

# *Dreaming Waters*

The Leftover Bits

by  
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*this work is dedicated to*

*America's heroic CEOs  
and their endless daily struggle against  
madness-inducing  
extradimensional evil.*

*"There's a reason not just anybody wants these jobs."  
—Mr. Paulson, ripping himself out of a spined and cherklish flume,  
in a candid 1999 interview*

*or to, you know, some other dedicatable people.  
You make the call!*

## Examples

Everything starting with the magic section needs more examples and more Dreaming Waters-specific examples. I only had a chance to be completist through ranged weapons.

## Fight, Heart, Spirit Reconciliation

It began to seem as things moved towards their close that I needed to take some time and properly define the consequences for defeat in Fight, Heart, and Spirit.

It began to seem like I could re-cast Spirit loss cleanly in terms of magic stuff.

Heart loss, because of the massive revisions on the Heart stuff when I got there, is completely incoherent. I think there's the root of how to fix that here.

I think it's possible to make this a fairly solid and tight design from both traditional and modern perspectives, hooking this stuff properly into the stipulations.

I like the rules for powering through Crises. They should be used for mooks too.

### Some Notes I Scribbled to Myself Here

At one point I wrote to myself, in re: more indie takes on this,  
"In particular, you defeat someone's Fight to win a concrete stake, their Spirit to win a metaphorical one?"

At another point I wrote:

"Consider replacing the whole concept of "death" with . . .  
some kind of NPC thing."

And

"Consider also having the Heart failure modes replicated in Fight and Spirit failure modes."

### Heart Shell

I should probably also fix the stuff early on that gave away Heart Shell. It used to be that Crises were "Difficulties," and they just sat there and

occasionally damaged you when you failed, missed, or your interval ended. Now that they're not, Heart Shell doesn't need to be given away free in chargen.

## Heart Weapons and Songs

This stuff needs more editing. I was in a hurry by the time I got there, and just doing basic adaptation on August notes.

## Magic and Songs

I think there's now room to code up world-changing elemental magic as Heart Weapons. See above.

## A Bit Deleted from Crises, that I Found Interesting:

This Crisis has the following special property:

Spirit Weapon: this Crisis is a Mind-Twisting Weapon that targets your Spirit Defense, and inflicts Spirit Damage. If it defeats you, you become confident of a certain interpretation, which may or may not be false.

# Needed Cleaning

I also should extract terrain control rules more than they are, so that they only take a few sentences per weapon.

And I need to clarify bleed timing.

The great libraries, referred to later, should be put in the setting.

Apparently there are "last throes" rules somewhere I was working on, and then had to stop, leaving them incomplete.

Descriptive resolution (just playing it out) is never defined or described. It needs to be, before or during simple action rules.

I wrote very late in the work: "Put another way, characters don't really have to define precisely where they are in a building until an enemy tries to constrain them with a ranged weapon or close to Melee Range."

This should appear much earlier.

I overloaded the word "defeat" when talking about Crises. When a Crisis defeats you means "tactical defeat, or caps out on Heart Damage," but it could be read by readers as referring to "you give up totally, or run out of Heart."

# Not Included

Bibliography—

Should mention Nausicaa re: wing-boards.

I was thinking of trying to include Projects.

Slake & other monster writeups & weapons.

Key thought: handling things like Starholm, where it's good but you are not allowed to be confident of that, is a good use of dice. Similarly the gift that breaks enshrouding.

Catch-nets: obstacles made by stringing large numbers of catch-ropes through the sky. They're generally only deployed by large groups.

Additional magic types, such as protective & kindling magics.

Stuff on campaigns, including XP and a sample campaign.

I had a cool idea for xp that involved . . . becoming closer to people. It was neat. Not sure if I have details anywhere, or how much it specifically referred to storms. Anyway, your social connections are the basic XP form.

Healing.

I'm not sure the Heart Weapon wielding rules are anywhere made clear, or even if I had a clear notion that I wrote down somewhere. They may contradict, if not.

# Leftover System: Drumbeat of Battle

*Something* like this is necessary. I think it can probably be dramatically simplified if the Fight/Heart/Spirit reconciliation/fixing goes well.

## The Drumbeat of Battle

Characters may achieve basic competence through skill and practice, but to display true mastery they must also have drive. Something must motivate them, something must sweep them up, something must allow them to exceed their normal level and transcend the basic forms.

This is the *drumbeat of battle*.

Each character in a detailed action resolution displays a level of passion, exultation, or energy ranging from 0 to 5. It normally begins at 0, but rises if events or circumstances give the character the appropriate fuel:

- someone wants to see what you can do;
- someone helps you believe in yourself;
- someone is asking for the best from you;
- someone has shown you how to go beyond yourself;
- something is triggering a passion;
- someone is condemning or jeering at you;
- you're facing a monstrous injustice;
- someone is hurting and needs you;
- someone infects you with their passion;
- something inspires you to a grand vision;
- someone says just the right thing to inspire you; or
- someone praises you.

Each character has their own kind of *fuel*—in addition to some standard kinds of fuel, and the ability to use a different kind of fuel with specific GM permission. This is the thing that acts for them as the big driver that can push them beyond themselves.

If you think that you're getting your character's fuel from circumstances, or want them to get it, then you can stipulate that that fuel is there. The GM may agree, or disagree, or take the neutral position of "well, if you say so." The first case means that you gain motivation—your "battle template" increases to the next level. The second case means that you were wrong about the situation or that the GM just can't imagine how you'd get fuel from it. The third case means that you're effectively raising the stakes.

For instance, if your fuel is that *someone is hurting, and needs you*, then the three cases are the GM going:

- "Yes, someone is definitely hurting. This person definitely needs you."
- "No, that doesn't make sense." *And*
- "All right, but if you fail, this person will be hurt."

In some games, and in some situations, it doesn't make sense to use the third option as-is: it's just too weird for the player or for the GM to make the player's decision to raise the stakes definitive. But at the same time, the GM will be indifferent or ambivalent as to whether the situation is genuinely such as to merit kicking up the tempo on the drumbeat of battle. In such cases, the best way to handle things is to roll a number of dice equal to the relevant Attribute to *decide* whether the situation merits it. Success means that things are in fact "that bad" or "that important"—you genuinely do need to step things up a bit because if you fail, that person really will be hurt. If you don't get any successes, then you were worrying too much. That person won't be hurt if you do poorly, so you can relax!

Appropriate fuel has the power to increase your battle template from 0 to 5. The benefits depend on what your "battle template" is—and each character may pick one of their own, something suited to their fighting style. There are six choices below:

- **The Destroyer**, who goes into a destructive fury;
- **The Genius**, whose art becomes a perfect expression of their ideals;
- **The Magician**, who wields powerful magic in combat;
- **The Novice Hero**, who triumphs despite the odds and their own failings;
- **The Unrelenting Hero**, who falls but keeps standing up again; and
- **The Willow Tree**, who flows seamlessly through the battle.

These have rough associations with the Attributes—Fierce people tend to be the destroyer, for instance—but it's really up to you which you choose. An impressionable destroyer, or a disreputable willow tree, is just as valid as any other choice.

It's also OK for the GM and the players to work out new styles. There's room for a style that focuses on stipulations, and for variant styles, and for combinations of two existing styles; after that, you're probably going to need to create wholly new game mechanics or draw out some of the stranger mechanics currently in the rules, since the templates here touch on most of the mechanical fiddly bits available in the combat rules.

Your battle template generally sinks back down to 0 as the situations that fueled you resolve or peter out. If a new scene or situation starts, then assume by default that your template is back to 0—if that doesn't seem to make sense to you, then ask the GM whether it can stay high, and how high it should stay.

## Battle Templates

### The Destroyer

*Associations:* Fierce

As the drumbeat of battle fills you, you become stronger and deadlier. You lay waste to every obstacle in your path.

- **Level 0:** this fight isn't getting your blood pumping yet.
- **Level 1 (Focus):** improve Accuracy, Control, or Solve by 1.
- **Level 2 (Deadly Blow):** once each interval, you can skip the roll to do Damage or make Progress, instead just declaring that you succeed.
- **Level 3 (Brutality):** when you roll to deal Damage/make Progress, you do as much extra Damage/Progress as you roll—even if you miss or fail. For instance, when you roll a 7, you'll do 7 points of Damage before the effects of failure.
- **Level 4 (Focus):** you may perform epic moves with a 9 as well as a 10.
- **Level 5 (Cataclysmic Destruction):** you may skip any roll to do Damage or make Progress, instead just declaring that you succeed—but if you *do* roll, your brutality damage is now twice what you roll.

### The Genius

*Associations:* Reliable

Your battle style becomes a thing of beauty—a perfect form, expressing the ruling passions of your heart. Who could stand against such a fighter? Not one thousand, not ten thousand, not all the monsters in the world!

- **Level 0:** your forms are a bit lifeless—you don't have anything strong enough to drive you on.
- **Level 1 (Defense):** improve Defense, Spirit Defense, and *Solve* by 1.
- **Level 2 (Fight):** gain 20 Fight, Heart, or Spirit (your choice).
- **Level 3 (Unstoppable):** Your interval length improves by 2.
- **Level 4 (Fight):** you may take Damage to any of your Fight, Heart, or Spirit. You may Effectively they are a single shared pool until the battle ends.
- **Level 5 (Mastery):** you are proficient with all weapons; conversely, any enemy attacking you *fails* on an 8 as well as a 7.

## The Novice Hero

*Associations:* Attentive

You're scared—but you're going to face your fear, and throw the enemy down. Because that's what heroes have to do. That's what you have to do.

Just remember who you're doing this for.

You're not alone.

- **Level 0:** you're trying hard, but it's not helping. Maybe you aren't the hero today.
- **Level 1 (Shell):** gain 3 Shell, Spirit Shell, or Heart Shell (max 10).
- **Level 2 (Everyone's With You):** you can get *assistance* on either 1 or 2. Victory in this conflict will earn you an extra Exemplar Die.
- **Level 3 (Heroically Averted):** any attack that would deal 10+ Damage to you instead deals 0. Any round in which you would take 30+ Damage, you instead take 0.
- **Level 4 (Stumbling Path):** after any *failure*, and assuming that you find some way to get back on your metaphorical feet and continue fighting, gain one Exemplar Die. On any epic move, deal an extra +2d6 Damage.

- **Level 5 (Pinnacle):** any allies fighting with you gain 3 Shell, Spirit Shell, or Heart Shell (max 10). Gain two Exemplar Dice.

## The Unrelenting Hero

*Associations:* Helpful

It doesn't matter how much they hurt you. Your unconquerable spirit means you get up and keep fighting, because there's something or someone important you're fighting for.

- **Level 0:** this isn't one of those days where you keep getting up. This is one of those days where you stay down.
- **Level 1 (Stand Up):** if you run out of Fight, Heart, or Spirit you can roll a d10. If you get an 8+, you are not defeated: instead, you cannot act or take further damage next round, and then you get up with a minimum of 10 in each of Fight, Heart, and Spirit.
- **Level 2 (Resilience):** when someone rolls to do Damage to you and misses or fails, or you roll to Solve a Difficulty and succeed, you may also gain as much Fight, Heart, or Spirit (your choice) as the number on the die.
- **Level 3 (Stand Up):** you may now "stand up" on a roll of 6+ rather than 8+, and with a minimum of 20 each in Fight, Heart, and Spirit.
- **Level 4 (Struggle Onwards):** you do not lose interval in any round where you take Damage.
- **Level 5 (Unrelenting):** stipulate that you will achieve some important thing in this conflict, even if you do not succeed. You no longer lose Exemplar Dice for running out of interval or being defeated. If you run out of Fight, Heart, or Spirit while the GM feels you have not achieved anything important during the conflict, you "stand up" automatically.

## The Willow Tree

*Associations:* Insightful

As you find your "balance" in combat, you become like an untouchable ghost. It's not prowess—it's the yielding, quiet power of someone who can flow with the enemy's actions and find the least resistant path.

- **Level 0:** your mind is full of unnecessary thoughts; this isn't a great day for showing off the way of the willow tree.
- **Level 1 (Low Priority Target):** enemies will not choose you to target if there is any reasonable alternative.
- **Level 2 (Mobility):** you receive an extra normal move in each interval. You receive a bonus of +2 when resisting terrain control or a +2 Defense against free attacks as a form of terrain control.
- **Level 3 (Recovery):** once per interval, you may automatically recover from one negative effect such as a round where you cannot act or a penalty to Defense or Accuracy.
- **Level 4 (Mobility):** you may now ignore terrain control. Enemies that miss you must inflict Damage on themselves.
- **Level 5 (Invisibility):** enemies will not choose you to target unless you have attacked them this interval.

## The Magician

*Associations:* None

As the drumbeat of battle fills you, you put aside petty material things like swords and axes and fight the enemy with unassailable five-element techniques. You can use this template even if you're not a trained magician; it works almost as well for those who draw on natural magical tools such as a pure heart or a powerful fear.

- **Level 0:** your focus is the physical world.
- **Level 1 (Spirit Weapons):** your spirit weapons have a -1 Defense against physical attack.
- **Level 2 (Spirit Luck):** once per interval you may use yin-yang power to re-roll a die.
- **Level 3 (Untouchable Magician):** your spirit weapons have no effect on your Defense against physical attack.
- **Level 4 (Dual-World Fighting):** you may wield a physical and a spiritual weapon simultaneously. You make only one attack roll in a round, but you gain terrain control and special features from both. Your physical Defense is based on the weapons you wield physically and your Deserving/Wicked Defense is based on the weapon you wield spiritually.
- **Level 5 (Spirit Step):** your physical body is untouchable when you move into the spirit world. This technique draws enemies whom you engage

with into the spirit world: this is not to say that they *must* move or follow your move into the spirit world, but rather that even the most mundane enemy may move with you into the spirit world without breaking character.

## Fueling the Templates

*If for some reason you do not have any Attributes at 3+ (in a weird variant game, say), pick one fuel.*

*If your character really needs one of the other fuels, you can swap it by talking to the GM and having 2 points???*

That bit seems to be a note to myself.

## Attentive Fuel

You may use these sources of "fuel" if your Attentive is 3+:

- **Confidence**, or, someone is asking you to believe in yourself.
- **Expectation**, or, people are asking for your best; and
- **Instruction**, or, someone is guiding you.

## Confidence

Someone is nurturing your belief in yourself. Unfortunately in order to draw on this as a power source, you have to put that belief at stake!

- **Level 0:** you're not very confident.
- **Level 1:** you're stipulating that this is a test of your newfound faith in yourself.
- **Level 2:** someone important has been teaching you to stand on your own two feet—but you're stipulating that if you fail here, you won't listen to that for a while.

- **Level 3:** you're stipulating that your faith in yourself will shatter if you fail here, and you'll spend a long while focusing on what others feel.

This power source only goes up to level 3—to get to level 5, you need to look at **Expectation**.

## Expectation

One way you can raise your battle template is to stipulate that people are looking to you—that they're asking for, expecting, wanting your best. You have been pushed forward into the limelight.

You have to be able to stipulate to the conditions below, and to some extent the GM has to accept the stipulation. You can't just be picking some merchant's lock and go, "Everyone's relying on me to do my best! And if I can't do this won't they all say that not just myself but my master are the worst?"

But the core of these stipulations isn't the part the GM agrees to.

The important thing is that if you lose, and the higher you've taken your template, the more it shows that you really aren't much. The more it shows that your best just isn't very good. That's part of the stipulation—that people will be disappointed in you, either the harsh hurtful disappointment of "I trusted you to do better" or the softly despairing disappointment of "that's all you were ever capable of. I'm sorry I expected more."

That's the stakes that you're buying into by making these stipulations.

As a practical matter, the dice can't actually decide your worth. If you screw up, even at level 5, a redemption arc can fix things. And all of these stipulations are things that can be true *already*, e.g., it's possible that even that maximum stipulation isn't actually putting anything at stake that isn't at stake already.

But if you're going to raise the stakes in this way, remember to expect that failure matters.

- **Level 0:** it's OK if you fail here, nobody's really looking to you.
- **Level 1-2:** someone important is
  - looking to you to do your best;
  - pinning their hopes on your doing well;
  - testing you;
  - going out of their way to cheer you on.
- **Level 3-4:** people are, or a very important person is:

- *relying* on you to do your best;
- wanting to believe you can succeed, but knowing you probably can't;
- giving up something important in order to trust in you.
- **Level 5:** you're not the only person they expect/demand of the best of. You're also carrying forward something important from someone else, showing off something important from someone else.

## Instruction

This is the power you can get from following others' direction. If you're defeated, it doesn't just mean your failing—it means that they're embarrassed too!

- **Level 0:** you're on your own.
- **Level 1:** someone is guiding you, explaining what to do.
- **Level 2:** you're carrying forward important instructions from someone important to you.
- **Level 3:** you're carrying forward a very important wish for someone in a public place, and you're doing it just as they said. If you fail it's as much a defeat for them as it is for you!

You have to reasonably believe that the person will genuinely lose face if you fail. If they're just teasing you with fake directions or something then they won't *actually* be embarrassed, and nobody's going to fall over unconscious in defeat three towns over because you couldn't carry out their instructions properly—but you really do have to believe that you're legitimately carrying out someone's will and acting as their instrument, and that it's in good part their loss if you fail, or this doesn't work.

The key difference between this power source and "expectation" is that you're not really trying to *live up to someone's ideas or hopes*—you're just trying to act as their agent, or look to them for ideas. That's part of why this power source only goes up to level 3.

## Fierce Fuel

You may use these sources of "fuel" if your Fierce is 3+:

- **Condemnation**, or, people are mocking or jeering at you;
- **Injustice**, or, you're facing a truly monstrous evil; and
- **Dissolution**, or, you've triggered some unworthy passion.

## Condemnation

This is the power you get when people are jeering at you or condemning you as an unworthy warrior. There are two converging reasons why this powers you up. The first is that characters with high Fierce generally seek to prove themselves and their right to define their morality as correct—so insults are a threat to this, rousing an interest in response. The second is that a character with high Fierce, believing that the world and the structure of society has failed them in some way, gets a kind of positive reinforcement from having people shout at them angrily. If everyone just kind of smiled and nodded when they made mischief wouldn't that be the most demoralizing thing of all?

- **Level 0:** nobody's condemning you. Maybe you're just having an off day, or maybe the last really good thing you did was too recent and the last trouble you made too far away.
- **Level 1:** you've been getting a fair diet of insults, condemnation, and mockery recently—enough to put you in either good or angry spirits, even if nobody's doing it right now.
- **Level 2:** you're facing some serious condemnation at this very moment.
- **Level 3:** you're being judged—and by people who're saying that you're totally unworthy, that they don't expect anything good from you, and that you're probably weak to boot, if not necessarily in those words—at this very moment.

The cost of these stipulations is that, in some sense, if you screw up too much, you're proving them right. Both the outside world and your own spirit will conclude, if you activate this power and then screw up, that maybe you've earned that condemnation. Maybe you're weak and wrong. The more power you get from this, the more devastatingly humiliating and/or crushing the result will be.

That said, losing a few fights or struggles and having people take it as clear evidence of your bad and worthless character—that's something that happens to every disreputable warrior now and then. If you don't have your face ground into the manure by some superior person's boot now and again, you'd probably be some other archetype! The stakes are high, but they don't get *that* high—and that's why you can only get to level 3 from this sort of thing. To get higher, turn to **Injustice**.

## Dissolution

This is the power you get from a disreputable passion—from a drive for something like wine or adrenaline or the praise of subservient lackeys, which something in the situation has either triggered or frustrated. It's good to lay out your character's ruling passion(s) if you can gain power from this source, and note which one or two of them are so strong as to both substantially trouble the character's life and to justify the use of the higher levels of this power.

- **Level 0:** you're sated, disinterested, or just not thinking about your vices right now.
- **Level 1:** something's piqued your interest, or taunted you with the lack of one of your passions.
- **Level 2:** you can reasonably stipulate that there's a strong disreputable passion driving you on right now.
- **Level 3:** as level 2, but with a long recent dry spell or an amazing or extraordinary temptation to work you up.

The real cost here isn't so much the stipulation as the effects on your character of making these stipulations on a regular basis. Self-control will dissolve, reputation will sink into the sewer, and the GM may impose the occasional Difficulty or negative modifier to the effect that the character is suffering from indulgence or from cravings.

Even with the great potential cost of being a hopeless addict to your vice of choice, this power source only goes to level 3. (Barring the use of a *Drunkard's Knack*.) If you want your character to really go all-out, you'll have to encounter **Injustice**.

## Injustice

This is the power you get from facing actual evil. The saving grace of the disreputable warrior is that, when the chips are down, no matter how much you dislike ordinary people or your allies or yourself, you can't let injustice and real evil stand. You don't really want people to know—

OK, that's not true, you don't want people to *admit* they know—

That you feel this way, that you're an evil-fighting hero at heart.

But when the chips are down, and you're looking at something truly and genuinely appalling, you will find an excuse to take a stand. If it's monstrous enough, you won't even bother making an excuse; you'll just give anyone who asks why you're involving yourself a *look*.

Unlike the *Suffering* power found under Helpful, you may use this power source even if it is too late to help the suffering. This is a power that allows for vengeance.

- **Level 0:** you're fighting something basically neutral or deserving.
- **Level 1:** stipulate that you're angry at this opponent. It's "trash" or "bull," like another disreputable warrior, or a venial official, or a stuck door.
- **Level 2:** stipulate that you have it in for this opponent. They're Wicked. They need to pay.
- **Level 3:** stipulate that something is actually unforgivable—that unless it turns out you were wrong on the facts, you *have* to deal with this person or event or lose self-respect.
- **Level 4:** stipulate that you're sickened to your core and driven to answer this evil. You're even willing to be a little Wicked yourself, if it helps to bring justice.
- **Level 5:** stipulate that this is absolutely antithetical—that you're willing to die, to sacrifice what you love, to do unforgivable things, as long as it brings some justice to this evil.

The higher levels of this path state that the character is willing to take brutal and unforgivable actions of their own. This is not a requirement in the strictest sense, but rather one mechanism by which the character may fulfill the obligation put upon them by making these stipulations. Each level increases the mandate that the character puts upon themselves to show their righteous anger against the source of evil—and the amount of emotional energy and time the GM can expect the character to dedicate to the matter. If necessary, the GM can make these expectations explicit and reduce the character's Spirit and Heart until they either live up to them or make a convincing peace with the fact that they have not.

It is often the case that when fighting level 3-5 evils the character will encounter lieutenants or incidents that do not entirely justify their wrath. An evil sorcerer who corrupts whole nations may justify level 4 or 5; does that mean that, encountering the sorcerer's loved ones or minions, the character may slaughter them with brutal levels of force?

In such cases, it is up to the player what level applies; however, take note that if you are willing to go all-out level 5 against a minion, you're saying that even the minions are absolutely antithetical to you, that you'd be willing ultimately to die to just do *this much*.

## Helpful Fuel

You may use these sources of "fuel" if your Helpful is 3+:

- **Answering**, or, there's a thing that needs doing.
- **Idea**, or, you've had this really cool idea for something to do; and
- **Suffering**, or, someone is really hurting.

## Answering

This is the power that you get for stepping up to the plate when there is a thing that needs doing. Someone might have asked you to do it, though that's more motivating for the Reliable. Someone might have told you to do it, though that's more motivating for the Attentive. In the end, it's not because they asked or told you, though, it's because the thing needs to be done.

- **Level 0:** you're either being selfish or you're being nice—it's not *important* to do what you're doing.
- **Level 1:** stipulate that it matters.
- **Level 2:** stipulate that if you are defeated, bad things will happen—more than just the immediate loss.
- **Level 3:** stipulate that you're stepping up at a crisis point. If you don't manage to succeed then a whole host of catastrophes will ensue, either imminently or otherwise.

The level 1 stipulation is intended as relatively noncommittal—it usually shows more about your character's priorities than the world, but may blur with the level 2-3 consequences. Those are, of course, that if the GM accepts the stipulation then the character really is taking a necessary action, and failure really will be important. For instance, if the character is repairing a wall lest an enemy invade while it is in poor repair, then a level 3 stipulation suggests that the enemy really *will* invade pretty soon, or at least something very bad will happen, if the character gives up or fails to succeed at the detailed action resolution.

That said, seeing a need and answering it isn't the principal power source even for the Helpful. That would be below—**Suffering**.

## Idea

This is the power that you get from having an idea, a vision, a thing that strikes you as whole and good and beautiful and that you therefore really want to do. It's the power that you get from something that *ought to be done*.

- **Level 0:** you aren't very dedicated to what you're working on.
- **Level 1:** stipulate that you're *interested* in what you're doing. It's caught your attention and you'd like to keep working on it.
- **Level 2:** stipulate that you're invested, maybe even a little obsessed, with what you're doing. You don't want to let it go.
- **Level 3:** stipulate that you're actively loyal to the project, the vision, or the dream that you're working on—that you'd stick by it even when it's not wise and go a little crazy if it falls apart. You *have* to see it through or you'll lose faith in the world and a bit of self-respect.

This is intended to cover dedication to and love for a craft and a thing well done, utopian thinking, and a fierce attachment to some dream that originally began as a way to help someone or prevent suffering but has mutated in your mind to become a thing, in and of itself, worth doing. When Helpful people take up ideological loyalty to a cause, such as national unification or building a new city or exterminating unbelievers or delivering a Christmas present to everyone in the nation, it's generally because of this latent drive—this power to lose sight of the immediately important causes for a greater and larger vision, for better and for worse. It's intended to operate much like the Fierce revulsion to Injustice—each level imposes on the character a greater mandate to play out their idealistic dedication, naïve faith, or cynical theory of best practices. Barring a *Visionary's Knack*, though, this caps out at level 3.

## Suffering

This is the power that drives you when you see someone who is suffering or is about to be suffering. This is the power that drives the Helpful to make an answer to the problems of the world.

- **Level 0:** you aren't, just this *moment*, trying to save anyone from being hurt.
- **Level 1:** you're carrying the weight of a lot of suffering that you've seen or helped with recently, and you're doing something that's . . . if not directly related . . . at least a way to make the world better.
- **Level 2:** you're stepping in right now to stop someone from being hurt, or something bad from happening.
- **Level 3:** losing is unacceptable; it would mean that many people would suffer, or one person would suffer horribly.
- **Level 4:** as with level 3, but it's irrecoverable. If you lose or give up, then, even if you manage to pick yourself up again, some people will suffer lifelong scars or something good will be lost forever.
- **Level 5:** you're fighting so that evil and King Evil<sup>1</sup> don't win. If you fail, a pall will descend over the region with consequences that will be long-lasting and tragic.

The cost of these stipulations is at its most profound when the GM had not yet decided how bad your losing would be. For instance, you come across a gang of wicked bandits kidnapping a young merchant. That's a pretty good ticket to level 2. But if you decide to go up to level 4, and the GM goes along with it, then you've just ruled out plotlines like "they hold him for ransom, then let him go" or "they're righteous bandits; he's convinced to join and fund them." If you lose here, then the next time you see that merchant will probably be a dead body on a torture device.

That doesn't mean that it's your character's *fault* that this happens. It's not. Nor is it the player's fault, or the GM's. It's more that you're saying: "This isn't the part of the story where I fight, and lose, and then pick myself up and hunt the bandits and cleverly do a rescue. This is the part of the story where I'm either a hero who can save this person, or I'm not." And if you're right, or close enough to right that the GM will let you or the dice sway them to that path, then there's something actually at stake. So the higher stipulations are you saying that the story makes most sense to you if that thing that is at stake is at stake now.

## Insightful Fuel

You may use these sources of "fuel" if your Insightful is 3+:

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<sup>1</sup> The original setting was going to be more like ASOYO and less like this thing.

- **Sacrifice**, or, you're acting against your own interests to prove someone's worth to them;
- **Shared Burden**, or, someone else can't act, so you have to; and
- **Unity**, or, acting to bring everything and everyone together.

## Sacrifice

This is the power you get from acting against your own interests. You're typically doing this to prove a point—often, that someone has the right to ask that much of you, or that the thing is worth doing. Sometimes you're doing it in a spirit similar to that of **Shared Burden**, below: because you can, that is, when somebody else can't.

- **Level 0:** you are not being terribly self-sacrificing at the moment.
- **Level 1:** stipulate that you don't enjoy what you're doing.
- **Level 2:** stipulate that you'll pay a price later for doing this, but it's worth it because of the good it does others.
- **Level 3:** if you win, you'll still suffer the effects of being defeated—some physical, spiritual, or mental collapse paired with a meaningful setback in your life. However, you won't lose Exemplar Dice from this sort of defeat.

## Shared Burden

This is the power you get from standing up for what others would need or want.

- **Level 0:** you aren't doing this right now.
- **Level 1:** there's someone—another PC or one of your very important people—who'd be motivated at least to level 2 by this. But they're nowhere near or unconscious and unable to act, so it's up to you. For instance, someone's acting totally contemptuous of a disreputable warrior—wouldn't they want you to stand up for them?
- **Level 2:** there's someone—another PC or one of your very important people—who'd be motivated at least to level 3-4 by this. But they're nowhere near or unconscious and unable to act. For instance, you're

disguised as an Attentive friend, and everyone's relying on you/them: surely you can at least push yourself to level 2!

- **Level 3:** as above, but to level 5. Your Helpful friend has failed to stop the works of King Evil; a pall is about to descend on this whole region. Except, you're here. And you know they'd want you to take up their burden. So you do.

## Unity

This is the power that you get from acting to bring everyone together. It's a terrible power for opposing unshakeable evil, but it's one of the most incredible abilities when you're fighting someone who could be turned back to the path of light and justice.

- **Level 0:** right now you are on your own.
- **Level 1:** stipulate that you see something good even in your opponent.
- **Level 2:** gather the will of your friends and allies to help you try, not just to defeat the enemy, but to save them.
- **Level 3:** put the overall success of your actions at risk by struggling to redeem the enemy. Your enemies gain a level of *their* battle template.
- **Level 4-5:** as above, but you have to target the enemy's Spirit, and the GM makes things even more difficult (e.g. by giving the enemy even more of their battle template.)

The cost of this power source is difficulty. You have to get your allies' buy in—at least temporarily—to the notion of saving this enemy. And then, as your own power rises, the GM gets to make the enemy nastier.

Sometimes this means that the enemy *is* nastier.

Other times it's just that—

Well. A sword fighter is a lot scarier when you're unarmed and praying that they'll listen to you and stop fighting, than when you have a sword and skill to use it to defend yourself with. Choosing the path of non-violence gives them a lot more opportunities to hurt you with force. That's scary!

The GM may cap this power source based on the dramatic potential of the scene. Specifically, level 3 requires that saving the enemy be interesting; level 4-5 requires that saving the enemy have a big story payoff.

## Reliable Fuel

You may use these sources of "fuel" if your Reliable is 3+:

- **Correctness**, or, doing things the right way;
- **Duty**, or, you have accepted an obligation;
- **Praise**, or, someone important is praising you or would praise you.

### Correctness

This is the power that you get from conducting yourself in an upright and proper fashion regardless of the circumstances.

- **Level 0:** it is not difficult or interesting to do this "properly." One may ride through the desert after a stolen treasure in a correct fashion, adhering in every respect to the guidance of the Classics, but the only benefit is maintaining the habit of doing things properly.
- **Level 1:** stipulate that there is some principle—some element of the correct way of doing things—at stake.
- **Level 2:** stipulate that you may act in this matter in such a way as to be an example to others.
- **Level 3:** stipulate that to lose, or fail, or be defeated, or give up here is in itself disgraceful—the cost of defeat, on top of everything else, will be shame.

Please note that the GM is unlikely to be indifferent on the intermediate propositions: it's *possible* that they will say, "Since you stipulated it, I will let your actions in this matter be an example to others," but more likely that when you make the stipulation it is either immediately accepted as transparently correct or rejected as inapplicable, self-serving, or false.

### Duty

This is the power of the heart that always seeks to fulfill its obligations to others.

- **Level 0:** this particular action is not in regards to any obligation.
- **Level 1:** you are acting in accordance to someone's explicit expectation.
- **Level 2:** some duty or burden that you are carrying will become harder to fulfill if you fail or give up here.
- **Level 3:** this is a crisis moment: you have a specific duty to succeed. To lose here is to fail in your duty, albeit in a way that may allow you to make amends.
- **Level 4:** as above, but there won't even be a way to make amends. To illustrate the difference: at level 3, you might fail to defend a caravan you're sworn to protect. The merchant will lose money: a path of redemption opens up. At level 4, you're delivering a letter from a dead soldier to his family. If the letter is destroyed, there's nothing left.
- **Level 5:** you can't give up, whatever happens. It's possible that losing or failing would be a shame that you could one day cleanse from your name, or that you could wander the world under a different name and still have some reason to exist. But if you give up here? You'd be lower than a dog.

## Praise

This is the power that you get from being praised by your teachers and very important people. It fills the heart and drives you to greatness.

- **Level 0:** you have not recently elicited praise.
- **Level 1:** you have received a good deal of praise in this story: your name has been on everybody's lips!
- **Level 2:** for just such things as what you are doing now, someone who is Deserving has praised you in the past couple of scenes.
- **Level 3:** for just such things as what you are doing now, your teacher or beloved or similar very important person has praised you in this story.

## Generic Fuel

In addition to these, each character has a specific *passion*—some key unresolved story element that drives them. Some characters will maintain a

single passion through the course of the game; others will resolve theirs and eventually replace it with another, grander goal.

- **Level 0:** your passion is irrelevant to events.
- **Level 1:** this conflict evokes your passion, at least thematically.
- **Level 2:** this conflict is part of your story arc.
- **Level 3:** this conflict is important to the story of your passion. It has a significance to *who you are*. If you lose, there will be a moral as to the nature of your personal failings; if you win, there will be a moral as to your strengths.
- **Level 4:** this battle is key to the story of your passion. To lose is to work an irrevocable element of tragedy and setback into your story. It's possible that this will feed into your ability to move forward again later, for every hero's journey involves a *few* setbacks, but it's also possible that a loss, failure, or surrender here will mean that there's something you've lost from the limits of what's possible.
- **Level 5:** this battle has the potential to resolve your passion, for good or for ill.

## Knacks

Knacks are just a sketch paired with notes to self. I stuck forward references in here as I worked.

### Accurate Weapon

You are particularly accurate with a given weapon or style, gaining a +1 *skill* modifier (max +1).

### Always Polite Speech

You speak in an excessively polite manner. Other players may assist you on any roll where your polite description amuses them greatly, up to three times per session each and even if you don't roll a 1.

### Avoid Consequences

You don't seem to suffer as many consequences for your degenerate or wicked behavior as you ought to—it's almost as if people forget how you've screwed them over any time it wasn't important to the plot! Maybe it's a lucky destiny, or maybe your character isn't actually as evil as described.

### Animal Speech

You can talk to animals. They even listen! Also, and this is probably more important, they can convey information to you.

### Carpentry

You can perform carpentry. If you come up against a Difficulty for which this is relevant, it adds +1d6 to your Progress.

*You may take other similar skills as knacks.*

### Dark Aura

You tend to fit in with Wicked people. If there's no evidence to the contrary, they'll tend to assume that you're sympathetic to them and would work well with them in a pinch. If there *is* evidence to the contrary, they'll assume that you're the moral weak link, the one they can persuade, threaten, or buy off.

### Dominion

Lamia dominion, or captured terror dominion, or something?

### Drunkard's Knack

*requires Fierce 3+*

Once per story, you may use Dissolution to push your battle template to level 5. You must be facing an extraordinary temptation or situation related to one vice (lust for money, alcohol, sex, drugs, fancy clothes, ancient scrolls, or whatnot) chosen when you buy this knack.

### Easy to Praise

*requires Reliable 2 or less*

You attract more praise than most. Sometimes you're even praised for being quiet!

### Embarrassing!

You don't look like a serious warrior or threat. It'd be embarrassing to fight you! Not even an ugly bandit would do that without good cause.

### Extraordinary Skill

Touch of fire thing. Like, instead of magic, you're really good at this thing.

### Faithful Servant's Knack

*requires Attentive 3+*

Once per story, you may use Instruction to push your battle template to level 5. You must be following a detailed set of instructions provided by someone else.

### Fire angel

Free Subject in the sun? Maybe something else too?

### Friends Everywhere

You have a lot of friends. You can usually turn up *somebody* you know just about anywhere. If the GM won't let you find somebody you know automatically, you can choose your approach and make a d10+your Solve roll; the target of the roll ranges from 7 (in your usual haunts) to 12 (stranded in a lifeless desert on an alien world.)

### Ferocious Human

Something about extra proficiencies.

### Healer

Something about minor access to Life Magic. (and other knacks!)

### Idealistic Interval

If your interval is about to end, but some narrow condition specified when you buy this knack is fulfilled (e.g., "my beloved needs me"), you may extend the interval by 2.

### Increased Heart

You begin with +10 Heart. (You may take this Knack twice.)

### Increased Fight

You begin with +10 Fight. (You may take this Knack twice.)

### Increased Exemplar Dice

You begin with +1 Exemplar Pool.

### Increased Spirit

You begin with +10 Spirit. (You may take this Knack twice.)

### Like an Angel

### Like a Machine

### Magician

You start with 60 Spirit and 50 Heart. You are familiar with the spirit world, and others recognize you as a magician.

### Magician, Trained *requires Magician*

You may have proficiency with magical weapons.

### Magic Weapon

If not the above.

### Shamanic Dream

### Spirit Weapon

*requires Magician*

You own a spirit weapon.

### Not So Bad

Some unfortunate trait that you possess is less embarrassing or socially awkward than it would otherwise be. This functions in the same fashion as *Avoid Consequences*.

## Tactical Advantage

Some situation, specified when you buy this knack ("in water," "close-in fighting in an urban environment," "when I can reasonably look down on my opponent," "when my opponent is likely to underestimate me") gives you a tactical advantage. This manifests as +1 Control, Accuracy, or Solve.

## Permanent Exemplar Die

The first point of Exemplar Pool you have can only be spent, not lost.

## Proficiency

You are proficient in an additional weapon. (You may take this more than once.)

## Prompt

You have a permanent +1 bonus to your Promptness.

## Very Important Person

You have a person who is very important to you. They can sometimes assist you even if they're not a PC. If they are a PC, then you're likely to get charged up when fighting with or for them.

## Visionary's Knack

*requires Helpful 3+*

Once per story, you may use Idea to push your battle template to level 5. You must be working towards a thing or plan that you're actively loyal to.

## Warrior

You start with 60 Fight and 50 Heart. You are a good candidate for learning your masters' secret styles and so forth.

## Warrior, Trained

You have additional weapon proficiencies? You may have proficiency with particularly weird weapons?

## Proficiencies

Characters start with the following proficiencies:

You start with five knacks, one battle template, and a passion.

## Antagonists

At some point I wrote down these antagonists for the sample campaign:

- Rags, an angel swayed by sunfire. He is also a possible love interest, either by destiny (for Leah) or by experience (for E. M. Chao).
- The shadow in the dreaming waters.
- The darkness that came to Siskery.
- Some lamia that hunts Daniel. Also a possible romantic interest.
- The truth about Starholm, unless and possibly even if it lives up to its billing.
- Bandit tribes and monsters as obstacles along the way, with an eye towards possible development should other antagonists be difficult to leverage.

# Bits that were going to be short PDF bonus releases for cash or marketing

## Five Element Magic

Based on an earlier draft of the rules

### Earth Mastery (Magic) [Physical Weapon]

-2 Accuracy/2d6 Damage

(+0 Promptness, -2 Defense)

**Very Long Range**

Earth mastery may be used to protect things or keep them still. It may also slowly shape rock and earth, which is to say, stabbing people with rock spears is difficult but starting an avalanche isn't terribly hard.

Earth mastery has the following special features:

**Inflexible:** it costs 10 Fight to switch from earth mastery to another weapon or approach in a single interval.

**Terrain Control:** when an enemy at Medium or Long range attempts to move closer to you, they must roll d10+their Defense. If they roll 13 or less, they choose to lose their action or take 2d6 or +1 damage (max 2d6+5).

**Fail:** your magic *backfires*, pinning you in place. Until the end of your interval, attacking costs you the use of your normal move.

**Epic Moves:**

**Stillness of Stone**—do 2d6 Fight and 2d6 Spirit damage. Until the end of their interval, in each round where the enemy makes an attack, it loses its normal move.

**Earthquake!**—do 2d6 Fight and 2d6 Spirit damage to any number of enemies within Medium range of one another. If their next action includes a move, as a terrain control effect, you may deal an additional d6 Fight.

**Spirit Shelter**—one ally gains 10 Fight, 10 Spirit, and +1 Defense (max +1). This lasts until the end of your interval.

### Fire Mastery (Magic) [Physical Weapon]

-2 Accuracy/2d6 Damage

(+0 Promptness, -2 Defense)

**Long Range**

Fire mastery may be used to rouse or satiate your enemy's passions. Or burn them. With fire.

Fire mastery has the following special feature:

**Delirium:** anyone who damages you while you are wielding fire mastery suffers *delirium*, taking a -1 *delirium* penalty to Accuracy and Control (max -1) until your next interval.

**Fail:** your magic *backfires*, with one of the following effects:

- you are *laughing helplessly*,
- you are in a *reverie of bliss*,
- you are *on fire*,
- you are consumed by a *mad craving*.

You cannot act until the end of your interval. Enemies can spend their normal move to lure you closer, in which case you move towards them. Should a terrain control effect such as archery's terrain control offer you the choice not to move, you may take that choice.

**Epic Moves:**

**Consuming Delirium**—do 2d6 damage to your enemy's Fight and Spirit. They are *maddened* by real or emotional fire and cannot act next turn. You may, if you like, drive them somewhere, causing them to take an immediate normal move towards yourself or some reasonable objective.

**Mists and Flame**—until the end of your interval you may exert the following **terrain control**:

**Terrain Control:** when an enemy at Medium or Long range moves, they must roll d10+their Deserving/Wicked Defense. If they roll 13 or less, they must either cancel their move or move instead towards an objective of your choice. Only one fire master may provide terrain control over a given enemy at a given time; if multiple fire masters would like to exert this control in different ways, each rolls Promptness and the winner provides this control.

### Metal Mastery (Magic) [Physical Weapon]

-2 Accuracy/1d10 Damage  
Very Long Range

(+0 Promptness, -2 Defense)

Metal mastery afflicts enemies with mysterious effects—plagues of birds and butterflies, clinging ghosts, fish falling from the sky, the ability to become hopelessly lost in a straight hallway, and so forth. It offers an enormous variety of interesting curses, but they lack some of the raw stopping power of the other masteries.

Metal mastery has the following special features:

**Inflexible:** it costs 10 Fight to switch from metal mastery to another weapon or approach in a single interval.

**Terrain Control:** when an enemy at Medium or Long range attempts to move closer to you, they must roll d10+their Defense. If they roll 13 or less, they must give up their move or take 1d10 damage. If there are multiple metal masters providing this terrain control, add +1 to the damage for each (max +5) but keep the same basic defensive roll.

**Fail:** your magic *backfires*, afflicting you with an unfortunate affliction of some sort. Your interval ends and you cannot use metal mastery in the next.

*Epic Moves:*

*Magician's Curse*—deal 1d10 Fight and 1d10 Spirit damage to your enemy. Until you next *fail*, that enemy is *cursed*: you may sacrifice your action to deal either 1d10 Fight or 1d10 Spirit damage to that enemy again.

*The Rigorous Magician Commands Heaven and Earth*—increase your Accuracy and Damage by 2 (max +2) until you next *fail*. This extends past the current interval, but does not stack with the benefit for freaky martial arts weapons.

**Water Mastery (Magic) [Physical Weapon]**

-2 Accuracy/1d10 Damage

(+0 Promptness, -2 Defense)

**Very Long Range**

Water mastery manipulates the life force—draining or giving life, as well as manipulating cold and water. It is also useful for stealth, subtlety, and darkness: while useful for healing and building, its principal form is a hungry yin power.

Water mastery has the following special features:

***Flexible***: switching to water mastery only costs 2 Fight, and enemies that are not aware of you do not become aware of you.

***Water Influence***: enemies in range of the water magician lose 1 Spirit every round. Allies gain 2 Spirit per interval.

*Fail*: your heart goes chill. You take 5 Spirit damage and you and your allies are now treated as "enemies" by your water mastery until the end of the detailed action resolution.

*Epic Moves:*

*Life-Giving Mastery*—heal one ally for 10 Fight, Heart, or Spirit. Until the end of your interval, your water mastery gives allies Spirit every round instead of every interval.

*Devouring Power*—pick one enemy. Each time you do damage to that enemy this interval, heal yourself by the same amount. Start with 1d10 Fight or 1d10 Spirit damage now.

## Wood Mastery (Magic) [Physical Weapon]

-2 Accuracy/2d6 Damage

(+0 Promptness, -2 Defense)

Long Range

Wood mastery may be used to twist your enemy's bodies or assault them with wind, vegetation, and insects.

Wood mastery has the following special features:

**Inflexible:** it costs 10 Fight to switch from wood mastery to another weapon or approach in a single interval.

**Wood Influence:** when you use wood mastery to attack, even if you miss or fail, every enemy within Short Range takes 1d6 damage. This is in addition to whatever damage your attack itself achieves.

**Fail:** your magic *backfires*, the natural world or your own body turning against you. Take 2d10 damage to your Fight. You suffer the effect of your own wood influence until the end of the interval.

**Epic Moves:**

**Twisted Flesh**—do 2d6 damage to your enemy's Fight and Spirit. They are *crippled*; each time they move, until the end of their interval, they take 1d6 damage to their Spirit as a terrain control effect.

**Wood-Wall**—do 2d6 damage to your enemy's Fight and Spirit. They are not able to use their normal move until they have spent one round without moving. (That is, this effect does not expire in any round where they follow a moving enemy or ally or use an epic move to move.)

## Additional Unarmed Styles

These unarmed styles add a bit of silly/crazy kung fu action to the **Filial Piety Action System**.

### Dog Style

+0 Accuracy/1d6 Damage

[One-Handed Weapon]

(+0 Promptness, +0 Defense)

Don't call a martial artist a mangy dog—they just might found a style! A dog-style artist bounds about the battlefield knocking enemies over. This uses the same rules as the standard drunken style.

*Fail:* instead of attacking the enemy, you cavort, bark, or pratfall. Gain 2 Fight.

#### *Epic Moves:*

*Scramble*—do 1d6 damage. You have a +2 *dog style* bonus (max +2) on attempts to avoid terrain control until you change weapons or the interval ends.

*Pounce*—do 1d6 damage. Your enemy is *knocked off balance or prone*, losing their normal move for one round and taking a -1 *opening* to Defense (max -3) until their interval ends.

### Eagle Style

-1 Accuracy/1d10 Damage

[Two-Handed Weapon]

(+1 Promptness, +0 Defense)

This martial art is a brutal and deadly style. Its founder, Eagle Sifu, liked to eviscerate his enemies with one hand. The mantra of Eagle Style is "train the eye into an eagle eye, train the hand into an eagle's claw."

This style has the following special feature:

***Eagle Eye:*** you have a +2 *eagle eye* modifier (max +2) to all rolls to become aware of hidden enemies while using this style.

*Fail:* you injure your hand. You may not use eagle style or any weapon or weapon combination requiring two hands until your next interval.

*Epic Moves:*

*Take Flight*—make two normal moves, ignoring terrain control. You do not need a place to stand in between the two moves—you can move through a river or up a cliff. Deal 1d10 damage either to the enemy you attacked or an enemy in Short Range of your new location.

*Eviscerate*—do 4d10 damage. You may not act next round, and this counts against your interval.

*Eagle Blow*—do 1d10 damage to your target and 1d10 to a second enemy within Medium range. This attack uses air pressure and gives a visual sense of a cluster of white feathers striking the second target.

Horse Style

+0 Accuracy/1d6 Damage+1

[One-Handed Weapon]

(+0 Promptness, +0 Defense)

This martial art focuses on powerful open-palm blows and working with a partner, who may or may not be riding on your back. You may also use this style to approximate the abilities of an actual horse, even if that horse is not a martial artist.

This style has the following special features:

**Partner:** designate an ally when you wield this style. When that ally is in Short Range, they gain a +1 *horse style* bonus (max +1) to Defense and Accuracy.

**Mount:** if your designated partner spends a normal move to climb onto your back, then they move with you automatically every time you move and ignore the effects of terrain control. A mounted rider cannot move or be moved away from you. This effect ends when you switch weapons or they spend a normal move to dismount.

*Fail:* you're wide open! (This isn't a terribly good defensive martial art.) Take a -1 *opening* to your Defense (max -3) until the end of your interval.

*Epic Moves:*

*Endless Stamina*—for the rest of the interval, gain 2 Fight every time your partner hits with an attack.

*Charge*—do 1d6+1 damage and make one to three normal moves, taking half damage from any terrain control. If you have a mounted partner, they add a 2d6 *charge* modifier (max 2d6) to the Damage of their next damaging attack. This modifier goes away when your interval ends.

### Fish Style

+0 Accuracy/1d6 Damage

[One-Handed Weapon]

(+0 Promptness, +0 Defense)

This martial art is based on the powerful kung fu of the koi. It works best in water, but can be a savage style on land.

This style has the following special feature:

***Underwater Style:*** this style does 2d10 damage when fighting in waist-deep or higher water.

*Fail:* you flop into a rock or wall, suffering 2d6 damage. Your teacher once bewailed, "Why can't a human move like a fish?"

### *Epic Moves:*

*Cling*—deal 1d6 damage and exert *terrain control* over your target. They suffer 1d6 damage any time they move while within Short Range of you until your interval ends or you cling to another target.

*Drown*—deal 1d6 damage and drive the air out of someone's lungs. They take a -1 *breathless* penalty to Defense and Accuracy (max -3) for:

- 1 round (on land)
- until the end of their interval (in water)
- until they can surface, and then until the end of their interval (underwater)

*Fish Eye*—deal 1d6 damage and *watch* two enemies (max 2) until you change weapons. Only one of these watched enemies can attack you each round—or, more precisely, once one attacks you, if the other also attacks you, they automatically *miss*.

## Hummingbird Style

+0 Accuracy/1d6 Damage  
Medium Range

[One-Handed Weapon]

(+0 Promptness, +1 Defense)

This martial art emulates the elusive quickness and disturbing stare of the feral hummingbird. A "body ripple" or "swift-step" technique based on intensive joint training allows the character to wrench themselves quickly to another location, generally without cuing the enemy in advance as to their direction of movement.

This style has the following special feature:

**Elusive:** enemies must *pin down* the character's location before they can attack the character. This is a roll of d10+their Promptness, made within Short Range, and requires a 7+. Enemies can attempt this roll once per turn; success pins down the location of all elusive characters within Short Range in whom they are interested. Effects that make enemies *aware* of hidden characters also suffice to pin down the location of an elusive character—for instance, a single roll can spot a hidden character and pin down an elusive one, and the eagle style's *eagle eye* gives a +2 modifier on pinning an elusive character down.

**Fail:** you're startled into a swift-step! Make a normal move towards something somewhere else on the battlefield; if terrain control gets in your way, you can spend a point of Exemplar Pool to stay put.

### *Epic Moves:*

**Dash**—do 1d6 damage and then make a normal move, ignoring terrain control.

**Fade**—do 1d6 damage and one enemy that has you pinned down loses track of your location.

**Hummingbird Sting**—deal 3d6 damage against an enemy that does not have you pinned down.

### Sun-Moon Dragon Style

-1 Accuracy/1d10 Damage

[One-Handed Weapon]

(+0 Promptness, +0 Defense)

Refusing to compare themselves to the dragons of the air, Sun Dragon Sifu and Moon Dragon Sifu developed a style based on the lumbering dragons living on the surface of the sun and moon. Practitioners of this style typically wear elaborate costume whose flaring sleeves and flourishes can confuse the eyes of the enemy.

*Fail:* You become absorbed in either the style's movements or philosophical questions regarding its provenance. You cannot act next round, but it does not count against your interval.

#### *Epic Moves:*

*Dazzling Flourish*—do 1d10+1 damage, and your enemy cannot act on what would have been their next action.

*Thrashing Coils*—until the end of your interval, you may use Sun-Moon Dragon Style at Medium Range. Further, every enemy within Medium Range will take 2 points of damage per round.

### Snake Style

+1 Accuracy/1d6+1 Damage

[One-Handed Weapon]

(+1 Promptness, +1 Defense)

The sinuous motions of the snake are a fertile ground for the cultivation of martial arts. The martial artist turns aside attacks with soft power and then cripples the enemy with pressure-point strikes.

This style has the following special features:

***Slithering:*** you receive a +1 *snake style* bonus to your Damage (max +5) and a -1 *snake style* penalty to your Defense (max -5) with this style each time an enemy misses you with an attack. This bonus increases at most once per round, and ends at the end of your interval.

*Fail:* you've lost momentum: lose 2 Fight and reset your slithering bonus and penalty to +0.

*Epic Moves:*

*Nerve Strike*—inflict your normal snake style damage and your enemy takes a *snake style* penalty to your choice of Accuracy or Defense that is equal to your current snake style damage bonus.

*Venom*—inflict your normal snake style damage. The enemy is poisoned and takes damage equal to your current (at the time of this move) snake style bonus until the end of their interval.

### Turtle Style

+0 Accuracy/1d6 Damage

(+0 Promptness, +1 Defense)

This martial art is patterned after the fighting style of the sea and land turtles. Your fists maintain a protective yin-yang shell while you snap at enemies with your teeth or bowl into them with a charge.

This style has the following special features:

***Yin-Yang Shell:*** you gain 3 points of Shell (max 8) when you are using this style. Reduce the damage of each attack that hurts you by this number.

***Terrain Control:*** whenever *you* want to move while wielding this style, even if it's the automatic move to stay with an enemy, you have to roll higher than your current shell on a d10. If you fail, you have to either immediately change weapons or cancel the move.

*Fail:* you withdraw into your shell! You gain 1 Shell (max 8) until the end of the interval, but you can't act next round.

*Epic Moves:*

*Harden*—do 1d6 damage and gain 1 Shell (max 8) until your interval ends.

*Rolling Charge*—make up to three normal moves, ignoring terrain control, and do 1d6 damage.