iconic

adventuring system™

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Fundamentals

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FUNDAMENTALS

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Omne Ludum Valebat Est!

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Iconic Adventuring System

FUNDAMENTALS

Fundamentals is an abridged version of the forthcoming role-playing rules found in the *Iconic Adventuring System*. While the basic and core rules are comprehensive, this guide offers a general insight into the system and what to expect.

First, the Iconic System uses cards instead of dice. A majority of these cards form your character deck and aid you in task resolution.

Furthermore, your character deck changes over the course of an adventure and as you advance. Along with a character sheet, your deck is unique to your adventurer, and helps define your character.

Second, the Iconic System creates an immersive experience, offering cinematic action that, coupled with a robust game engine, allows players to unleash their character and control the narrative.

Leap upon rolling barrels of ale, swing from a giant's hair as you cut its throat, launch yourself from a catapult to slay the two-headed dragon, slide down a set of stairs on a shield while pelting your foe with arrows - all without making dozens of dice rolls and hoping each succeeds.

For the Game Master, Iconic offers unfettered storytelling: weave epic tales, featuring dramatic and fearsome foes, within the very first adventure of your campaign. There is no longer a need for the traditional litany of low level fodder and slow advancement for a campaign to reach its heroic conclusion.

However, before you free your imagination and enter the realm of legends, let us introduce the foundation upon which you will forge your mythic saga . . .

IMPORTANT TERMS

Game mechanics refer to several terms and instruction to help guide and facilitate game play; the most important of which is how to play a card.

When you play a card, take the card from your hand and place it face up into your immediate play area. After attempting a task, discard the cards you played into the discard pile, otherwise known as the *fatigue pile*.

Further mechanics may instruct you to perform one of the following:

❖ **Discard.** Unless an action is specific, you discard from your hand, the top of your character deck, or play area. When you discard a card, place it face up onto the fatigue pile of your own character deck, unless an action dictates a different destination.

❖ **Exert.** Discard a card from the top of your character deck.

❖ **Exhaust.** You temporarily lose the use of a card or resource. Remove the card from your hand, character deck, fatigue pile, or play area as instructed. You regain the card after you meet certain conditions or at the discretion of the Game Master.

❖ **Forsake.** You permanently lose the use of a card or resource. Remove the card from your hand, character deck, fatigue pile, or play area as instructed.

❖ **Gain.** When you gain a card, place it face up onto the fatigue pile of your character deck unless otherwise specified.

❖ **Hand Size.** The number of cards a player can have in his or her hand at any given moment. Aptitudes often determine hand size for tasks.

❖ **Prepare.** Place a card face up in your immediate play area for use at a later time.

❖ **Replenish.** Place the card face down at the bottom of your character deck.

❖ **Reshuffle.** If there are not enough cards in the character deck, draw or discard as many as possible, shuffle the fatigue pile to form a new character deck, then draw or discard the remainder to satisfy the action or effect.

❖ **Reveal.** When you reveal a card, you show the Game Master and other players the card and return it to its proper place, unless an effect instructs you to place it elsewhere.

❖ **Retrieve.** When you retrieve a card, place the card into your hand.

❖ **Stack.** When you stack a card, place it face down on top of your character deck.

❖ **Threshold.** The number of cards in your fatigue pile.

THE CARDS

There are eight types of cards in the basic set:

❖ **Action**
❖ **Experience**
❖ **Fate**
❖ **Feat**
❖ **Quest**

- ❖ Mana
- ❖ Stress
- ❖ Wound

Action Cards

Action cards are the heart of the *Iconic Adventuring System*. Each card corresponds with one of your ability scores. Action cards inspire role-play, help manipulate your character deck, and aid you in task resolution.

For each action card you play as part of a task, you either act or react to overcome obstacles, setbacks, or foes. What unfolds as you weave your tale is limited to your imagination along with that of your Game Master and fellow Players.

There are five basic types of action cards: AGILITY, CHARM, INSIGHT, STRENGTH, and WILLPOWER.

Suggested Agility Actions. Slide under a table, swing from a chandelier, catch a small object, or whirl and dance.

Suggested Agility Hindrances. Roof beam collapses, arrow whizzes past your head, or a wet surface causes you to slip.

Suggested Charm Actions. Bribe a guard, distract a foe, command your companion to attack, inspire trust, intimidate an opponent, or hide amongst the crowd.

Suggested Charm Hindrances. Clumsy stranger tries to aid you, crowd impedes movement, an animal alerts your presence, or you disturb a nest of insects.

Suggested Insight Actions. Identify a weakness, discover a clue, interpret an ancient script, or aim for a vital area.

Suggested Insight Hindrances. Witness gives a cryptic clue, shadowed foe strikes, the room is dark or poorly lit, or your armor has a weakness.

Suggested Strength Actions. Shove a foe over a cliff, overturn a table, guide oxen in the fields, threaten a thug, or hold open a portcullis.

Suggested Strength Hindrances. Debris pins you to the ground, tangled in a web, your shield splinters, a chest is heavy and awkward, or a foe forces you backward.

Suggested Willpower Actions. Drink dwarven ale, hold your breath, endure harsh weather, maintain a grapple, or stay alert during watch.

Suggested Willpower Hindrances. Creature frightens you, a giant crushes you with its grip, sneeze or cough while hiding, or you disturb a noxious plant.

Experience Cards

Experience cards act as wild action cards, representing how characters learn and adapt during an adventure by overcoming challenges. Game Masters can reward experience cards for role-play and after completing tasks.

Fate Cards

Fate reveals complications and the abilities required to overcome a task (discussed in further detail later). The fate deck consists of 32 fate cards, each unique.

Feat Cards

When you use a feat card, you perform a notable or remarkable act of achievement, displaying an assured boldness or expertise. Your character begins with two feat cards and can earn more through advancement.

Mana Cards

Weaving an incantation, awakening primal spirits, or evoking a miracle, often requires the expenditure of one or more mana cards. Like experience cards, mana cards act as wild action cards, but imparts the **magic** keyword to the task. Casting rituals also require mana cards to unlock the mystical power of incantations or miracles.

Quest Cards

When a character embarks on an adventurous expedition wrought with peril and risk, the Game Master rewards the player with a quest card after completing a milestone. An adventure may have several milestones for characters to complete. Banking quest cards make tasks less difficult. Once you bank five quest cards, you to advance your character.

Stress Cards

When an adventurer gains a stress card, it represents the mental or physical strain that a task places on the well-being of that character. This stress or pressure can manifest itself during an event or later when the event is long over.

As players draw stress cards into their hand or add them to their fatigue pile, tasks become increasingly difficult. On the other hand, there are times stress allows adventurers to achieve results beyond his or her capability. While the *Core* rules discuss stress in further detail, the following rules govern stress cards:

Player's Area

Played Cards →

SHADOW MAGIC

STRENGTH

STRENGTH

Character Deck

Prepared Cards →

FEAT

FEAT

CHARM

EXPER

INS

WOUND

Fatigue Pile

Player's Hand ←

- ❖ **Encounters.** The first time you begin a major encounter, gain 1 stress card. The second time you start a major encounter, gain 2 stress cards; the third encounter, 3 stress cards; and so forth.

- ❖ **Daring Action.** A willing adventurer may also choose to gain a stress card to further improve the chance of success for a task. This is called a *daring action*. Once per task, a player may gain a stress card to draw one additional card from his or her character deck.

- ❖ **Forsaking Stress Cards.** Once in your fatigue pile, stress cards prove difficult to purge from your character deck without resulting in a mishap. At the end of a turn, the active player can forsake all stress cards in his or her hand.

- ❖ **Mishaps.** Whenever your hand entirely consists of stress cards, or stress and wound cards, a mishap occurs.

Wound Cards

When your adventurer becomes injured, take one or more wound cards from the wound stack and place them into your fatigue pile. When your character suffers a greater injury, you instead place the wound card into your hand or character deck.

Gaining Wound Cards

While discussed in greater detail within the *Core* rules, the wound card has the following guidelines:

- ❖ **Cannot Discard.** You cannot discard, exhaust, stack, replenish, or forsake wound cards from your hand unless an effect explicitly states otherwise.

- ❖ **Dying.** If you possess an entire hand of wound cards, your character is unconscious and dying.

- ❖ **Dead.** If you possess an entire hand of wound cards and gain an additional wound card to your hand, you are dead.

The Basics

Before focusing on the details of how to attempt and resolve tasks, it is important to understand a few basic concepts of the *Iconic Adventuring System*.

Time

During the course of an adventure, situations arise where precision timekeeping becomes important—most notable, in a skirmish where adventurers make split second decisions. The Game Master determines the time required to accomplish a task. Although, for most of the game, it is fine to keep track of time with a loose narrative or in general terms: minutes, hours, days, weeks, months, even seasons or years.

- ❖ **Exploring.** In a dungeon environment, movement happens on a scale of minutes.

- ❖ **Excursions.** Within a city or traversing open wilderness, a scale of hours proves more appropriate.

- ❖ **Expeditions.** For longer journeys, a scale of days makes the most sense.

- ❖ **Encounters.** In a skirmish or other quick, dramatic events, the Game Master keeps track of time in *rounds*. A round is a period of time lasting an average of 6 seconds.

Turn Order

Most adversaries or dangerous situations govern which aptitude score determines turn order. If there is not a set aptitude, the default is Initiative.

At the beginning of each round, a character whose aptitude score is equal to or higher than the threat acts first. If more than one character is able to take action before a threat, players elect which of their characters will act first, second, third, and so forth.

Afterward, adversaries take action or the dangerous situation resolves, then those adventurers who have yet to act, can take a turn. Players also choose the turn order for those characters who act after the threat.

- ❖ **Seize the Initiative.** Players can discard a prepared feat card to take a turn before the opponent or hazard. The Game Master can also seize the initiative and have a non-player character (NPC) that has yet to act to take a turn before a player character (PC). To seize the initiative, the Game Master adds one momentum after the NPC acts. The Game Master cannot seize the initiative again until a player takes a turn.

Tasks

Action cards represent a single act, and when a PC performs a series of actions, it is a task. When undertaking a task, keep in mind the following:

- ❖ **Players Perform All Tasks.** In *Iconic*, the focus remains on the players and their characters (PCs). Therefore, only adventurers possess a character deck, draw and play cards, and attempt all tasks during an encounter.

- ❖ **Movement During a Task.** Unless it is specifically a movement task, there is no need to keep track of movement. When a player attempts a task, the system automatically measures character motion with fatigue.

Tell Your Tale

While the Game Master provides the framework for adventure, as you play action cards, feel free to describe what is going on in cinematic detail. The icons are simple enough to provide direction without hampering your imagination. Include the environment, obstacles, and witnessing NPCs — even foes challenging you. In other words, anything that can either contribute to your success or failure.

The Core

While the *Iconic Adventuring System* incorporates a variety of mechanics, at its heart, it is about resolving a task. Whenever your character attempts to act, whether he or she struggles against a ferocious dragon or climbs the matted locks of a giant while you make your attack, you perform a task.

When the outcome is uncertain, you play action cards against one or more fate cards to determine the result. The task is successful if you match all icons on each fate card with action cards from your hand. Otherwise, you fail and often suffer fatigue or ill effects.

Performing Tasks

Each adventurer has one turn during a round. In a turn, a character performs one or more actions to complete a single task. Often, tasks require much labor, skill, or planning to become a success.

All actions fall into one of the following categories: AGILITY, CHARM, INSIGHT, STRENGTH, and WILLPOWER. Each of these categories correspond with an action card.

Furthermore, each task identifies with one of the ten aptitudes: CONVICTION, GUISE, FITNESS, FORTUNE, INITIATIVE, LEADERSHIP, PRESENCE, RESOLVE, SPEED, and STAMINA. A task has a degree of difficulty that determines the likelihood that an adventurer succeeds.

Perform the following steps to attempt a task in *Iconic*. The rules explain several steps in greater detail further below.

❖ **Declaration.** Tell the Game Master a goal or series of actions your character will attempt. Be clear and concise about the outcome you seek.

❖ **Determine Difficulty.** The Game Master determines one of the nine degrees of difficulty to accomplish the task.

❖ **Momentum.** If available, you can forsake one or more *momentum*. For each momentum you forsake, decrease the difficulty by one step. Afterward, draw a number of stress cards indicated by the degree of difficulty.

❖ **Assign Attribute.** The Game Master selects one of your ten aptitudes befitting the task at hand. The chosen aptitude score serves as a basis for your hand size.

❖ **Assistance.** You may ask for assistance from one or more companions.

❖ **Draw Your Hand.** Draw cards from your character deck until the number of cards in hand equals your hand size.

❖ **Consult the Fates.** Depending on the difficulty level of a task, the Game Master draws one or more fate cards, interprets them, and finally reveals the cards to players.

❖ **Resolution.** Play one or more action cards from your

hand. The revealed fate icons on the fate card represent obstacles and determines which action cards prove effective for the task. If the action cards played match each of the fate icons, you succeed. Otherwise, you fail.

❖ **Exhaustion.** Exert fatigue for each unmatched fate icon. If fatigue causes you to overexert your character deck, suffer trauma.

❖ **Experience.** If you succeed in a task without playing an experience card, gain an experience card.

❖ **Refresh.** Forsake all stress cards from your hand. Discard all cards you played into your fatigue pile.

Consult the Fates

Fate cards represent complications that arise during a task. Most fate cards have icons that correspond with one or more of the five core attributes: AGILITY, CHARM, INSIGHT, STRENGTH, and WILLPOWER. The icons symbolize obstacles in order to succeed the task at hand. The Game Master and players are both responsible for interpreting the icons revealed on the fate card.

This can prove a challenge, since one or more of the icons on the fate card might not relate to the given task. As a matter of fact, oftentimes, it might happen that none of the appropriate icons appear. However, this is the heart of *Iconic* and exemplifies storytelling as well as the art of improvisation.

❖ **Reveal Fate.** Draw and reveal a number of fate cards until the total amount of icons meet or exceed the minimum required indicated by the degree of difficulty.

Resolution

After the fate card reveals the complication along with the required icons to complete the task, the player must match those icons with action cards from his or her hand. If the player succeeds, then he or she achieves the task.

❖ **Momentum.** When a player succeeds in a task, he or she also adds one momentum to the group resource pool.

❖ **Experience.** If you succeed in a task without playing an experience card, gain an experience card.

Otherwise, for each icon the player fails to match, he or she loses a certain amount of fatigue. If the task is opposed, for each unmatched icon, the fatigue loss is equal to the attribute score of the opposition. If the task is not opposed, for each unmatched icon, it is equal to 3 + the number of stress cards in hand.

❖ **Exert.** Discard an amount of cards equal to the fatigue from the top of your character deck and into your fatigue pile.

❖ **Overexert.** If there is not enough cards in the character

deck, discard as many as possible, gain trauma, shuffle the fatigue pile to form a new character deck, then discard the remainder to satisfy the task or effect.

Resistance

Even if successful, a task can prove such a strain that an adventurer loses fatigue regardless, such as plunging a dagger between the plates of a well-armored foe. This is called *resistance*.

Not all tasks have resistance. If fact, most do not. Certain situations or events, determined by the Game Master, can result in a task having resistance.

❖ **Resistance.** If a task has resistance, if successful, lose the indicated amount of fatigue equal to the resistance score. Should this loss of fatigue cause a character to overexert, the adventurer gains a stress card.

If a task is opposed, resistance is often the aptitude score of the opposition that determined the difficulty. However, oftentimes when opposed, the task has resistance if the threat has training in a specific skill. If unopposed, the *Difficulty Table* indicates a recommended resistance score.

Natural Success

During tense situations, when time is of the essence or circumstance requires great effort or risk, such as in combat, the Game Master requires a check. On the other hand, there are moments when success does not require a check.

If a task proves routine or simple enough that an adventurer can accomplish it through force of habit, the Game Master may decide there is no need for a task. When an adventurer can succeed in a task without a check, it is called a *natural success*.

There are three paths toward a natural success:

❖ **Adept.** In certain situations that have a small amount of risk, characters succeed and do not need to make a check if trained in a relevant skill. Untrained characters, with a bit of cleverness, can also have a natural success, but must first discard a feat card. Regardless, both trained and untrained characters still must exert fatigue if the task has resistance.

❖ **Time.** When given time, without pressure or distractions, trained adventurers can forgo a check and succeed with a natural success. Given enough time, with favorable conditions, and without interruption, untrained characters can also achieve a natural success. However, the Game Master might require the untrained character to first discard a feat card. Once again, if the task has resistance, both trained and untrained characters still must exert fatigue.

❖ **Assurance.** In uncertain situations that have a larger amount of risk, characters can succeed and do not need to make a check if trained in a relevant skill, but first *must* discard a feat card. Untrained adventurers can achieve

the same result, but must discard two feat cards. As before, both trained and untrained characters still must exert fatigue if the task has resistance.

Regardless of the situation, natural success is at the discretion of the Game Master.

Failing Forward

While most moments require a definitive success or failure to determine an outcome, there are times that a failure slows the momentum of the game rather than progressing it forward. *Iconic* has an intrinsic fail forward system, whereas if a character fails and suffers fatigue, the Game Master can declare the task was a marginal success instead of a complete failure.

Attribute Tests

There are several encounters in which adventurers react to the environment or respond to an immediate situation rather than initiating a task. These are *attribute tests* and include: activating an ability, being startled by a trap; resisting the effects of a spell; noticing a secret passage while strolling down a hall; sliding beneath a portcullis before it slams shut; or overcoming the frightening roar of a dragon.

The action card required is determined by the effect that causes it. The result of a successful or failed attribute test is also detailed in the effect that allows the action.

To determine success or failure, perform the following:

❖ **Reveal or Discard.** Depending on the situation, you either reveal or discard the required action card from your hand for a success.

❖ **Exert Fatigue.** If you do not possess the required action card in hand, you may instead exert fatigue up to your attribute score. If you exert the required action card, it is a success.

❖ **Skill.** If trained in a particular skill, you may exert 1 additional fatigue.

❖ **Feat.** Whenever an effect or ability requires you to make an attribute test, you can instead discard a feat card for a success. You must decide to discard a feat card before you make an attempt.

Usually, a success means that a creature suffers no harm, or reduced harm, from an adverse effect.

An Example of a Task

The following is an example of a task:

Ricard has an audience with Lord Williamsdale later in the evening and decides he could use a bath and have the launderers wash his clothes. However, his purse holds herbs and dried flow-

er petals, but no coin. Ricard relents, and searches the market for a drunk merchant's son with a few bob left to spend. Ricard stretches and flexes his fingers as the troubadour is about to make a withdrawal. It has been a while.

After Rachel, the player role-playing Ricard, draws a number of cards until her hand size equals her Guise score, the Game Master reveals two fate cards. A total of three icons appear: Willpower and two Strength. Her heart sinks. Though Rachel has one of each in her hand, she does not have a second Strength card. Furthermore. the Strength icon is confusing for a pick-pocketing task.

Rachel talks to her Game Master and fellow players: "I have an idea for the Willpower icon, but I'm finding it hard to explain the Strength icon. I mean, I don't want to strong-arm him."

"Well, what's your idea for the Willpower icon?"

"In his drunken stupor, he bumps into a few locals that remember him from his previous visit to the village last season. He talks with them for a while. Perhaps, too long, because the day runs short and I need time to launder my clothes for tonight. I play my Willpower to show my determination against my own impatience."

"Okay," the Game Master encourages, "That's great! I think I have an idea for the rest. As you wait and are about to move on, he breaks from his friends and staggers further down the street. You overheard one of the locals mention a daughter of a taverner up the block that he should visit.

After a few moments more, you make your move, but as you do, you hear behind you, 'Hey, James, my friend, you're staggering up the wrong street.' However, his laughter quickly dies and turns to anger, 'Hey, what do you think you're doing? James, this wretch is trying to pick your pocket!' The local grabs your arm.

"I play my Strength card. I don't have a second one to play, so I know that's not enough."

"Yes, but you still have a chance. Do you wish to gain a stress card to attempt a daring action?"

"It's tempting, but I don't want another stress card to clog up my deck. I hope to recount a tale or sing a song to honor Lord Williamsdale later and I want to succeed. So, no, not this time. I'll find another way to get the coin I need. I knew I shouldn't have returned to my old habits."

Normally, Rachel would fail the task because she did not match all the fate icons. However, to progress the story along and to reward good role-play, the Game Master decides to fail forward: "Okay. Since there is one unmatched Strength icon and you possess two stress cards in hand, you lose five fatigue. Afterward, you break free from his friend and lose yourself in the crowded market. A few pennies in hand, not enough to launder your clothes, but enough for a bath. Furthermore, you're free from an evening in the stocks."

"Since I have ten cards remaining in my character deck, I don't need to reshuffle my deck after losing five fatigue. No stress this time."

COMBAT

Whether you strike with a melee weapon, let loose a few arrows, or perform an assault with a spell, you make an attack. Attacks have a clear structure and this simple rule:

ATTACKING IS LIKE PERFORMING ANY OTHER TASK. ALMOST.

ATTACK TASKS

To attack a foe during a skirmish encounter, you must perform a melee or ranged task.

❖ **Attack Form.** You decide which form the attack will take; a spell that harms or a martial assault.

❖ **Declare Target.** Once you decide the form of the attack, select a target within your attack range: a creature, object, or location.

❖ **Resolve the Attack.** You perform an attack task. On a success, you gain momentum, unless the particular attack states otherwise. Some tasks cause special effects in addition to or instead of momentum. If damage is equal to or greater than the Health of your foe, he or she instead suffers either a dramatic end or critical injury.

If there is ever doubt whether a task is an attack, the rule is simple: if you perform a *melee* or *ranged* task, it is an attack.

ATTACK FORMS

Generally, there are two distinct attack forms: melee and ranged. Magic is unique, though often it is either a melee or ranged attack.

Melee Attacks

A melee attack allows you to attack an opponent when engaged. Generally, combatants make melee attacks with a handheld weapon such as a sword, war hammer, or axe. Monsters often make a melee attack when striking with claws, horns, teeth, tentacles, or some other body part. A few spells also involve making a melee attack.

Most creatures have a **5-foot reach** and can thus attack targets within 5 feet of them when making a melee attack. Certain creatures (typically those larger than Medium) have melee attacks with a reach greater than 5 feet, as noted in their descriptions.

To attack a foe with a melee weapon, unless otherwise stated, you must engage the opponent and perform a *melee* task.

Two-Weapon Fighting

While wielding two weapons, you gain a +2 bonus to weapon damage. Determine expertise and edge from the weapon in your primary hand.

Ranged Attacks

Ranged attacks include bows and firearms, as well as hurling axes and daggers. Your foe must be within a certain distance of your weapon to be an effective ranged attack.

Engaged

While engaged, you can use a bow or firearm to make a ranged attack if trained in acrobatics. The ranged attack is also contested.

Parry

If armed with a weapon with the **parry** keyword or a shield, you may parry during a melee task as either an active or reactive player. Likewise, if you equip a shield other than a buckler, you can parry a ranged attack as the reactive player.

To parry, perform the following:

❖ **Parry.** Discard a feat card to replace one revealed fate card with another from the fate deck.

Fatigue & Trauma

Combat is savage and brutal. While a large and vicious weapon in the hands of a well-armored, warrior is a threat, a quick dagger thrust between armored plates from a flanking foe can prove just as lethal. Therefore, in the *Iconic System,* damage is relative to outmaneuvering a rival, and takes precedence over the size of a weapon.

Health

Each creature has a Health aptitude. It is one of the ten aptitudes that best represents the overall physical and mental wellness specific to that creature. It further embodies the willingness to remain in a skirmish and fight.

Oftentimes, the Health aptitude is Stamina, which best typifies the well-being of mundane, living creatures. On the other hand, fabled monsters and supernatural beings have different aptitudes to represent health.

Player Characters

Along with Health, player characters (PCs) have a character deck which further represents a combination of physical and mental durability, the will to live, as well as luck. Oftentimes, whenever a player takes damage, it is in the form of fatigue. However, if fatigue forces you to overexert, it either causes stress or some other form of trauma, such as a wound.

Once a wound card moves from the character deck and into the hand, it begins to effect the capabilities of the PC. Should more wound cards appear in hand, it can cause bleeding, and might lead to death.

Non-Player Characters

Without a hand of cards and a character deck to draw from, damage for non-playing characters (NPCs) is different. In most instances, all forms of trauma are sufficient to finish a NPC and often results in retreat, a mortal blow, or some other grievous injury. Larger, more powerful creatures prove harder to vanquish.

Damage

Damage measures the severity of an attack. The more damage an attack inflicts, the risk of injury is greater.

Each weapon, spell, and harmful monster trait specifies the damage it deals in terms of *effort*. When attacking with a **weapon**, add its effort, including any modifiers, to determine damage. An **implement** or **spell** specifies its effort and whether to add any modifiers to determine damage.

Magic weapons, special talents and traits, as well as other factors can grant a bonus to effort, and thus increase damage. Two of the most common modifiers are as follows:

❖ **Momentum.** Add +1 to effort for each point of momentum in the pool.

❖ **Allies.** For each other allied creature engaged in melee with the opponent, add +2 effort to melee damage.

Thus, damage is equal to EFFORT + MOMENTUM, in addition to any other modifiers.

Damage Effects

Whenever a creature takes damage, compare that damage to its Health Rank, including any modifiers, such as armor. If the damage is less than its Health, the creature is staggered and beaten, losing fatigue if it is a player character (PC), but no other effect.

However, if the damage is equal or exceeds its Health, the creature suffers a critical injury if the target is a player character (PC) or a dramatic end, otherwise known as a *coup de grace*, if the opponent is a non-player character (NPC).

Dramatic End

To defeat a NPC, you must perform a *coup de grace*. It is a decisive strike that makes the combatant incapable of fighting.

If damage is greater than its Health, then select one of the following:

- **Death.** The NPC receives a mortal wound and ceases to live or otherwise exist.

- **Subdue.** The NPC is injured and incapable of fighting, whether cowered, captured, or unconscious.

- **Retreat.** The NPC will no longer fight and flees from the skirmish area.

Otherwise, if an attack other than a coup de grace proves successful, or should you fend off a foe with a counterattack, you gain *momentum*.

Critical Injury

Player characters (PCs) do not suffer from a dramatic end. Instead, he or she suffers a critical injury and gains a wound card. If damage is less than his or her modified Health, the player character instead suffers fatigue equal to the unmatched fate icons. If a PC overexerts, then he or she gains a wound card.

Summary

To become well-versed with combat damage, along with how and when to apply it to an opponent, refer to the following:

Melee Combat

If you succeed, do the following:

- **Damage.** Damage is equal to your weapon effort + momentum.

- **Resistance.** You exert fatigue equal to the Armor Rank (AR) or Defense Rank (DR) of the opponent, whichever is greater.

- **Trauma.** If fatigue forces you to overexert, gain a stress card.

If you fail, do the following:

- **Damage.** If damage from your opponent is equal to or greater than your modified Health score, gain a wound card. Otherwise, exert fatigue for each unmatched fate icon. The amount of fatigue loss is equal to the corresponding attribute of the threat.

- **Defense.** If you must exert fatigue, reduce fatigue loss equal to your Defense Rank (DR).

- **Trauma.** If fatigue forces you to overexert, you gain a wound card.

Ranged Combat

A successful ranged attack follows the same procedure as a successful melee attack. However, on a failure, do the following:

- **Fatigue.** You exert fatigue for each unmatched fate icon. The amount of fatigue loss is equal to the corresponding attribute of the threat.

- **Trauma.** If fatigue forces you to overexert, you gain a stress card. If the attack is contested, unless specified, gain a wound card.

Magic

Through arcane knowledge and faithful devotion, one cultivates a key to unlock the gateway into the unknown. For magicians and priests, it begins with weaving incantations and conjuring miracles.

Adventurers with the appropriate talent, can wield two distinct forms of magic: hedge magic, often referred to low magic or folk magic, and ritual magic.

Hedge Magic

While adventurers can learn to cast spells from a master list of rituals, it is also possible to cast spells of their own design. A situation might arise when a ritual proves too confining or the needed esoteric formula is unknown to the caster.

Ritual Magic

Ritual magic, also known as high magic or ceremonial magic, encompasses long, complex formulas required by its practitioners to cast spells. Although, once learned and committed to memory, ritual spells proves more reliable than those conjured through hedge magic.

Regardless of the type of magic, spellcasters do not have a limit to the number of spells he or she can cast. For those familiar with other role-playing games, Iconic does not use a Vancian or similar magic system.

If mana is in your reservoir, you can cast a spell. Otherwise, you must either wait until mana replenishes into your reservoir, either drawing them once again into your hand or gathering more mana. The latter, however, poses a greater risk and you might suffer trauma.

Furthermore, with hedge magic, spellcasters can perform a task, casting one or more spells, creating a narrative without the

need for mana. While creative and perfect for storytelling, without mana, it does not have the **magic** keyword and is aesthetic.

For example, a druid performs an attack task, describing vines bursting from the ground and surrounding foliage, whipping and choking his foe. However, without earth mana, the attack does not have the **magic** and **earth** keywords for the purpose of overcoming defenses or other requirements.

CHARACTER SHEETS

The standard character sheet for the *Iconic Adventuring System* organizes basic, but crucial information, including initial character development and numbers. The following offers a brief explanation of these elements.

1. BASIC INFORMATION

The name of your adventurer appears on the top right of the character sheet, along with your selected role. Further below offers space for your chosen occupation, background, and archetype.

2. ATTRIBUTES

All creatures, characters included, have five basic attributes: AGILITY, CHARM, INSIGHT, STRENGTH, and WILLPOWER. Your attributes also indicate how many of each basic action card is in your character deck as well as its rank.

Brim has an Agility of 4. Therefore, Brim has 4 Agility action cards in his deck, and each Agility action card has a rank of 4.

Aside from attributes, this area of the character sheet also includes the other cards a character deck holds.

Brim has 2 experience cards, 2 quest cards, and 1 feat card. Brim had 3 quest cards, but the darkened circle near the quest icon indicates he banked 1 of those cards to lessen the difficulty of a previous task. Once you bank 5 quest cards, you gain renown, or in other words, level your character.

Experience cards are not shown on the character sheet. Once played, forsake the experience card (remove it from play). Players record unspent experience cards between game sessions.

3. APTITUDES

Your five attribute scores determine the ten aptitudes your character possesses. Aptitudes often determine your hand size for tasks. The darkened circle near the adjoining attribute icon indicates an expertise in performing a task involving the aptitude.

4. SKILLS

You gain training in two skills of your choice. You gain additional training in three other skills depending on your chosen character role. Training in a skill provides advantage to tasks and attribute tests.

5. WEAPONS

Each weapon possesses the following statistics:

❖ **Expertise.** This is a measure of prowess, control, and finesse a wielder possesses with a particular weapon. During an attack, you can discard the indicated action card to draw a card.

❖ **Edge.** Weapons can also provide further advantage when wielded during a skirmish. Once per attack, you can discard the indicated action card to gain a momentum, regardless of whether the attack was a success or failure.

❖ **Effort.** Whether through brute force, discipline, or subtle finesse, effort is a measure of potential force a weapon exudes in capable hands against opponents. Damage from a weapon is equal to its effort + momentum gained during the encounter. Your effort is either a static number, such as for an arbalest or crossbow, or based on one of your attributes.

The effort from Brim's short bow is based on his strength, while insight serves as a basis for his arming sword.

❖ **Stamina.** The stamina required represents the overall energy needed to use the weapon to its maximum potential. If the adventurer does not meet the stamina requirement, treat the character as untrained with the weapon. Furthermore, for each wound card in hand, increase the stamina requirement by one.

In addition to its statistics, several weapons also have keywords described in further detail within the core and basic edition of the rules.

6. OTHER STATISTICS

Within the center of the attribute ring, there are four further statistics: Health, Armor Rank, Wounds, and Stress.

❖ **Health.** Your health is equal to your health aptitude (which, in this case, is Stamina) + your armor rank. If the damage from an attack meets or exceeds your modified Health score, you suffer a critical injury.

❖ **Armor Rank.** Your armor rank, aside from modifying your Health score, offers additional protection against certain damage types as indicated with the darkened circles. If you would gain a wound card from a particular damage type, you can discard a prepared feat card to instead gain a stress card.

Wound and stress indicates how many you have of each of

Iconic Character Sheet

Front

(1) Brim Aimar — CHARACTER NAME

(2) AGILITY 3 · Archer — CHARACTER ROLE

FEAT 1

CHARM 2

INSIGHT 4

QUEST 2

HEALTH 7 · ARMOR 2 · STRESS · WOUNDS

(6)

EXPERIENCE

STRENGTH 3

WILLPOWER 2

OCCUPATION / BACKGROUND: Fletcher/Poacher

ARCHETYPE: Defender

(3)
CONVICTION	4
GUISE	5
FITNESS	6
FORTUNE	6
INITIATIVE	7
LEADERSHIP	7
PRESENCE	6
RESOLVE	6
SPEED	5
STAMINA	5

(4)
- ☐ ACADEMIA
- ☐ ACROBATICS
- ☐ AFFLUENCE
- ☐ ARCANA
- ☐ ATHLETICS
- ☒ CRIMINAL
- ☐ ENDURANCE
- ☐ INFLUENCE
- ☐ MEDICINE
- ☒ NATURE
- ☐ OCCULT
- ☒ PERCEPTION
- ☐ PERFORM
- ☐ RELIGION
- ☐ SCIENCE
- ☐ SOCIAL
- ☒ STEALTH
- ☒ SURVIVAL

(5)
WEAPON	EXPERTISE	EDGE	EFFORT	STAMINA	BULK	TYPE	KEYWORDS
Shortbow	Insight	Agility	3	4	L	P	Ranged
Arming Sword	Insight	Agility	4	3	L	P, S	Noble, Versatile

Back

CHARACTER DESCRIPTION

(7)
LINEAGE	Human
GENDER	Male
CULTURAL ORIGINS	Elven
AGE	17
HOMELAND	Almheldir
EYES	Hazel
FAMILY	Unknown
HAIR	Brown
RELIGION	Iothdë
HEIGHT	5' 9"
LIEGE/PATRON	The Evanesce, Spiritual Leader
WEIGHT	187 lbs.

LANGUAGES

(8) SPOKEN
- Common
- Elvish
- Sylvan
- Primordial

TALENTS

(9)
- Marksmanship

WEALTH

(10) STANDARD OF LIVING: Poor

RESOURCES 2

FOOD 4

WATER 4

ARMOR

Gambeson

(11) IMPROVEMENT: War Hat — BONUS: 0*

COMPANIONS

GEAR

(12)
ITEM	BULK	LOCATION
2 arming swords	L	Sheathed
Gambeson	l	Worn
Explorer's pack	l	Back
Shortbow	L	Back
Quiver	L	Back
Hunting snares	L	Backpack
Dark common clothes with hood	-	Worn
Belt pouch containing a few coin	L	Belt

GEAR
ITEM	BULK	LOCATION

AMMUNITION: Arrows

(13) NOTES: *+1 against larger opponents or defending lower ground. Searching the wood of Almheldir for the fabled pathway into the fey realms for the elvish spiritual leader, the Evanesce.

those cards in your character deck.

7. Character Description

This section allows you to further describe your character, including any pertinent information you might want to include.

8. Languages

You can speak a number of languages equal to your Insight score (minimum of one — your origin language). You cannot read or write in these languages unless you possess training in Academia.

9. Talents

During character creation, and through advancement, you can gain talents that offer special capabilities. When you first create your adventurer, you can forsake one or more of your starting feat cards to gain a talent.

The player controlling Brim decided to forsake one of his two feat cards to gain the marksmanship talent during character creation.

10. Standard of Living

When not descending into the depths of the earth, exploring ruins for lost treasures, or waging war against the encroaching darkness, adventurers face more mundane realities. Even in a fantastical world, people require basic necessities such as shelter, sustenance, and clothing.

The *Iconic Adventuring System* has an abstract system of wealth and instructs how to obtain items during an adventure or downtime. Your standard of living also serves as a basis for acquiring items while within civilized areas, such as village markets and burgeoning townships.

11. Armor

This section of the character sheet details your armor, including improvement.

As of now, Brim has thick cloth armor, called gambeson, along with a war hat. One day, he hopes to acquire a mail hauberk to layer with his gambeson to improve his defense.

12. Gear

Keep track of important equipment and quest items, along with its bulk and location, you might need over the course of a campaign.

13. Notes

During an adventure or campaign, keeping notes of important clues or NPCs can help you remember key events. Listing traits or other details about your character can also aid in role-play.