Kevin. The loudest cat ever to roam the 'villa. We miss you terribly. ~SE and DM	Lady Snowball	Raley Wey Saffe
Aidan Marsh	FREDDIE	Landi Garcia	Raminagrobis
Alex McLauchlan Gray & Chester	Geza Letso	Lars Holgaard	Rasmus Lyngkjær
Alexander Brown	Glen R Taylor	Lato T. Cat	Red & Cormac
Alicyn Simpson	Goose	Lawrence Giaco	Regina Head
Anderson "LightO2" Hughes	Götz Weinreich	Legionaire42	Rhea Shelley
Andrew Guentert	Griffyn	Lord Montgomery	Rick Saada
Andrew Robeson		Selkirk von Rex	Robert "Jefepato" Dall
Andrew Steele		Lucy Freeman	Robert Morris
			Roberto Hoyle

KICKSTARTER BACKERS

Rosie
S J Jennings
S. O. Terric (via D. B. Rosengard)
S.K.
Sally Jeonsa Matecha
Sam Hing
Sam Rosenthal
Samuel L Catson
Sean 'Ariamaki' Riedinger
Seán D. Rose
Sebastiano Sitran
Seth Johnson
Shannon R. Bell
shardsofblue
Shawn Whyte
Shayne Lebrun
Silvius Altus
Sir Francis Cat and
Lady Freya Evenson-Schumacher
Sir George,
Grand Tabby of Cibolo
Sir Mister Guy of Gisbourne
Sir Percy of Trailview
Sir Roger the Tiny
Skippy (Adams)
Skumring
Smokey
Socks Thomson
Stephen D Lowery

Stephen von Kugelgen
Steve Burnett
Steven S. Lloyd
Strype McClaine & Clyde Ffrey
Sunshine and Mercurio
Sushi
Takoma
Tali
Tallacia
Taylor Kirkham
Taylor Lawton
Tetsuo
Thane & Rafe Dube
The Pash
Theresa, Cavan and Chérie Rider.
Thomas Powell
Tiffany
Tiga
Tiji
T-Mo
Tony Bellegante
Troy Lees
Tybalt deLeon von Fernandez-
Duque
Tyler Wirth
Vanyel Eponine Templar
velxundussa
Verri
Vincent Alexander

waelcyrge
Wanda Aasen
Webley
William Franks
Yogi the Magnificent
Younghold
Yuki Hyo
Zeilenrausch
Ziva
Zuzuesque

Bismarck von Siberian,
Mammassita Mew von Angora
Boudie & Sherman "Manytoes" /
Noah & Callum "Underfoot"
Daria Giovannoni, Milo Stefani
Francesca B. Meowldo aka
Frankie B, The LeFay Brothers
Goo (aka GooCIFur or the
great Goodini) Pickles & George
Gothic and Bones
His Royal Highness Spectre the
First of his Name, Bishop of Purrs,
Vicar of Ceiling Cat, Successor of
the Prince of the Kitties, Supreme
Pontiff of the Felines, Primate
of the House, Archbishop and
Metropolitan of the Bed Province,
Sovereign of the Chair State; His
Royal Mewy Mew Cassanova
the Elder, First of his Name and
Most Beloved of Grumpy Butts

Lee Leggett, Em Leggett
Lucy Carpaneto and
Josephine Luckey-Bergesen
Madi Kowiak and
Milano Aguilera
Maeve - Steven Bobula,
Fiona - Betty Osthoff
Nipsan Harwood, Glory Fish
Rodigan "der Fusselsammler"
Schmidt, Mr. Iyengar, the most
cutest cat ever ! Im rasanten
Tempo alle Herzen erobert und
viel zu früh gegangen. Aber nur
die Besten sterben jung.
Sheldon Albertson,
Shawn Albertson
Sophie Lafleur,
Danny Fireball Wittmer
Tiger Nighttime Fluffytail, Mochi

Dragon's Lair Comics & Fantasy
Katzi, Kirby, Shinx, Tannis,
Scooter
Trollune; Charles Trécourt; Louis
Trécourt; Yannick Peyrède;
Spirit of Chantelouve
Zena Burnell, Frisky Snaggletooth
Spencer, Poe Leon, Webster
Sorenson, Koshka Amundson

Moebius, Arioch, Loki, Rakshasa,
Cyprian

CERTIFIED CAT

Havoc and Mayhem Evans
Mr. Hermes

Beemer and Caprica Courmac
Chibi Ross
Sepfy

Andy Biddle
Benjamin "eSca" Reed
Brian Allred

Bryan Fox
David Futterer
David Starner
Emiliano Marchetti
Fifi van Housington
J. W. Bennett
James Chatham
Jeffrey S. James
Lainmai
Lin Kenneth Oakes III
Luigi, Minder of Socks
Margaux Duff
Matthew Oakes
Munchkin Korat von Radiant
Nicole Goodchild
Phorden
Princess Gracie McFlufferkitty
Rhel ná DecVandé
Rhys von Reinart
Richard Libera

Scott E. Vigil
Simone "Mother of Cats"
Lohmeier
Spunky Vannelli
Tennessee of New Flatford
The Great Lillika
The Twins, Muush & Stripe
Trouble

CAT EXEMPLAR

Benjamin Herral
Eddie and Sweetie Pug
Mumi Moxi

Nik 'Alia Iron-Fang' May
Pixel Bevers-Keptner

Andrew and Anie Sayman
Julien A. Féraud & Elfie
Mike Janson

Richard Clayton
Tim Redford

MAU NOBLE

Biggles and Conan Shafer
Christopher Maloney
and Ewin da Manx
Countess Magdalena
von Booplesnoot
David Wohlreich

Feste Osborne
Gopher, Thunder, Beau, and
Jayce McLaughlin (and Travis!)
Jennifer and Adam Logan
Miss Kitty

Gavin Downing
Jeremy and Tasha Cue
(w/Aeris, Carby, and Finn.)
Margarete Strawn
& Hunter Crawford

Matthew York, Kashic York
Robert-Sean Harley
Shadow Nettles
Norah

MAU VISITOR

Brad Whitcomb

Kayleigh, Skittles, and Katie
McLaughlin (and Mikaela!)
Sammy Who Barks at Thunder.

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Pugmire

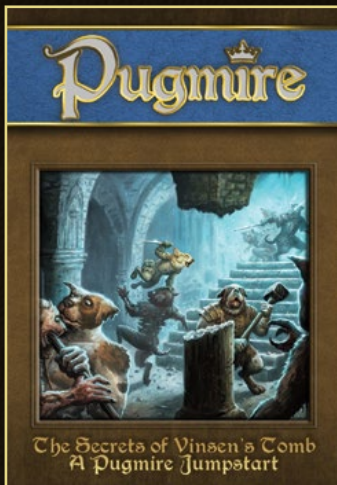
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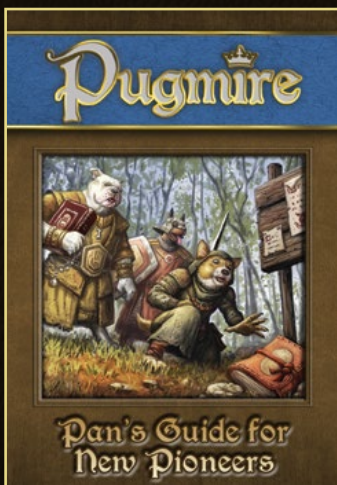
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/

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STAMINA DICE

TOTAL

DEATH SAVE FAILURE

RUCKSACK AND EQUIPMENT

ATTACK	ROLL	DMG	TYPE/QUALITY

SKILLS

PERSONALITY TRAITS

Ideal: What is most important to me is...

Mystery: No one knows about...

Flaw: No matter what, I just can't...

MONARCHIES of MAU

Before we were six. Now we are one. We differ on many points, but on these we agree: Always trust our instincts, always reward loyalty, and always pounce upon minions of the Unseen. Without these tenets, we are no longer worthy of the adoration of Man.

Monarch Trillani Persian von Mau, deceased

Cats have inherited the world, unifying their six fractious monarchies after untold centuries. These cats have been uplifted to use tools and language, and they seek to rediscover the ruins of the Old Ones. Some have learned to use the leftover technology of humanity, but they believe it to be magic given to them by their lost worshippers. Others seek to create a cohesive nation, using Precepts of Mau agreed to after years of political conflict. The world is dangerous and mysterious, but the instincts of a good cat will always be true.

Some highlights of Monarchies of Mau include:

- An evocative and mysterious setting that's both family friendly and deep enough to create compelling stories.
- A traditional fantasy rules system redesigned for streamlined play and easy creation of heroic cats, with an emphasis on cooperation and action over competition and violence.
- A variety of callings and houses that give access to several fun and interesting secrets.
- Rival species to interact with, like dogs and mice, along with terrifying and dangerous monsters that roam the landscape.

WILL YOU TRUST YOUR INSTINCTS?

