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Twisted Tunnels

The Phoenix Apocryphon

by John Stephens

*A deadly game of madcap dungeon demolition following
the wicked footsteps of Ken St. Andre*

Malcontents

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Introduction

The Wizard Wars ended in a spectacular meteor storm that decimated the wizard ghods of old and left the planet in ruins. Humanity survived, and slowly they built new outposts of civilization across the shattered lands. Yet the planet is riddled with underworlds of Stygian darkness, filled with every possible terror. There, legends tell of treasures untold and magic beyond measure: the Twisted Tunnels!

In *Twisted Tunnels RPG*, you and some friends play through adventures in the Twisted Tunnels. One of you takes the part of an impartial referee who maps out an adventure site and loads it with diversions and devilry for the other players to discover. Everyone else forms a dungeon demolition team, taking the roles of desperate rogues who descend into the Twisted Tunnels for fun and profit.

Some people will tell you that there are no winners or losers in a role-playing game like *Twisted Tunnels*. Those people are losers. The object of this game is to survive, and your level is a measure of your victory. You win when your characters retire with their fortunes in comfort and security, having attained higher levels than anyone else.

In order to accomplish this, you will delve into the darkest, most devil-infested depths of the Twisted Tunnels. Then you must evade, outfox, or eviscerate the threats in your path, and bring back the most glorious treasures and legendary magics hidden below. If that doesn't kill you, you will recruit allies and lay plans for another descent.

Acknowledgements

Twisted Tunnels is an opinionated re-imagining of Ken St. Andre's 1975 fantasy adventure game that pits swords, wizardry, and wits against troll-infested tunnels. That game is still in print, and you should play it!

Our goal is to celebrate and recover the explosive power of the first role-playing game built on wild adventure yarns of pulp fantasy and comics without the protocol of wargames.

We also want to acknowledge everyone who sent critical feedback and words of encouragement over the many drafts. We will include personal appreciations in the final draft. Thank you!

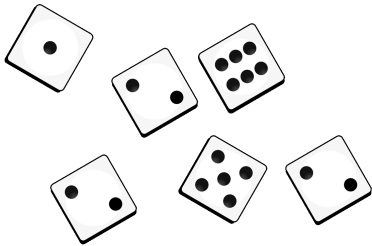
1 Character Creation

1.1 How to recruit a delver

Whether mad, desperate, or foolish, rookie delvers show up on the streets of safe havens. They are a random lot, so we determine their characteristics in a semi-random fashion, as follows:

1. Get some skills.
2. Figure scores.
3. Pick a skin.
4. Figure your fighting dice.
5. Pick some gear.
6. Figure your Haul and Speed.
7. Name your delver.
8. Name your heir/ess.
9. Select a quirk.

I roll 6 dice, getting the following 6 numbers:



That gives me dice for each skill as follows:

1 <i>Charisma</i>	2 <i>Intelligence</i>
2 <i>Constitution</i>	5 <i>Luck</i>
6 <i>Dexterity</i>	2 <i>Strength</i>

From those, I get the following scores:

1 <i>Cha</i>	11	2 <i>Int</i>	12
2 <i>Con</i>	12	5 <i>Lck</i>	15
6 <i>Dex</i>	16	2 <i>Str</i>	12

1.2 Get some skills.

Dungeon delvers have 6 skills: Charisma, Constitution, Dexterity, Intelligence, Luck, and Strength. Each skill has dice and a score. When we talk about your skill number, we always mean its dice unless the “score” is specified.

Hero mode

Start with 1 die in each skill. Hardcore players spit in the face of advantages that they did not win themselves through masterful play.

Casual mode

Roll 6 dice and assign the numbers you get in order to the 6 skills above. If you wish, you may pick 2 skills and swap their levels.

1.3 Figure scores.

Add 10 to your dice in each skill for its score. Your scores represent your grit, and when any score gets to zero you face sudden death.

1.4 Pick a skin.

Your skin represents your character's initial training and nature, whether it's fighting, magic, or miscellaneous. Your skin gives you some limits and starting badges, and there are 3:

Warrior

Warriors are delvers who survive mainly by strategy and armed struggle. They have no magic in their bones.

Warlock

Warlocks are delvers with magic in their bones, trained by the mysterious Cabal in spellcraft.

Maverick

Mavericks are cunning jacks-of-all-trades who can use both weapons and magic.

1.5 Other Traits

Fighting dice

Your fighting skills are Dexterity and Strength. Whichever has more dice is your primary skill in fighting, and the other one is secondary. If they are tied, you pick. If your primary fighting skill is Dexterity, your fighting style is graceful. If your primary skill is Strength, your fighting style is brutal. Your fighting dice are determined by you skin.

Languages

You start with your native tongue, and you can get as many languages as you have Intelligence dice. When you spend time trying to decipher unknown writings or speech, make a Saving Roll on Intelligence. On a success, you can make out the meaning this time, and you may add this language to your list of known languages at your option.

This character looks like the perfect **maverick**, and I'll call him *'Tooth the Tasty*.

'Tooth's high Dexterity makes him a *graceful* fighter. He gets 6 fighting dice from his Dexterity, plus 1 from his exceptional Luck. That makes **7 fighting dice!**

For starting gear, 'Tooth gets a forest green tunic, britches, stocking-cap, backpack, and bedroll for free, along with 1 weapon. I'll take a long dagger—a light weapon.

For additional items, I roll 3 and 4, for a total of 7. I pick an 11-foot pole, a useful bottle, a butterfly net, a crackerjack kit, some hemp rope, a lantern, and 1 pint of oil.

Then for pocket coins, I roll a 2, 5, and 3—that's 10 altogether. I'll buy a shovel with that, because I don't want to have any money to waste in the dungeon.

With 3 **Heavy** items and 6 regular items, my haul is 12—which is all I can carry safely. If I find any loot, I'll put something down!

Haul and Speed

Your Strength score is the number of items you can carry. Heavy items count double, and Very Heavy items count triple. A bundle of small items count as 1. If your Strength score falls, you might need to put stuff down.

When you carry a haul no more than your Dexterity dice, *and* no more than your current Strength score, you are *fast* and *nimble*.

When you try to haul more than your Strength score allows, you are *slow* and *clumsy*, and you automatically fail any Saving Roll until you put something down.

Gear

You get a backpack, your traveling clothes, 1 weapon of your choice, and 1 piece of armor that isn't *uncommon* or *rare*. Then, pick 2d6 additional items. *Uncommon* items count as 2 picks, and *rare* items count as 3. If you want anything that's not on the list, ask the referee.

Coins

Roll 3d6—that's how many pocket coins you have.

1.6 Heir/ess

Let's face it: Your delvers are gonna die in the Twisted Tunnels.

What you can do about it is roll up three characters whenever you need a new delver. You will pick one as the new recruit, and one will be your delver's **heir** or **heiress**. Your heir or heiress stands to inherit all your worldly goods, including your cut of any maps or treasure from your final run, should your delver depart this life.

The third character will be inducted by the referee into a gallery of possible henchmen for hire, should you need backup on a dungeon demolition run, and you have pocket coins to spare.

1.7 Lovable Personality Quirks

Roll or pick 1–3 quirks from the list below, or make up your own. Your quirks are just for inspiration, not a straight-jacket. Feel free to turn over a new leaf at any time! If you get a *flabby*, *narcissistic despot*, or an *overconfident*, *childish murder victim*, it doesn't have to be forever. Think about what your quirks imply about your past—the referee and other characters will ask you about them!

111–116		141–146		211–216	
111	Absentminded	141	Carefree	211	Deaf
112	Aloof	142	Careful	212	Debater
113	Amnesiac	143	Careless	213	Deceitful
114	Analytical	144	Catatonic	214	Decisive
115	Antisocial	145	Champion	215	Deep thinker
116	Anxious	146	Childish	216	Delusional
121–126		151–156		221–226	
121	Artisan	151	Claustrophobic	221	Desperate
122	Attentive	152	Colicky	222	Devoted
123	Beefy	153	Comforter	223	Diplomatic
124	Bereft	154	Confident	224	Direct
125	Bloodlust	155	Confused	225	Dirty
126	Bookish	156	Conservative	226	Disabled
131–136		161–166		231–236	
131	Bored	161	Consistent	231	Disorganized
132	Boring	162	Conventional	232	Distant
133	Bulldozer	163	Cooperative	233	Distrustful
134	Busted	164	Crafty	234	Domineering
135	Busybody	165	Creepy	235	Dull
136	Cad	166	Cultured	236	Easy-going

241–246

241	Emotional
242	Entertaining
243	Evasive
244	Even-keeled
245	Explosive temper
246	Expressive

251–256

251	Flighty
252	Follower
253	Foolish
254	Forceful
255	Forgetful
256	Frugal

261–266

261	Fussy
262	Gangly
263	Goal-oriented
264	Gullible
265	Hard-working
266	Hayseed

311–316

311	Honest
312	Honorable
313	Hyperactive
314	Hypochondriac
315	Idealistic
316	Ill-advised

321–326

321	Impressionable
322	Impulsive
323	Indecisive
324	Independent
325	Informative
326	Innocent

331–336

331	Intellectual
332	Intolerant
333	Introspective
334	Intuitive
335	Inventive
336	Judgmental

341–346

341	Kleptomaniac
342	Know-it-all
343	Know-nothing
344	Lax
345	Lazy
346	Legalistic

351–356

351	Lithe
352	Loud
353	Lowlife
354	Mastermind
355	Melancholy
356	Mentor

361–366

361	Messy
362	Misanthrope
363	Miscreant
364	Miserly
365	Misinformed
366	Modest

411–416		441–446		511–516	
411	Mood swings	441	Outsider	511	Rational
412	Murder victim	442	Overconfident	512	Refined
413	Muscled	443	Overeater	513	Relaxed
414	Mute	444	Passionate	514	Reliable
415	Nag	445	Perceptive	515	Reprobate
416	Naive	446	Performer	516	Reserved
421–426		451–456		521–526	
421	Nauseated	451	Persevering	521	Responsible
422	Narcoleptic	452	Plump	522	Righteous
423	Nervous	453	Politician	523	Rule-follower
424	Nogoodnik	454	Practical	524	Sanguine
425	Nonconformist	455	Pragmatic	525	Scamp
426	Nonjudgmental	456	Problem-solver	526	Scoundrel
431–436		461–466		531–536	
431	Obsessive	461	Promoter	531	Scrawny
432	Offbeat	462	Protector	532	Secretive
433	Off-kilter	463	Provider	533	Selfless
434	Old soul	464	Psychotic	534	Self-satisfied
435	Organized	465	Rabble-rouser	535	Sensitive
436	Organizer	466	Rascal	536	Sensual

541–546

541	Shy
542	Sickly
543	Simpleminded
544	Sleepy
545	Slender
546	Slim

551–556

551	Slimy
552	Sloppy
553	Smooth
554	Snake
555	Sober
556	Squanderer

561–566

561	Stout
562	Stressed out
563	Strict
564	Superstitious
565	Supervisor
566	Supporter

611–616

611	Taciturn
612	Tattler
613	Teacher
614	Teetotaler
615	Tenderhearted
616	Thin

621–626

621	Thrifty
622	Tippler
623	Tongue-tied
624	Traumatized
625	Trusting
626	Unappreciated

631–636

631	Unclean
632	Uncouth
633	Uncultured
634	Underfed
635	Underhanded
636	Undisciplined

641–646

641	Unhinged
642	Unimpressive
643	Unsavory
644	Upbeat
645	Utilitarian
646	Vengeful

651–656

651	Vigilant
652	Villain
653	Visionary
654	Vow
655	Wary
656	Wasteful

661–666

661	Whisperer
662	Wild
663	Willful
664	Wily
665	Wino
666	Worldly

2 Warrior

The warrior is trained in using weapons of all kinds. The warrior can also get more mileage out of her armor by making minor adjustments and repairs during down-time in the dungeon.

It's not that they are merely *incompetent* when it comes to magic: Like blindness, the warrior simply lacks the capacity for occult intuition. A warrior can usually benefit from magical artifacts and elixirs, but they can never cast spells.

2.1 The warrior's badges

Foe hammer

You get fighting dice equal to your primary fighting skill. Add 1 die if your secondary skill is 5+, and add another if your Luck is 5+.

Martial techniques

You can spend style points to bore through all your enemy's defenses. Whether you win or lose the Clash, and regardless of your enemy's armor, each style point you spend this way inflicts 1 damage, or 2 damage if you are using a buster weapon.

You can also spend style points to perform heroic feats of focus, speed, and strength. Describe what you want to do, and the referee will tell you the cost. These secret moves are very situational, so be creative and awesome.

If you train under a master, you can learn **secret weapon techniques**. Secret weapon techniques give you new ways to exploit hidden advantages in combat, by spending style points.

Man-at-arms

You can repair your armor while resting in the dungeon. When you make camp, choose a piece of armor you can fidget with, and restore its original rating. Then make a Saving Roll. On a miss, the armor is on its last legs and you won't be able to fix it again.

2.2 The warrior's limit

Impetuous

You cannot learn magic or cast spells.

3 Warlock

The warlock is a rare individual who has both raw ability and rigorous training in magic. The far-reaching and mysterious Cabal trains warlocks in all the apprentice spells (see page XX). Warlocks may purchase loftier magic from the Cabal or discover spells in their adventures.

The warlock can also use a magical device—a dagger, an hourglass, an orb, a staff, or a wand—to channel and conserve spell power when casting magic. If no device is at hand, warlocks can create a makeshift staff using an ordinary walking stick or branch.

Warlocks are trained to channel their Strength and Dexterity into spellcraft, and they have fewer fighting dice as a result.

3.1 The warlock's badges

Arcane apprenticeship

You start out with all 9 apprentice spells.

Occult scholar

When you gain a new elder-level spell and spend a few days practicing it, you can cast it at-will.

Cast a spell

When you unleash a spell that you know, subtract its cost from your Strength score. The spell takes effect according to its description.

Cabal member

When you meet with agents of the Cabal with gold on hand, you may purchase new spells.

Focused casting

When you hold a device while casting a spell, reduce its Strength cost by half.

When you spend a few minutes inscribing a mundane staff with your unique sigil, the staff becomes a temporary magical device. Make an Intelligence Saving Roll when you use the staff: On a miss, the staff is destroyed by the surge of occult power.

Now We're Cooking with Evil Gas!

Tapping into the dungeon's feng shui, you can spend style points to immediately replenish your Strength. Each style point you spend in this way restores Strength equal to the dungeon level.

The Pit of Ultimate Darkness

When you call upon the Unseen Awful Powers to invoke their terrible potency, add 1 die to your Improv Saving Roll if you have 5 or more dice in Charisma.

You may spend 1 style point to see a chilling vision from the Pit. The referee will tell you what it is.

3.2 The warlock's limit**Awkward**

You get fighting dice equal to your secondary fighting skill.

Mind your Haul.

There's nothing stopping you from kitting yourself out with a buster weapon and heavy metal armor—or any other gear you may not associate with warlocks. But you might have to leave it all behind after casting a few spells!

Warlocks' magic is in their marrow, and using it leaves them weary. Check out what you can haul on page XX.

Optional

Some people hate level limits. But before you wuss out and spurn the rule, consider the following:

- Dungeon delvers are a delicate lot, and few of them make it to level 7 anyway! For the majority, a career of 7 levels is a delusion of grandeur.
- For those that do survive that far, the power differences between different skins offers players a way to set their own challenge level. Playing a maverick beyond level 7 is one way to escalate the game's rigor at testing your creativity and nerve.
- On the other hand, you could put all your XP into skills after reaching 7th level, developing more mettle than anyone else in the game.

If you still hate level limits, write your own house rule here. That's what margins are for!

4 Maverick

A maverick is the classic jack-of-all-trades and master of none. The maverick is skilled with weapons, but never reaches the warrior's mastery over armed struggle. Likewise, the maverick has untrained talent for working magic, but never attains the warlock's supremacy over spellcraft.

The Cabal shuns mavericks, and will not sell them magic or teach them the art of channeling power through a device. Thus, the maverick must learn magic from a warlock in her party, but the warlock's player may demand any price. If the Cabal finds out that a warlock has taught its secrets to a maverick, the warlock may be expelled or worse.

Martial masters likewise snub mavericks, and will not teach them their secret weapon techniques. They could always get training from a warrior in their party, but the same terms apply.

The maverick is versatile, but limited: Mavericks attain mastery at level 7. At that point, a maverick who continues adventuring will find their progress hampered. A level 7 maverick may opt instead to take up a new skin as a level 5 warrior, or a level 3 warlock.

4.1 The maverick's badges

Scrapper

You get fighting dice equal to your primary fighting skill. Add 1 die if your secondary skill is 5+, and add another if your Luck is 5+.

Knack for trickery

You can spend style points to slip flashy attacks through your enemy's defenses. Whether you win or lose the Clash, and regardless of your enemy's armor, each style point you spend this way inflicts 1 damage, or 2 damage if you are using a light weapon.

You can also spend style points to perform heroic feats of stealth, skill, and guile. Describe what you want to do, and the referee will tell you the cost. These secret moves are very situational, so be creative and awesome.

If you train under a warrior, you can learn **secret weapon techniques**. Secret weapon techniques give you new ways to exploit hidden advantages in combat, by spending style points.

Cast a spell

When you unleash a spell that you know, subtract its cost from your Strength score. The spell takes effect according to its description.

Diabler

When you call upon the Unseen Awful Powers to invoke their terrible potency, add 1 die to your Improv Saving Roll if you have 5 or more dice in Luck.

4.2 The maverick's limits

- You cannot purchase spells from the Cabal or secret weapon techniques from martial masters, only from delvers in your party, who may charge you whatever price they wish.
- You cannot use a warlock's magical device.
- When you attain level 7, **double the XP required to attain higher levels**. Any time thereafter, you can choose to continue advancing as a warrior or warlock. If you take up a new skin, reset your XP to zero, and disown any badges you have earned.
 - If you renounce your spells, you become a 5th-level warrior, gaining the warrior's badges and limit.
 - If you join the Cabal, you become a 3rd-level warlock, taking on the badges and weakness of the warlock.

Optional: The maverick's starting spell

Ask the referee if mavericks start with any untrained talent in a random spell. If so, roll 1d6 and consult the following list to pick. You may choose to add your Luck skill to the roll.

1. *Scent of Brimstone* or *Wiggling Wisp*
2. *Opportunity Knocks* or *Bearded Babyface*
3. *Finders Keepers* or *Sharpest Knife in the Drawer*
4. *Tiger Eyes* or *What the Hex*
5. *Counter Jinx* or *Curse of Lynks*
6. *I Fly, You Fools* or *Owa Tana Siam*
7. *Time Twist* or *Will You Look At That*
8. *Bog Slog* or *Muggle Juggle*
9. *Necrotic Nostrum* or *The Sleep of Ages*
10. *Embitty Embiggen* or *Floored Ward*
11. *Gullible Get-Well* or *Snuff Out*
12. *Globe of Yuzed* or *Streaker*

5 Gear

Gear may have the following tags, or others invented by the referee:

Dangerous

If you handle the item in a carefree, frivolous fashion, or fail a Saving Roll, someone might get hurt. It might be you!

Heavy

The item is hefty or bulky, counting as 2 items for carrying purposes.

Rare

It's very hard to come by, counting as 3 picks when equipping a new delver.

Uncommon

It's hard to come by, counting as 2 picks when equipping a new delver.

Very Heavy

The item is especially hefty or bulky, counting as 3 items for carrying purposes.

5.1 General Supplies

Item	Cost	Notes
11-foot pole	11	Heavy, clumsy
Antivenom, 1 use	20	<i>Rare.</i> Treat an envenomed ally right away to neutralize the toxin.
Bandages, 1 use	20	Bandage a delver's wounds after a fight to heal 1 damage; or bandage a disabled ally to revive them immediately.
Boots, knee-high	10	
Boots, calf-high	5	
Bottle, useful	5	Holds 1 pint oil, 1 insect/imp/fairy, or 2 doses "medicine", etc.
Butterfly net	5	
Chomp dog	20	Monster Rating of 2d6+1. May go berserk when it smells a

Item	Cost	Notes
		monster.
Crackerjack kit	20	A few pieces of chalk, handful of matches, salt, short bit of string, few sticks of wax—and a secret prize . When you pull out the prize, it's usually something useful right now.
Curare, vial (3 uses)	30	<i>Uncommon, dangerous.</i> A weapon dipped in curare causes double damage, but the weapon loses its venom after 3 actions. The attacker can also spend 1 style point to halve the enemy's fighting dice for 1 scene.
Disguise kit, 1 use	20	<i>Uncommon.</i> A purse with putty, make-up, fake hair, etc.
Firewood bundle	10	Very Heavy
Hemp rope, 50'	2	Heavy
Herbal poultice	10	<i>Uncommon.</i> Apply it to treat inflammation and disease, healing 1d6 damage.
Lantern	20	
Lantern oil, 1 pint	2	
Magical device	100	<i>Rare.</i> A silver dagger, an hourglass, an orb, a staff, or a wand.
Magnetic compass	5	<i>Uncommon</i>
Mongrel whistle	20	<i>Uncommon</i>
"Monster" treats	20	<i>Rare.</i> Some monsters can be tamed with treats even if you don't speak their language.
Onion, big	1	Good for your breath, or instant tears.
Pickaxe	10	Heavy, clumsy
Pitons, × 10	10	For climbing walls.
Piton hammer	5	
Rations, 1 day	10	Food, drink, mess kit, matches.
Ritual candles, × 20	1	
Shovel	10	Heavy
Silk rope, 20'	10	<i>Uncommon</i>
Torches, × 10	1	

Item	Cost	Notes
Traveling clothes, backpack	5	Soft-soled shoes, warm clothing, cloak, and bedroll.
Whistle	10	
Zeewieric acid, vial, 1 use ¹⁵	20	Rare, dangerous. Eats through almost any substance over about 1 hour.

5.2 Weapons

Typical price in coins is shown in parentheses.

Weapons and armor may have additional tags, as follows:

Buster

When you hit an enemy, count the top 2 numbers showing on your dice as damage.

Ranged

The weapon is good for shooting enemies within shouting distance. Resolve hits using the rules for Long Shots (page XX).

Reach

The weapon lets you keep enemies at bay. See page XX.

Requires X

In order to equip and use the armor properly, you must also have X equipped.

Shield

You can use it to deflect extra damage (page XX).

Light (10)

Examples: *Bagh naka*, *dagger*, *hand axe*, *katana*, *nunchuks*, *one-handed mace*, *rapier*, *sabre*, *truncheon*

Ranged (20)

Examples: *Blowgun*, *bola*, *javelin*, *longbow*, *shortbow*, *sling*, *throwing knives*

Ammo (1/shot)

Arrows, *bolts*, etc.

Buster (40)

Examples: *Bastard sword*, *claymore*, *double-bitted axe*, *estoc*, *flanged mace*, *khanda*, *spiked club*

Very Heavy

Reach (30)

Examples: *Bec de corbin*, *flail*, *poleaxe*, *spear*, *spiked ball-and-chain*, *urumi*

Heavy

5.3 Armor

Typical price in coins is shown in parentheses. Check out page XX to find out how it works.

Aketon, 3 armor (50)

Worn by itself, or underneath a hauberk or heavy metal.

Hauberk, 5 armor (150)

Heavy, uncommon, requires aketon

Heavy metal, 7 armor (500)

Rivet on extra rondels and spikes for even more protection.

Very Heavy, rare, requires aketon

Rondels and spikes, 1 armor ea. (15)

Requires heavy metal or gauntlet

Buckler, 3 armor (17)

Shield

Target shield, 4 armor (50)

Heavy, uncommon, shield

Tower shield, 5 armor (145)

Very Heavy, rare, shield

Helm, 2 armor (15)

Wear it alone, or attach a fashionable visor.

Visor, 1 armor (10)

Requires helm

Gauntlets (pair), 1 armor ea. (10)

Rivet on an extra “rondel” per gauntlet for extra defense.

6 How to Play

The referee prepares a dungeon, and the other players make characters. Playing the game takes place as a conversation between the players and the referee:

The referee describes the immediate situation, usually a dungeon or some other environment that offers danger and opportunity. The players ask questions and take turns narrating what their delvers think, say, and do. The referee narrates the world around them and the results of their actions.

This conversation is the medium of play, and it's the first method of resolving events in the shared fiction: players and the referee narrate situations and build on those situations through common assent.

But adventures in the Twisted Tunnels are rife with deadly dangers. As the referee introduces hazards and the delvers face peril, there will be times when the outcome is too risky to judge. That's when we roll dice.

6.1 When to roll dice

You usually roll dice only when you attempt something dangerous, to resist a hazard, or you want to oppose some action by another character. Don't roll dice if there is no challenge, risk, or threat. The most common trials are settled with Saving Rolls and Clashes, as follows.

6.2 Marks and Overflows

Twisted Tunnels uses dice, regular six-siders, and lots of them. After you roll, you count the number of dice showing 4 or higher: fours, fives, and sixes. These are your **marks**, and the more marks you get, the better.

You'll also want to keep track of any sixes you roll. Every six gives you 1 **style point**, which you might spend to do some cool stuff.

If *all* of your dice come up 4 or higher, it's an **overflow**: Count the marks and roll again, adding any subsequent marks to your original total. If you roll another overflow, keep rolling and adding marks until one or more dice come up lower than 4.

If *all* the dice come up 3 or lower, it's a **whammy**. That's usually bad.

6.3 Save Vs. Dungeon!

When you suffer Sudden Death or some other indignity, the referee may call for a Saving Roll to find out what happens. To resolve a Saving Roll, you will roll your **skill dice**, count your **marks**, and try to beat the **dungeon level**.

You get dice from the skill being tested, usually Luck. You succeed if your marks add up to the dungeon level or higher. If you make it, the danger is averted, at least in part.

If you score less than the dungeon level, the calamity strikes! You get XP equal to the dungeon level, and the referee will say what happens.

Add 1 to the dungeon level if any of the following are true. If 2 or more are true, add 2:

- You're exploring in dim light.
- You're hungry or thirsty.
- You're weary.

It gets worse if someone is fighting **berserk**.

If you're exploring in pitch darkness or carrying too much, you automatically fail any Saving Roll.

6.4 Pushing Your Luck

Any time you miss a Saving Roll, you can spend points equal to the current dungeon level from your Luck score to reroll all your dice. You don't get XP, but you do get a second chance. If you make it, the referee will describe how you nearly came to ruin.

Saving Roll Summary

1. Roll your **skill dice**.
2. Count your **marks**, including any overflows.
3. Compare your marks to the **dungeon level**.
 - If your total meets or beats the dungeon level, you succeed!
 - If your total is less than the dungeon level, the Saving Roll fails. You get XP equal to the dungeon level.

6.5 Clashes

When you get into a ruckus with the enemy, it is a **Clash**. A Clash includes all the positioning, feints, dodges, parries, flurries of blows, and locked swords until opponents pause,

panting, to regroup.

To resolve a Clash, each side rolls their **fighting dice**, and counts the **marks**. Compare each side's marks: The side that rolled more marks wins. The winner deals **damage** equal to the number on their highest die. Ouchy! This damage comes off the loser's Constitution score or Monster Rating.

When you suffer more damage than your Constitution dice in one Clash, you are **reeling**. To recover, you must do nothing but catch your breath for a few moments.

When you suffer any damage while you are reeling, you suffer **sudden death**. Make a Saving Roll. If you succeed, you are **disabled**: You can do nothing but whimper or grit your teeth, fading in and out of consciousness, until someone revives you. If you miss, you have perished.

Clash Summary

Sometimes you want to do something other than gore your enemy, like grab someone's weapon, trip them, wrestle, or similar. If the stunt pits your fighting skill against theirs without making either of you helpless, resolve it like a Clash. If you win, you forfeit your damage to carry out the maneuver.

1. Each side rolls all their fighting dice, plus any bonus dice they get for this Clash.
2. Each side counts their **marks**, including any overflows.
3. **Whoever gets the most marks wins.**
If that's a tie, whoever rolled fewer dice wins. If it's still a tie, the Clash is indecisive.
4. **Count damage.**
 - The winner counts the highest number rolled as damage.
 - The loser can use armor can use it to soften the blow.
 - Subtract any damage that gets through armor from the loser's Constitution score or Monster Rating.

You'd be surprised how many conflicts can be solved with your fighting dice. But Clashes offer a flexible way to resolve any strife where two sides are competing and exchanging knocks until one side is exhausted or gives up.

Sometimes you might even use skills other than fighting. And the damage might be counted against other scores. In a fight, a Clash tells you who got gored, and who is still standing. But you are free to use a Clash to resolve any conflict where something just as crucial is at stake.

6.6 Style Points

You get 1 style point for each six that comes up on any roll. You can spend style points right away to trigger special effects. You can only hold style points until you take your next action—after that, they are gone.

In addition to the stunts and special effects you get from your skin and badges, here are some exploits anyone can do, at any time:

You can spend 1 style point to...

Find a useful item or handy terrain feature within reach.
The referee will tell you what.

You can spend 2 style points to...

Pull out a useful object from a pocket or backpack that you didn't know you had.

Call for a sudden ally. The referee will tell you who.

Recover focus if you are reeling.

Immediately add 1 to any waning score.

You can spend 3 style points to...

Immediately take another action, before anyone else.

You can spend 1 or more style points to...

Trigger a special effect of an item or location.

Activate a monster weakness, if any.

Tell your ideas to the referee. If it's feasible, the referee will tell you how many style points it will take.

Stealth without checks

Unless the opposition is just a bunch of scumbags like the delvers, keeping it quiet and out-of-sight is a good strategy. And there is no Saving Roll to hide—you can just do it, if there is cover.

A lot can happen, but dealing with enemies when you're hidden usually involves the rules for reactions and surprise. The following countdown is typical:

1. **You are hidden.**
2. Something makes the guard **curious**. The referee might call for a reaction Saving Roll.
3. The guard **spots you**. The referee might call for a surprise Saving Roll. If they are surprised, you get to act before they do!
4. Depending on the situation, the referee might call for another reaction Saving Roll.
5. The guard **calls for help**, if they are intelligent and organized.
6. If you're still hanging around with your mouth open, **it's time to fight!**

7

Trekking and Delving

7.1 Fairy Oaths

If a fairy makes an oath to you, it owes you a favor. It can fulfil its oath at any time by casting a spell on your behalf, or by discharging all of its Strength to add 10 to 1 of your scores that is waning. Sometimes people catch fairies and put them in bottles to extract oaths in exchange for their freedom.

7.2 Hiding and Creeping

When you hide and hold still, you remain hidden from sight until you draw attention to yourself or someone stumbles into you. Check your **haul**. If you are *nimble*, and you don't have any rattles or light on you, you can remain hidden while creeping around in shadows and what-not.

7.3 Injury, Recovery, and Death

If a character takes damage from anything other than a Clash:

- Take 1d6 damage if the threat is scratches or bruises.
- Take 2d6 damage if the threat is spilled blood or broken bones.
- Take 3d6 damage if the injury could kill a normal person.

Waning

When any score falls below 10, it is **waning**.

Death's door

When any score drops below your dice in that skill, you are at **death's door**. Thing's just got worse. When that skill is tested, count dice from your current score instead.

Last words

When any score drops to zero, you face **sudden death**. If you make a Saving Roll, you are merely **disabled** until someone tends to your wounds. If you fail, you have **perished**.

If you die on your adventure, your companions owe your heir or heiress **weregild** equal to the sum of all your skill dice, times 10, plus your share of the treasure recovered. This weregild counts as a penalty against any XP for treasure they recover.

Recovery

When your Strength score is waning and you spend a few minutes catching your breath, make a Strength Saving Roll. On a success, take the highest number you rolled and add it your Strength score.

When you rest and consume a ration, make a Constitution Saving Roll. On a success, take the 2 highest numbers you rolled, and add it to 1 waning score.

If you are disabled, you need someone to bandage your wounds before you can do anything strenuous.

When you make camp in the dungeon and get at least a few hours of rest, choose 1 waning score, and add 1d6 to that score.

7.4 Lighting the Way

The Twisted Tunnels are utterly hostile to human life, and without light delvers who venture in are doomed.

- A candle provides enough light for 1 delver, and will last about 3 actions. If you drop a candle suddenly, it goes out!
- A torch offers enough light for a cluster of 3 people, and it will last about 1 scene, plus 1 action.
- A lantern lights up the whole area—a space about the size of a room. A lantern with 1 pint of oil will last about 3 scenes.

If your light has a duration in scenes, count down whenever you leave the scene. If your light has a duration in actions, count down when you take an action. If time passes without scenes or actions, the referee will tell you when your light expires.

Even with firebrands ablaze, the frantic action of combat can snuff the light. If there isn't time to put torches down with care, delvers may toss them aside to draw weapons. When you drop a torch or lantern in haste, make a Saving Roll. On a miss,

the light gutters out. Otherwise, the area is plunged into **dim light**.

When you are blinded or hemmed in by darkness, you automatically fail any Saving Rolls and double the fighting dice of your opponents.

7.5 Perception

When you examine your environment, ask questions. The referee will tell you everything you can see, hear, smell, feel, and taste. You will get better answers from better questions.

Searching and surprise are special cases, covered further on.

7.6 Search

When you scour your environment for something hidden, name something you are looking for and make a Saving Roll. Describe how you search for the item or feature.

On a success, the referee will tell you whether you are getting “hotter” or “colder” after each step of the process, until you are interrupted or you find what you are looking for.

On a miss, describe your search anyway. You might find it, if you happen to look in the right spot.

8

Struggle

8.1 Armor

When you take damage (say, from losing a Clash) that armor might absorb, you may sacrifice armor, 1 point for 1 hit, to ignore incoming damage.

Shields

When you have a shield equipped, you can block or parry damage up to the shield's rating Clash after Clash. The shield only breaks when you take a hit that is at least double the shield's rating.

8.2 Berserk Fighting

Delvers and monsters sometimes go bananas in battle. Besides sorcery, you can go berserk because you want to, or because someone provokes you.

- You can spend 1 style point to go berserk whenever you lose your chill.
- *Some* enemies can spend 1 style point to goad your fury. Make an Intelligence Saving Roll if you wish to resist.
- A monster can go berserk at the referee's discretion.

When you frenzy in combat, you may add any number of dice up to the dungeon level to your fighting dice. When you do so, add the same number to the dungeon level until you calm down.

In addition to the extra fighting dice, berserk fighters ignore the *reeling* condition when they get hurt. Creatures with Monster Ratings continue to count their original rating for fighting dice, even as they take damage, until they drop dead or calm down.

A berserker must attack someone nearby—even an ally—using any weapon or bare hands, until no one else is standing or until the madness ends. The frenzy lasts until you are unconscious, dead, or until someone calms you down.

When you sooth a berserk ally with soft words and gestures, make a Charisma Saving Roll. If you succeed, your ally recovers from the frenzy. On a miss, you draw the berserker's attention to yourself.

8.3 Buster Weapons

When you hit someone with a buster weapon, count the top 2 numbers showing on your fighting dice as damage.

8.4 Capturing and Taming Monsters

Monsters mostly don't want to die, and they may use different tricks get the delvers to spare them. Like whimpering, pledging their service, offering something of value, or playing dead.

When a monster begs you for its grisly life and you understand its language, you may keep the monster as a minion. If you are a good master, your minion will more or less follow orders and keep its promises—unless things get stressful. Through magic it's possible to enthrall the monster permanently.

Animal-type monsters might be tamed with appropriate treats instead of language. This is how to get cool mounts like dinosaurs or giant birds.

Crushing mutiny

Any minions who are not enslaved by magic may revolt any time they get a chance. When you shame a minion that defies you, make a Charisma Saving Roll. If you win, the minion submits. Otherwise, the monster betrays you or escapes as soon as it can.

Appetites and advancement

Minions can earn XP and level up. Minions earn XP by sating their hideous appetites, like hankerings for mayhem, destruction, corruption, mischief, slaughter, sloth, or simply chomping anything it finds at the end of its chain. The referee will tell you 1–3 ways your minion can sate its appetites when you first take command over them. After an expedition, they earn 1 XP if they sated an appetite, and 2 XP if they indulged in it *to the extreme*.

Treat their uninjured fighting dice as their current level to determine how much XP they need to level up. When a minion levels up, the referee may give it a new talent or power appropriate to its ilk.

8.5 Dodge

When you lose a Clash in combat, you can dodge the incoming damage if you are *nimble* and have room to maneuver. Describe a dramatic flip, dash, or duck into a nearby arena, and spend 1 point from your Strength score for every point of damage you ignore.

8.6 Dwimmer Match

Spellcasters have their own form of honor duel taught by the Cabal: the dwimmer match. Any warlock may initiate a dwimmer match by tracing a circle on the ground with their device, and speaking the true name of their opponent, who must be another magician, hellion, or alien.

If the opponent accepts, the two can see and throw spells at each other regardless of distance. If the opponent declines, they are marked and their Cabal membership is revoked as if they lost the match.

Once the match begins, the magicians choose a spell in secret. Then they announce their spells at the same time and make a Clash of Charisma. Whoever wins the Clash has their spell take effect first. The loser takes damage to their Strength score, and their spell dithers for a moment before taking effect. It's up to you to imagine the fireworks, time-space distortions, and random mutations of local wildlife that may ensue!

The match ends when one caster loses 3 Clashes, or dies, whichever comes first. The loser is marked by an invisible sign that can be detected by the spells *Scent of Brimstone* or *What the Hex*. Any Cabal members who sense the sign shun you as a maverick, until the sign is removed as a curse or until you defeat the magician who marked you in another dwimmer match.

If you win a dwimmer match against a hellion or alien that is not under the Cabal's protection, your mark either banishes it from this world, or binds it into your service—your choice. Treat it as a minion for the sake of **crushing mutiny** or feeding its **appetites**. Should you *lose* a dwimmer match against such a creature, its mark will taint you in a bad way, depending on the creature's nature.

8.7 Firearms

Firearms are big, horn-shaped cannons that take a long time to load, and they're unpredictable.

When you hit an enemy, count the top 2 numbers showing on your dice as damage. Spend 1 style point to knock your

target down if they are about human-sized or smaller.

If you roll a whammy, the firearm misfires, igniting any flammables on your person. Take 1d6 damage.

8.8 Free-for-all

When all the fighters swarm together in *mêlée*, it's a **free-for-all**.

Everyone is paired up with a dancing partner, and we resolve each Clash in whatever order makes sense. If there are any extra fighters, they can pick on someone who will be **helpless** against their attack.

If there are extra unnamed monsters milling about, they will often be grouped together in 1 or more *mobs*.

Delvers are free to try anything, but goofing off in the middle of the brawl might make them **helpless** against loitering enemies.

8.9 Helpless

When you have no way of fighting back, you are **helpless**. The attacker will roll their fighting dice, and add their marks to the damage. You just have to suck it up. You can still sacrifice armor, when applicable, to ignore some or all of the damage.

Delver vs. delver fire

When another delver shoots you, make a Saving Roll. On a miss, you are **helpless**. The shooter rolls their Dexterity dice to determine the damage.

8.10 Long Shots

When you shoot an enemy at range, roll your Dexterity dice—the target is **helpless**.

You can choose to fire multiple shots to add extra dice to your roll—each additional ammo you spend gives you 1 bonus die. Spend style points from your roll to make a called shot.

When a monster shoots you, make a Saving Roll. On a miss, count the monster's fighting dice as damage.

8.11 Mech Armor

If you find ancient mech armor in the dungeon, it will have its own Monster Rating determined by the referee, and it may include the following tags: *boosters*, *blast*.

Mech armor is *slow* and *clumsy*, but you can add the mech's fighting dice to your Strength when you make any rolls that test your might.

When you get hit wearing mech armor, you can spend points from its Monster Rating just like armor, 1 point to soak 1 hit. When a mech's Monster Rating falls below 4, it is weakened. When a mech's Monster Rating drops to zero, it is disabled.

Boosters

If your mech armor has *boosters*, you can use it to perform Wuxia jumps.

Blast

If your mech armor has a *blast* attack, you can add its fighting dice to your Dexterity to make a ranged attack.

8.12 Monster Reactions

When you meet monsters unexpectedly, the referee will determine their **rank** relative to the delvers, and reveal their **reaction**.

In dark tunnels, higher **rank** might be determined by force of arms. But in posh environs, rank could be determined by things like titles, thrones, and other cues. Who has the most obvious power right now, in the monster's best guess?

The monsters' **reaction** will often be based on their appetites, fears, or the behest of their overlord. But not every monster is on patrol with a bloodshot eye for slaughter.

When you meet monsters who have no plot nor prejudice, the referee will call for a Saving Roll from the unluckiest delver. If the monsters outrank you, add 1 to the dungeon level.

On a whammy...

If you outrank them, the monsters flee immediately.

Otherwise, the monsters attack without hesitation, even pursuing you if you flee.

On a miss...

The monsters are visibly hostile, but they won't attack or flee right away. If *anyone* takes a hostile action, the parley is over.

If you succeed...

The monsters are cautious—but if a delver can *speak their language*, they may chat, rap philosophy, or broker deals.

Count your marks: That's how many actions your side can take before the monster bite, withdraw, or flee. You can buy more time by giving them something they want.

Your Saving Roll determines their initial disposition, but monsters may change their minds at any time as the encounter unfolds.

When you try to haggle with a monster in its own language, say what you are offering and what you want. If it's

If the reaction Saving Roll says the monsters *attack*, that usually means blood. But an attack can be *any* hostile action, not just hacking and slashing.

Savvy monsters sometimes find it better to attack the delvers in other ways, hitting them in their relationships, resources, or their reputations instead of their flesh.

feasible, make a Charisma Saving Roll. As above, add 1 to the dungeon level if they outrank you.

If you succeed, the monster will do as you ask if you outrank them. Otherwise, it will reveal what it would need to yield.

8.13 Run!

When you are in a chase, either running away or pursuing a monster, check your speed based on your haul. If you are faster or slower than the other runner, you gain or lose ground accordingly.

If that's not decisive, make a Constitution Saving Roll. On a success, you get the advantage—whether that means closing in on the other runner, or getting further away. If the runner is another delver, use a Clash to resolve your relative movement.

Chases are a great time to use your style points to find handy terrain features or create obstacles for your pursuer or prey.

8.14 Spark Gunnes

If you find an ancient spark gunne in the dungeon, it will have 2d6 charges (or a number determined by the referee), and you can spend a charge to make a long shot attack.

When you hit a human-sized enemy with a spark, you may spend 1 style point to instantly vaporize them. When you roll a whammy when attacking with the spark gunne, the gunne explodes: You must make a Saving Roll or be instantly vaporized. On a success, you are unharmed.

When you fight an enemy with a close-range weapon or reach weapon, you can spend style points, 1 for 1, to increase a spark gunne's charge.

8.15 Surprise

Getting the drop on your enemies gives you a crucial advantage in combat. Delvers who are clomping around in heavy armor, with torches smoking and flaring won't surprise anyone. Likewise, an unseen and unexpected enemy will always get the drop on you.

But when you meet monsters without warning on either side, the referee will call for a Saving Roll from the unluckiest delver. On a success, you took them unawares: They are **helpless** long enough for everyone on your side to take 1 action. On a miss, you didn't get the drop on them, but they didn't get the

drop on you either. On a whammy, they caught you off-guard—your side is **helpless** while the monsters take 1 action.

8.16 Two-weapon Fighting

When you have a light weapon in each hand, you can make an immediate follow-up attack for 2 style points instead of 3.

8.17 Weapon Reach

A reach weapon lets you keep enemies at bay, where you can hit them without them hitting you. They are especially good at hitting enemies who charge your front ranks or rearguard, but they are nearly useless in a free-for-all.

When you attack an exposed enemy using a reach weapon, the enemy has a choice. They can either take the full assault as if **helpless** in order to get into position, or do nothing but defend themselves. If they choose the latter, resolve it as a Clash, but you suffer no damage if they get more marks than you.

You can use *any* weapon to exploit a weak spot, though. You might be exposed after being disarmed at the point of a rapier. If you're up close and personal, your enemy could be exposed at the point of a dagger.

8.18 Wuxia Jumps

If you are *nimble* and have room to maneuver, you can run on sheer surfaces and perform flying leaps.

When you launch yourself at an enemy, roll your fighting dice. The target is **helpless** unless they know *kung fu*—then it's a Clash.

You can choose to attack a cluster of enemies in a rapid combo—add 1 bonus die to your attack for each additional enemy in the bunch.

When you launch yourself at a nearby surface, make a Strength Saving Roll. On a miss, the stunt drains your *qi*: Spend 1 from your Strength score. If the surface is more than a few paces away, spend 2. If it's more than a stone's throw away, spend 3.

9

Safe Havens

Safe havens are the towns, cities, homely houses, and other outposts of civilization where you go to gather rumors, get supplies, recruit help, recover, and level up between expeditions. Maybe someone even knows your name there, in a good way!

When you rest for at least a week in a safe haven, restore all your injured scores to 10 + your skill dice. Then add your current level number to 1 score, or divide it between any scores as you wish.

Level 1 delvers and hirelings don't have to pay anything to hang out at a safe haven. Everyone else has to pay for their upkeep, usually coins equal to their level per week—but market conditions may vary.

If you take any hostile action in a safe haven, it instantly shifts into a dungeon with its own dungeon levels. You can't treat it as a safe haven until you resolve the issue. Enemy invasions and other mishaps might also turn a safe haven into a dungeon.

Monsters that you tame in the dungeon will usually not follow you into a safe have, unless they can disguise themselves as regular people or similar.

9.1 Experience and Levels

Earning XP

You get XP for looting treasures, daring, exploration, and survival. The referee determines XP awards for a given adventure, using the following guidelines:

Looting treasures

Gold, coins, jewels, fine art, trade goods, or other valuables: If you find it in the Tunnels and bring it back to a safe haven, it's worth XP equal to its value in coins, divided by 100. Subtract the werewild from any companions who died in the journey, and divide the XP equally among the survivors.

Leaping in

Earn 1 XP for showing up on time and playing until the session ends.

Daring

Every time you miss a Saving Roll, earn 1 XP \times the current dungeon level.

Exploration

When you escape the Twisted Tunnels alive, earn 2 XP \times the deepest dungeon level you reached in that delve.

When you first traverse a new region of the campaign map, earn 1 XP \times the area's threat level.

New scars

When you escape from the dungeon, earn 1 XP if you were wounded by an enemy in battle. Earn 2 XP if you were wounded by an enemy and you won the fight.

Player superlatives

By unanimous player acclaim, when you escape from the dungeon:

- Someone may earn 1 XP for the craziest stunt.
- Someone may earn 1 XP for the bravest deed.
- Someone may earn 1 XP for the funniest mishap.

Level Up

The point of accumulating XP is to gain levels, according to the table below.

When you earn enough XP, you gain a level. When that happens:

- Increase your level number by 1;
- If you have any skills ranked lower than your new level number, choose one and increase it by 1 die; and
- You win a badge based on your previous works, deeds, and scars. The referee will tell you what badges are available, and you pick.

If you raise your Dexterity, Luck, or Strength dice, you may need to update your fighting dice based on your skin.

XP	Level	XP	Level
10	2	70	5
25	3	100	6
45	4	160	7

XP	Level	XP	Level
250	8	1,440	15
360	9	1,690	16
490	10	1,960	17
640	11	2,250	18
810	12	2,560	19
1,000	13	2,890	20
1,210	14	3,240	21

9.2 Hirelings and Henchmen

You don't have to go it alone. When you put the word out that you're going on an expedition, you might get applicants who want to offer you their services. These come in two varieties: hirelings and henchmen.

A **hireling** is someone who has 1 or 2 talents they are good at: like a bodyguard, a guide, a torchbearer, or a lion tamer. A hireling has a Minion Rating that gives them skill dice just like a Monster Rating. Hirelings will serve anyone who can pay, and they demand a **retainer** for each expedition equal to their Minion Rating \times 3; plus a quarter share of any treasure recovered in the delve, payable to their heirs if they don't survive.

If the hireling dies in your service, you owe the settlement **weregild** equal to the hireling's retainer plus their share of the profits. This weregild counts as a penalty against any XP for recovered treasure, whether you pay up or not.

A **henchman** is an amateur delver, complete with skills, scores, and a skin. Henchmen don't require a retainer, but they will only serve a master whose Charisma is at least as high as their highest skill.

Henchmen do require a half share of any treasure recovered, and they earn XP and gain levels just like any other delver on the trek. They also make good backup characters in case you die suddenly.

If a henchman dies in your service, you owe their heir or heiress weregild just like another delver. As with a hireling, this weregild counts as a penalty against any XP for treasure they recover.

10 The Dungeon Spiral

You have three jobs as the referee:

1. **Mediate the conversation** and settle any questions or disputes fairly, in light of the rules and the established fiction.
2. **Describe the current situation**—everything the delvers can see, hear, smell, feel, and taste—as they explore the Twisted Tunnels.
3. **Tell them the cost or impact** of their actions.

Mediate the conversation

This is mainly just making sure every player gets a turn, helping everyone understand the game, and applying the rules fairly as they come into play. The game is first and foremost a conversation and it's no fun if one person dominates.

When you uncover situations that aren't covered by the rules, or if there's any confusion, try to make a fair ruling to keep the game moving. And if you make a mistake, just let everyone know. The rules are just agreements that define how certain situations will be settled, and if you and your table develop new ways to resolving trouble in the Twisted Tunnels, that's cool too—as long as everyone knows what to expect.

Describe the situation

This refers to the imagined places, people, and events created by the conversation. You are their eyes and ears, and making them aware of anything they should know falls to you.

It's everyone's job to picture the situation, and everyone's picture will be different. As you mediate the conversation and find out what the players have dreamed up, it's your job to convey the important details and resolve any significant differences.

If they describe an action that seems odd or absurd, that's a good sign that you see the situation differently. Find out what they want to accomplish, and try to bridge the gap.

Tell them the cost or impact

If it was just you describing the situation the whole time, it would be a filibuster, not a test of their mettle in the face of deadly peril. It's also your job to *listen*, parse their input, and tell them what happens next.

What happens next will almost never be “nothing”. Every time they make a move, you'll be revealing more about the opportunities and dangers that hem them in on all sides. When it's your turn to talk, you will be showing them **threats**, showing them **messes**, showing them **boons**, and showing them **prizes**.

Sometimes it will be subtle—telling them about clues, warning signs, rumors, hints, or mysteries. Sometimes it will be direct—when they clash with monsters, uncover magical wonders, navigate hazards, or open treasure vaults. Either way, you are taking some element of the situation, and highlighting it for them in a way that ratchets up the tension and provokes a response.

When they ask if they can do something, or describe an action that is likely to cause trouble, let them know the risks, the cost, and the likely impact. And when they do it anyway, make them feel the hot breath of hell on their faces.

10.1 What to prepare [DRAFT]

Getting an adventure ready in the Twisted Tunnels is an art, but there are patterns some focusing tools to help you. Digging the delve and loading it with secrets starts with just one idea, and you spiral out—or *down*—from there.

When you are making or altering a barrow in the dungeons, pick one of these building blocks and place it on your dungeon map:

- The overlord
- A faction
- A forecast
- A heavy toll
- A hoard
- A mutation
- A trigger
- An ill omen
- A threshold
- A boon
- Bait

- A familiar spot

These are the building blocks of a dungeon in the Twisted Tunnels: an **overlord**, **intentions**, **prizes**, **heavy tolls**, **mutations**, **triggers**, **ill omens**, **boons**, **thresholds**, **bait**, and **familiar setting**. When you need to work out the next area of your dungeon, pick one of them and find a place to plant it on your map.

In storybooks, these building blocks usually form a circle: Delvers start in familiar setting, and take some bait that leads them to the edge of the unknown. Once they cross the threshold, they use boons that they find on the journey to adapt to the hazards they find. As they continue, they encounter ill omens pointing toward the looming threat.

Along the way, they make out intentions, including the overlord's goals and plots by other fiendish factions. If they survive, the dungeon will present them with present them with triggers, mutations, and prizes that usually come with heavy tolls. They may even escape, finding their way back to the familiar; but they have been changed by their experience. And if not, they may find drastic changes in their familiar setting.

In actual play, these often trace a circle: The delvers start in a familiar spot, take some bait that leads them to a dungeon, cross a threshold into the unknown, and use boons to adapt to hazards they find there. Then they encounter escalating omens about the dungeon's triggers, mutations, and tolls. Along the way, they make out intentions, including the proprietor's own goals and plots by other fiendish factions. If they survive, they may find prizes and return to the familiar—but they usually come back changed in some fashion. There, they'll see ill omens and find bait that may lure them into further adventures.

[TBD: Rewrite this.] In your prep however, it's useful to consider the building blocks in the opposite order: Start with a proprietor, determine its agenda, and use its personality to shape the triggers, mutations. Figure out the prizes available and likely tolls for grasping after them. Consider how the dungeon and the world will reveal signs of these dangers to the delvers as they explore. Boons and treasures often give the delvers goals to pursue in the dungeon. But they don't know there's an adventure to be had unless you tell them, and so you have to scatter bait to lure them into the dungeon, throughout the familiar places they frequent.

In reality, the adventure won't proceed in a perfect circle from one element to another, and the creative process of designing your adventure won't be orderly either. You can consider them in any order you want, and add one idea to each until you feel that the adventure is fleshed out enough to map

out adventure sites and determine Monster Ratings for the adversaries.

The Overlord

Every dungeon has its animus, a fiendish intellect or twisted ghod—*that* is the dungeon's overlord. The overlord's will is manifest in every part of the dungeon's design: it's traps and trappings, its rascals and regalia, its villains and vibes.

It could be the person or creature who literally made the dungeon, or simply a vague presence expressed in the dungeon's theme. Some examples include a mad wizard; a sinister spirit; a horrific monster; or even just an emotional motif incarnate in the dungeon's layout, structures, and dressing.

Once you have some idea about the overlord, you can easily generate other details about the dungeon by considering the overlord's likes, dislikes, goals, and quirks.

Don't overthink it. You can have endless fun by simply giving your dungeons overlords who express your own mischievous impulses, sinister mindsets, and fiendish humors in different ways.

Prizes

Prizes include anything in the dungeon that is valuable to someone. [TBD]

Intentions

Look at each threat and resource in the dungeon and ask yourself what will happen if the delvers fail? What will happen if they do nothing? Some hazards will lie fallow, but others will be active forces in the setting: luring the innocent, devouring resources, menacing the weak, spewing forth danger, and hatching evil. Keep a short to-do list for every major faction or malefic intellect so you always know the next step in any evil plots that are afoot.

Triggers

Some things in the Twisted Tunnels have will and agency to act on their own, but others will depend on the delvers (or some other creature) pulling a lever, placing a gem, stepping on a pressure plate, or turning a key. Make note of any events or stakes in your dungeon that hinge on some action by the delvers, or anyone else who might pull the trigger.

Mutations

How could the delvers be changed by events in the dungeon? How could events in the dungeon change the world they live in? They might simply get maimed, killed, or disappear for good in the dungeon's bowels. They could even escape unscathed. But in a world of sinister magic, wondrous treasure, devilish trickery, and breathtaking marvels, the delvers will often meet things in the dungeon that redefine their lives in subtle or drastic ways. Be sure to include some machinations in your dungeon that can change their abilities, equipment, relationships, mental outlook, or physical style.

Heavy tolls

What will it take to get what they want in the dungeon? They might win through sheer luck, strategic skill, or force of arms. But giving them high-stakes choices spurs their creativity and adds weight to their decisions. Whether it's death, dismemberment, activating countdowns of doom, or ruining their reputations, make sure that there is a chance that someone will pay a heavy price for looting the dungeon.

Ill omens

What is there that they don't want to find? For every pile of coins, prisoner rescue, or legendary artifact they find, you better believe there will be icky infections, harrowing poisons, deadly traps, ancient curses, horrific terrors, and groaning humor to liven things up. Go over all the dangers and looming threats nested in your dungeon, and find ways to show them what is coming. Just like the bait, you can use rumors, lore, and all kinds of sensory clues to warn the players what evil they will find.

Boons

How will the delvers adapt to the sinister and hostile environment of the dungeon? You should count on the players overcoming their obstacles and solving problems in unexpected ways. That includes turning the tables by making unforeseen alliances or using the dungeon's hazards against the creatures who live there. But it's also fun to give them resources in the familiar world and in the dungeon itself. These might include sources of food, light, and other supplies; healing plants; magical means to navigate the dungeon in unexpected ways; surprise encounters with merchants; wise sages and sources of secret lore; or naive monsters who just want to help.

Thresholds

How will the delvers get from the familiar to the weird? And after they get in, how will they escape? Thresholds are the passages and gateways that cross between common world and the dungeon, and between different areas of the Twisted Tunnels. They may include dangerous wilds, poisoned wells, overgrown archways, feverish visions, and portals through space and time.

What hazards await them at the threshold or just beyond? Some thresholds will be obvious, some will be hidden, but they all involve risk of some kind, and often exact a cost. Why haven't workaday peasants already gone in and looted the place?

Bait

What do they want that they can't get in the familiar spot? Money? Power? Mystery? Deadly puzzles? Gullible monsters to trick? The thrill of battle? Sparkling conversation? How could they find out about the opportunities for adventure in the dungeon? Go over the glorious treasures and funhouse features that await them in the dungeon, and scatter information about all of it throughout the setting, including their familiar settings and the dungeon itself. Think about the rumors they might hear, the lore they might dig up with research, and the subtle clues they might make out with observation and guesswork. Then find ways to get that information in front of the players any chance you get.

Familiar spots

Consider the delvers in their zones of comfort. Take any situation the players and characters are familiar with, like the classic tavern meet-up, monstrous half-men raiding the village, getting ambushed by highwaymen, and add some details to make it real. What makes the situation unstable?

Be sure to seed the familiar world with bait and ill omens of all the treasure and trouble the dungeon holds in store.

Content TBD:

- Monsters: including tracks, spoor, sounds, instinct
- Threats
- Treasures / Magic
- Dungeon "gimmicks" - Check my notes on game/level design

11 Monsters

There are two kinds of riffraff in the Twisted Tunnels: allies and monsters. Allies include minions, hirelings, and henchmen. Everything else you encounter is a monster.

Troll? Monster. *Animated skeleton?* Monster. *Evil sorcerer?* Monster. *Rival adventurers?* Monsters. If you want “non-player characters”, go find a game for ninnies and literature professors. A horde of misshapen men, a hulking mass of claws and fangs, and Lady Macbeth are all monsters.

Monsters are almost never as detailed in their game ratings as the delvers. In most cases, all you need is a Monster Rating (MR), which represents the monster’s morale, ferocity, strength, and how much damage it can take in battle.

Monster Rating (MR)

Monsters get fighting dice equal to their MR divided by 3, dropping any remainder. Their MR counts as their Constitution for purposes of taking damage.

If a monster has to make a Saving Roll, roll it’s fighting dice if it’s something the monster specializes in. If it’s not a specialty, but the monster has a chance, roll half its fighting dice. Otherwise, the monster fails the Saving Roll.

A monster whose rating drops below 3 is incapacitated.

Injured monsters usually recover their Monster Rating at 1 point per scene, when they aren’t doing anything strenuous.

MR	Dice	MR	Dice
0–2	0	21–23	7
3–5	1	24–26	8
6–8	2	27–29	9
9–11	3	30–32	10
12–14	4	33–35	11
15–17	5	36–38	12
18–20	6	+3	+1

11.1 Spawning the Monster

Twisted Tunnels isn't a safari. Delves never know what terrors they might face in the bowels of the abyss when their torches burn low. We don't know what lurks and slithers in *your* imagination, and we urge the referee to spawn each and every monster from her own demented designs.

As soon as you have a mental picture of your monster, give it a rating from 1 to 99 that describes how tough it is. Then decide what language it can speak, if any, and give it at least one hideous **appetite**. You may give monsters any other traits or powers you wish, without tying them to ratings.

Usually a Monster Rating spiked with a grisly imagination is all you need to churn out one rip-roaring encounter after another on game night. If your imagination is feeble, bone up on some weird tales, adventure fiction, comics, and action movies. The first rule of creating monsters is have fun; if it seems like work, you're breaking the first rule.

One way to flesh out monsters without complicated stats is with tags. Tags are any shorthand you use to sum up certain common traits. Here are some possibilities, but you can and should make your own:

***N* attacks**

The monster can fight off multiple enemies at the same time, whether it has extra limbs, supernatural speed, or it's just huge. You can divvy up its fighting dice to counter up to *n* enemies.

Berserker

The monster will go berserk when it gets stressed out.

Dungeon-bonded

When the monster hits an enemy, add the current dungeon level to its damage.

Exploits (*N*)

Delves can spend *n* style points to exploit a weakness you define.

If they don't observe the monster closely and it's an especially tricky weakness to exploit, you could give them a chance to *notice* the weakness when they spend style points.

Fast or slow

When there is a chase, compare the monster's speed to the other runner.

Heavy hitter

The monster's attacks hit like a buster weapon: count the top 2 numbers from the monster's attack as damage.

Mob

The monster is composed of several separate creatures that work together and count as one fighter. Usually, this means they get combined into a single Monster Rating; but monsters might gang up on the spur of the moment too. If that happens, pick a **leader**, usually one with the most fighting dice. Then, roll the leader's fighting dice, +1 die for each fighter supporting them.

Nimble or clumsy

Nimble monsters tend to move silently. Clumsy monsters tend to draw attention to themselves.

Shielded (*N*)

The monster can take *n* damage Clash after Clash until it suffers a hit for at least double it's rating. A monster might have shield-like armor protecting any number of body parts.

Skills (*N*)

A *skilled* monster has 1 or more ratings like a delver's skills, independent of its Monster Rating. Monsters can have all kinds of exotic skills, beyond those available to the delvers; just remember that monster abilities rarely need a numeric rating.

Giving them fighting skills lets you create monsters who are *unyielding*: Unlike most monsters, their fighting dice don't diminish as they suffer damage. The *unyielding* tag is a good fit for monsters who can ignore pain like zombies or robots.

Or, you can make them *glass cannons*: Give them Monster Ratings of 1, along with any number of fighting dice. *Glass cannons* have a stronger chance of hitting, but if they suffer any damage, they are instantly clobbered.

Special attacks (*N*)

Spend *n* style points to trigger stunts, tricks, powers, or special effects that you define.

Sudden death

Some monsters have attacks that strike delvers dead, or smite them with some other indignity. Examples include poisons, giant footsteps, breath weapons, or gorgon glances. Anyone caught in the assault must make a Saving Roll or suffer the consequences.

Unbreakable

The monster's enemies can't deal damage at all unless they find and exploit a vulnerability.

Warrior

When you roll the monster's fighting dice, you may spend style points 1 for 1 to deal extra damage that ignores enemy defenses.

If the monster is only effective when it's part of a mob...

Whether it's a swarm of demon hornets or a savage litter of leprechauns, some monsters get no fighting dice when fighting on their own. But in a mob of whatever number seems right, you can give them a collective Monster Rating. When they take damage, it can represent individuals getting crushed—or it could represent their confusion, panic, disbursing, and squabbling among each other.

If the monster is super fast, strong, huge, or armored...

These features can all be covered by jacking up its Monster Rating, and describing it vividly. The extra endurance and fighting dice might represent *anything* that helps the monster hit harder, or faster, or avoid damage, and it's up to you to bring it to life in your description.

These are also opportunities to consider special effects to trigger when you spend style points from the monster's roll: Maybe the monster does a sudden backflip to get some space, or dodges a blow with preternatural speed. Or maybe it smashes a delver for double damage.

Likewise, if the monster is slow, weak, tiny, or squishy, just decrease its MR—or create special effects the delvers can trigger by spending *their* style points!

If the monster is impervious to some kinds of attack...

Suppose your fire ifrit can't be harmed by flame, your vaporous ghosties can't be hit by physical weapons, or your adamantium robot can only take damage if they target its atomic eye lasers. Just describe how the inappropriate attacks bounce off harmlessly and move on.

The delvers won't roll fighting dice for their harmless attacks, but it might leave them helpless against the monster's attack. When the monster is indifferent to their standard weapons, the delvers will have to be creative to deal any damage at all.

But it's okay to let them spend style points to take advantage of a temporary vulnerability, too. You might do this for colossal monsters and other meanies—it's still going to *hurt* them if you put a sword in their eye, it's not easy to get into that position.

If the monster isn't *quite* impervious and you yearn for more accounting, you could subtract or divide the damage by a constant factor every time they hit it with an attack the monster can resist.

If the monster has a weakness...

Some monsters will be *completely defenseless* against certain exploits. Your vampires might be arithnomaniacs who are immobilized by counting when you throw seeds at them. Your dog-men might be instantly reeling if someone blows a dog whistle. Your Ancient Spirits of Evil might be immediately banished if someone speaks their true names aloud. You don't need any ratings to handle stuff like this—just describe it when it happens.

There are also weaknesses that depend on strategic positioning or chance opportunities to exploit. In order to hit the ogre with a crippling groin attack, you have to get under him somehow. Weaknesses like this give you another benefit to offer players who want to spend their style points.

If you crave more bookkeeping and the weakness isn't that dramatic, you could add a damage bonus or multiply the damage every time they hit the monster with its weakness.

If the monster has an attack that needs to refresh...

Maybe you have an arbalist who needs to reload his weapon between shots, a swamp troll whose belch can engulf delvers in burning acid, or a witch who can summon clouds of blood-drinking songbirds. You *could* make them follow the same rules as delvers and track their ammunition or Strength score. But who needs the extra record keeping, when you can use the monster's dice to check for style points? You might spend 1 style point for the arbalist to reload, for example, or 2–3 for the witch to get her mojo back.

If the monster has other special attacks...

Some monsters might be able to hold delvers at bay like a reach weapon; knock them around; leave savage, crippling wounds; grab them; swallow them; poison or infect them; et cetera. Your imagination is the limit. Be fair: Make sure there are signs of the threat for observant delvers, and be obvious when you narrate the monster's behavior and actions. Just let your descriptions set the scene.

If they have a brutal special attack that can disable a delver or hit multiple delvers at once, it can be fun to let the monster's style points decide when it triggers, just like refreshing an attack.

If it survives an encounter with the delvers, then you might endow your monster with more detail: Consider its hunger, its habits. What are its fixations or emotional disorders? Does it have any hopes or fears? Does it have a distinctive voice or awesome quirk, like twirling its whiskers or regurgitating the bones of delvers past, to gnaw on while it awaits its next feeding?

11.2 Wandering Monsters

Some areas of the Twisted Tunnels are so hostile that even monsters fear to creep. Others have wandering monsters who might bumble into a dungeon demolition team at any time.

Make a list of monsters who prowl the area the delvers are exploring (if any), either alone or in groups. They don't have to be looking for trouble: You can include all kinds of interesting encounters in your list, and a good mix can add a lot of atmosphere to your Twisted Tunnels.

When there are monsters a-lurking, you will roll a d6 every scene, or whenever notable time has passed, and spring one of the encounters on the list on a 1. You might check for

wandering monsters based on other events and actions, or at a different frequency based on the situation.

When an encounter from the list is triggered, you can pick a random event from the list or choose one that makes sense. Some referees keep their wandering monster entries on index cards to shuffle and draw when needed; others roll dice to pick a random entry from a written list.

After you determine which monsters will appear, decide where they are in relation to the delvers and what they might be doing there. In order to breathe life into the dungeon, you have to own the results you roll, so give them a meaningful goal. Sometimes they will spring right away, sometimes you will show the players signs of the monsters before they are in sight.

12 How to Host a Combat [TBD]

13 Spellcraft

13.1 Calling on the Unseen Awful Powers

When you make offering to the Unseen Awful Powers, bellow out your petition and make an Improv Saving Roll:

- Roll 1d6 if you stage an elaborate ritual to beseech them.
- +1d6 if you are working in a well-stocked kitchen, laboratory, or magical node.
- +1d6 if you do something to derange your mind, thrill your senses, or escape your flesh.
- +1d6 if the spell is known to the Cabal; you must either spend the Power or use up laboratory supplies costing at least half the spell's price.

“Yes, I have walked along the path of evil many times. It’s a twisting, curving path—that actually leads to a charming block garden—but beyond that, EVIL!”

—Sir Simon Milligan

On a success, they either grant your petition or reveal their fiendish cost; if you pay the price, they will do your bidding. On a miss, the Unseen Awful Powers twist your spell to their own ends.

Your offering must be something that goads their eerie alien desires, and they are notoriously fickle. Use your imagination, and don't repeat yourself.

The Unseen Awful Powers generally do not grant anything unlimited, permanent, unfailing, or incorruptible. The scope of their influence is relative to the current dungeon level: Asking for far-reaching magic requires deeper and deeper excavations, closer to the Pit of Ultimate Darkness. If you ask them for something too grandiose, they will offer you a more humble alternative.

13.2 Buying spells

It takes money to run a secret society, and the Cabal sells magic to budding warlocks to generate revenue.

As with any illicit product, prices may vary by season, locale, and other market conditions. For spells, prices are derived from their casting cost (listed in parentheses), since more powerful spells draw more power from the magician.

The “average” price for a spell is its the casting cost times 275 coins on average—or the casting cost \times 3d6 \times 25 coins if the referee is letting the fates decide. Or, the referee may choose to set prices based on some abundance or scarcity that has

arisen in the course of play.

For example, the spell Foul Mouth (8) would normally cost 8×275 coins, or 2,200 coins total. The spell Baleful Burst (36) would normally cost 36×275 , or 9,900 coins.

The Cabal will not sell its secrets to warriors or mavericks. Mavericks may find their spells while adventuring, or purchase them from willing warlocks in their party. Warlocks who sell magic to mavericks may set their own prices, keeping in mind that they will be shunned by the Cabal—or worse—if found out.

The spells of the Cabal inhere in the magician's bones and marrow, not in scrolls or books. In order to "learn" a spell, a magician must receive it through the magic of Roto-Tutor (below), or by consuming a tincture made from the bones of another magician, alien, or hellion.

You can make your own tincture by adding the powdered bone to 1 part baking soda and 12 parts vinegar, for maximum effervescence.

13.3 Casting spells

When you unleash a spell that you know, subtract its cost from your Strength score. The spell takes effect according to its description.

To unleash a spell, you must be able to call out its name loudly enough for the Unseen Awful Powers to hear you.

13.4 Apprentice Spells

All warlocks know these spells upon reaching Level 1.

Scent of Brimstone (1)

Smell good and bad magic in the area.

Self, 1 action

Wiggling Wisp (2)

Light up your finger or device with sickly green flame, about as bright as a candle. Or, spend double the Power to spark fire as bright as a torch.

Self, 3 actions

Opportunity Knocks (4)

Bolt or unbolt any mundane lock or door. This spell will also open a magical lock cast by a lower-level magician.

Thrown, scene

Roto-Tutor (4)

Breathe one spell you know into the soul of a maverick, who can cast it thereafter.

Touch

Finders Keepers (6)

See a smoky aura around anything hidden or invisible in the area.

Self, 1 action

Sharpest Knife in the Drawer (6)

Sharpen a blade. Anyone who uses it adds your level to their fighting dice.

Touch, 1 action

Face of Evil (6)

You strike a fearsome scowl. *One* monster whose Monster Rating is less than your Charisma score or every monster whose Monster Rating is lower than your Charisma dice flees in terror. A cornered monster might freeze or go berserk instead. Any monster who resists the spell attacks you exclusively.

Area, scene

Some spells have tags too, and this is what they mean.

Self

The spell takes effect on the caster alone.

Touch

You have to touch the target, either with a hand, or with a magical device. In the case of an unwilling target, you may have to resolve a Clash to see if you “hit”.

Thrown

You must have a free hand, or holding nothing other than a magical device, to “throw” the spell; and you must be able to see the target in some manner. After you spend the Strength, you must hit the target using your Dexterity dice to make a long shot attack.

Sight

Like a Thrown spell, except no ranged attack roll is required. After you spend the power, the spell strikes unerringly.

Area

You must have both hands free, or holding nothing other than a magical device, to unfurl the spell. If the area isn't defined in the spell, assume it effects a space about the size of a "room". If the spell also has Thrown or Sight tags, the area can be centered on any point you can see. Otherwise, you are the center of the area.

X actions

The spell lasts until you take the specified number of actions. When you take an action, count down the spell's duration.

Scene

The spell lasts until you leave the scene.

Sunrise

The spell lasts until sunrise.

Spells with range-related tags can be cast on any spot closer ranges when it makes sense.

Death Stare (6)

Smite a living creature with your glare, causing psychic trauma. Deal damage equal to double your Intelligence dice, ignoring armor.

Sight

Crowd Shroud (10)

Turn yourself and your allies invisible.

Touch, scene

13.5 Elder Spells**Bearded Babyface (4)**

As you point at a living creature, its chin sprouts glorious locks of facial plumage in any style you choose, from soul patch to full ZZ Top. Or, point at a hirsute character and denude him or her of all hair.

Thrown

Ouchy Kiss (6)

Restore level number + 1 to one injured score—your own, or an ally's.

Touch

Critter Vision (8)

Mark a beast with your blood. When you close your eyes, you can see through that animal's peepers. Or, spend double the power to remotely control the animal if it's Monster Rating is no greater than your Charisma score.

Touch, sunrise

Foreboding Fear (8)

You see an ill omen about some significant danger or threat. The referee will tell you the next move of a major monster, faction, or other nearby hazard. Make a Saving Roll. On a miss, you are shaken and suffer 1d6 damage to your Charisma score.

Self

Foul Mouth (8)

You can speak and understand the speech of any one monster type you have met before.

Self, 3 actions

Tiger Eyes (8)

See in total darkness.

Self, scene

What The Hex (8)

The referee will tell you about one magical effect influencing a person, place, or thing, including its level and type.

Touch

Counter Jinx (10)

Remove an evil spell or curse that you have previously identified. If the magic was planted by a higher-level magician, your *Counter Jinx* may briefly weaken its hold, or fail entirely.

Touch

Curse of Lynks (10)

You jinx an enemy. They can't be healed except by magical means until the curse is removed. Every time they miss a Saving Roll, the referee tells them a new imagined symptom, like perfect pitch, fearsome apparitions, an appetite for prison yard clay, or yucky ear.

Thrown

Disco Ball (10)

Summon a globe of dazzling light that spins in place, lighting up the whole area until you leave.

Area

Double Toil, Double Trouble (10)

Double one of the target's scores. When the spell ends, halve that score (rounding down) for the same duration.

Touch, scene

I Fly, You Fools (10)

Hover or fly at your running speed.

Self, 3 actions

Owa Tana Siam (10)

Command absolute, unquestioning loyalty from a captive or helpless monster whose Monster Rating is no greater than your Charisma score.

Touch

Time Twist (10)

You catch one creature in a time warp: Double or halve the creature's speed. When they have to roll dice for something time-sensitive—like fighting or searching—they get double dice or half their dice, as appropriate.

Thrown, 3 actions

Will You Look At That (10)

Intelligent creatures who can hear your voice see whatever you describe, but physical contact with the illusions causes them to vanish.

Area

Bog Slog (12)

Transform stone into quicksand.

Sight, area, scene

Elemental Blast (12)

Barf forth goutts of fire or sheets of ice at your enemies. Roll your fighting dice, plus 1 die for each enemy in the blast. Subtract the same number of dice after you roll. The fire or ice may have other logical effects on the scene.

Thrown, area

Muggle Juggle (12)

Levitate and move objects and creatures weighing no more (in total) than yourself.

Area, 3 actions

Necrotic Nostrum (12)

Remove any effects of a drug or poison from a living creature.

Touch

Psychic Pong (12)

Conjure an orb of crackling psi energy and hurl it at an enemy. If the creature is holding a pit-forged weapon or magical device, it can spend 1 from its Strength score to make a Saving Roll to knock it back at you. Likewise, if you have a pit-forged weapon or magical device, you can spend 1 from your Strength score to make a Saving Roll to hit it back at the enemy. Take turns making Saving Rolls until someone drops out or misses. The loser suffers damage equal to your Intelligence score, plus the number of Saving Rolls, counted against the loser's Intelligence score.

Sight

The Sleep of Ages (12)

Lock your gaze on one creature. If your Charisma score is higher than the creature's MR, you subdue it in a trance. If you speak the creature's language, you can ask it questions. The creature will answer each question the best it can, and remember nothing about your questions on waking. But if you make more demands than the creature's Intelligence score divided by 5 (ignoring any remainder), it grows confused and incoherent.

Sight, 3 actions

Bane Brume Belch (14)

Barf forth a cloud of toxic nausea. Breathing creatures in the blast immediately halve their Constitution and Strength scores or MR, and suffer 1d6 damage, ignoring armor, every round they spend in the cloud. The gas will dissipate (or not) normally.

Area

Embitty Embiggen (14)

Enlarge or reduce an object or creature, in size and in value. If you enlarge a target, roll 2d6, and multiply the target's size and mass—including Constitution and Strength or MR—by the number you get. If you reduce a target, roll 2d6 and divide the same traits by the number you roll.

Thrown, scene

Floored Ward (14)

Draw a circle on the floor, with your foot or device, while you cast this spell. Usually the ring will be just big enough to circle yourself and one ally, but you could make a bigger circle if you are bored. No harmful magic or weapon can penetrate the ward.

Area, scene

Gullible Get-Well (14)

You cure a creature of all disease through mummery and pseudoscience.

Touch

Snuff Out (14)

Your voice sends a shiver through every light in the area. Darkness chokes out any natural light, along with any magical light created by a lower level magician.

Area

Globe of Yuzed (16)

Draw a cryptic symbol in the dust with your finger or device, and name a person. A gleaming ball of black jade appears, about the size of a large marble. When the ball is touched by the named person or their heir/ess, it turns into a hideous, hairy spider of the same size and color. The beastie has a Monster Rating of 3, and anyone bitten by it must make a Saving Roll or die. On a success, pain spasms through the victim, cutting their Dexterity dice or Monster Rating in half until the venom is removed or treated.

Touch

Streaker (16)

You vanish in a puff of brimstone, leaving your gear behind, and pop up 50' away in a direction of your choice, buck naked. Or, spend double the power to keep your clothes on, and bring a Haul no greater than your Intelligence score.

Self, sight

Fairy Thorns (18)

Summon a 10' wall of brambles and thorns that spring up immediately. The thorns attack anyone passing through with a Monster Rating equal to your Intelligence score. Anyone who makes it into the middle of the patch is intoxicated by the perfume of its roses, and they must make a Saving Roll or fall into a slumber.

Touch, area, sunrise

Luigi Board (18)

Ask the referee 3 yes/no questions, and the referee must answer honestly.

Self

Seeing Scryball (18)

Fall into a trance and hawk up an invisible eye of ectoplasm through which you can see, even in the dark. The eye can pass through almost any substance except for meteoric iron, and you can send it anywhere in the dungeon.

Self, sunrise

The Grey Matter is Warm (20)

You can hear the hideous secret thoughts of all nearby creatures, as if they were all whispering in your ear. In order to focus on one creature's mind, you must "hit" it with a ranged attack using your Charisma dice instead of Dexterity.

Thrown

Wall of Stuff (24)

Create a thick wall of fire, ice, iron, or stone, as high as your Intelligence score in feet.

Fire burns anything that passes through it, with fighting dice equal to your Intelligence.

Ice has an armor rating equal to your Intelligence score, and anything touching it may freeze.

Iron and Stone are really hard. They have an armor rating equal to your Intelligence score, but most weapons are useless against them.

Touch, sunrise

Herbal Enlistment (26)

Nearby plants hear and obey your orders.

Self, sunrise

Manservant Hecubus (26)

A servile human in black tights appears at your command, with a Monster Rating equal to your combined Charisma and Intelligence scores. The manservant delights in mischief and petty mayhem, but apart from that it will follow your orders until your Charisma score is reduced for any reason. The Hecubus can change its appearance at will.

Mutagen Makeover (26)

You transform into any creature you have tamed, with a Monster Rating no greater than 10 plus your combined dice. You gain all of the creature's adaptations. Cut the MR in half for each fantastic power or advantage.

Self, sunrise

Pit-Forged (26)

Graft an ectoplasm into any weapon, and give the weapon a bitchin' name like "Orcrist", "Stormbringer", or "Saint Andre". The weapon gains a visible aspect of the psychic presence, and a Monster Rating equal to your Intelligence score. Anyone using it for the first time must call the weapon by name and make a Charisma Saving Roll to master it—you only get one chance. The weapon will add its fighting dice to its master's fighting dice in battle.

Touch

Soul Steal (26)

Steal one spell from the mind of another magician. You can specify any spell you have seen the magician cast, or you can steal a random spell. The magician loses that spell until they learn it again from some other source.

Thrown

Invisible Rampart (28)

Raise a wall of force from floor to ceiling. Nothing can penetrate it except for the magic of a higher-level caster.

Touch, sunrise

Mutation Contagion (28)

Transform someone else into a creature you have tamed, with a Monster Rating no greater than the target's MR or 10 plus the target's combined dice; it can be as low as you like. The target gets all the adaptations that go with the new form. Cut the MR in half for each fantastic power or advantage.

Thrown, sunrise

Stone from Bone (30)

Turn living flesh to stone, or vice versa, with a dramatic stare.

Thrown

Symbiote Armor (30)

Graft an ectoplasm into any armor. The armor gains chitinous hooks, barbs, and spikes, adding your Intelligence score to its armor rating without increasing its weight. The armor also drains 1d6 power from its wearer to "heal" itself between fights.

Touch

Dithering Fume (32)

Barf forth a cloud of confusion and doubt. Every enemy in the cloud becomes so confused that they can't attack or defend themselves at all.

Area, 3 actions

Path of Evil (32)

Step into a shadow and name a place you've seen. You melt and reappear immediately in a shadow at the named location, bringing a Haul no greater than your Intelligence score.

Self

Abra Cadavers (34)

Raise all dead creatures in the area as obedient minions. Each cadaver has a Monster Rating equal to double its Strength score or Monster Rating while alive, but they are nearly invulnerable while their master lives.

Area, scene

Viper Surprise (34)

Touch a stick or belt or similar. It turns into a venomous snake with a Monster Rating equal to your combined Charisma and Dexterity scores.

Touch, sunrise

Baleful Burst (36)

You blow a giant shimmering bubble, sensitive to air movements and pointy objects. When it pops, the blast of heat will completely atomize anything within a radius equal to your Intelligence score in feet.

Thrown, area

Brimstone Baby (40)

Summon an invisible alien who is so incredible that your friends won't believe you summoned anything at all. The alien will carry out one task at your bidding. Beware: it will want something from you when it reports back! The specific ratings, powers, and desires of each brimstone baby are up to the referee.

Astral Amble (42)

Collapse into a death-like trance, without breath or heartbeat, and let your ghost wander abroad, still able to cast spells. Every time you take an action in the astral world, take away 1 from your Constitution score. When you return to your body, your Constitution score is restored to its level before your travel.

Self

Telltale Heart (44)

Remove your heart and hide it somewhere. You'll be fine! Should you perish anytime thereafter, your spirit lives on until the heart is destroyed. You can continue to cast any spells you know from the heart's hiding place, and possess anyone who comes within earshot of your heartbeat if their Charisma score or Monster Rating is lower than your Charisma score.

Five Elements (46)

Summon a sandestin of elemental wood, fire, earth, metal, or water. The sandestin may have its own agenda, but it will serve you (or rebel) like a minion. Sandestins have a Monster Rating of 60, but they are nearly invulnerable to anything apart from their controlling element: Wood splits earth, earth absorbs water, water quenches fire, fire melts metal, and metal chops wood. If you don't get along with your sandestin, summon up another to obliterate it—by all means!

Kill Pid (48)

Selectively terminate any and all magic in your field of vision—even if it's complicated and you don't know what's going on. If any magic was planted by a higher-level magician, your Kill Pid may briefly weaken its hold, or fail entirely.

Area

Nine Lives Nixed (48)

Point at one creature. Nine deadly calamities strike in a quick series of freak accidents. Unless the creature is protected by some higher power, it must make a Saving Roll for each calamity. If the creature makes all nine Saving Rolls, your magic becomes harmless against it; otherwise, the creature dies.

Sight

Necromancer's Subpoena (52)

Recall the ghost of a creature into its assembled remains, giving the creature a temporary respite from death.

Touch, sunrise

The Perfectly Cromulent Word (54)

It is useless to call on Crom, because he hates weaklings. When you utter the Perfectly Cromulent Word, he sends forth doom—utterly destroying you and everything within shouting distance, turning your location into a smoldering ruin, devoid of all life. Make a Saving Roll. If you succeed, some of your bones survive.

Pocket Universe (54)

Trace any hole—like an archway, a cupboard doorway, the opening of a purse—with your finger or device. It becomes a gateway into a random universe or subdimension. The deeper you are in the Twisted Tunnels, the weirder the destination. When the spell ends, make a Saving Roll. On a miss, the portal disappears, but on a success it remains until dispelled.

Touch, sunrise

Back in the Saddle of Evil (88)

Enchant a room or chamber in the Twisted Tunnels, and inscribe a name there—your own or someone else's. The named person will reincarnate in this room when death strikes. The clone retains all the skills, XP, badges, and memories from its previous incarnation, but no clothing or gear.

Touch

14 Secret Weapon Techniques

You don't have to know any techniques to try *anything you want* in combat. What follows are special effects that may be triggered in addition to whatever else you are doing.

If you *attempt* the following stunts without spending style points, it usually demands all your attention for one action, and you don't get to make another attack simultaneously. At the referee's discretion, such stunts may also require a Saving Roll or Clash to see what happens.

But a fighter who trains in these techniques can perform them by muscle memory, seizing momentary opportunities like no one else. Spending style points lets you add special effects to your other actions. Consider them bonuses to your regular attack.

You can perform any maneuver for 1 less than the listed cost if your enemy is helpless, to a minimum of 1 style point.

14.1 Price

1,000 coins for your first technique. After that, every new technique costs 1,000 coins plus 275 coins per technique you already know.

You can also work on with another fighter to develop techniques without the oversight of a dojo or a master, but it will take you weeks of rigorous experimentation and trial and error.

Bloodletter

Spend 2 style points to slice an exposed vein or artery.

Your enemy will suffer 1d6 damage every time they take an action until they stanch the blood flow.

Crash Through Walls

Spend 3 style points to knock an opponent through a wall, floor, or ceiling, +1 style point for each additional barrier after the first. Deal 1d6 additional damage per barrier.

Buster, unarmed

Daze, Blind, or Stun

If you can make a direct attack to your enemy's senses, spend 1 style point to disorient the opponent for a moment, 2 if they roll more fighting dice than you. For vertebrates, a blow to the head will do, but enemies with exotic anatomy or heavy armor might require knowledge of a specific weakness.

Disarming Strike

If an enemy is using a weapon other than its own body, spend 1 style point to knock one weapon they are using out of reach.

Do-si-do

Spend 2 style points to ignore an enemy's attack and introduce it to another nearby enemy. They deal damage to each other instead.

Light, unarmed

Ending Blow

If you know your enemy's vital spot and you can reach it, you find an opening to kill them without further ado. Spend 2 style points to kill an enemy who rolled no more fighting dice than you. Or spend 3 style points if they rolled more fighting dice than you.

An enemy's vital spot might be open for all to see, a momentary vulnerability, or a carefully-guarded secret.

Living Lightning

Spend 2 style points to make an immediate follow-up attack before anyone else, or 1 style point if you are holding a light weapon in each hand.

Light, unarmed

Piercing Strike

Your thrust penetrates the enemy's hide. Each style point you spend deals 2 points of damage. Spend 3 or more style points to impale your enemy (or at least a limb).

Light, ranged, reach

Roll With the Blow

Spend 2 style points to sway with the force of your enemy's attack, dispersing all the damage of the impact.

Unarmed

Second Wind

Add 1 to any waning score immediately for each style point you spend.

Buster, light, unarmed

Shattering Blow

Spend 3 style points to break your enemy's weapon if it's not magical.

Buster

Shield Splitter

You smite your enemy's shield with a shattering blow. Take away 1 point from the shield's rating for each style point you spend, permanently.

Buster, reach

15 Badges [DRAFT]

Badges are the heart of character development in Twisted Tunnels. As you gain levels, there are modest bonuses to your abilities, but the most important boons you get are those you unlock through your exploits.

When you level up, the referee will offer you two or more badges based on your adventures so far. You get to pick one and add it to your character. Because the badges you earn are ripped right out of the headlines of your your own personal feats and fiascos, your badges will become a unique record of your life and times.

A badge consists of three elements: A snazzy name, a requirement, and a description. The requirement is something that you must do in the fiction that makes the badge possible.

Con-artist

Requirement: You got exposed making grandiose claims to fool someone.

When you bamboozle someone with rapid, misleading talk, pick 1 or make a Charisma Saving Roll: They are dazed; they accept 1 premise from your spiel; or they offer you something of value to stop. On a success, pick 2. On a miss, they are unfazed.

Cutpurse

Requirement: You have botched a mugging.

When you pick someone's pocket or bag while holding a light blade, make a Dexterity Saving Roll. On a success, you get something useful if they have it. On a miss, they catch you, but they are momentarily **helpless** if you attack immediately.

Drunk Roller

Requirement: You have stolen something while the owner was intoxicated.

When you ply someone with their favorite vice, choose 3 items they have or secrets they might know about and make a Charisma Saving Roll. On a success, the referee or other player will choose 1 of the items or secrets and entrust it to you.

Gold-tongued Devil

Requirement: You have the Silver-tongued Devil badge and you blew it in a legendary con.

TBD

Mech Pilot

Requirement: You have survived a fight wearing mech armor.

You can ignore the *clumsy* tag on any mech armor that you have previously piloted in a fight.

Mech Pilot Pro

Requirement: You have the Mech Pilot badge.

You can ignore the *clumsy* tag on any mech armor that you have previously taken on a test drive.

Opportunist

[TBD]

Silver-tongued Devil

Requirement: You broke someone's heart after charming them with sweet words.

When talking with someone using charm and social grace, you may spend 1 style point to ask them exactly what they want, and they will answer truthfully. When you entice someone with melodious offers of exactly what they want, make a Charisma Saving Roll. On a success, they will do whatever you ask, as long as it's not obviously against their interests. On a miss, they will demand some assurance that you can deliver.

16 Appendix A Conversion

Converting monsters from the original Phoenix Fantasy game by Ken St. Andre

Monster Rating = original MR $\times \frac{2}{5}$.

Converting characters from the original Phoenix Fantasy game by Ken St. Andre

Subtract 10 from each Prime Attribute, and divide the result by 2 to find the skill's dice. Add 10 to the dice to find the score.

OSR Monsters

Monster Rating = HD × 4

Add 2 if the damage die is d8; add 4 if the damage die is d10; and so on.

Add 2 if the armor is like leather; add 6 if it is like chain; add 8 if it is like plate.

If the monster has a shield add the tag *Shielded* (2).

17 Appendix B Probability

Probability:

\ Calculate probabilities with troll:
<http://topps.diku.dk/torbenm/troll.msp>-

```
-
function-
function allmarksreroll(n) =-
    x := count 2 = n d2;-
    if x=n then x + call
allmarksreroll(n) else x-
```

```
-
call allmarksreroll(4)-
```

```
-
\ Or calculate probability of X dice (4)
beating Y (3)-
```

```
-
count call allmarksreroll(4) > call
allmarksreroll(3)
```

17.1 Saving Rolls

Marks	Difficulty
2	Easy
3	Professional
5	Master
8	Superhuman
12	Godlike

17.2 Style Points

Probability of rolling style points with different numbers of dice

-	1+	2+	3+	4+	5+	Avg.
1d6	28.55%	4.07%	0.57%	0.08%	0.01%	0.33
2d6	36.98%	6.47%	0.85%	0.13%	0.02%	0.44
3d6	45.42%	10.11%	1.40%	0.19%	0.03%	0.57
4d6	53.38%	14.93%	2.44%	0.31%	0.04%	0.71
5d6	60.57%	20.64%	4.17%	0.56%	0.07%	0.86
6d6	66.86%	26.88%	6.64%	1.06%	0.13%	1.02
7d6	72.25%	33.31%	9.83%	1.90%	0.25%	1.18
8d6	76.81%	39.68%	13.63%	3.16%	0.50%	1.34
9d6	80.65%	45.81%	17.91%	4.86%	0.93%	1.50
10d6	83.86%	51.58%	22.52%	7.01%	1.57%	1.67
11d6	86.55%	56.95%	27.35%	9.58%	2.46%	1.83
12d6	88.79%	61.87%	32.27%	12.53%	3.64%	2.00

\ Calculate probabilities with troll:
<http://topps.diku.dk/torbenm/troll.msp>

```

-
function allmarksreroll(n) =-
    x := count 3 < n d6; \ count the
number of hits-
    y := count 6 = n d6; \ count the
number of sixes-
    if x=n then y + call
allmarksreroll(n) else y-
-
call allmarksreroll(12)

```