

ANTHROPOMORPHIC FANTASY ROLE-PLAY



IRONCLAW

Second Edition
Omnibus



BEAGEN

From the Frozen wastes of the untamed Wildeniands comes this troubled soul who seeks meaning in his savage world.



VESPER

A man of peace and generosity, this cleric has devoted his life to alleviating the suffering that is so ubiquitous in this world.



ANNUSHKA

There's so much of the world to see, and so little time to see it all!



HENDRICK

A fellow so cunning, he could be naught else but a weasel, this quick-fingered scoundrel sees no doors, bars, or locks ... only delays.



ANONYMOUS

What tragedy could have happened to convince her to give up her past, and her name?



MANSUR

It's not that he particularly enjoys sorcery ... it's that there is nothing he enjoys more.





ANTON

His sincerity would be insufferable, if he wasn't so good at being the knight in shining armor who saves the day.



TYCHO

It can take a lifetime to master the art of wizardry, but to know the art of thaumaturgy is to be a worker of miracles.



MAVRA

With her reputation as the notorious "bandit killer", this fox has formidable skills in both the arts of battle and of magic.



DIERDRE

Don't let the old injury fool you. There are very few who can let an arrow fly with the accuracy of this former soldier.



LADY AMALSAND

The Dowager Primadonna, the Queen Mother of the Mausoleum, the Fox Necropolitan - these are but a few of the names of the widow of High King Don Rinaldi. None dare accuse her directly of the murder of her husband, as all know of her plans to make her son the ruler of all she surveys.



VASLOV

The favorite son of Lady Amalsand, everything comes easily to him: academics, diplomacy, seduction ... and murder. All the nobles of the Great Houses fear the end of the salad days, when Vaslov claims the crown of all the land.

WHAT IS IRONCLAW?

If you've NEVER played a role-playing game before ...

To play the game of *Ironclaw*, you will assume a *role*. You will make up a *character* who lives in the fantasy land of Calabria. You will choose a name for your character, what sort of species they are (bat, cat, rat, etc.), and what sort of job they have (crafter, fighter, wizard, etc.).

One of you will be the *Host*, the director of the story. The Host tells you what's happening in the world, and to your character. Shop-keepers want to sell you things! Thieves want to steal your money! Monsters want to eat your face! Villains want to do bad things! Victims want your help against the forces of tyranny! As you pretend to be your role, you will tell the Host what you want to do, and the Host tells you whether it happens or not.

Just like how authors write a story, you and the Host will have to decide if what you want to do is possible or not. Many times, you will push your character to new heights of glory, uncertain of the outcome. To represent taking a chance, *Ironclaw* uses *dice*, those funny shaped things with the numbers on them. You've probably seen the cube-shaped, six-sided dice before. *Ironclaw* also uses four-sided, eight-sided, ten-sided, and twelve-sided dice. (The four-sided pyramids are a little weird – when you roll them, look at the number at the base, to see what you scored.) You will roll several dice at once, in all different shapes and sizes. If the text says “Roll 2d10, 3d6”, then you roll two ten-sided dice and three six-sided dice and check out each number. Usually, only the highest number matters. Sometimes, the second- or third-highest numbers will matter. Don't add the dice together.

You start the game with ratings in general abilities called *Traits*. Your character is rated in strength and hardiness (*Body*), quickness and agility (*Speed*), smarts and wits (*Mind*), stubbornness and determination (*Will*), instinct and natural ability (*Species*), and training and schooling in their job (*Career*). Each Trait is measured with dice. The bigger your dice are – that is, the more sides they have – then the higher they can roll, so the better your character is at doing things.

You can improve your character by buying *Skills* – specialized dice for certain tasks like climbing, searching, building, sneaking, etc. – and by buying *Gifts* – new abilities that let you do things the non-gifted can't do, like cast mighty spells or perform amazing stunts.

Some abilities can only be used a limited number of times, or they require you to do something to refresh

them. When a Gift *Exhausts*, you must Refresh it before you're allowed to use it again. Each Gift is different, and each one has different rules on how often it can be used.

Books, television, and movies often brush over long spreads of time, such as “Three weeks went by as Mavra searched for the book.” But when an action sequence starts up, suddenly everything is described in great detail. “Mavra reached for her sword, her eyes quivering with rage, and she leveled the point against the charging bandit, and she barked a strangled curse.” *Ironclaw* will often use *narrative time* to breeze through long periods of time, but then will switch into *combat time* to describe a fight scene blow by blow. When a fight starts, each Player will get a turn to do something – well, two somethings, actually, which are called *Actions*. There's lots of rules for what Actions do, and they're covered in the *Combat* chapter, but the main rule is that you can do two things, as long as they're *different* things.

Ironclaw is an action game, so there will be lots of fighting. As people get hit, they will become hurt, they will lose the will to fight, and they may even be killed. Just like how the main character doesn't get bumped off in the first five minutes of the story, your character begins the game with some special abilities to protect them ... but be careful! It will take quick wits, skillful planning, and a heroic attitude to win the day.

This book may look intimidating, with all the rules, but most of this stuff only comes up in rare cases. And in the end, there's only one golden rule to role-playing:

Have fun!

If you've played a COMPUTER role-playing game before ...

One player acts as the *Game Host*. He or she is the moderator who decides what content will be available in the game, what rules are in effect, how those rules should be played out. As a *Player*, you declare what you want to do, and the Host tells you how it plays out. The Host says what goes and what doesn't.

Ironclaw is a story-based game. What you did yesterday will affect what folks think of you today. Many computer games have locked doors, obstructed passageways, or even invisible walls that block your progress ... and the people in the world are just props, they don't remember who you are nor have any opinions about you. In *Ironclaw*, the only limits are your

imagination: you can go anywhere and talk to anyone, making new friends ... and maybe new enemies.

Ironclaw gives characters several special abilities, called *Gifts*. Many Gifts grant special abilities that *Exhaust* the Gift – you'll have to Refresh the Gift before you can use it again. When an ability can Refresh will vary; some Gifts have long cool-down times, others can be Refreshed in the middle of a fight.

Funny-shaped dice will be used, to add random elements to the game. If the text says "Roll 2d10, 3d6", then you roll two ten-sided dice and three six-sided dice and check out each number. Usually, only the highest number matters. Sometimes, the second- or third-highest numbers will matter. Don't add the dice together.

Ironclaw has two kinds of time: "narrative time" and "combat time." Narrative time is more like a cut scene, where characters establish things that they'll do, or talk about things related to their personalities. Game time is rigidly measured out in hours, minutes, or even 6-second increments (called *rounds*), and what you declare, at what time, is very important.

Combat is turn-based, with one side taking all of their actions, and then another side taking all of theirs. Each side can take their turns in whatever order they want ... so usually the healers go first, to remove bad statuses from the fighters, and then the fighters attack.

Being hit in combat causes *Reeling* – a de-buff status that lowers your defenses and makes you lose one of your actions. It's quite possible for a character to get stunned and to be beaten up by an angry mob. To prevent stun-locking, you must be really good at countering, or you must fight at range, or you must have some really good healers on your side. Any character can attempt to remove Reeling, using their Will and Leadership ... so it's a good idea to have one or two members in your party who have strong Will and great Leadership!

Area-of-effect attacks are rare, but many of them have friendly fire. Don't drop a grenade in the middle of a fight if you might catch some of your friends in the blast!

Ironclaw is a point-based system, where characters earn Experience and then spend them to buy up their Skills and to buy new Gifts. Points are earned by surviving to the next Chapter, by good role-playing, and by completing objectives.

If you've played a TABLETOP role-playing game before ...

The master of the game is called the *Host*. Everyone else is called a *Player*. Non-player-characters are divided up into *Major Characters* (who may have any special ability that the PCs can get) and *Minor Characters* (who are denied any major abilities, and thus could be taken out with one lucky hit.)

Ironclaw uses typical polyhedral dice. Usually, only the highest number matters. Sometimes, the second- or third-highest numbers will matter. Don't add the dice together.

Ironclaw divides combat into rounds, and each player takes a turn. First all the combatants on one side take their turns, then all the combatants on the other side take their turns. On your turn, you can declare two actions, which must be different. (For example, you can "dash" towards someone, then "attack" them, but you couldn't declare two attacks.) You can learn special abilities that increase the number of actions, or that let you combine actions, but the golden rule is "never the same action twice, on the same turn."

Ironclaw doesn't use hit points. Each character gains more and more bad statuses. At first, statuses just increase future damage ... but bigger damage results can make your character lose the will to fight, knock them down, or kill them.

Ironclaw is a point-based system, where characters earn Experience and then spend them to buy up their Skills and to buy new special abilities (called *Gifts*). Points are earned by surviving to the next point in the story or by good role-playing. Completing an objective can win you an entirely new Gift.

If you've played a previous version of IRONCLAW before ...

Here's a quick guide to the major changes.

- ↔ **Fewer Skills, more Gifts.** There are only 26 skills, and that's it. Everything else is a Gift.
- ↔ **Lower starting abilities.** You now start with 2d8, 3d6, and d4. You only start with 13 Marks to put in Skills, with a maximum of 3 Marks in any one Skill. (If that bothers your group, check out the Variant Rules for ideas on starting with more power.)
- ↔ **Flat Costs.** Skill Marks cost 4 experience, all Gifts cost 10 experience. All Gifts have the same cost, but many have requirements. Everyone starts the game with the same number of Gifts and Skill Marks.
- ↔ **Bonuses and Penalties are more dice.** A bonus for you is another die to roll. A penalty for you is a bonus die to the other side. No more bumping up die sizes, no more re-rolls.
- ↔ **Exhaustions and Refreshes.** Some Gifts grant abilities you can use any time you want. Other Gifts must be Exhausted, and then you must Refresh them before you can use any of their abilities again.
- ↔ **Faster Combat.** There's no "ranks of initiative" ... there's no initiative rolling every round. Characters take their turns in the most logical order, and everyone gets two actions to decide what to do. (Recovering from Reeling is one action, so getting

hit only makes you lose half your turn, not your whole turn.)

The standard melee defense is now the Counter-Attack: two combatants dice off, the winner hits the loser ... so something happens to somebody.

Your attack roll is also your damage roll. Every success you score to hit someone counts as +1 point of damage. Each weapon adds bonus damage to that. You still roll Soak dice, but now you count 4s or better as -1 point of damage, each.

Hit points have been replaced with status effects; being damaged can not only injure or kill, it can demoralize a combatant so they can't attack, which may end a fight.

- ↔ **Magic.** All Magic is handled by Gifts. There are no more Magic Points. Many magic spells are weapons that are readied, thrown, then readied again.
- ↔ **Re-training.** You can exchange Marks and Gifts for experience points, to change your character.

CONTENTS

What is Ironclaw? 2

If you've NEVER played a role-playing game before . . .	2
If you've played a COMPUTER role-playing game before . . .	2
If you've played a TABLETOP role-playing game before . . .	3
If you've played a previous version of IRONCLAW before . . .	3

Character Creation 6

Starting Traits.....	6
Starting Species.....	7
Starting Career.....	7
Starting Personality.....	7
Starting Local Knowledge.....	7
Add your 13 Skill Marks.....	8
Add 3 Gifts.....	8
Add up your Skill Marks to determine Skill Dice.....	9
Choose a Name.....	9
Choose a Motto.....	10
Choose a Starting Goal.....	11
Choose your Equipment.....	11
Battle Array.....	11

Species..... 13

Species..... 13

Careers..... 33

Skills..... 38

Skill Dice.....	38
Skill Marks.....	38
Descriptions of Skills.....	39
Academics (Culture, Mental).....	40
Brawling (Physical).....	40
Climbing (Encumbered, Physical).....	40
Craft (Physical, Mental).....	40
Deceit (Culture, Social).....	41
Digging (Physical).....	41
Dodge (Encumbered, Physical).....	41
Endurance (Encumbered, Physical).....	41

Gossip (Culture, Social).....	42
Inquiry (Culture, Social).....	42
Jumping (Encumbered, Physical).....	42
Leadership (Culture, Social).....	43
M��le Combat (Physical).....	43
Negotiation (Culture, Social).....	43
Observation (Mental).....	44
Presence (Social).....	44
Ranged Combat (Physical).....	45
Riding (Physical).....	45
Searching (Mental).....	45
Stealth (Encumbered, Physical, Mental).....	45
Supernatural (Mental).....	46
Swimming (Encumbered, Mental).....	46
Tactics (Physical, Mental).....	47
Throwing (Physical).....	47
Vehicles (Physical, Mental).....	47
Weather Sense (Physical, Mental).....	47

Gifts..... 48

Explanation of Gifts (Descriptors).....	48
Opportunity Cost.....	49
Exhaustion and Refresh.....	49
Physical Gifts.....	51
Mental Gifts.....	54
Social Gifts.....	58
Trappings Gifts.....	61
Character Development Gifts.....	66
Natural Gifts.....	67
Magical Gifts.....	91

Equipment..... 95

Money.....	95
Finding Stuff.....	96
Encumbrance.....	97
Weapons.....	97
Effects and Descriptors, Explained.....	107
Armor.....	111
Shields.....	111
Care 112	
Consumables.....	112

Containers.....	112
Food and Drink.....	113
Garments.....	113
Illumination.....	113
Labor.....	113
Lodging.....	113
Personal Items.....	114
Transportation.....	114
Trade gear.....	115
Valuables.....	115
Suggestions for Other Items.....	115

How to Play 116

One Participant is the Game Host.....	116
Declare First; Claim Later.....	116
The Funny-Shaped Things With the Numbers On Them: Dice.....	117
Your Highest Showing Die: The Score.....	117
Beating the odds: Successes.....	118
Overwhelming Victory: Multiple Successes.....	118
Facing off against someone: Dice-Rolling Contest.....	118
Rolling all ones: Botches.....	118
Making Ties into Successes: Breaking a Tie.....	118
Quotas.....	119
Extra Dice for you: Bonus.....	119
Extra dice for them: Penalty.....	119
Getting Some Help: Assists.....	119
Same Old, Same Old: Potes.....	119
Less-Than-Ideal Circumstances: Limits.....	120
Something for Nothing: Favor.....	120

Combat Rules 121

Narrative Time vs. Combat Time.....	121
Combat in a Nutshell.....	121
The Set-Up.....	121
Divide the Battle into Two Sides.....	121
First, Refresh all Battle Gifts.....	121
Ring the Bell to Start the Fight: Initiative.....	121
The Side that Starts the Battle Goes First.....	122
When the Round Ends, deal with pending issues.....	122
Taking your Turn.....	123

Actions	123	The Avoirdupois	159	Journeyman Cognoscente Magic.....	299
Descriptions of Actions.....	123	The Bisclavret	161	Master Cognoscente Magic.....	300
Focus Turn	126	The Doloreaux.....	163	Journeyman White Magic.....	303
Taking Action on Someone Else's Turn:		The Phelan	165	Master White Magic	307
Interrupt	126	The Rinaldi	166	Journeyman Thaumaturgy	308
Attacks	127	Rinaldi	166	Master Thaumaturgy.....	311
Threatening Zones and Defenses	128	the Free City of Triskellian	167	Using the Part for the Whole: Synecdoche.....	312
Attacks vs. Defenses.....	130	Gazetteer	227	Ultimate Power Over Life and Death: Necromancy ...	312
Results	131	Menagerie	254	Apprentice Necromancy	312
Attack vs. Resistance	132	Minor Characters	254	Journeyman Necromancy	313
Retreating and Pressing.....	133	Major Characters.....	258	Master Necromancy	315
Reeling	134	Beasts of Burden.....	262	Necromantic Weapons.....	316
Damage	134	Untamed Beasts	265		
Recovery from Attacks	137	Beings of Primordial Material: Elementals.....	268	The Wilding Way.....	317
Scope of Attacks.....	138	Lingering Phantoms of Emotion: Shades	271	Adventure: The Closing Of	
Spot Rules and Variant Rules	139	That Which is Not Dead Can Eternal Lie: Undead.....	272	The City Gates	323
		Ferocious Monsters of Battle: Goblins.....	277	What Has Gone On Before	323
Character Development	140	Other Careers.....	279	The Tale of How Our Heroes Came to Meet.....	323
Experience	140	Advanced Magic	286	The Tale of the Surly Watchmen	324
Beginning of play: The reading of the Mottos and		Journeyman Air Magic.....	286	The Tale of the Bustling City.....	326
Goals	140	Master Air Magic.....	287	The Tale of the Roadside Ruffians.....	327
Chapters	140	Journeyman Earth Magic.....	288	Dramatis Personæ.....	330
Goals	140	Master Earth Magic	289	Appendix: Statures	332
End of Session.....	140	Journeyman Fire Magic.....	291	Appendix: Variant Rules	336
Improving your Character: Spending Experience.....	141	Master Fire Magic.....	292	Appendix: Time.....	339
Changing your Character: Retraining	141	Journeyman Water Magic.....	294	Times of Day.....	339
		Master Water Magic.....	295	Days, Months, and Years	340
Hosting the Game.....	137	Secret Star Magic of the Dunwasser Academy.....	297	Index	343
Know the Theme of Your Game	137				
Spot Rules.....	145				
Movement	145				
Environment	151				



CHARACTER CREATION

CHARACTER CREATION

Game Terms	
Career	Your character's job
Equipment	Stuff that your character carries around
Gift	A special advantage that the non-gifted don't have
Goal	An objective your character wants to accomplish
Mark	A measure of skill training
Motto	The slogan that your character lives by
Name	What they call your character
Personality	A Gift that grants a bonus d12 to a certain behavior
Skill	Key abilities in the game, rated by training
Species	Your character's genetic race
Trait	Body, Speed, Mind, & Will – measures of your ability

Here we'll talk you through the steps of making your own character.

Starting Traits

You start with one d4, three d6s, and two d8s. Assign these traits to your Body, Speed, Mind, Will, Species, and Career.

What's the best way to assign your traits?

There is no one "right" answer for how to assign your Trait Dice, but we can give you some good advice.

An excellent strategy is to drop the first d8 into your Career. Your Career is what your character will be doing most, so you want to be as good at that, as you can be.

The second d8 is a little tricky: if you see your character as a muscle-bound type, put the d8 in Body; a fast and agile shooter, put the d8 in Speed; a thinker and a learned sort, put the d8 in Mind; as a stubborn hero who never gives up, put the d8 in Will; or as a prime example of what it means to be the sort of critter that they are, put the d8 in Species.

Your character also has that d4 – a weak point in their character. If you see your character as thin or small, put the d4 in Body; as awkward or clumsy, put the d4 in Speed; as uneducated or simple, put the d4 in Mind; as indecisive and wimpy, put the d4 in Will; and as far more humanoid than bestial, put the d4 in Species.

And don't worry – if that d4 really bothers you, you can improve these Trait Dice later.

YOUR CHARACTER HAS SIX BASIC TRAITS THAT DEFINE JUST WHAT SORT OF PERSON THEY ARE. FOR EXAMPLE, YOU MIGHT DECIDE TO CREATE A **CAT MERCENARY**...



A CHARACTER WITH BIG DICE IN **BODY, WILL, AND SPECIES** WILL BE A SAVAGE, BRUTAL WARRIOR. HE WOULD BE A POWERFUL ATHLETE, HE COULD SNEAK THROUGH THE SHADOWS AND POUNCE ON HIS FOES, THEN SAVAGE THEM WITH CLAWS AND TEETH. HE WOULD RELY ON HIS NATURAL INSTINCTS, AND HE WOULD PROBABLY LEAVE THE HEAVY THINKING TO OTHERS.



A CHARACTER WITH BIG DICE IN **SPEED, MIND, AND CAREER** WOULD BE A STEELY-EYED SOLDIER. HE WOULD BE VERY GOOD WITH WEAPONS AND ARMOR, AND HE WOULD BE SKILLED WITH TACTICS AND NEGOTIATION. HE WOULD PREFER TO THINK FIRST AND TO CHOOSE HIS BATTLES CAREFULLY.

THERE'S NO RIGHT OR WRONG WAY TO CHOOSE YOUR TRAITS. THINK ABOUT WHAT YOUR CHARACTER WOULD BE LIKE, WHAT THEIR STRENGTHS ARE, AND HOW THEY WOULD DEAL WITH PROBLEMS. AND MOST IMPORTANTLY, **HAVE FUN!**

Starting Species

Choose your Species. Write down the three Gifts it gives you. Write down your Habitat, Cycle, Diet, Senses, and Weapons.

Find the Species column on the Skill List. Find the three skill rows that your Species Trait is included with. Write your Species Trait's die in each of the three rows, in the Species column.

What is the best Species to take?

Most people who play *Ironclaw* have a preferred species in mind: Cat, Fox, Raccoon, Horse, Rat, etc. Naturally, the best Species is the one that you are the most comfortable assuming as a role.

Other players will want to pick a Species that has a specific advantage for their character's role. For example, cats can be sneaky fighters who strike from the shadows ... squirrels can jump from tree-top to tree-top ... horses can carry heavy loads and run fast ... et cetera.

Starting Career

Choose your Career. Write down the three Gifts it gives you.

If you get the same Gift twice, only write it down once, and instead give yourself "Increased Trait (of choice)". The Gift of Increased Trait lets you increase any Trait to the next die size.

Find the Career column on the Skill List. Find the three skill rows that your Career Trait is included with. Write your Career Trait's die in each of the three rows, in the Career column.

Starting Personality

Everyone starts with a Personality Gift. Choose your Personality now, either from the suggested list below or just make one up, using one or two words.

The Personality Gift is the major defining feature of your character. Is your character a dashing hero, renowned for their boldness? Are they preening and vain, with pride that sometimes gets the better of them?

After playing your character for a while, you may decide on a different Personality. That's fine – you can change to a new Personality at no cost.

What personality should my character have?

If you're having trouble coming up with a Personality, here's a list of common suggestions.

- ↔ Altruistic, Selfless, or Self-Sacrificing
- ↔ Bold, Dashing, or Reckless
- ↔ Charitable, or Giving
- ↔ Chaste, Abstemious, or Pure
- ↔ Choleric, or Vengeful
- ↔ Envious, or Jealous
- ↔ Gluttonous, or Unrestrained
- ↔ Greedy
- ↔ Gregarious, or Friendly
- ↔ Humble
- ↔ Kind
- ↔ Lustful
- ↔ Melancholy, or Sad
- ↔ Naïve
- ↔ Obsequious, Sycophantic, or Flattering
- ↔ Patient
- ↔ Phlegmatic, or Listless
- ↔ Proud, or Vain
- ↔ Sanguine, Hopeful, or Optimistic
- ↔ Selfish
- ↔ Slothful, or Lazy
- ↔ Sneaky, Duplicitous, or Deceptive
- ↔ Sympathetic
- ↔ Temperate, Ascetic, or Restrained
- ↔ Wrathful, or Angry
- ↔ Zealous, Diligent, or Stubborn

In the world of *Ironclaw*, physicians and learned folk will describe *Choleric*, *Melancholy*, *Phlegmatic*, and *Sanguine* as the **Four Humors** — an “unbalanced” personality caused by a build-up of fluids in the body.

The popular religion known as the Church of s'Allumer condones the **Eight Virtues** of being *Altruistic*, *Charitable*, *Chaste*, *Humble*, *Kind*, *Patient*, *Selfless*, *Temperate*, and *Zealous*. These Personalities are admired by the pious and the righteous. On the other side of the coin, the Church condemns the Eight Vices of being *Envious*, *Gluttonous*, *Greedy*, *Lustful*, *Proud*, *Selfish*, *Slothful*, and *Wrathful*. Many church sermons speak out against such behavior.

Starting Local Knowledge

Ask your Game Host where the game will be starting. When they tell you the place name, write that in under “Local Knowledge”.



Add your 13 Skill Marks

You may now place 13 Marks into any skills you want. You may not put more than 3 Marks per Skill.

Later, some Gifts may push you past the 3-Mark limit. For right now you can only put up to 3 Marks in a single Skill.

How should I assign my Skill Marks?

All Skills are good to have! Your character already starts with some dice to roll when using a few Skills — your character has a Species and a Career, and those Trait dice are included with several Skills. Marks can give you even more dice in Skills your character already has ... or the Marks can be in other abilities to make your character wiser in the ways of the world.

Some players may prefer the route of putting 1 Mark in each of 13 different Skills, becoming a jack-of-all-trades. A Skill roll carries the risk of catastrophic failure, known as a *Botch*. Botches are much, much more likely with Skills where the character has no training at all ... so even one Mark can make a big difference. Also, having that one Mark lets your character declare *Favorite Uses* for Skills, which can be a minor bonus.

Most of your foes will have dice no larger than d6. If you can get your Skill up to at least 3 Marks, you'll have a d8 to roll. In other words, if you want your skill to work against almost everyone you meet, put 3 Marks or more in it.

Some players will prefer the “minimaxing” route of picking four skills to have 3 Marks apiece. More Marks mean bigger dice, and bigger dice are always better.

Remember that you may only place up to three Marks in a single skill at this step, the character creation step. You'll earn more Marks as you play the game.

What Skills should I put Marks in?

Ask yourself what you think your character will be doing. Adventurers live dangerous lives, and that makes some skills more popular than others: *Dodge* to avoid being hit in combat, *Melee Combat* to use hand-to-hand weapons, *Ranged Combat* for shooting people, and *Brawling* for punching, kicking, clawing, and biting.

Skill Marks can also round out the weaknesses of some classes. If your Career lacks talking skills, you'll probably want to buy some *Gossip* and *Inquiry*. If you're worried about missing clues, consider *Observation* and *Searching*.

The bonus dice from Skill Marks stack with your Trait Dice ... so if you want to be the best at what you do, get high Traits and high Marks.

Later in the game, you can change Marks

Don't worry too much if you forget something. Your character will earn more Marks as you play the game. Also, you will be able to trade in Marks you're not using for extra points.

Add 3 Gifts

You may add three Gifts of your choice. They can be any 3 Gifts that you meet the Requirements for.

What Gifts can I take?

What are Requirements?

Some Gifts are *Basic Gifts*. Any character can take these Gifts. There are no special requirements, prerequisites or other conditions.

Advanced Gifts will have one or more requirements — conditions that must be met before your character is allowed to have these Gifts. Sample requirements include:

- ↔ *Another Gift*. For example, you can't take the Gift of “Rapid Guard” unless you already have the Gift of “Veteran”. If you don't already have the Veteran Gift, you will have to buy Veteran as one of your 3 starting Gifts, then buy Rapid Guard as another of your starting Gifts.
- ↔ *A minimum Trait*. For example, the Gift of “Animal Magnetism” requires “Species Trait of d10 or better”. If your character's Species Trait is d10, or d12, then you may take the Gift. If the Trait is only d4, d6, or d8, you may not. You may use the Gift of “Increased Trait” to raise a Trait to the level you need.
- ↔ *Special permission from the Game Host*. For example, the gift of “Ordainment” would make your character a recognized priest or priestess of a popular religion. Such characters can be fun to play, but they also have big obligations. You and your Game Host should spend a minute or two to discuss what the Gift means and how it will affect your character.

When a Gift has multiple requirements, you must have all the requirements before you can take it. For example, the gift of “White Magic” requires both “Literacy” and “Cleric's Trappings”. Your character must have both Gifts before they can take “White Magic”.

What Gifts should I take?

As an adventurer, your character will live a dangerous life, so some Gifts will be more popular than others:



CHARACTER CREATION

- ↔ **Increased Trait** – If you're unsure what Gifts to take, then making your Trait Dice bigger is always good. The Gift of Increased Trait improves a die to the next size. For example, a Speed of d6 would become d8. Use Increased Trait to get rid of that d4 you start with, or to improve your Career Trait (since you'll be using your Career Die a lot).
- ↔ **Literacy** – The world of Ironclaw is primitive, and there's no popular education. Characters without the Gift of Literacy cannot read at all! A few Careers, such as wizards, start with Literacy ... but most Careers don't. If you want your character to be able to read and write, take Literacy.
- ↔ **Luck** – This Gift allows you to force a die to be re-rolled, taking the best of three throws. Luck can be a real life-saver. And since Luck works on almost any die roll, it can also fix your character's bad Skill rolls, making Luck a good buy for multi-talented heroes.
- ↔ **Resolve** – Characters who get beaten up a lot learn how to walk it off. The Gift of Resolve lets you use your Will to resist damage. Fighting Careers start with Resolve, but it's a good buy for anyone who might take a hit.
- ↔ **Toughness** – Some folks are made of sterner stuff. The Gift of Toughness may be tapped to weaken damage done to your character. What's more, a character can take the Gift of Toughness multiple times, to weaken multiple hits.
- ↔ **Veteran** – The Gift of Veteran improves how your character aims at their targets and how they guard against attackers. Most fighting Careers start with Veteran; all would-be warriors should take it.

Some Gifts say "+1 Mark" to a Skill. These Gifts can push you over the 3-Mark Limit

For example, the Gift of Knack gives you +1 Mark to a Skill of your choice. If you already had 3 Marks in Stealth, then you now have 4. Only Gifts that grant Skill Marks can push you over the 3-Mark limit, at character creation. (After you start playing the game, there is no limit to Skill Marks.)

Later in the game, you can change Gifts

Don't worry too much about whether this Gift is better than that Gift, or if you're choosing the "wrong" Gifts. Your character will earn more Gifts as you play the game. Also, you will be able to trade in Gifts you're not using for extra points.

Add up your Skill Marks to determine Skill Dice

After all Marks and Gifts are taken, you can now determine your Skill Dice. More Marks means more dice.

- ↔ Zero Marks = No dice.
- ↔ 1 Mark = d4
- ↔ 2 Marks = d6
- ↔ 3 Marks = d8
- ↔ 4 Marks* = d10
- ↔ 5 Marks* = d12
- ↔ 6 Marks* = d12, d4

* At this step in your character's creation, more than 3 Marks is only possible if you have a Gift that adds Marks.

Dice from Skill Marks do not add to Traits

The extra dice you get from Skill Marks stay in their own column. For example, a Trait of "Species: Horse d6" would give you a d6 in Endurance. If you put 1 Mark in Endurance, you would have an extra d4, for a total of "d6, d4". (You do *not* have a d8.)

Choose a Name

Wow, did we actually get this far, and your character doesn't have a *name* yet? Let's fix that!

Common Names

Every character has at least one common name, so we know who is who in a crowd. Different regions of Calabria will have different naming conventions. Here's a listing of 52 names to help get you started.

Sample Female Names		Sample Male Names	
Abelinda	Nerilda	Alais	Nicephore
Belamire	Odelie	Beauvais	Odilon
Celestyna	Pierrine	Calixto	Petronius
Damasile	Qerene	Dalvany	Quentilien
Eldorienne	Renata	Echetone	Raguenot
Franzoez	Stessy	Foucauld	Sauvaire
Grilequin	Theognosia	Garion	Theudbald
Hombelina	Ultragotha	Heracleus	Ulderic
Irounia	Vigilia	Itamar	Vicente
Javiere	Wynne	Jean-Matthieu	Wilmot
Khalidah	Xavierre	Konhoyarn	Xever
Lecheme	Yfame	Leofred	Yariv
Magloirienne	Zozimene	Malaquias	Zemarchus

Noble Surnames

Horses of noble birth will have the surname of their house: *Boulangier* or *Moulin*. An arrogant knight-errant might declare their last name to simply be *Avoirdupois*.

CHARACTER CREATION



Noble foxes, especially grey ones, may be of the *Rinaldi* blood-line. The Rinaldi once ruled all of Calabria, but their house has fallen into deep decline. These days, the Rinaldi have all the privileges of nobility but none of the respect.

Boars of high privilege are *Doloreaux*.

Wolves of nobility are almost always *Bisclavret*, but often they may claim another house.

The Avoirdupois horses, Bisclavret wolves, and Doloreaux boars, are the three *Great Noble Houses*. The Great Houses recognize each other as peers. The Rinaldi foxes are the *First Great House*, and their patriarch, the *Don Rinaldi* or *High King Rinaldi*, is recognized by the Great Houses as the rightful ruler of all of Calabria.... Well, the letter of the law recognizes the Don, anyway. In reality, the Rinaldi have become so weakened that the Great Houses do as they want, fighting their battles amongst each other. Each Great King hopes to gain enough power so that he may declare himself High King and then crush any challengers to their title.

Not all horses, boars, and wolves need be of noble blood of a Great House. There are still tribes of commoners who serve their blooded masters. So yes, you can play a horse who isn't an Avoirdupois.

Dozens of other noble bloodlines exist. These *Lesser Houses* or *Minor Houses* have sworn fealty to a Great House. With the permission of the Game Host, you can make up your own Minor House, complete with its checkered history of marriages, fortunes, and scandals. The Gazetteer has a lot more details on the world, and it starts on page

Nicknames

Most commoners don't have a last name. Often, folks will earn *nicknames*, to tell them apart: "Young Pierre", "Fat Pierre", "Pierre the Polecat", "Pierre the Miller", "Pierre from Granvert", "One-Eyed Pierre", and so forth. Sometimes, the reason for the nickname is long gone, but the nickname sticks – for example, maybe "Old Pierre" died twenty years ago, and Young Pierre has since turned gray, but everyone still calls him that, so it sticks.

A proud character may try to start their own nickname, such as "Mavra the Ineluctable". Such nicknames will only stick if they keep working at it.

Sometimes someone will just pick up a nickname at the scene and use that for conversation. It's common knowledge that wizardry can be worked against someone, by means of knowing the target's name.

Forms of Address

What do you call someone in formal speech? How do you introduce yourself to strangers? The *forms of*

address in Calabria are numerous and strange. Here are some tips.

Only nobles – that is, characters with the Gift of Nobility – may be addressed as "Sir" or "Madam". There are numerous forms of address and how to say them – characters with the Gift of Etiquette will know how to speak with nobles without embarrassing themselves by using the wrong form of address.

Characters with the Gift of Ordainment are recognized priests and priestesses. The lowest-level ordinaries in the Church of s'Allumer are addressed as "Brother" or "Sister". Common clerics – that is, folks with s'Allumer careers who are not ordained – may be addressed as "Presbyter", such as "Presbyter John". Uneducated lay-folk may slur the words and say "Prester John", instead.

There are no men ordained in the Old Faith of the Doloreaux. Ordained women, known as *Hierarchs*, are addressed as "Blessed".

Commoners are addressed as "Good", such as "Good Hendrick, have you seen my purse?"

Choose a Motto

Your character's *Motto* represents their personal outlook on life. When you're not sure what a character would do, read the motto again, and then act accordingly.

Mottos help you get into the role-playing mood

At the beginning of each play session, you and your fellow players will read your character's *Motto* out loud. Be enthusiastic! It's time to get into character.

Mottos help you earn Experience Points

At the end of the play session, you and your fellow players will once again read your *Mottos*, and then it's up to the Game Host to decide if your character lived up to the *Motto*. If your character kept to the spirit of their *Motto*, the Game Host will award 1 Experience Point.



Sample Mottos

Choose a motto that not only defines your character's outlook on the world, but also encourages taking some kind of action. Mottos earn points, so you want a motto that's broad enough to cover a variety of heroic acts, but is also one that says when and why your characters does the things that they do. Here are some examples:

- ↔ "All for one and one for all."
- ↔ "Deeds, not words."
- ↔ "Discretion is the better part of valor."
- ↔ "Duty first."
- ↔ "Failure is the mother of success."
- ↔ "First toil, then the grave."
- ↔ "First, do no harm."
- ↔ "Fortune favors the bold."
- ↔ "Get them before they get you."
- ↔ "Honor in all things."
- ↔ "Justice will prevail"
- ↔ "Keep your faith alight, but keep your powder dry."
- ↔ "Know no fear, serve with joy."
- ↔ "Knowledge is belief, belief is power."
- ↔ "Many can hide, but few can stand."
- ↔ "No one is above the law."
- ↔ "No one punishes me with impunity."
- ↔ "Nothing is done in this world until men are ready to die for it."
- ↔ "Peace to all good people."
- ↔ "Success is the nobler brother of revenge."
- ↔ "There's always something new beyond the horizon."
- ↔ "When good folk do nothing, evil prevails."

Choose a Starting Goal

Each character starts with one *Goal* that you get to pick. After character creation, only the Game Host may assign new Goals.

Sample Starting Goals

Your first Goal should be pretty simple. It should be the kind of Goal that starts you on the road to adventure. Here are some sample Goals. Pick one, or make your own:

- ↔ Defeat a foe in combat.
- ↔ Get out of town.
- ↔ Get paid.
- ↔ Go on a real adventure.
- ↔ Help someone out of danger.
- ↔ Meet a real hero.

Choose your Equipment

You may start with up to 8 stone (50 kg) of Cheap and Average equipment. You also begin the game with the Equipment listed in any Trappings Gifts you have taken.

You also start with loose change equal to the maximum that you could roll on your Career Die. For example, if your Career Die is d8, then you start with 8 coins, called *denarii*. Write that number down on your character sheet, in the "Money" section.

Battle Array

The last step in Character Creation is to fill out the battle array. It's best to take a few minutes to fill this out *before* a fight starts, to avoid delaying the game.

Your **Initiative** is your *Speed & Mind Dice*. You roll these dice at the start of the battle to see how ready you are.

Your **Stride** is usually 1. Gifts can improve this.

Your **Dash** is half of the maximum you could roll on your Speed Dice. (d4=2, d6=3, d8=4, d10=5, d12=6), with a +1 if your Body trait is *greater* than your Speed Trait. If you carry too meach gear and become Burdened, your Dash drops to zero.

Your **Sprint** is your Speed die. Sprint movement is random.

Your **Run** is the *maximum* you could roll on your *Body die*, *plus* the *maximum* you could roll on your *Speed die*, *plus* your *Dash*. For example, if your Body was d8 and your Speed was d4, then your Run would be 8+4+3, or 15.

For **Equipment**, you can start with as much Cheap and Average gear as is appropriate. Careers list the equipment they start with.

Your **Attack** dice vary from weapon to weapon. See the Equipment chapter for more details.

Your **Defenses** also vary, but everybody gets at least a **Dodge** defense, which is your *Speed die* and any *Dodge Dice* you have from Skills and the like.

Cover is from shields or cloaks (or magic)

Your **Soak** is your *Body die*. (If you have the Gift of Resolve, you may include your *Will die*, too).

Your **Armor** is from equipment. Most people prefer to list both their dice and their type of armor, such as "Leather d6". Some folks will wear two types of armor, such as "Leather & Cloth d6, d4", at the expense of their Dodge dice and their Dash.

As for **Money**, you start with *denarii* equal to your maximized Career die. So if you have a Career of d6, you start with 6 denarii.

TWELVE STEPS TO MAKE A CHARACTER

STEP ONE: Choose your Traits. You may assign two d8s, three d6s, and one d4. Higher is better.

STEP TWO: Choose your Species. Fill in the blanks, as appropriate. In the Gifts section below, Fill in your Species Gifts.

STEP THREE: Choose your Career. Fill in the blanks, as appropriate. In the Gifts section below, Fill in your Species Gifts.

STEP FOUR: Choose your Personality. You may now claim a bonus d12 to do something appropriate.

STEP FIVE: Choose your Local Knowledge. Ask your Game Host for suggestions.

STEP SIX: Add thirteen Marks to skills. You may put up to 3 Marks in any one Skill.

STEP SEVEN: Choose Gifts. You get 3 Species Gifts, 3 Career Gifts, and then any 3 Gifts of your choice.

STEP EIGHT: Choose a Name. What do they call your character?

STEP NINE: Choose a Motto. What motivates your character?

STEP TEN: Choose a Goal. What does your character want to do?

STEP ELEVEN: Choose your Equipment. Each Career lists starting gear, but you can add more.

STEP TWELVE: Fill out the Battle array. Write in your Initiative, Stride, Dash, Sprint, and Run. What are your Attacks? Defenses? Soak? Armor? You start with Denarii equal to your max Career Die.

NAME: MAVRA THE INELUCTABLE

SPECIES: RED FOX (d4) **CAREER:** WARRIORS (d8)

STATS: Body 7, Mind 6, Speed 8, Will 6

PERSONAL MOTTO: JUSTICE WILL PREVAIL

GOALS (up to three):

-
-
-

BATTLE Initiative: d12, d8, d6 (Speed & Mind Dice)

Movement: Stride: 1 (1) Dash: zero (1/2 Max Speed) Sprint: d8 (Speed die) Run: 12 (Max Speed + Dash)

Attack: ROD @ CLOSE d8, d6 DAMAGE +2
 CREATE AIR @ MEDIUM d10, d8 DAMAGE +2 CRITICAL
 LIGHTNING BOLT @ MED d10, d8 DMG +3 CRIT., CONFUSE

Defense: Defense Dice Effect
 Speed & Dodge Dice d10, 2d8 Dodge
 COUNTER w/ROD d8, d6
 PARRY w/ROD d12, d8, d6 BLOCK MILES

Soak: d6 (Body dice) **Armor:** LEATHER & Y.ROBE d6

Combat Modifiers (Cover Dice, Gifts, etc.):
 X @ USE READY ACTION TO CALL FORTH A "CREATE AIR" SPELL.
 X @ USE AIM ACTION TO BOTH AIM AND UPGRADE "CREATE AIR" TO LIGHTNING BOLT. USE "ATTACK" ACTION TO LAUNCH SPELL.
 SECRETS OF AIR = EXTRA REFRESH TO USE ON ONE AIR MAGIC GIFT.

Damage & Other Status:
 any hit = Reeling (penalty d8; no Counters) Burdened (Dash is zero, limit of d8 to Skills)
 1 hit = Hurt (+1 damage) Over-Burdened (Burdened, can't run, disadvantaged)
 2 hits = Afraid (cannot attack or rally) Unconscious (helpless)
 3 hits = Injured (+1 damage)
 4 hits = Dying (get first aid!) Knockdown (disadvantaged, can't retreat)
 5 hits = Dead (beyond mortal help)
 6 hits = Overkilled (allies become Afraid)

Gifts: Personality: ZEALOUS (X for bonus d12, six and appropriate roll)
 Language: Calabrese (Speak the most common language of Calabria)
 Local Knowledge: (bonus d12 for local knowledge rolls)
 Combat Save: (X to negate Dying or Dead from failed Defense)
 Species: DANGER SENSE (D12 TO INITIATIVE, OBSERVE DANGER)
 Species: KEEN EARS (HEAR ULTRASONIC AND QUIET NOISES)
 Species: NIGHT VISION (PARTIAL DARKNESS --> NO DARKNESS)
 Species: ELEMENTALIST'S TRAPPINGS: YELLOW (STUFFED)
 Career: ELEMENTAL MAGIC (USE ELEMENTAL SPELLS & WEAPONS)
 Career: LITERACY (CAN READ AND WRITE)
 Luck: (X TO RE-ROLL ONE DIE 2 MORE TIMES, TAKE BEST)
 SECRETS OF AIR MAGIC (EXTRA MAGIC REFRESH)
 LIGHTNING BOLT (AIM UPGRADES "CREATE AIR")

EXPERIENCE: Spend 3 to buy a Skill Mark. Spend 10 to buy a new Gift.

Money: Orichalks: _____ Denarii: _____ Quincunx: _____ Aureals: _____
 (=1/12D) (=1D) (=3D) (=24D)

STEP SEVEN: Choose Gifts. You get 3 Species Gifts, 3 Career Gifts, and then any 3 Gifts of your choice.



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