

6 Adventuring and Exploration

The game **Tales of the Iron League** revolves around the adventures that the characters embark upon to explore new places, defeat monsters, claim treasure, and interact with other creatures. This chapter describes how the GM can set up this action, and it details some of the rules associated with the interesting things that can happen on these adventures.

The Iron League

The Iron League was founded over six hundred years ago during the Wars of Fragmentation (see Chapter 10). Originally a group of successful treasure-hunters or bandits, depending on who you ask, the Iron Company (as they were originally known) was frequently asked by nobles to loot old tombs or rob the castles of rivals to finance their petty wars. The Iron Company couldn't handle all the work themselves, so they franchised the operation and became the Iron League.

After the Wars of Fragmentation ended, the business of the League increased, and they have steadily grown over the centuries. The Iron League now operates throughout the World of Uroth, with hundreds of freelance adventurers taking part in activities in a half-dozen locations at the same time.

The GM must establish what area of the World of Uroth will be the setting for the adventure. Who has hired the Iron League, and what treasure is so difficult to acquire that they need the services of an elite band of venturers? Using Chapter 10 for reference, the GM must establish the basic idea of the campaign, which could be "extract treasure from enemy shipping in a contested area of the world" or "loot a necropolis of valuable funerary goods", and then use that as the nucleus of adventures.

The storytelling mode of **Tales of the Iron League** is intended to be free-form and open-ended. Instead of the GM dictating where the adventurers go and what they do, they are presented with a series of options, and the Iron League members then choose what they want to do within that framework. In that sense, this is intended to be a **sandbox** game; the GM prepares the playing space, and then the other players choose how they want to entertain themselves in that area.

Base Camp

One of the first creative tasks the GM must engage in is establishing base camp. When the Iron League is contracted to work in an area, they first set up a secure camp from which their members will operate, where they can acquire all the tools that they need to be successful in their adventuring. A base camp can be a small fort, a secure building, or perhaps a series of caves.

The Iron League's contract is usually with nation-states who have standing armies, and that contract stipulates that their host nation is responsible for guaranteeing the safety of their base camp. As a result, characters may always retreat to base camp and rest there in perfect security. They do not need to pay to stay in safe, clean, private rooms, and they receive hot meals provided by the Iron League. If characters can return to base camp successfully, they can take all the time they need to rest and recover from their adventures before they set out again.

The Iron League appoints one of their senior members to be the administrator of the base camp. The camp administrator is not the boss of the adventurers; they are freelancers, and the Iron League can only set guidelines for how they must behave – for instance, don't rob the citizens of the host country, or stay away from the Shrine of the Owls, as it is sacred to the locals.

It is up to the characters whether they choose to follow the requirements of the camp administrator, but if they defy the Iron League and the terms of the contract made with their client, they may find themselves in trouble. The consequences of that trouble could be financial penalties, imprisonment, or even loss of life, depending on the nature of the offense, so wise characters will behave accordingly!

The most important function of the camp administrator is to collect the Iron League's share of the treasure. All Iron League members work under the same conditions: 10% of all treasure they find, in the form of coins, gems, jewelry, or other valuable objects, belongs to the Iron League. They turn these gains over to the camp administrator at the end of a successful adventure.

Whether the loot was acquired by venturing in ruins, by stealing from merchants, or by performing legitimate work for hire, is of no interest to the Iron League. They take their 10% cut and split it with their host client; the rest is for the adventurers to keep or dispense with how they please. Magic items are of no interest to either the Iron League or their clients; these are entirely the property of the adventurers.

Some characters may be tempted to short-change the Iron League of their portion of the cut, but the League's administrators may employ a variety of tools to test the honesty of their members, ranging from spying to magical assaying of loot to paid informants, so those who seek to cheat their own organization had better know what they are doing! It is up to individual adventurers to figure out how to fairly divide up treasure amongst themselves once the Iron League has taken their cut.

The Iron League is a collection of freelancers, but it is in the best interests of the overall organization for each of their members to be successful. Accordingly, the camp administrator makes a point of keeping their ear to the ground regarding rumors that might be of interest to league adventurers. The administrator maintains good relationships with local military, religious, and mercantile leaders, and actively solicits offers of employment, rumored lucrative opportunities, rewards offered, and so on.

The camp administrator often posts notices in the common areas of the league's living quarters and relates any news they hear to enterprising characters who request it. The GM may wish to prepare some leads and hints that the camp administrator can provide to seed some pre-prepared adventures into an otherwise sandbox-style play setting. In convention play, it is common to provide different sets of rumors for each day of the event, so that there is something new going on regardless of when players show up.

The Iron League also sets up a company store on the premises of the base camp, and it is run by a quartermaster. The quartermaster's job is to buy and sell items for the characters, converting valuable items found into coinage, and then accepting coinage to sell useful equipment back. Anything listed in Chapter 5 is available at the company store and can be bought at book prices. Anything in Chapter 5 can also be sold back to the company store at half the listed book price.

The intent is not for the Iron League's company store to compete against other local vendors, and indeed other merchants may be able to provide better deals to characters. It is rather the intent of the Iron League to ensure that their members have at least one place to buy and sell items, and a place where the characters can be guaranteed not to be robbed or cheated while they are worrying about the hazards of adventuring. A secondary benefit to the Iron League is that they make a decent profit on selling adventuring gear, and this nicely supplements the profits they take from their 10% cut.

Player and Non-Player Characters

Groups of Iron League adventurers assemble themselves: whoever shows up to play that day is in the expedition that will sally forth. Apart from the Iron League administrators, no Iron League members are controlled by the GM – and administrators never join adventuring parties. If only one player is available that day, only one Iron League member will be part of that adventure.

Solo character play can be very fun and rewarding, but it can also be very dangerous – there is definite security in numbers, especially if the adventurers stumble across something more dangerous than usual. There are therefore two mechanisms that players can use to bolster their numbers and the strength of their adventuring party.

First, the Iron League makes a point of setting up base camp near a tavern or other gathering locus where hardy traveling people commonly stop in for a drink or bite to eat. Such places often have rugged venturing types passing

through – adventurers who are not members of the Iron League, but who are nevertheless capable individuals with classes and levels, whose skills might be useful to complement an adventuring party's capabilities. The GM should generate a handful of these NPCs, most of them 1st-level but some of 2nd or higher levels, each with their own equipment, unique description, and personality.

These characters are controlled by the GM, and they might be willing to adventure with Iron League members, often for an equal share of the treasure (which would not be subject to the 10% Iron League tariff), but they may have unique conditions for partnership. They may also have their own agendas and biases, which may at times come into conflict with the desires of the players. It is up to the players and GM, through role-playing, to work out whatever conflicts may result.

Rarely, one of these NPCs may be a spy for some rival faction (such as the Shadow Boxers; refer to Chapter 10), and these characters may actively work against the goals of the party while pretending to be helpful! NPCs can acquire experience points towards advancing their levels (see later in this chapter), and if they adventure often enough with the Iron League, they may increase in levels and capabilities.

Second, the involvement of the Iron League in a particular area is never a well-kept secret, and it is generally known that Iron League adventures are all about acquiring fabulous treasures. This always attracts a certain amount of attention, particularly among the impoverished. Although the Iron League does not directly influence this, it is inevitable that a camp will set itself up close to Iron League base camp that is called the Camp of the Desperados.

This tent city is populated by desperate people who have no special adventuring skills, but who are eager to attach themselves to an expedition of Iron League members. If Iron League members visit the Camp of the Desperados, they will have no trouble finding any desired number of starry-eyed persons willing to sign up to participate in an adventure.

The game statistics of these desperados is always the same; they are *human civilians* (see Chapter 8). They have ability scores of 9 across the board, and they have 3 hit points. They are only proficient with *cheap* weapons, and only know the predominant language in the area. For equipment they have only a dagger and the simple clothes they wear; any other gear they may require, including food and water, must be provided by their employer.

Hiring desperados is simple: for 1 gold piece per day, they will come with the party and do what they are told. This employment relationship is tested when things become dangerous; in the heat of the moment, desperados may not do as instructed, and they may flee or desert if they fear for their lives – see rules for **morale** in Chapter 7. Otherwise, desperados can be counted on to do as they are told, and they will even use armor or weapons if they are provided by their employers, although they have limited proficiency.

Desperados never gain experience points or advance in levels, and once a particular expedition dissolves, they disappear from the camp, never to be seen again, along with whatever gear they are provided. Their 1 gp/day fee must be paid up front, and if the gold is not forthcoming, they will desert at the first opportunity. Once paid, the gold essentially disappears – who knows what desperados do with the money they covet, but they don't keep it on their persons, to be reclaimed if they fall in battle!

See the Desperados Worksheet at the end of this chapter; the GM should keep several copies available.

Spells and Spellcasting

The Iron League provides its members with access to spells and spellcasting. The Iron League ensures that at least one Divine spellcaster and one Arcane spellcaster are quartered near base camp, and that they are willing to cast spells to benefit adventurers for a price. Sometimes these spellcasters are part of the Iron League organization, but other times they are simply local practitioners of their arts who are interested in a lucrative business arrangement.

These casters usually have access to 2nd-level spells, but rarely are high enough level to have access to 4th-level spells. They can cast many lower-level spells including basic curatives or information-gathering incantations, but they generally do not have the ability to raise the dead or perform the most powerful magic. These casters may withdraw their services from the party if they are treated poorly. Arcane casters may be willing to sell spells to player characters; refer to Chapter 4.

The Iron League provides one last very useful service to its membership – everybody gets a magic item. This item is the Iron League Journal, a slim leatherbound book with many thin pages. This item appears on every player character's Inventory as a zero-space item and is detailed in Chapter 5.

The journal has the following property: that which is written within the pages of one journal within one hundred miles of Iron League base camp is written within every journal. Accordingly, the journal is a means of record-keeping within one Iron League adventuring area, but it is also potentially useful as a means of communication.

The GM provides a physical booklet for the players' use; this should ideally be a bound book of graph paper, available at office supply stores. Only one book needs to be provided for the entire table, and this book can be passed around by the players as desired. The players can write whatever they like in the journal, and they may always refer to it during play. (Though characters with limited intelligence should probably not write particularly articulately.) The journal is a great way for players to map the places they explore, take notes about people or places or items or rumors, and even write messages to each other.

There is no guarantee that anything written inside a journal is accurate! The journal exists as a tool for the characters to use, so smart players write the most descriptive notes they can, to benefit both themselves and those who may adventure after them. They should also read the journal from time to time to see what notes have been added by other players. More than one character has committed themself to a course of guaranteed suicide solely to make notes in the journal as their last dying act, to add to the knowledge of the Iron League and its brave adventurers.

Since the journal is used by all Iron League members in the area, not just the players' characters, the GM should feel free to seed the journal with passages provided by non-player League members to provide the players with additional information or clues as desired. Note, also, that the journal has a limited range, so a different journal book is used for each Iron League contract.

Gameplay

Once a party has formed and is prepared to go on an adventure, it is time to start playing. The party always commences game play at Iron League base camp, regardless of where the action ended in any previous outings. The players discuss amongst themselves where their characters want to go, and the GM tells them what they see when they go there. If the players cannot agree on one course of action, the majority must rule, or some other method must be found for deciding what the party will do. The GM should not be involved in this decision.

It is possible during gameplay for one or two characters to split away from the main body of the party to do their own thing, but this must be kept very short and simple. When an adventuring party is split, the GM must dedicate time and attention to one part of the group, leaving the other part with nothing to do. It is essential that the players agree that the bulk of their game time is spent with all the characters together – otherwise, what is the point of playing a cooperative game at all?

The game proceeds for however long the GM and players agree to play. This block of time spent playing together is called a **session**. A typical home session of **Tales of the Iron League** can last anywhere from two to eight hours. In convention play, the GM sets up at a table when the game room opens and does not conclude until the room closes. Players come in and out of the session as their schedules dictate.

Even in home games, it is not necessary for all players to participate for the entirety of the session. Sometimes other commitments mean that a player can't stay for a whole session. That's okay; this game is designed to allow

players to fluidly enter and drop out of the game. It's best for the party if all the characters are present as much as possible. Each character has skills and abilities to offer, and every player has ideas that might benefit everybody. But reality sometimes conspires against group members remaining together for long periods of time, so it's also best if the rules can accommodate players entering and leaving the game.

It's a good idea for the GM to keep an adventure log: a diary of the actions the party takes, where they go, what characters they interact with, etc. To help them keep track of when events occur in the game, they should note the real-world date and time at the beginning and end of each session. This is especially important for allocating **Experience Points**, or **XP**; see later in this chapter. The GM Exploration Record worksheet at the end of the chapter is a useful tool for this purpose; it gives the GM a place to keep notes on what happens in each day of game time. It is best to keep a stack of these handy if you plan on using them.

During a session of play, it is normal and natural for some or all the players to take breaks, or even stop for a meal. It is not necessary to note the time when play starts or stops for short breaks, provided they don't go much over an hour; however, if a break will last over an hour, the GM should consider stopping the session and restarting it when the players have returned.

When a player must drop out of a session, the GM should note the time their character leaves the session, and briefly stop play to calculate the experience points accumulated by that character during the session. All players should record their experience points, make advancement adjustments as necessary, and the departing player should hand in their character sheet. The GM stores the players' character sheets in between sessions; that way, a player can go weeks, months, or even years between sessions, but they always know where their character sheet can be found.

After a break, play of the game's session resumes, but the leaving player's character disappears from the group. In the game world, it is assumed that character has departed for Iron League base camp, and even though numerous hazards may exist that would make it dangerous for that character to attempt the journey on their own, it is assumed that the character makes it back to base safely and will be available for play in the next session.

Sometimes a player comes late to the session and must join play already in progress. The GM should find the player's character sheet and note the time that character entered the game. Before the character joins play, the GM will call for a break, allocate experience points to the existing group, and allow the players to divide treasure acquired up to that point. Then play resumes with the new character mysteriously and instantaneously appearing amidst the adventuring party.

It is presumed in the game world that the new character, also an Iron League member, has been following along on the party's progress in the Iron League journal and has used the clues inside it to track down the party so they can join up. Even if this ought to be impossible because obstacles are in the way – say, the new character joins up with a party that finds themselves trapped by a collapse in a ruined tomb – the players and GM should suspend disbelief in the interests of quickly bringing another player on board.

Sessions end when the GM and the players agree they should end, but the GM is the final arbiter on this subject. Sessions should never end in the middle of a combat, and if the characters are in immediate danger from some non-combat source (say, they are in a mining elevator, but the cable has broken), the GM should resolve that situation before ending the session.

When a session ends, the GM stops play and records the time. Experience points and treasure are allocated, and the players record them on their character sheets. The GM collects the character sheets and stores them for later, and the characters are returned to Iron League base camp. This can sometimes defy logic; in the preceding example of a party trapped in a collapsed ruin, the group would have escaped their predicament by a game mechanic, with no explanation offered for how their characters freed themselves from the rubble.

This can both help and hinder a party, however; since every game session begins back in Iron League base camp, this means that all progress getting to the point where the last session ended has been lost. The monsters slain during that session are still slain, and treasure stolen is still in the party's possession, but they must still travel to where they were adventuring the previous time, and if they escaped that collapsed ruin by game rule fiat, now they might need to figure out how to dig their way back in!

When NPCs are members of a party, they remain part of the session provided at least one player's character is still present. It doesn't matter which character convinced them to join the party; they stay until the end of the session, or until they choose to leave the party for role-playing reasons. NPCs, having survived a session, may potentially be recruited again to join another session's adventures, and they may have acquired experience and kept items they found in earlier sessions – it is the GM's job to update these characters' records accordingly.

Desperados recruited to assist a party are a different matter. They were hired by a particular character, and when that character leaves the session, they depart as well. Desperados do not persist beyond a session of play; after surviving an adventuring outing, each desperado vanishes, never to be heard from again, and the party must recruit brand new desperados for a new session.

Adventures

What kinds of adventures will the characters go on? There are many possible opportunities for characters to take risks and face challenges in pursuit of gold and glory. It is the GM's job to prepare adventures within the area in which the Iron League operates so that the players will have fun things for their characters to do. There are multiple preparation tasks the GM must engage in to be ready for whatever the game may bring.

First, a GM should prepare an area map that encompasses the scope of the portion of the world that the characters may adventure in. Maps of cities, buildings, caves, or other indoor spaces are generally drawn on square-ruled graph paper; scales of one square to ten or fifty feet are the most common. Maps of outdoor spaces are drawn on hexagonally gridded paper, with each hexagon about one half inch across and representing a span of a half a mile.

If the game action will happen entirely within a single city or ruin, the map should depict the extents of that area. If the scope of adventuring may take characters out into wilderness areas, the map should sketch out the boundaries of the expected farthest reach of an expedition.

Two versions of this area map should be made. One version should be poster-sized and provided for the players' use; it should be left on the game table so that players can refer to it and the GM can add new information to it as it is learned. This map should show only the details of the area that is generally known to everybody in the area, and this copy of the map is in fact an extension of the Iron League journal: the information shown on this map is known by every Iron League member.

The map should not show things the GM is keeping secret; if the GM wants the players to find the location of the entrance to the fabled Caves of Catastrophe via research or exploration, for instance, that detail should not be shown on the map until the party successfully learns where it is. The GM would then write that detail on the map.

A word to the wise: sometimes drinks spill on gaming tables, so either cover this map with a piece of transparent plastic or tack it up on a nearby wall instead.

A second copy of this map should be held by the GM and not shown to the players; it should contain all the game-world information that the players do not know. The information on the first map should be shown on the second, but other information should be added: the location of the Caves of Catastrophe, for instance; the site of a hidden lair of bandits; a long-lost tomb; the cavern where the terrible dragon Fisstuth slumbers atop a heap of treasure. The characters may not begin play knowing where these things are, but they may find them by exploring the countryside, or by receiving a rare atlas from a friendly librarian, or perhaps by bribing a commander of the local army for information.

This map need not be poster sized, and it does not need to have the same legibility as the players' map, but it should have the same shape and configuration of its grid, and it should be easy for the GM to know which square or hex on one map corresponds to the same square or hex on the other. A great tool to do this is to key each square or hex with a unique alpha-numeric name, and then put that legend on both maps.

The area map should be large enough that the players have choices regarding where they want to go to adventure. Perhaps the Iron League is exploring a single large, ruined city, and the players have multiple wrecked buildings or tunnels to the underground that they can explore.

Perhaps the Iron League is engaged to explore and loot numerous tombs scattered over a large wilderness area, and a dozen of their locations are known (and on the players' map) but many others have not yet been located, let alone explored (these appear solely on the GM's map). Or perhaps the adventure occurs in the sewers under a large city, and there are many known ways to get in (and many others that are secret).

Regardless, this game works best when the players have many choices. This necessarily means the GM must be prepared for adventuring regardless of which opportunity the players select. Being prepared means doing some work ahead of time, but it's worthwhile if the players are given the ability to help determine their fates.

For the hex maps showing outdoor areas, the GM doesn't need to do a lot of preparation for each individual grid hexagon. It's important to know what kind of terrain is in that hex, and to know any major features of the area such as large mountains or rivers that might be seen from a great distance away. If there is significant change in elevation in the area, the GM may wish to draw contour lines that show the elevation above sea level at intervals of every thousand feet.

Otherwise, the GM doesn't need to have a more detailed map of each hex area unless it is expected that significant adventuring will occur in the area. If there is a ruined castle in a hex, for instance, or the village of a tribe of lizard men, it seems likely that a party of adventurers might spend a fair amount of time in this area. In this case, it might be advisable for the GM to prepare a smaller scale map with all salient features of the area marked and keyed.

This map would be for the GM's eyes only, but as the characters adventure, the GM might draw out a version of this map on paper on the table's surface. It would then be the responsibility of the players to transfer the information in such sketches into maps in the Iron League journal, if they wanted that information to be retained; otherwise, maps sketched by the GM (other than the overall player's map) are thrown away at the end of a session.

But if a particular hex doesn't have any significant adventuring features in it, the GM doesn't need to have any additional mapping prepared. The GM does need to know what randomly encountered monsters are likely to appear in any given hex; refer to Chapter 8. An example of the sort of symbolic keying that might be used in a typical outdoor map is found at the end of the chapter.

Where areas of the game world are planned by the GM to have more interesting exploring involved, especially in buildings, caves, or other indoor environments, the GM should prepare square-grid maps for the area. The most common scale for such maps is one square for every 10', but a very detailed area might need a scale of one square for every 5'. These maps, too, are only for the GM to see, but they may sketch on table graph paper some portions of the map that the party has observed.

Again, if the players want to preserve these sketched maps in the journal, they should write them in themselves (there's a reason the Iron League journal should be in a book with square-gridded graph paper), but they are under no obligation to do so: the players must learn from experience how important it is to take good notes for later reference!

The GM should draw up their map with notes regarding the contents of each area, to whatever level of detail they feel is necessary to describe the area to the players, know what will happen when characters venture there, what creatures are present, what items might be found in the area, and so forth. It is up to every GM to decide how detailed their notes must be, but if a detail is not worked out in advance, the GM may need to invent it on the fly! Improvisational invention is an important skill for good GMs. An alpha-numeric keying of square-gridded maps is just as useful here as it is with hex-gridded maps; it allows the GM to uniquely describe each square of the map, which is helpful for the record-keeping described later in this chapter.

Proper planning of outdoor and indoor (or **dungeon**) exploration areas can yield plenty of opportunities for adventuring parties to find action and treasure. However, sometimes a GM may wish to devise adventuring encounters that aren't linked to a single locale. The GM can prepare adventures in the form of an overarching mission, wherein the characters receive instruction or incentive to pursue a particular goal. There are many different types of missions; examples might include:

- Escorting an important person through dangerous territory
- Finding out where a hostage is being held, and then staging a dangerous rescue
- Solving a murder mystery
- Winning a race against rival groups to scale a very tall mountain
- Stealing back a noblewoman's prized artwork which was burglarized by a rival
- Rescuing children trapped in an extensive network of flooded caves
- Tricking spies into revealing what they know, while feeding them false information
- Hunting down and returning, alive, exotic monsters which have escaped from a private zoo
- Locating an incredibly rare flower for an alchemist's experimentation
- Scouting out the movements of an enemy military force without being caught
- Breaking a folk hero out of prison

Most missions involve a reward being offered. This reward could come in the form of a bounty of money or other valuables being proffered by a wealthy patron; it could be a valuable prize found at the mission's end that the party can keep for themselves; or it could be that a reward is offered with no quantifiable treasure value, such as the friendship and future assistance of a group of wandering nomads, or the eternal gratitude (and healing favors) of a temple of benevolent priests.

A good GM should have a mix of outdoor adventures, dungeon adventures, and mission adventures available. Enterprising and curious players often have no trouble finding adventure by pointing to an area of the map that hasn't been explored before, or by reading a section of the Iron League journal with notes on some incompletely explored area and saying, "Let's find out what's here!"

Other times, however, the players may have analysis paralysis, with too many options presented for them to be able to decide which way to go. Also, sometimes none of the known adventuring opportunities really seem intriguing to the players. In these situations, having a few missions handy to dangle in front of the party can be a good way to spur them into action.

An essential building block of an adventure is the encounter. An encounter is what happens whenever the adventurers come across something interesting, and danger or opportunity presents itself. This could be a run-in with a monster or with a traveling band of merchants; it could be ruined crypt that the adventurers dig up, which might contain treasures guarded by sinister traps; it could be a sudden avalanche that threatens to bury characters alive. An encounter usually involves only a single area – perhaps one room, or a clearing in a forest, or a cave that a monster uses for a lair.

When encounters are planned by the GM, these are called **keyed encounters**, because they are indicated on a GM's outdoor or dungeon map with a numbered key, and that key refers the GM to notes about what is found in

that encounter. Adventures are created by stringing together a quantity of keyed encounters. However, no GM can completely plan out what's going on in every corner of their world; there can also be unkeyed encounters, where the adventuring party can run across encounters that are randomly generated. More rules for both kinds of encounters are found later in this chapter.

Let's use an example to illustrate how the GM and some players can bring some of these elements together to prepare for an adventure.

***Example:** The GM has prepared an adventuring scenario for the Iron League to tackle. In the remote borderlands, a council of villages has established that 8 legendary crypts, the Vertical Tombs of Tarquon, can be found in the mist-shrouded hills north and east of their valley. The Iron League has been hired to make a base camp in the village of Inathay, scour the countryside for these ancient burial places, and loot them for the public profit. However, it is known that at least one tribe of **bugbears** lives in the area as well, and these large and potentially hostile goblin-kin make this a dangerous prospect.*

Three players have shown up to play in a session, and they are playing three characters: Andaluz the Archer, a Sniper Thief; Bylaric the Bold, a Country Halfling; and Corelli the Courteous, a Majestic Elf. The players have familiarized themselves with their characters and they have bought extra adventuring equipment with their starting funds. It is time for the adventure to begin!

The GM provides hints to the players, possibly using the journal, that there are individuals in town who have some experience traveling through the country outside the valley; asking questions in the right places may reveal some valuable information. A series of inquiries leads the party to Old Kiki, a wizened gatherer of medicinal herbs who knows much about the local wilderness. Old Kiki divulges to the party that they once visited a wind-swept hilltop about seven miles east of town, and a huge cairn of rocks was sealed with an ancient block of rune-carved stone – possibly one of the vertical tombs? The herbalist also shares that an old path leads part of the way there, but then it's a difficult climb through rugged country, and aggressive bugbears lair in the area as well!

Given this advice, the party decides that they may need to add a little bit more offensive capability. They hunt for a NPC fighter to help them, and in a tavern in Inathay they find Denali the Dirty, a Ranger. Denali isn't an Iron League member, but they impress the party members with their apparent skills and valor, so the party agrees to include the Ranger in their adventure for an equal share of the treasure. Unbeknownst to the players, Denali has a secret agenda: the Ranger's parents were slaughtered by goblin-kind, and they burn with the need for vengeance! The GM keeps this secret for now.

The party also decides that, while they don't know exactly what a 'Vertical Tomb' is, it almost certainly will require a great deal of rope to explore it. Hemp rope isn't costly, but it does take up Inventory space, so the party decides to spend a few gp to hire the services of two desperados to carry equipment. They find Erskine and Filworth in a camp outside town, buy two coils of 50' hemp rope for each to carry, supply the two hirelings with the piece of gold necessary to secure their services, and they are ready to go!

Time

An adventurer can only do so much. There are only so many hours in the day, and in the game world, just as in the real world, time is a resource that must be managed wisely by the players. The GM must keep track of time accurately because each action or event takes a certain amount of time, and it may be important to know when things begin or end.

One example: a character plans to drink a magical *potion of flying* to allow them to cross a vast pool of acid, land on a mineral-encrusted ledge on the far side, pry the jewel-encrusted scepter out of the hands of the skeleton seated regally on a throne, and fly back. The potion should last an hour – but is that enough time, or will our hero find themselves trapped on the wrong side of the pool?

Another example: a party loots part of a dungeon and returns to headquarters; they must plan what they do before they return to adventuring. The party Magic-user wants to scribe several new spells into their spellbook, while the Fighter wishes to prowl the marketplace looking for an upgrade to their weapons, and the Halfling wants to visit the taverns along the docks to seek out useful rumors. How much time do these activities take, and what has happened in that partly explored dungeon while they are gone?

One important thing to keep in mind for GMs is that in the game of **Tales of the Iron League**, time only passes for characters while their players are sitting at the gaming table. Their characters do not cease to exist during the time that their players are away, but neither do they perform useful actions. They are essentially on vacation, taking time away from adventuring.

Absent characters can heal and memorize spells, such they are ready to adventure again when their players return, but they do not craft items, research new enchantments, guard locations, read books of lore, or do anything of value to themselves or others. Those actions must be taken while their players are at the table. If a player wants their character to perform an action that takes a long time, they must convince the other players to allow them to do so and not hold up play for everybody else.

Fortunately, many actions that consume significant amounts of game-world time often don't take very long in real-world time; a character scribing new spells into their spellbook need not take up much of the players' time, even though the character may be hard at work for days.

Time on the world of Uroth is measured very similarly to the way it is measured here in the real world. Uroth is a spherical planet that orbits a sun, called Solara. It rotates on a tilted axis, which causes those dwelling on the surface of the world to experience night and day, and as the planet travels around the sun, the weather varies with changing seasons. Uroth has a single large moon, Lune, which travels around Uroth causing variations in the tides. The planet completes a full orbit around the sun in a year, which is 336 days long. In turn, the moon completes a full orbit around Uroth in a month. There are never any leap years; the motions of Uroth and Lune are perfectly synchronized, a mystery that has baffled astronomers and philosophers alike throughout the ages.

The calendar has 12 months, and these correspond to the English-language names for months in the real world: January, February, March, April, May, June, July, August, September, October, November, and December. The portion of the world of Uroth described in Chapter 10 is in the northern hemisphere, and as a result, winter lasts from December through February, spring is March through May, summer is June through August, and fall is September through November. Each month is 28 days long, divided into four weeks that are seven days long.

The weekly calendar's days also correspond to the English-language names for days in the real world: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. On the first day of the month, always a Monday, the moon is new; it waxes until the 14th day of the month, at which point the moon is full. Beginning after the 15th day of the month, the moon wanes until it is new again on the last day of the month, always a Sunday.

The day is broken up into 24 hours, each of which is the same length as an hour in the real world. Hours are counted from midnight to twelve noon, and these morning hours are labeled **AM** (*Ante Meridian* in Ancient Poldaran); after that, the hours are counted from noon to twelve midnight, and these are the **PM**, or *Post Meridian* hours.

An hour is broken down into 60 minutes, and these are further subdivided into 60 seconds, just as they are in the real world. As with the hour, minutes and seconds on Uroth are very similar to similar intervals in the real world. In winter, the sun rises at 7:00 AM and sets at 5:00 PM; in spring and fall, the sun rises at 6:00 AM and sets at 6:00 PM; in summer, the sun rises at 5:00 AM and sets at 7:00 PM.

One unit of time not used in the real world is the **round**, which becomes important in Chapter 7. A round is six seconds long, and there are ten rounds in a minute. Rounds are important during combat, or when dangerous action is taking place; a round is the amount of time necessary for characters to perform many types of actions.

While the GM is running the game, it is important that they keep track of the amount of time that has elapsed for the party. This timekeeping in the game world is in addition to timekeeping in the real world as described above. Time drives many things: how far the party can move, both in the wilderness and in the dungeon environment; how often they need to eat or rest; when they can heal or recover spells.

Many magical effects have set durations that eventually expire, sometimes when it is least convenient for the characters. Torches will burn out; rations will spoil; eventually that sleeping dragon will wake up. The GM needs to keep records of what day it is, and how much time elapses once the party begins their day.

There are no wristwatches on Uroth, but characters nevertheless have an instinctive sense of the passing of time; if a character asks the GM roughly what time it is, the GM ought to give that time within a half-hour or so.

However, the GM is under no obligation to tell the players exactly what time it is, or how much duration is left on any spell or consumable item, unless they are using an hourglass or similar tool to help them track time more precisely.

Fatigue

Time places limitations on how much adventurers can do, but an equally important limitation is the frailty of the mortal body. *Humanoid* creatures need adequate rest and sustenance to function properly. They do not need these things continuously, and they can survive for long periods of sustained effort. However, unless an adventurer takes care of their body's needs, that character starts to lose their edge, and their performance is affected.

To track a character's endurance, let us consider the **fatigue limit** section of a character sheet. A character's fatigue limit is equal to 4 plus their Constitution modifier. As characters go about the business of adventuring, they accumulate fatigue points. When a character rests, fatigue points are subtracted. An encumbered character's fatigue limit is reduced by 1.

If the total number of fatigue points equals or exceeds the character's fatigue limit, the character acquires the **fatigued** condition: they suffer a -2 penalty to skill checks and attack rolls, and their **Movement Points (MPs)** are reduced. It is therefore in a character's best interests to avoid becoming fatigued.

A character acquires fatigue points by several mechanisms. Every hour of continuous adventuring in a wilderness or dungeon setting requires each character in the group to add a point of fatigue at the end of the hour.

Characters who choose to **hustle** must add an additional point of fatigue at the beginning of the hour. Additionally, when characters engage in combat (see Chapter 7), they must each add a point of fatigue at the combat's conclusion. Since fatigue points may go up or down frequently, it's a good idea to make fatigue changes to a character sheet with pencil and eraser.

Rests

Continuously active characters can pile up fatigue very quickly, so it is necessary for characters to get sufficient rest throughout the day. There are three types of rest: **Short Rests**, **Long Rests**, and **Full Rests**. Adventurers may take as many of each type of rest as they would like during any day.

Short Rests

A Short Rest is about ten minutes long. The adventuring party does not need to make any kind of camp while a Short Rest is made; they can stop wherever they want. While resting, characters may cast spells, consume food or water, use tools, search an area, examine an object, or perform any other type of action provided they are not moving from the spot where the rest is designated. They are not asleep, and they are in full possession of their faculties and senses; it is therefore not necessary to post watches during this type of rest.

At the conclusion of a Short Rest, each character subtracts one fatigue point from their total, provided they have had at least one Long Rest, and have consumed at least one food and water ration, within the previous 24 hours.

Short Rests are the primary mechanism by which characters can keep their fatigue levels low during the day; however, these rests stop being effective if characters haven't had enough sleep, food, or drink.

Long Rests

A Long Rest is four hours long. To take this kind of rest, a camp must be made – see below. When characters take this type of rest, they are sleeping. Sleeping characters may take no actions and require Hearing checks to be made with a -4 penalty to awaken unless a friendly character shakes them awake. Characters engaged in a Long Rest are therefore extremely vulnerable, and unless the group is resting at Iron League headquarters or someplace equally safe, it is recommended that they rest in shifts, with some characters enjoying a Long Rest while other characters keep watch.

The watching characters do not gain the advantages of having had a Long Rest, but they effectively enjoy a series of Short Rests, so fatigue can at least be cleared. The sleeping characters cannot take any actions while they are taking a Long Rest, apart from consuming food or drink at bedtime. Once a character has completed a Long Rest, which must be uninterrupted, they enjoy the following benefits:

- They clear all fatigue points.
- They may take Short Rests for the next 24 hours.
- They clear one point of trauma.
- They may recover one surge associated with their class.

Full Rests

A Full Rest is eight hours long. Like a Long Rest, taking this kind of rest requires the establishment of a camp – see below. Characters engaged in a Full Rest are also sleeping, with the same penalties listed for a Long Rest, and therefore with the same recommendation for resting in shifts. This type of rest must also be uninterrupted or else no benefits are received. A character taking a Full Rest cannot take any actions while resting, apart from consuming food or drink. Once a character has completed a Full Rest, they enjoy the following benefits:

- They clear all fatigue points.
- They may take Short Rests for the next 24 hours.
- They clear up to three points of trauma.
- If they are a spellcaster, they may recover all spell points.
- They recover all surges associated with their class.
- If they are resting in a comfortable environment, such as a bedroom in a town, they may recover 1d3 hp. If they are camping and have equipment that makes camping more comfortable, they may recover up to 1d3 hp; refer to Chapter 5. Alternatively, instead of recovering hit point damage, the character may choose to recover one point of damage to an attribute score.

In addition to keeping track of their rest, adventurers must also track whether they have eaten enough food and consumed enough water. This game does not assume that characters must spread their eating and drinking out across multiple times per day; provided a character has a food and water ration and uses it once per day, they may continue to use Short Rests to clear fatigue. Without sufficient food and water, even Long Rests and Full Rests do not clear fatigue. Additionally, at the end of the second day without water, and every day thereafter, a character takes 1d6 damage to their Constitution score. Starving characters likewise suffer; at the end of the third day without food, and every day thereafter, a character takes 1d3 damage to their Strength score.

Movement Points

While adventuring, characters are likely to move around quite a bit. These rules help a GM understand how much terrain an adventuring party can cover, and what they can do as they travel. If the dungeon the party wants to explore is twenty miles from town across rugged country, how long will it take the party to get there? Where will they camp? Once they reach the dungeon, how long will it take to thoroughly search its passages? A key

component to answering these questions is grasping the factors that affect how quickly adventurers can move around.

First, it is recommended that GMs use a tool found at the back of this chapter: the GM Exploration Record. Make copies of this worksheet and fill it out as the adventurers explore the world. This is a handy place to record where adventurers go and when they get there, which characters join and leave the group and when they do so, what weather and climate factors affect travel, and so on.

One sheet should be used for each day of exploration, so it may make sense to fill in the basics (GM name, campaign, real world date) and then make copies of that. Then, for each day of game time, fill in the date, state of the moon, names of the characters who start adventuring on that day, and the weather (see below). The remainder of the sheet is used to track where the party goes and what they do across the rest of the day, tracked hour by hour, and it is also useful for tracking character perception skills.

To determine how much a group of adventurers can do in an hour, a GM must track their **Movement Points**, or **MPs** for short. In a typical hour, a group has 6 MPs to spend on various activities. This means that each MP consumes about ten minutes of time, but each MP's activity doesn't necessarily take up the same interval, so it's best to think of that as just an average duration.

If a party opts to **creep** (see below), they can only spend 4 MPs in an hour, but they can move more cautiously and deliberately, potentially avoiding some trouble. If a group decides to **hustle** (see below), a way to get more done at the cost of additional fatigue, they can spend 8 MPs in an hour. If any member of the group is *fatigued*, however, then the group may spend one less MP in an hour. Only one *fatigued* member of the group is enough to slow everybody down; otherwise, the exhausted adventurer would have to be left behind. A group cannot hustle if any of its members are *fatigued*.

Outdoor Movement

The rules presented in this section are intended to give the GM a robust framework to be used for **hex crawl** games – games of exploring outdoor environments. If a party of characters wanders various types of outdoor conditions in search of adventure, they ought to risk freezing to death, or being washed away in a flash flood, or being buried in an avalanche. These rules allow the GM a rigorous method for determining what happens to adventurers when they travel through the outside world, providing them with a system of generating unkeyed encounters.

However, the GM may instead wish to run a game where the dungeon is the main location where adventure occurs, and the outside world just needs to be traversed to get there, ideally with minimal fuss and distraction. If so, the GM should feel free to ignore some or all these rules, choosing their own method for determining what happens to characters in an outdoor setting. This allows them to focus on keyed encounter areas.

Movement in outdoors settings is dependent on climate, weather, and terrain. There are five types of climate zones in **Tales of the Iron League**: temperate, tropical, arid, arctic, and mountain.

Temperate climates are those which have moderate seasonal extremes of both hot and cold weather. Tropical and arid climates both have severe seasonal extremes of hot weather and mild seasonal extremes of cold weather, but tropical climates have plenty of rainfall whereas arid climates have very little. Arctic climates have severe seasonal extremes of cold weather and mild seasonal extremes of hot weather. Mountain climate zones can occur in any part of the world, potentially surrounded by any of the other four types of climates, but they are marked by cold weather, strong precipitation, and high winds. Adventuring areas of the Iron League generally fall entirely within one climate zone.

Each climate zone has different extremes of weather. Every day, the GM should roll 1d100 and consult the Weather Table below:

Table 6-1: TOTL Weather (roll 1d100 at the beginning of the day)

SUMMER Climate Type:	Weather:						
	Light Rain	Heavy Rain	Light Snow	Heavy Snow	High Winds	Heat Wave	Fog
Temperate	1-2	3-4			5	6-7	8
Tropical	1-4	5-8			9-10	11-15	16-17
Arid	1				2-5	6-10	
Arctic	1		2-4	5-7	8	9	10-15
Mountains	1	2	3-6	7-10	11-15	16	17-20

SPRING OR FALL Climate Type:	Weather:						
	Light Rain	Heavy Rain	Light Snow	Heavy Snow	High Winds	Heat Wave	Fog
Temperate	1-3	4-6	7		8-10	11	12-13
Tropical	1-6	7-12			13-15	16-17	18-20
Arid	1-2	3			4-5	6-8	
Arctic			1-5	6-10	11		12-13
Mountains	1		2-6	7-11	12-18	19	20-25

WINTER Climate Type:	Weather:						
	Light Rain	Heavy Rain	Light Snow	Heavy Snow	High Winds	Heat Wave	Fog
Temperate	1	2	3-5	6-7	8		9-10
Tropical	1-4	5-8			9	10	11-15
Arid	1-2	3	4		5-6	7-8	
Arctic			1-10	11-20	21-24		25-30
Mountains			1-12	13-24	25-30		31-40

Referencing the season of the year and the climate type, the number rolled on the 1d100 is compared to the different entries in the table. If that number appears in one of the table entries, that type of weather is present. If the number does not appear in one of the table entries, the weather is clear, dry, and of a typical temperature for that time of year. In the real world, weather conditions can change rapidly, but in the game world, weather is rolled once at the beginning of each day, and those weather conditions persist until the day ends.

The type of terrain a party moves through strongly influences whether travel is easy and quick or laborious and slow. Unlike climate, terrain is very finely grained; each half-mile hex on an outdoor map is one of multiple different types of terrain.

Outdoor Terrain Types

Alpine

Mountainous terrain consisting of large masses of exposed rock, usually steeply inclined and at altitude. Vegetation is limited to grasses and brush.

Beach

Areas where other terrains meet large bodies of water, either along a saline sea or a fresh-water lake. There may be a sandy strand, or grasses may grow down to the water's edge, or there may be slabs of basaltic rock shelves in volcanic areas.

Broken

Rugged and challenging hills, with fractured rock surfaces, and trees and plants clinging to patches of dirt.

Desert

Places with low average rainfall. Deserts may be sandy, with rolling windswept dunes, or they may be rugged and rocky plains where only the hardiest plants can survive.

Heavy Woods or Jungle

Significant density of tree growth, including thick underbrush and vines, with visibility ranging from 10' to 50'. There are many layers of fallen trees, leaf and humus cover, and thick brush that may require manual clearing to permit passage.

Light Woods

Areas of concentrated tree growth, with visibility ranging from 60' to 200'. There are fallen limbs and clusters of undergrowth that hampers travel.

Path

A lightly worked and marked traveling surface intended to speed travel for those on foot, but generally not for any conveyances. Travel on paths can be speedy in good weather conditions, but they can bog down quickly during periods of rainfall. Note that paths cut across hexes, and those hexes have their own terrain; if the adventurers are following the path, they use the movement characteristics of the path, but in all other cases the hex's terrain movement rules apply.

Plains or Grasslands

Generally flat sections of lightly vegetated plain, with good visibility out to the horizon in all directions, and few serious obstacles to travel.

Riverbed

The course of a major river or stream, with sandy beds or smooth rocky outcrops hemming in the banks of the water. Travel along a river is often relatively easy going, provided there isn't a flash flood! Note that riverbeds cut across hexes, and those hexes have their own terrain; if the adventurers are following the riverbed, they use the movement characteristics of the riverbed, but in all other cases the hex's terrain movement rules apply.

Road

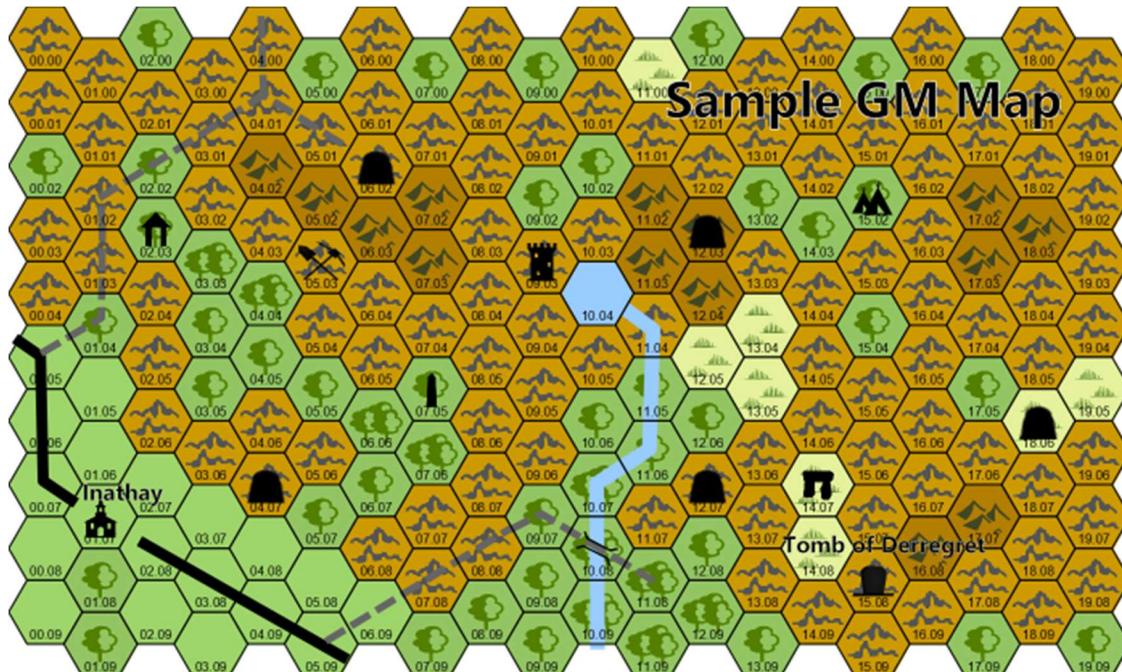
A graded and finished surface intended to speed travel for carts/wagons as well as people and animals. There are often bridges or well-marked fords across rivers and streams, and measures have been taken to avoid obscuring or washing out of the road due to weather conditions. Note that roads cut across hexes, and those hexes have their own terrain; if the adventurers are following the road, they use the movement characteristics of the road, but in all other cases the hex's terrain movement rules apply.

Wetlands

Forested or grassland areas with poor groundwater drainage, yielding swampy areas with stagnant water and abundant insect life.

To prepare for the Vertical Tombs of Tarquon campaign referenced earlier, the GM must prepare some maps of the wilderness around Inathay. Here's an example of how that might work.

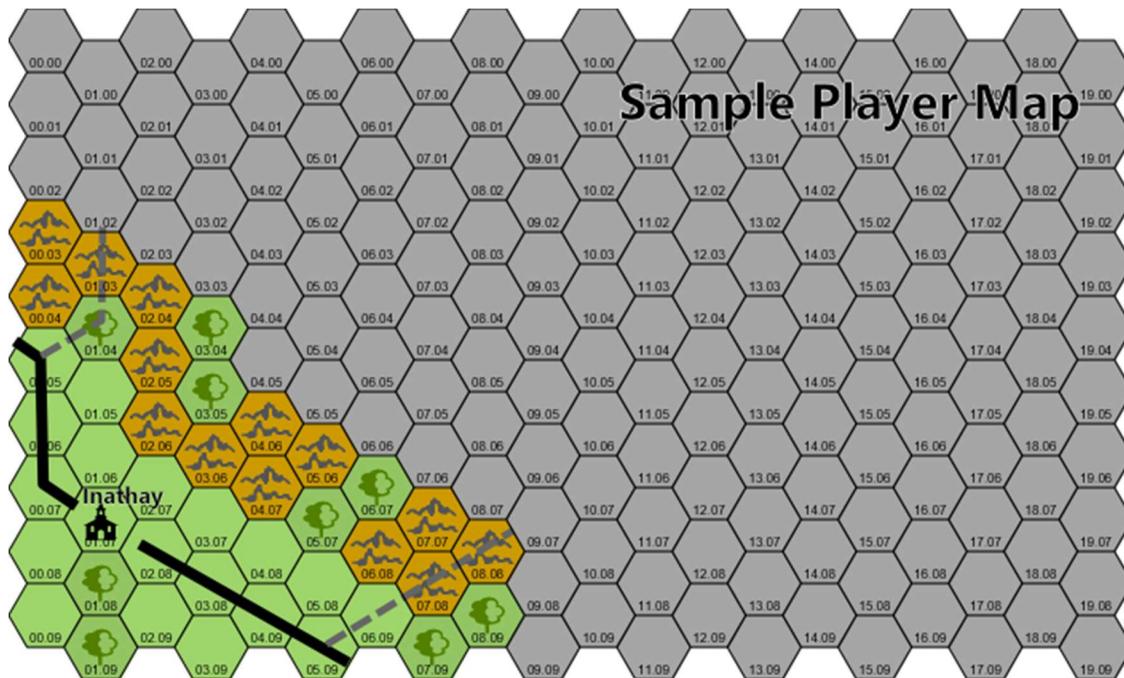
Example: *the area that the party may venture into might be substantial, but for the first session the GM prepares a map for only the portion of wilderness within the immediate reach of the party. They create a map consisting of half-mile hexes which shows Inathay, the starting point, as well as terrain, roads, rivers and bodies of water, and any significant landmarks in the area:*



This map was created using software called **Worldographer**, which can be found and purchased online, but a variety of other options exist. A search on the internet will find many hex mapping products, some cheap or even free, that can also be used. The GM can also make maps by hand; custom paper with square or hex grids can be created and printed using resources at incompetech.com/graphpaper/, and there is no charge for this although users are encouraged to provide support on [Patreon](https://www.patreon.com).

Note that every half-mile hex has a number at the bottom indicating the column and row of the hex, which allows precise identification of a specific area; for instance, the village of Inathay is in hex **01.07**. This will be useful later for making notes regarding the party's progress. The map also shows significant roads (a heavy black line), trails (grey dashed lines), bridges, and a variety of black symbols indicating other points of interest. Normally the GM will key these locations and have notes regarding what is to be found there, but the only landmark of specific interest in this example is the **Tomb of Derregnet**, shown next to a tombstone-like symbol in hex **15.08**. This is one of the eight Vertical Tombs of Tarquon. The other seven tombs are not shown on this map, but they may be found off the map to the north, to the east, or one might even be hidden in a forgotten basement below Inathay itself!

The information provided in this map represents everything the GM knows, but the players do not have access to all this knowledge; they must learn most of it by exploration. The GM chooses to dole out a small amount of the information shown in the GM map, and they do this by creating a second map, a *Players' Map*, which shows only the information that the GM chooses to share:



Note that this map shows Inathay, the starting point, the roads and some of the trails, and the broken and light forest terrain closest to the valley – and that’s about it. Even though this map shows the terrain in hex 04.07, it doesn’t show the cave indicated on the GM map. Perhaps that cave represents the well-hidden lair of a tribe of kobolds who steal from the farmers near Inathay, and they have taken great pains to ensure that their underground home is not discovered. A close examination of that hex may reveal this feature – in which case it will be added to the Player’s Map – but otherwise this detail will remain unknown. As players explore the map, the GM will add more and more terrain and other information to it as the players discover it, until the Player’s Map begins to resemble the GM Map. The Player’s Map is subsumed within the Iron League Journal, so the characters always have access to this information.

Outdoor Movement

Whenever an adventuring party moves through the outdoors, they must spend a movement cost in MP to enter any hex. The movement cost to move into a hex must be spent for partial hexes as well as full hexes – there are no discounts for cutting the corners on map hexes. Refer to the Outdoor Terrain table for the number of movement points necessary to travel into hexes of different terrain types, as well as risks and penalties native to that terrain:

Table 6-2: TOTIL Outdoor Terrain

Terrain	MP Cost	Risks and Penalties
alpine	3	monster encounter (2); hypothermia (1); impassable (1)
beach	2	monster encounter (2); poor hearing (1)
broken	4	monster encounter (2); falling (1); impassable (2); 320' line-of-sight
desert	2	monster encounter (1); heat stroke (1)
heavy woods or jungle	4	monster encounter (4); poor seeing (2); impassable (1); 160' line-of-sight
light woods	3	monster encounter (3); poor seeing (1); 320' line-of-sight
path	1	monster encounter (2)
plains or grasslands	2	monster encounter (2)
riverbed	2	monster encounter (2); poor hearing (1)
road	1	monster encounter (1)
wetlands	4	monster encounter (3); mire (4); impassable (1)

When moving outdoors, there are MP costs, risks, and penalties. The table describes the base MP costs for each terrain type, and then describes the effects of various modifying conditions that may be present (owing to weather, time of day, topography, or other considerations); these modifiers are detailed later in this Chapter.

Risks and penalties are described by a name and a number in parentheses. A **risk** represents a hazard inherent to moving through a hex, or sometimes just being in it, and might lead to adventurers being directly exposed to danger via an unkeyed encounter. A **penalty** is a negative effect of being in a hex; it may impact a character's senses or ability to think clearly. Penalties are unlikely to directly cause harm to adventurers, but they may contribute to disaster if dangerous situations arise.

Different terrain types, climates, weather conditions, and other factors can sometimes cause the same risks and penalties to accrue more than once; when this happens, the number in parentheses is additive. For example: if an adventuring group is moving through a hex of **heavy woods**, which has a penalty for *poor seeing* (2), and a light rain is also falling (which carries a penalty of *poor seeing* (1)), then that group must contend with a total penalty of *poor seeing* (3).

For normal movement outdoors, after the use of every hour's movement (regardless of MP cost), each member of the party must add a fatigue point. Optionally, an adventuring group may choose to hustle when moving; this allows them to get more done in a shorter period, but haste can be both exhausting and can make explorers incautious.

When a party chooses to **hustle**, each member must immediately add a fatigue point before the movement starts, add an additional fatigue point after the hour has elapsed, but in between they receive eight MPs to spend. During the period that a group is hustling, all party members receive a -1 penalty to Seeing and Hearing skill checks.

As one last option, an adventuring group may choose to **creep** when moving; this only allows the group to spend four MPs. However, Seeing and Hearing skill checks made to detect the party receive a -1 penalty.

The characters may choose to stay in one place for a period – perhaps because they have made a camp and are resting, or because they are waiting for something, or because they are hiding from an enemy, or for any of a thousand reasons why adventurers might loiter in a place. While they are in a hex and not moving, they suffer continuously from all penalties save *impassable*, but they only check for risks once every four hours. Risks associated with movement, such as *falling*, are not checked.

Outdoor Movement Modifiers

At certain times, moving through a hex can be very risky. At other times, a hex may be relatively free of dangers (but is never completely safe!) This can depend on local conditions in that type of terrain, the weather, the time of day, or other factors that the GM chooses to apply. These factors may slow down movement, make it harder to sense danger, increase dangers already native to that terrain, or present new risks that were not present before.

A tabulation of common modifications to the risks and penalties of outdoor movement are here:

Table 6-3: TOTIL Outdoor Movement Modifiers

Modifiers	MP Cost	Risks and Penalties
arctic or mountain climate	same points	Add <i>hypothermia</i> (1) during nighttime hours
darkness	1 point more	Add <i>poor seeing</i> (2); add <i>lost</i> (2); add <i>impassable</i> (2) to heavy woods / jungle / wetlands / alpine / broken; add <i>falling</i> (2) to broken / alpine
dim light	same points	Add <i>poor seeing</i> (1); add <i>falling</i> (1) to broken / alpine
fog	1 point more	Add <i>poor seeing</i> (2); add <i>lost</i> (4); add <i>impassable</i> (4) to heavy woods / jungle / wetlands / alpine / broken; reduce line-of-sight to 80'
heatwave	same points	Add <i>heat stroke</i> (1) in desert or jungle; add <i>avalanche</i> (1) if alpine has heavy snow cover; subtract <i>hypothermia</i> (1)
heavy rain	2 points more	Add <i>poor seeing</i> (2) and <i>poor hearing</i> (2); add <i>mire</i> (2) to plains/light woods/heavy woods/path; add <i>washout</i> (4) to riverbed and (1) to others; add <i>lightning</i> (1)
heavy snow cover	3 points more	Add <i>falling</i> (2) to broken; add <i>avalanche</i> (1) and <i>crevasse</i> (1) to alpine
heavy snowfall	1 point more	Add <i>poor seeing</i> (2); add <i>hypothermia</i> (2)
high altitude	1 point more	Add <i>hypothermia</i> (1); add <i>anoxia</i> (1)
high winds	1 point more	Add <i>falling</i> (1) and <i>hypothermia</i> (1) in alpine and broken; add <i>poor seeing</i> (2) in desert; add <i>poor hearing</i> (4)
light rain	1 point more	Add <i>poor seeing</i> (1) and <i>poor hearing</i> (1); add <i>mire</i> (1) to heavy woods or path; add <i>washout</i> (2) to riverbed
light snow cover	1 point more	Add <i>falling</i> (1) to broken
light snowfall	same points	Add <i>poor seeing</i> (1); add <i>hypothermia</i> (1)
moderate climb	1 point more	Add <i>falling</i> (1)
moderate descent	same points	Add <i>falling</i> (1)
severe climb	2 points more	Add <i>falling</i> (2)
severe descent	1 point more	Add <i>falling</i> (2)
total darkness	2 points more	Add <i>poor seeing</i> (4); add <i>lost</i> (4); add <i>impassable</i> (4) to heavy woods / jungle / wetlands / alpine / broken; add <i>falling</i> (4) to broken / alpine
tropical or arid climate	same points	Add <i>heat stroke</i> (1) during daylight hours

Arctic or Mountain Climate

In relatively cold climes, the effects of losing body heat are heightened. In all terrain types, add the risk of *hypothermia* (1) during nighttime hours. This risk is not increased during the day.

Darkness

Refer to the section on lighting later in this chapter. In conditions of ordinary darkness, each hex traveled costs one additional MP. All characters accept a penalty of *poor seeing* (2), and those characters traveling through broken and alpine terrains accept an added risk of *falling* (2). In addition, in terrain types of heavy woods, jungle, wetlands, alpine, and broken, adventurers can expect the risk of *lost* (2) and the penalty of *impassable* (2).

Dim Light

Refer to the section on lighting later in this chapter. In fading light conditions, MP expenditures for movement are not affected, but all characters accept a penalty of *poor seeing* (1), and those adventurers traveling through broken and alpine terrains accept an added risk of *falling* (1).

Fog

Mist can descend on almost any type of terrain at almost any time of year. Foggy terrain is not more arduous to travel through, but limited visibility can make travel more hazardous. On foggy days, **line-of-sight** is limited to a maximum of 80' in any direction. All characters receive a penalty of *poor seeing* (2). Additionally, the lack of faraway reference points adds the risk of *lost* (4), and if the characters are in the heavy woods, jungle, wetlands, alpine, or broken terrains, they further add the penalty of *impassable* (4).

Heatwave

On days when the sun beats down exceptionally fiercely, characters can find themselves prone to overheating and dehydration in hot places – add the risk of *heat stroke* (1) in desert and jungle terrains. However, the risk of *hypothermia* is reduced by (1) in colder climates. If the characters find themselves in an alpine climate where there is heavy snow cover, tack on an additional risk of *avalanche* (1) – the rapid snowmelt can bring on violent shifts in snow stability.

Heavy Rain

If the weather check determines that a heavy rain is falling, the risks and penalties associated with traveling are elevated. The penalties to perception checks are *poor hearing* (2) and *poor seeing* (2). A *mire* (2) penalty is added to the plains, light woods, heavy woods, and path terrain types. A *washout* (4) penalty is applied to traveling through a riverbed, but a *washout* (1) penalty is applied to all other terrain types – flash flooding can happen anywhere if enough rain is falling. A thunderstorm may also arise, and this adds a penalty of *lightning* (1) to all terrain types. Traveling in heavy rain is difficult; all hexes cost 2 additional MPs to enter.

Heavy Snow Cover

This condition is defined as an average of over two feet of snow present, and the GM must determine whether this level of snowpack exists for each hex entered. Movement in such deep snow is extremely difficult; 3 additional MPs are required to enter such a hex. If the terrain type is broken, the danger of a fall increases by *falling* (2). If the terrain type is alpine, this adds two new potential hazards: *avalanche* (1) and *crevasse* (1).

Heavy Snowfall

When a daily weather check reveals heavy snowfall, the hazards of travel are elevated. All characters receive a penalty of *poor seeing* (2) and a risk of *hypothermia* (2) in all terrain types. Additionally, travel is slowed when snowfall is heavy; add 1 MP to the cost to move through all hexes.

High Altitude

Above eight thousand feet, reduced oxygen levels make overland travel grueling; add 1 MP to the cost to enter every hex type. Temperature also rapidly drops off at high altitude; add the risk of *hypothermia* (1). The characters also suffer the effects of *anoxia* (1). Note that for every additional two thousand feet, each of these penalties increases by one – for example, at thirteen thousand feet, adventurers pay 3 additional MPs to enter a hex, and they suffer *hypothermia* (3) and *anoxia* (3).

High Winds

On days with very high wind, the chief penalty to travelers is difficulty with hearing dangers; all characters accept a penalty of *poor hearing* (4). If the characters are in desert terrain, they also experience a penalty of *poor seeing* (2) owing to swirling dust and sand. Finally, if the characters are in alpine or broken terrains, the strong winds can be both chilling and destabilizing; characters accept the added risk of *hypothermia* (1) and *falling* (1).

Light Rain

During the daily weather check, if it is determined that a light rain is falling, there are corresponding risks and penalties for traveling in such uncomfortable conditions. All characters receive penalties of *poor hearing* (1) and *poor seeing* (1), because the rainfall masks many noises and can obscure vision. In hexes of the heavy woods or path types, add *mire* (1) to the risks that may be encountered; soft, muddy ground in low places can trap the unwary. If the characters are traveling through a riverbed area, add *washout* (2) to the risks – swiftly rising water can catch characters in a flash flood. Additionally, every hex traversed during a light rain costs 1 additional MP.

Light Snow Cover

Whether or not the weather check establishes if it is snowing in an area, there may already be snow on the ground. It is left up to the GM to determine a method for establishing what levels of snow cover may be in a place; in higher altitude alpine settings, snow cover may be a year-round and omnipresent obstacle, but in seasonal

climates, the presence of previously fallen snow is highly variable. Time of year and recent weather both contribute to this determination.

Light snow cover is defined as an average of between six inches and two feet of snow on the ground; anything less than that doesn't impact movement. Movement in these conditions is slowed; all hexes with light snow cover require 1 additional MP to enter. Furthermore, if the terrain type is broken, snow and ice make taking a tumble more likely; add a risk of *falling* (1).

Light Snowfall

A weather check may determine that a light snow is falling, and while this has no effect on movement rates, there are other consequences for traveling through these conditions. Characters accept a penalty of *poor seeing* (1). Conditions are also colder out; add *hypothermia* (1) to all terrain types.

Moderate Climb

In areas with significant increase in altitude, where the adventurers' path rises in elevation by one thousand feet over not more than two miles, this is on average a steep climb. For each half-mile hex traversed along this path, the MP cost increases by one. Additionally, the precipitous terrain may add some incidental danger; add *falling* (1) to any risks the party may encounter.

Moderate Descent

In hexes where the path of travel causes the elevation to drop by one thousand feet over not more than two miles, there is no increase to the MP costs for this travel. However, there is still just as much danger of taking a fall during a descent as there is during an ascent; add *falling* (1) to the risks in that hex.

Severe Climb

Here the path of travel rises in elevation by one thousand feet over not more than one mile, this is a very steep climb and is correspondingly more arduous. For each half-mile hex traversed along this path, the MP cost increases by two. Additionally, the risk of injury due to slipping is increased over a less rigorous path; add *falling* (2) to the encounter risks.

Severe Descent

Where the path of travel drops in elevation by one thousand feet over not more than one mile, this steep drop does slow the party's travel somewhat; increase MP costs by one point for each hex. Additionally, the hazards of tumbling during the descent are like those risked during a severe ascent; add *falling* (2) to the encounter risks.

Total Darkness

Refer to the section on lighting later in this chapter. In conditions of absolute darkness, each hex traveled costs two additional MPs. Where anything can be seen, all characters accept a penalty of *poor seeing* (4), and those characters traveling through broken and alpine terrains accept an added risk of *falling* (4). In addition, in terrain types of heavy woods, jungle, wetlands, alpine, and broken, adventurers can expect the risk of *lost* (4) and the penalty of *impassable* (4).

Tropical or Arid Climate

In hot climates, the effects of overheating are more pronounced than they are in other parts of the world. In all terrain types, add the risk of *heat stroke* (1) during daylight hours. This risk is not increased at night.

Risks and Penalties

Once all movement through terrain has relevant modifiers applied, the cost in Movement Points to move through that hex is established. Additionally, all relevant risks and penalties are summed up. The GM may choose to add other risks that do not appear in this chapter; for instance, Chapter 7 describes some disease risks that the GM may choose to impose.

In general, a **risk** is a hazard that may be incurred, generally infrequently; when any portion of the hex is moved through, the GM rolls a separate percentile die for each risk, and if the result is equal to or less than the risk's number in parentheses, a related unkeyed encounter must be faced – refer to the descriptions below. Some risks only apply as the party is moving through a hex, while others may need to be checked every four hours even if the party is not moving. A **penalty** is a disadvantage represented by a modifier to certain rolls, or by the need to make a skill check to proceed. A tabulation of risks and penalties is provided below:

Table 6-4: TOTAL Risks and Penalties

Risks:		roll the number in () on 1d100 to encounter that risk in that hex
<i>avalanche</i>		Attacks Dodge defense of all creatures. Success means 1d10 hp damage and trapped. Failure means 1d3 hp damage
<i>crevasse</i>		Combines the results of <i>falling</i> and <i>mire</i>
<i>falling</i>		All non-flying creatures must make a Feats of Agility check or fall. Failure means fall 10' and make another check or fall more, 30' maximum
<i>heat stroke</i>		Attacks Toughness defense of all creatures. Success means 1d3 points of trauma
<i>hypothermia</i>		Attacks Toughness defense of all creatures. Success means 1d3 points of trauma
<i>lightning</i>		Randomly attacks one creature's Dodge defense. Success is 4d6 hp damage, failure is half
<i>lost</i>		Characters move in the wrong direction; GM randomly determines which hex they move into
<i>mire</i>		All non-flying creatures must make a Feats of Might check or become trapped
<i>monster encounter</i>		Roll on a monster encounter table (see Chapter 8)
<i>washout</i>		Randomly attacks one creature's Dodge defense. Success means 1d10 hp damage and washed away. Failure means 1d3 hp damage
Penalties:		
<i>anoxia</i>		Number in () is penalty to skill checks and attack rolls
<i>impassable</i>		A path cannot be found through this hex unless a Woodcraft check succeeds by number in ()
<i>poor hearing</i>		Number in () is penalty to Hearing skill check
<i>poor seeing</i>		Number in () is penalty to Seeing skill check

Risks

Avalanche

Occasionally, masses of snow and ice (and sometimes rock and mud) can destabilize on steep slopes and begin sliding downwards rapidly. This can be a very dangerous phenomenon that can lethally attack with little warning. A rumbling sound may give the characters a few seconds to react; characters who make a good result on a Hearing check gain a +2 bonus to their defenses against the avalanche.

The avalanche makes an attack at a bonus equal to the number in the parentheses, directed against the Dodge defenses of every character as it attempts to cover them with a pile of debris tens of feet deep. If the attack fails, those lucky characters take 1d3 hp damage and are otherwise unaffected. If the attack succeeds, those characters are swallowed up by the avalanche. They take 1d10 hp damage immediately.

If they still survive, they are buried alive in heavy debris and have no air to breathe. Each trapped character must make two consecutive successful skill checks – either a fantastic Feats of Agility or a fantastic Feats of Might check – to escape; for each failed skill check, that character takes 1d3 points of trauma (see Chapter 7). If that character goes unconscious before freeing themselves, they suffocate unless they are saved.

Free characters can attempt to make Hearing checks to find their companions, and they can assist them in getting free if they can locate them.

Crevasse

Deep clefts in ice and rock can become covered over with thin layers of snow, and it is possible for unlucky explorers to fall into these crevasses. This risk combines the features of the *falling* and *mire* risks.

First, all characters roll the *falling* risk. Those who fall, regardless of how far they fall, are trapped in the crevasse, and must make skill check rolls to escape, exactly as if they were extricating themselves from a *mire*. Characters who did not fall need not roll to escape. Roping characters together helps with both portions of the *crevasse* risk.

Falling

Adventurers are capable, intrepid individuals who can negotiate even rugged terrain without risk of falling, provided surfaces are not vertical and progress is not rushed. However, wherever there is danger, there is also the potential for risk to life and limb – there are no sure things when climbing. When the dice indicate that a *falling* risk has arisen, it means that the group has encountered an especially rough area – perhaps stones are loose, or surfaces are icy, or maybe the group just runs into a bad patch of luck.

Every non-flying member of the group must make a Feats of Agility check, modified by any bonuses or penalties associated with climbing. Those who generate a minimal success have negotiated the hazard without taking damage, but those who fail fall at least 10'. They must then make a second skill check; success means the fall was only 10', but failure means they must roll a third and last time. Success in this last roll means they fall 20'; failure means they fall 30'. Damage from this fall is 1d6 hp for each 10' fallen.

Characters who rope themselves together can reduce their *falling* risk by one and improve their Feats of Agility skill check by one, but if they get into combat, a basic action that triggers **attacks of opportunity** must be used to disengage them from the rope (see Chapter 7). 50' of rope can be used to anchor up to four characters.

Heat Stroke

In exceptionally hot conditions, humid or otherwise, the bodies of characters may be unable to reject heat rapidly enough to avoid damage; this is especially true if they are wearing armor. When this risk arises, all characters are attacked by *heat stroke* with an attack bonus equal to the number in parentheses. The attack is directed at the characters' Toughness defenses, which is potentially modified by equipment such as desert robes, but which also take a penalty associated with each armor type – the heavier the armor, the worse the penalty.

If the attack fails, the characters take no damage. If the attack succeeds, the victim takes 1d3 points of trauma – see Chapter 7. Under most normal conditions, *heat stroke* checks are generally only made during the day.

Monsters with the *heat native* secondary trait or the *energy resistance (fire)* or *immunity (fire)* special powers are not affected by this risk.

Hypothermia

In cold and wet conditions, characters can lose heat rapidly from their bodies, and this can lead to sickness and even death. When this risk arises, all characters are attacked by *hypothermia* with an attack bonus equal to the number in parentheses. The attack is directed at the characters' Toughness defenses, which is potentially modified by equipment such as cold weather gear. If the attack fails, the characters take no damage. If the attack succeeds, the victim takes 1d3 points of trauma – see Chapter 7. Monsters with the *cold native* secondary trait or the *energy resistance (cold)* or *immunity (cold)* special powers are not affected by this risk.

Lightning

Natural lightning striking a living being is rare, but it can happen, and it is often deadly. When this risk arises, the GM should randomly determine one character in the group, which can include NPCs. That character is attacked by *lightning*, which makes an attack at a bonus equal to the number in the parentheses, directed against the Dodge defense of the random target – the other characters are unaffected. The character's Dodge defense receives a penalty of -2 if the character is wearing metal armor.

If the attack fails, the character takes 2d6 hp lightning damage. If the attack succeeds, the character takes 4d6 hp lightning damage.

Lost

The characters lose their bearings and move in a direction other than that which they intended. The characters do not move into the intended hex; instead, the GM randomly determines if the characters move one hex to the left or one hex to the right of their intended hex. They pay the MP cost for that hex instead.

The characters will immediately realize their mistake and mark their location correctly on the player map, but they must then pay additional MP costs if they want to move into the hex they originally intended.

Mire

There is a chance that when traveling through soft, marshy ground, a character will sink into an especially soft patch and become stuck. Every non-flying member of the group must make a Feats of Might check, and those who generate a minimal success have avoided entrapment. Those who fail are trapped in the *mire*; extricating themselves can be a time-consuming process. Each character trapped must make two consecutive successful Feats of Might checks to drag themselves out (characters who are free can help with these skill checks).

For every failed Feats of Might check before achieving freedom, the group must spend one additional MP. Just as is the case with the *falling* risk, characters who rope themselves together can reduce their *mire* risk by one and improve their Feats of Might skill checks by one, but the same difficulty presents itself in untying oneself from the rope during combat.

Monster Encounter

When this risk arises, a monster or group of monsters encounters the characters. A table from Chapter 8 can be used to determine what appears, or the GM can use their own table, or they can simply select what the encounter is likely to be – if a lair of a particular creature type is known by the GM to be close by, for instance, an encounter with that type of creature is likely. Refer to Chapter 7 for resolving the encounter.

Washout

Characters wading through rapidly moving water run the risk of being washed downstream and battered by the rocks. Even those who stay by the edge of the water can potentially slip and fall in or can be caught in a flash flood that carries them away unexpectedly.

When this risk arises, the GM should randomly determine one character in the group, which can include NPCs. That character is attacked by the *washout*, which makes an attack at a bonus equal to the number in the parentheses, directed against the Dodge defense of the random target – the other characters are unaffected. If the attack fails, the character takes 1d3 hp damage and is deposited 10d6 feet downstream. If the attack succeeds, the character takes 1d10 hp damage and is washed 10d100 feet downstream.

Penalties

Anoxia

Starvation of oxygen to the brain can affect a character's performance in many ways. The number in parentheses is the penalty to all skill checks and attack rolls made within this hex. This penalty applies to all creatures, including monsters, unless that monster has the *altitude* trait – see Chapter 8.

Impassable

Labyrinthine terrain or close-grown foliage makes this hex difficult to move through. One of the characters must succeed at a Woodcraft skill check by the amount listed in parentheses to guide the party through the hex.

If a check succeeds, the party's movement is not impeded. If all checks fail, pay the number in parentheses as an added MP cost but do not move the group into the hex. The group can try to enter the hex again immediately, if desired.

Poor Hearing

The number in parentheses is the penalty to all Hearing checks made within this hex. Note that this penalty applies to all creatures, including monsters.

Poor Seeing

The number in parentheses is the penalty to all Seeing checks made within this hex. Note that this penalty applies to all creatures, including monsters.

Activities

Movement Points may also be spent performing tasks other than moving through hexes. Performing these tasks generally does not add additional risks or penalties beyond those already present in the hex. However, it is usually necessary to spend MPs to perform an activity. A tabulation of activities commonly performed in the wilderness is provided below:

Table 6-5: TOTL Outdoor Activities

Activity	MP Cost	Effects
hide passage	2	Creatures using Woodcraft to track party receive a -4 penalty
hunt and forage	6	Make Woodcraft checks to generate rations
make camp	1	Necessary to perform a Long Rest or Full Rest
monster encounter	1	Encounter one or more creatures, peacefully or otherwise; see Chapter 7 and
screen camp	6	Characters in camp receive reduction of (1) to <i>hypothermia</i> , <i>heat stroke</i> , or <i>monster encounter</i> risks
search a hex	Same as terrain cost	Allow Seeing and Hearing checks to detect features or beings
set a trap	3	Set a deadfall or snare

Hide Passage

Characters who are concerned about being followed in the wilderness may choose to spend some time covering their tracks. 2 MPs are spent doing this, during which time characters may be obscuring footprints, scattering leaves over their path of travel, hiding evidence of camping, etc. This is a time-consuming process and exposes the characters to all risks in that hex. When this activity is performed, those who attempt to use Woodcraft skills to track the characters through the hex accept penalties of -4 to their rolls.

Hunt and Forage

Adventuring parties that find themselves short on food rations can attempt to find edible fruits, nuts, berries, or roots, or they may set snares or hunt to bring down wild game. Doing so requires a Woodcraft roll. If multiple characters up to 4 attempt the check, only the best result is taken; 5 or more hunters/gatherers are required to make two separate checks.

Success depends on the terrain type; in plains, grasslands, heavy woods, jungle, or riverbed terrains, a minimal success is required. In light woods, beach, or wetlands terrains, a good success is required. In broken or alpine terrains, a great success is required, while in desert terrain, a fantastic success is needed. Failure means no food is found; success means that a single full unpreserved ration is found (refer to Chapter 5). Meanwhile, hunting takes up 6 MPs and exposes the party to the risks in that hex.

Make Camp

It is necessary to make a camp where characters wish to perform a Long Rest or Full Rest. Making camp consists of clearing brush or uncomfortable rubble out of an area large enough to accommodate the entire group, making

beds or seating areas out of soft sand or leaves, and perhaps piling brush into simple lean-to structures to keep the characters out of the elements. This costs 1 MP, and no risks are checked for during this activity.

The party has the option to build a fire. A fire eliminates the *hypothermia* risk for those within 10', and also provides a source of light, but it increases the risk of *monster encounters* by 4 as long as the fire is lit. Provided they have flint and steel or other means for making a spark, it is assumed that all characters can start a fire in dry conditions, but a minimal Woodcraft check must be made to gather dry wood and start a fire in light rain or light snowfall conditions, and a good Woodcraft check is required in heavy rain or heavy snowfall conditions. A great Woodcraft check is required to start a fire under conditions of *high wind*.

Monster Encounter

Should the characters encounter one or more creatures and engage them, either peacefully or in combat, refer to the rules in Chapter 7. Unless a fight or a parley takes an unusually long time, such interactions expend 1 MP. No risks are encountered as part of this activity, although all penalties save *impassable* apply.

Screen Camp

By spending 6 additional MPs while making camp, it is possible to erect some wind breaks and line-of-sight breaks. This makes it possible to rest in concealment while also improving resistance to the elements. While in such a camp, characters reduce the risks of *hypothermia*, *heat stroke*, and *monster encounters* by one. However, making such an elaborate camp takes time and energy - check for all risks in that hex during this process.

Search a Hex

The characters may use Seeing and Hearing checks at the usual values while they are moving through wilderness, and this does not cost additional MPs. If the party wishes to check an area more thoroughly, they may choose to remain in a hex but move around it to carefully search it. This costs the same MP that would be spent to enter the hex.

All risks are checked for while the adventurers are searching; all penalties save *impassable* apply. When determining the outcome of Seeing and Hearing checks made while searching, the characters are considered to approach within 160' of every point on the hex, which makes noticing things much easier.

Set a Trap

Those characters who may be expecting pursuit by hostile individuals may wish to leave an unpleasant surprise behind for their enemies to encounter. By spending 3 MPs, adventurers may construct either a deadfall or a snare – refer to the rules in the Exceptional Hazards section later in this chapter. Creating a trap takes time and requires characters to move around the hex to gather resources; the group is exposed to all risks in the hex.

Using our previous group of example adventurers, let's see how the initial overland travel portion of the adventure might play out.

Example: the players consider the player's map that the GM has supplied – meaning that Andaluz, Bylaric, and Corelli gather around a table in Iron League headquarters to ponder their first move. Out of respect for their NPC Ranger, they include Denali (played by the GM) in their counsels as well. Erskine and Filworth are present as well, but as they are unskilled hirelings, their opinions are not solicited.

"The old herbalist mentioned a path leading partway to the hill with the stone cairn," says Andaluz.

"That's true," says Bylaric, "and I can't help but notice that here, on this map, there appears to be a trace road that starts just outside town and winds off to the east. Perhaps that's the path in question?"

"Perhaps," says Corelli, "and I note that the path appears to go up into rough, hilly country. It would be an arduous day's travel unless we chose to use the trail."

"Hilly country," grunts Denali. "Likely a haunt for bugbears. We should leave at first light; bugbears can see perfectly in the darkness."

"As can I," says Corelli, noting that Elves enjoy infravision.

"But the rest of us cannot," observes Andaluz. "Therefore, daylight is our friend. We leave at dawn."

The GM prepares a GM Exploration Record sheet for the party's adventures. They fill in the GM name and the name of the campaign (Vertical Tombs of Tarquon), and then make copies – they will use one of these sheets for every day of game time. On the first sheet they fill in the date they are playing, the names of the PCs (Andaluz, Bylaric, Corelli), and the name of the starting location (Inathay). They also need to fill in some information about the game calendar. This campaign starts on the first day of spring, so the GM fills in the game world date (March 1) and indicates that the moon is full, as it always is on the first day of a month. It is also important to know what the weather is like on this day, so the GM rolls 1d100 and consults the Weather table. They roll a 46, and for spring in a generally temperate climate, this indicates there will be no inclement weather that day. Perhaps a good omen for the venture?

The party begins travel at dawn, which in the spring occurs at 6AM. The GM draws a line through the rows prior to dawn, indicating no adventuring happens during this time. The GM requests that the party provide a **marching order**, which is a statement of what the default arrangement of the party will be – who goes in front, what they have in their hands, etc. The players debate briefly, then decide that Denali will go in front with sword drawn; Corelli and Bylaric will follow side-by-side, both armed with slings; Erskine and Filworth will follow the Halfling and Elf, fearfully clutching their daggers; and Andaluz will take up the rear with an arrow at the ready.

At first light they leave town on the east road. Travel on a road costs 1 MP per hex. Under clear weather conditions, there are no penalties for such travel, and the only potential risk is **monster encounter (1)**, meaning there is a 1% chance per hex of having an encounter with a living creature. The GM secretly rolls 1d100 for each hex traveled, and with results of 08, 71, 66, and 29, no monster encounters occur. This doesn't mean that the party sees no creatures; the GM may narrate how the party travels the relatively safe road and sees farmers working the land, carts hauling hay and paving stones, various birds, and shy deer that bolt when the adventurers approach. The GM will report that the party safely travels two miles to the east and sees the fork where the old path splits off to the northeast. In the GM Exploration Record, on the 6-7 AM row, the GM notes the hex entered with each of the four MPs used so far: **02.08**, then **03.08**, then **04.09**, and finally **05.09**.

At this point the party leaves the well-traveled road and takes the path into wild country. The first hex entered (**06.09**) is farmland, which counts as grassland, but they are traveling along a trail. While they are on the trail, they use the movement costs, risks, and penalties of that terrain, not those associated with the terrain of the hex. Therefore, there is still only a risk of **monster encounter (2)** for that hex, and even when they enter the rugged broken terrain of the hills (in hex **07.08**), there is still only that same risk. The GM rolls 91 and 95 for the monster encounter rolls, meaning no creatures are encountered. The GM marks these two hexes under MP 5 and MP 6 for the 6-7 AM row. Since the party is not hustling, MP 7 and 8 are not used for this row; the GM draws a line through these boxes. The party has completed a full hour of travel, so the GM instructs the players to mark 1 point of fatigue for each of their characters. The GM narrates how no other people are seen once the road has been left behind, but wildlife proliferates in this strangely beautiful wild country.

In the next hour, 7-8 AM, the party continues their march along the old trail. They enter hex **08.08** and **09.07**, which the GM marks on the GM Exploration Record under MP1 and MP2. Even though none of the players say they are specifically looking for distant landmarks, the GM rules that in each hex somebody might catch a glimpse of a ruined old obelisk jutting up from the horizon in hex **07.05**. The GM has

recorded all the characters' Seeing skill checks, and they secretly roll to see if anybody notices the faraway ruin. However, nobody does.

The monster encounter roll in **8.08** doesn't turn up anything, but the GM rolls 01 in hex **09.07** – an encounter will occur! The GM uses a monster encounter chart and determines that the party will encounter a roving pack of **land lampreys**, small voracious predators detailed further in Chapter 8. Encounters and combats are detailed in Chapter 7, and a blow-by-blow example of how that encounter could unfold can be found in that chapter. Suffice it to say that the monsters surprise the party and attack, but after a difficult fight, the party successfully kills many of the land lampreys and drives the rest away. This combat consumes MP3 in this hour of travel. Additionally, even though it is not the end of the hour, combat encounters always add a point of fatigue, so the GM instructs the players to mark that on their character sheets.

All members of the party survived the fight, but several members are wounded, and several surges were used. The party decides that the sensible thing to do before proceeding is to rest – especially given that every person has two points of fatigue, and Corelli has a fatigue limit of 3. They decide that a Short Rest isn't restorative enough, but a Full Rest would last until well after dark, so a 4-hour Long Rest is the best option. This requires **making camp**, which is a 1 MP activity that does not require checking for additional risks. The party chooses a spot a short distance away from the trail that will allow them to hunker down in relative safety for a short period of time. They opt not to make a fire – the temperature is warm enough that there is no need to fend off serious cold, while the light that a fire would shed would be likely to draw unwanted attention. They create a watch schedule and settle down for a period of four hours, during which they only check for risks in the hex once.

The Long Rest passes uneventfully. A four-hour Long Rest lasts until MP4 in the 11-noon row; it is not possible to creep or hustle while resting. At the end of the rest, all points of fatigue are cleared, and every character regains one surge up to their maximum. With plenty of daylight left, the party is ready to return to the trail and resume their adventure. Using MP 5, they enter hex **10.08** without incident and cross a rickety bridge over a mountain stream. However, a short distance past the bridge, the trail peters out; the adventurers must now choose a route through the wilderness without the benefit of a path to lead the way.

The party surveys the situation, and Bylaric climbs a tree to get a clear view of the terrain to the east. Hex **11.07** is more hilly and broken terrain; however, hex **11.08** is unusually thick forest. After a short conference they choose to enter hex **11.07**. Broken terrain costs 4 MP to move into, so MP 6 of the hour is used as well as the first 3 movement points of the noon-1PM hour. The danger of their recent combat weighs heavily on the party, however, and they choose caution and slow movement over speed. From noon onwards they choose to creep, meaning they only have 4 MP to spend every hour, but creatures will suffer a penalty to detect their stealthy progress. Hex **11.07** has a risk of monster encounter has risks of **monster encounter (2)**, **falling (1)**, and **impassable (2)**, so 1d100 is rolled for each risk separately. None of these risks materialize.

From a high point in hex **11.07**, they make Seeing checks to look at the neighboring hexes. Bylaric notes columns of smoke originating in hex **12.07**, and Corelli sees what appears to be signs of settlement surrounding a large cave in that location. They conclude that this could easily be a bugbear village. A heated argument follows; Andaluz, Bylaric, and Corelli want to give any bugbears a wide berth, while Denali wants to investigate more closely (the ranger hates goblins and their larger relations, the bugbears, but these motivations are not yet made clear to the rest of the party). The Iron League members outvote Denali, who reluctantly agrees to proceed into hex **12.08** instead. Hex **12.08** is light forest with risks of **monster encounter (3)** as well as the penalty of **poor seeing (1)**, but no creatures appear to menace the party. The GM rules that the bugbears in hex **12.07** have a chance to spot the party's movement and

*makes a Seeing check for them, but in part owing to the party's stealthy creeping and in part due to the terrain's penalty to Seeing, they are not spotted. The GM records the party's movement into **12.08** through MP 2 of hour 1-2 PM.*

*The party next chooses to enter hex **13.07**, which is more broken terrain. The GM rolls for **monster encounter (2)**, **falling (1)**, and **impassable (2)** risks, and the 1d100 comes up 02 for impassable. The hex appears to be a maze of twisting box canyons which thwart progress. The GM calls for all party members to make Woodcraft skill checks, and the best result is Denali's success by 1. However, a good success is necessary to avoid this risk. The party spends 2 more MP fruitlessly attempting to enter the hex.*

*Undaunted, the party chooses to try again. The same risks are rolled and none of them arise, so the party spends 4 more MP and enters hex **13.07**. It is now the end of the 2-3 PM hour and the party has picked up enough points of fatigue that all the characters except for Denali have acquired the **fatigued** condition.*

*The party rests in hex 13.07. They choose to take 2 Short Rests, which will clear 2 points of fatigue for everybody, and this does not require making a camp. Since the party is stationary, only one check for risks is made, and nothing dangerous happens. Having regained some of their vigor, they must choose between the two grassland hexes that lie east of them. They choose **14.08** and move into it, rolling the risk of **monster encounter (2)**, but all seems safe. Andaluz scans the horizon, and the GM asks for a Seeing check. Andaluz gets a great result, and the GM rules that this means that Andaluz sees the irregular stones of an ancient monument jutting above the horizon in hex **14.07**. This is interesting, but there are no hilltops there, so the party decides to mark the location on their Player's Map but continue going to the east.*

*The party chooses to enter hex **15.08**, which is broken terrain and certainly looks hilly. The GM rolls for all risks in that terrain, none materialize, and the party moves into the hex at the end of the 4-5 PM hour. The GM knows that this hex contains the Tomb of Derregnet, but their notes also indicate that its entrance is not obvious. The GM allows Seeing checks to spot the stone plug, but none of the characters succeed.*

*With the sun about to set, and the party growing **fatigued** once more, they choose to perform the **search** action on hex **15.08**. This spends 4 more MP and rolls all risks for the hex, but this activity allows them to make Seeing checks as if they are close to every point within the hex. Another round of checks is called for, and this time Corelli succeeds, spotting a strangely flattened space upon a neighboring hilltop. As the sun sets at the end of the 5-6 PM hour, the party has found the sealed tomb! They opt to make a camp and rest for the night, hoping to begin their investigation of the tomb in the morning.*

The GM Exploration Record thus far looks like this:

GM EXPLORATION RECORD			GM: sample GM		Campaign: Vertical Tombs of Tarquon			Real World Date/Time sample date		
Starting Characters: Andaluz, Bylaric, Corelli								Starting Location: Inathay		
Game World Date: March 1			Moon: full			Weather: clear				
Time:	MP 1	MP2	MP3	MP4	MP5	MP6	MP7	MP8	Character Joins	Character Leaves
midnight-1 AM										
1-2 AM										
2-3 AM										
3-4 AM										
4-5 AM										
5-6 AM										
6-7 AM	02.08	03.08	04.09	05.09	06.09	07.08				
7-8 AM	8.08	9.07	Fight 9.07	Make Camp	Long Rest	→				
8-9 AM	Long Rest					→				
9-10 AM	Long Rest					→				
10-11 AM	Long Rest					→				
11-noon	Long Rest				→	10.08	11.07			
noon-1 PM	11.07			→	12.08					
1-2 PM	12.08		→	Impassable						
2-3 PM	13.07			→						
3-4 PM	Short Rest	Short Rest	14.08	→						
4-5 PM	15.08			→						
5-6 PM	search			→						
	15.08									

Dungeon Movement

Just as is the case for outdoor movement, these rules provide the GM with guidelines for what happens when characters wander indoors or in underground environments and have unkeyed encounters. When characters are roaming through crumbling ruins or serpentine caverns, there ought to be opportunities for adventurers to brave cave-ins, or to accidentally fall down a sinkhole, or to encounter monsters that may be wandering themselves. If, however, the GM wishes to allow the characters to experience programmed encounter areas with a minimum of side-tracking, these rules can be safely set aside.

Movement in dungeon settings works similarly to movement in the outdoors. However, climate and weather are not factors in an indoors environment, and the time of day generally does not affect vision, so these considerations are removed. There is terrain, however, and this carries movement costs and risks. There are also MPs and fatigue costs, and the same amounts of each (as well as benefits and penalties) accrue if the party chooses to move normally, to hustle, or to creep.

Just as is the case with outdoors movement, the terrain type has a significant effect on dungeon movement rates. A typical dungeon map is laid out on a grid of 10' square grids, and the terrain MPs listed are associated with the cost to traverse a path through the dungeon up to 100' long. If mix of terrain types is encountered over a 100' distance, the GM must use their judgment to determine how many MPs must be expended.

Dungeon Terrain Types

A tabulation of the terrain MP costs, risks, and penalties is found below:

Table 6-6: TOTIL Dungeon Terrain

Terrain (per 100'):	MP Cost	Risks and Penalties
wading through knee-deep water	2	<i>monster encounter (1); mire (1)</i>
wading through waist-deep water	3	<i>monster encounter (2); washout (1); mire (2)</i>
walking through natural caves, unworked	3	<i>monster encounter (3); collapse (2); sinkhole (1)</i>
walking through semi-worked tunnels and caves	2	<i>monster encounter (2); collapse (1)</i>
walking through smooth, flat tunnels and rooms	1	<i>monster encounter (1)</i>
swimming through deep water	4	<i>monster encounter (3); washout (2)</i>

Wading through knee-deep water

This might represent a low point in an underground tunnel that has partially filled with water, a march around an underground sea on a path sometimes swallowed by the tide, or a crypt below an old monastery which traps stagnant groundwater.

Wading through waist-deep water

This could involve poking through a rubbish-choked pool, reluctantly trudging down a fetid sewer passage in search of a secret way into the prison basement or forcing one's way past the outflow from a sea-cave as the tide is going out.

Walking through natural caves, unworked

This could involve a series of natural limestone caverns linked by unimproved openings, some quite narrow or tortuous.

Walking through semi-worked tunnels and caves

This might be the crudely worked lairs of underground dwellers with only modest mining and tunneling skills, a system of natural caverns that has been partially developed to make them more usable for travel, or perhaps a series of snow-caves crudely hacked out of hard-packed ice.

Walking through smooth, flat tunnels and rooms

This can include the interiors of non-ruined buildings, a labyrinth of square-cut tunnels and chambers riddling the inside of a mountain, or a well-worked mine with mostly even floors.

Swimming through deep water

Any time the characters' feet must leave the floor, this movement cost must be paid.

Dungeon Movement Modifiers

Just as is the case with outdoor movement, dungeon terrain movement costs, risks, and penalties may change owing to variable conditions. A tabulation of common modifiers to dungeon movement is found below:

Table 6-7: TOTIL Dungeon Movement Modifiers

Modifiers:	MP Cost	Risks and Penalties
damaged or ruined	1 point more	Add <i>collapse</i> (1); add <i>impassable</i> (1)
darkness	1 point more	Add <i>poor seeing</i> (2); add <i>lost</i> (2); add <i>sinkhole</i> (1) to natural caves that aren't flooded
dim light	same points	Add <i>poor seeing</i> (1)
ramp or stair downwards	same points	
ramp upwards	1 point more	
stair upwards	2 points more	
total darkness	2 points more	Add <i>poor seeing</i> (4); add <i>lost</i> (4); add <i>sinkhole</i> (2) to natural caves that aren't flooded

Damaged or Ruined

Some dungeon environments may have been exposed to a disaster or cataclysm that caused a dangerous destabilization of the terrain, with cracked floors and walls, collapsing ceilings, and precarious piles of rubble inconveniently placed. Whether this is a system of natural caves wracked by intermittent earthquakes, or ancient crumbling ruins finally surrendering to the march of time, both worked and unworked terrains can be ruled to be damaged at the GM's option. The cost to move through a 100' distance in this area is 1 MP greater. Additionally, the adventurers are exposed to the added risks of *collapse* (1) and *impassable* (1).

Darkness

Refer to the section on lighting later in this chapter. In conditions of ordinary darkness, each 100' of distance traveled costs one additional MP. All characters accept a penalty of *poor seeing* (2), and they are exposed to the risk of *lost* (2) in all terrains. Additionally, if the characters are in semi-worked or unworked natural caves, the risk of *sinkhole* (1) is a potential hazard.

Dim Light

Refer to the section on lighting later in this chapter. In poor light conditions, MP expenditures for movement are not affected, but all characters accept a penalty of *poor seeing* (1).

Ramp or Stair Downward

There is no additional cost in MPs for moving downward using stairs or ramps.

Ramp Upward

Ramps are usually intended for a wheeled conveyance or a beast of burden to be able to use them, and as such typically have a gentle slope compared to a stair. When traversing a 100' stretch of ramp sloping upward, all MP costs are increased by 1.

Stair Upward

Stairs are generally steeper than ramps and climbing them can be quite arduous. A 100' long climb up a stair costs 2 additional MPs.

Total Darkness

Refer to the section on lighting later in this chapter. In areas of complete darkness, each 100' of distance traveled costs two additional MPs. All characters accept a penalty of *poor seeing* (4), and they are exposed to the risk of *lost* (4) in all terrains. Additionally, if the characters are in semi-worked or unworked natural caves, the risk of *sinkhole* (2) is a potential hazard.

Risks and Penalties

Once all movement through terrain has relevant modifiers applied, the cost in MP to move through that terrain is established. Additionally, all relevant risks and penalties are summed up. The GM may choose to add other risks

that do not appear in this chapter; for instance, Chapter 7 describes some disease risks that the GM may choose to impose.

In general, a risk is a hazard that may be incurred, generally infrequently; when any portion of the terrain is moved through, the GM rolls 1d100, and if the result is equal to or less than the risk's number in parentheses, that hazard must be faced – refer to the descriptions below. Some risks only apply as the party is moving through the area, while others may need to be checked every four hours even if the party is not moving.

A penalty is a disadvantage represented by a penalty to certain rolls, or by the need to make a skill check to proceed. A tabulation of dungeon risks and penalties is found below:

Table 6-8: TOTIL Dungeon Risks and Penalties

Risks:		roll the number in () on 1d100 to encounter that risk in that 100'
<i>collapse</i>		Attacks Dodge defense of all creatures. Success means 1d10 hp damage and trapped. Failure means 1d3 hp damage
<i>falling</i>		All non-flying creatures must make a Feats of Agility check or fall. Failure means fall 10' and make another check or fall more, 30' maximum
<i>lost</i>		Characters move in the wrong direction; GM randomly determines which area they move into
<i>mire</i>		All non-flying creatures must make a Feats of Might check or become trapped
<i>monster encounter</i>		Roll on a monster encounter table (see Chapter 8)
<i>sinkhole</i>		Combines the results of <i>falling</i> and <i>mire</i>
<i>washout</i>		Attacks Dodge defense of all creatures. Success means 1d10 hp damage and washed away. Failure means 1d3 hp damage

Penalties:		
<i>impassable</i>		A path cannot be found through this area unless a Stonecraft check succeeds by number in ()
<i>poor hearing</i>		Number in () is penalty to Hearing skill check
<i>poor seeing</i>		Number in () is penalty to Seeing skill check

Risks

Collapse

When the characters face this risk, they have entered a particularly unstable portion of the dungeon, and the ceiling may fall in on them. The collapse makes an attack at a bonus equal to the number in the parentheses, directed against the Dodge defenses of every character as it attempts to crush them under a pile of loose rubble.

If the attack fails, those lucky characters take 1d3 hp damage and are otherwise unaffected. If the attack succeeds, those characters are buried under the collapse. They take 1d10 hp damage immediately.

If they still survive, they are buried alive in heavy debris and have no air to breathe. Each trapped character must make two consecutive skill checks – either a fantastic Feats of Agility or a fantastic Feats of Might check – to escape; each failed skill check means they take 1d3 points of trauma – see Chapter 7. Characters who fall unconscious before being freed suffocate to death unless rescued.

Free characters can attempt to make Hearing checks to find their companions, and they can assist them in getting free if they can locate them.

Falling

Adventurers are capable, intrepid individuals who can negotiate even rugged terrain without risk of falling, provided surfaces are not vertical and progress is not rushed. However, wherever there is danger, there is also the

potential for risk to life and limb – there are no sure things when climbing. When the dice indicate that a *falling* risk has arisen, it means that the group has encountered an especially rough area – perhaps there are crumbling sections of masonry that may give way, or piles of boulders may be deceptively loose, or maybe the group just runs into a bad patch of luck.

Every non-flying member of the group must make a Feats of Agility check, modified by any bonuses or penalties associated with climbing. Those who generate a minimal success have negotiated the hazard without taking damage, but those who fail fall at least 10'. They must then make a second skill check; success means the fall was only 10', but failure means they must roll a third and last time. Success in this last roll means they fall 20'; failure means they fall 30'. Damage from this fall is 1d6 hp for each 10' fallen.

Characters who rope themselves together can reduce their *falling* risk by one and improve their Feats of Agility skill check by one, but if they get into combat, a basic action that triggers attacks of opportunity must be used to disengage them from the rope (see Chapter 7). 50' of rope can be used to anchor up to four characters.

Lost

The characters lose their bearings and move in a direction other than the direction they intended. The characters do not move in their intended direction; instead, the GM examines the dungeon map and determines randomly the direction they move in, which may include going back the way they came from. They pay the MP cost for that area of the map instead.

The characters will immediately realize their mistake – mark their location correctly on the player map – but must then pay additional MP costs if they want to move into the area they originally intended.

Mire

There is a chance that when traveling through soft, marshy ground, a character will sink into an especially soft patch and become stuck. Every non-flying member of the group must make a Feats of Might check, and those who generate a minimal success have avoided entrapment. Those who fail are trapped in the *mire*; extricating themselves can be a time-consuming process.

Each character trapped must make two consecutive successful Feats of Might checks to drag themselves out (characters who are free can help with these skill checks). For every failed Feats of Might check before achieving freedom, the group must spend one additional MP. Just as is the case with the *falling* risk, characters who rope themselves together can reduce their *mire* risk by one and improve their Feats of Might skill checks by one, but the same difficulty presents itself in untying oneself from the rope during combat.

Monster Encounter

When this risk arises, a monster or group of monsters encounters the characters. A table from Chapter 8 can be used to determine what appears, or the GM can use their own table, or simply select what the encounter is likely to be – if a lair of a particular creature type is known by the GM to be close by, for instance, an encounter with that type of creature is likely. Refer to Chapter 7 for resolving the encounter.

Sinkhole

Water moving through cave systems can produce many hazards. Over thousands or even millions of years, the erosive and chemical action of water can carve treacherous, difficult-to-notice shafts dropping down from natural caves and caverns. These features are called sinkholes, and they can be a real menace to those moving through the underground. This risk combines the features of the *falling* and the *mire* risks.

First, if this risk materializes, all characters roll the *falling* risk. Those who fall, regardless of how far they fall, run the risk of getting wedged in the sinkhole and becoming trapped – they must then make rolls to escape the *sinkhole*, like a *mire*. Characters who did not fall need not roll for becoming stuck.

Roping characters together helps with both portions of the *sinkhole* risk, but also may prove inconvenient if the party suddenly enters combat.

Washout

Characters wading or swimming through rapidly moving water run the risk of being washed downstream and battered by the rocks. Even those who stay by the edge of the water can potentially slip and fall in, or they can be caught in rising water that carries them away unexpectedly.

When this risk arises, the GM should randomly determine one character in the group, which can include NPCs. That character is attacked by the *washout*, which makes an attack at a bonus equal to the number in the parentheses, directed against the Dodge defense of the random target – the other characters are unaffected. If the attack fails, the character takes 1d3 hp damage and is deposited 10d6 feet downstream. If the attack succeeds, the character takes 1d10 hp damage and is washed 10d100 feet downstream.

Penalties

Impassable

High-piled rubble or a tangle of wreckage makes this area difficult to move through. One of the characters must succeed at a Stonecraft skill check by the amount listed in parentheses to guide the party through the hex. If a check succeeds, the party's movement is not impeded. If all checks fail, pay the number in parentheses as an added MP cost but do not move the group into the area. The group can try to enter the area again immediately, if desired.

Poor Hearing

The number in parentheses is the penalty to all Hearing checks made within this area. Note that this penalty applies to all creatures, including monsters.

Poor Seeing

The number in parentheses is the penalty to all Seeing checks made within this area. Note that this penalty applies to all creatures, including monsters.

Activities

Movement Points may also be spent performing tasks other than moving through squares. Performing these tasks generally does not add additional risks or penalties but usually requires spending MPs. A tabulation of dungeon activities can be found below:

Table 6-9: TOTIL Dungeon Activities

Activity:	MP Cost	Effects
ascend ladder	1	Up to 50'. Added risk: <i>falling</i> (1)
batter door	1	Added risks: <i>monster encounter</i> (1); <i>poor hearing</i> (1)
breach	2	Added risks: <i>monster encounter</i> (2); <i>poor hearing</i> (2)
check for secret doors	1	Make search check to find hidden compartments or secret doors in a 100 square foot area of wall, floor, or one desk-sized object
climb rope	2	Up to 50'. Added risk: <i>falling</i> (2). Add 1 fatigue point
find mechanism	1	Make search check to find hidden mechanisms, including traps, alarms, and concealed levers or buttons
hide passage	2	Creatures using Stonecraft to track party receive a -4 penalty
make camp	1	Necessary to take a Long Rest or Full Rest
manipulate mechanism	1	Make Mechanisms checks to pick locks, disable traps, or fiddle with machinery
monster encounter	1	Encounter one or more creatures, peacefully or otherwise; see Chapter 7 and Chapter 8
prod for pits	double MPs	Characters in front may use poles to search for mechanisms or moving stones that would be revealed by pressure
scale surface	3	Up to 50'. Make Feats of Agility check or fall. Add 2 fatigue points
search a room	1	Find obvious items in a 400 square foot area
set a trap	3	Set a deadfall or snare
swim current	1 extra MP	fatigue point.

Ascend Ladder

Climbing a ladder is easier than climbing a rope, and up to a 50' long ladder (including climbs with carved hand-holds and foot-holds) can be climbed without needing to make a skill check. This takes up less time than climbing a rope (only 1 MP is spent) and no fatigue points are added. Only those characters who climb face the risk of *falling* (1). If the *falling* risk does materialize, the maximum distance fallen cannot exceed the height of the climb.

Batter Door

Sometimes, characters encounter a door that is jammed shut, or a portcullis that cannot be raised, or a barred gate that must be forced. When this happens, characters must make Feats of Might skill checks to gain entry. The number of characters who may make these checks at the same time depends on the size of the entry to be forced; small objects may require only one character to make the roll, with only a few (or no) other characters able to assist.

A minimal success is required to break down simple doors, break open boxes with flimsy locks, kick in a window, or gain entry to similarly easy portals. The GM may rule that progressively stouter structures require good, great, or fantastic skill checks to force. This requires some time to do; 1 MP is expended.

This is also a noisy activity; not only is the party less able to hear threats (add the risk of *poor hearing* (1)), but nearby creatures may hear the racket and come to investigate (add the risk of *monster encounter* (1)). A failed check may be immediately reattempted.

Breach

When there is an object or portal that is made to be opened, and the adventurers use brute force to gain entry, the batter door activity is used. When there is no pre-made opening, but the characters want to create an opening or break something anyway, they instead use the breach activity. This is the activity that would be used to smash the stone slab sealing an ancient crypt, or to bend the bars of an iron grating to make a hole large enough to crawl through, or to smash the ancient, cursed statue watching over the evil temple.

Characters must make Feats of Might skill checks to accomplish their task. The number of characters who may make these checks at the same time depends on the size of the object worked on; small objects may require only one character to make the roll, with only a few (or no) other characters able to assist.

A minimal success is required to break through a thin plaster wall, or to tear into the cocoon of a giant caterpillar, or to crash through an inch of ice on a lake's surface. More substantial obstacles and barriers may require good, great, or minimal skill checks, at the GM's option. This activity is time-consuming enough that 2 MPs are spent.

This is even noisier than the batter door activity; all characters are exposed to the added risks of *poor hearing* (2) and *monster encounter* (2). A failed check may be immediately reattempted.

Check for Secret Doors

This activity consumes 1 MP, but only a very small area can be so carefully scoured; no risks are checked during this time. One section of wall or floor not exceeding 100 square feet can be carefully checked for a hidden door; similarly, a single object no larger than a writing desk can be checked for secret compartments or concealed panels. This allows the character engaged in this activity to make a search check.

Search checks usually use the Seeing skill. However, depending on how the player describes the nature of the search, the Hearing skill may be used instead – the character may be tapping on a wall hoping to find a hollow cavity, for instance. Up to two characters may search the same area at the same time, and skill checks are made for both characters. The GM should roll these skill checks since the players should not know whether they succeeded or failed.

A minimal success reveals the presence of only the crudest of secret doors and compartments; the GM may determine that increasingly well-crafted portals require good, great, or fantastic search checks to find. Note that finding a secret door does not necessarily reveal the way to open it; unless the GM decides its mechanism is obvious, a separate check must be made to **find mechanism** (see below). A party may attempt to check for secret doors multiple times on an area or object.

Climb Rope

When there is no danger or time-pressure, all characters can climb a rope. Up to 50' of rope can be climbed without needing to make a skill check, although it is time consuming (this takes 2 MPs) and arduous (all characters who climb add 1 fatigue point). Those who climb do face the risk of *falling* (2), because no climb is ever perfectly safe. If the *falling* risk does materialize, the maximum distance fallen cannot exceed the height of the climb.

Find Mechanism

This activity consumes 1 MP, but only a very small area can be so carefully scoured; no risks are encountered during this time. One section of wall or floor not exceeding 100 square feet can be carefully checked for mechanisms of all sorts; similarly, a single object no larger than a writing desk can be checked. This search may find mechanical or magical traps, secret catches or buttons, levers cunningly disguised as candlesticks, etc. This allows the character engaged in this activity to make a search check.

Search checks usually use the Seeing skill. However, depending on how the player describes the nature of the search, the Hearing skill may be used instead – the character may tap gently on a door frame to determine that it is just a fake door whose handle is the trigger for a trap, for instance. Up to two characters may search the same area at the same time, and skill checks are made for both characters. The GM should roll these skill checks since the players should not know whether they succeeded or failed.

A minimal success reveals the presence of only the least subtle of traps and mechanical workings; the GM may determine that increasingly cunning catchments require good, great, or fantastic search checks to find. Note that this activity is not the same activity as checking for secret doors, and success at one does not produce successful results at the other. A party may attempt to find mechanisms multiple times on an area or object.

Hide Passage

Characters who are concerned about being followed in an indoor environment may choose to spend some time covering their tracks. 2 MPs are spent doing this, during which time characters may be obscuring footprints, scattering sand over their path of travel, hiding evidence of camping, etc. This is a time-consuming process and exposes the characters to all risks in that area. When this activity is performed, those who attempt to use Stonecraft skill to track the characters through the area accept penalties of -4 to their rolls.

Make Camp

It is necessary to make a camp should characters wish to perform a Long Rest or Full Rest. Making camp consists of locating a convenient out-of-the-way space, clearing broken timbers or uncomfortable rubble out of an area large enough to accommodate the entire group, and making beds or seating areas out of softer debris close at hand. This costs 1 MP, and no risks are checked for during this activity. The party has the option to build a fire. A fire provides a source of light, but it increases the risk of *monster encounters* by 4 while the fire is lit.

Manipulate Mechanisms

Once a mechanical device is located, it takes time to work on it with tools – most uses of this activity require the expenditure of 1 MP, but no added risks are encountered during this time. This activity can be used on a single mechanical object. A lock without a matching key may be picked; a cunning trap may be disabled; a wire connected to an alarm bell may be neutralized. Simply manipulating an obvious lever or button does not require the use of this activity.

Only one character may attempt this skill check at a time, although the GM may determine that one or more additional characters can help (see Chapter 3). The helpers may roll their own skill checks, but the skill check for the character working the mechanism should be rolled by the GM, since the players should not know whether they succeeded or failed.

The very simplest of mechanisms don't require a roll to work them – a hidden lever, once detected, can be pulled without any risk of failure, for instance. More complicated mechanical items require a minimal success to fiddle, with increasingly cunning objects demanding good, great, or fantastic successes. What happens when the check succeeds (or fails) is up to the GM to decide; most commonly, failing to disable a trap triggers the mechanism! A failed check may be immediately reattempted.

Monster Encounter

Should the characters encounter one or more creatures and engage them, either peacefully or in combat, refer to the rules in Chapter 7. Unless a fight or a parley takes an unusually long time, such interactions expend 1 MP. No risks are encountered as part of this activity, although all penalties save *impassable* apply.

Prod for Pits

As characters are moving through an area, they may choose to engage in a simple and straightforward way to find certain hidden items: prodding the ground in front of them with long poles. This requires the adventuring party to travel in such a way that the characters in front are equipped with poles or long-shafted weapons that allow them to press vigorously on the ground in front of them. This process is slow; the MP cost is doubled to move through an area where the adventurers are prodding, but only the risks associated with normal movement through the area apply.

Prodding allows the characters in the front of the party to make search checks to attempt to find covered pits, slides, tripwires, or other mechanisms that might be revealed by putting weight on the ground. Search checks usually use the Seeing skill. However, depending on how the player describes the nature of the search, the Hearing skill may be used instead – the character may be tapping on the ground with the butt of a spear to listen for a hollow cavity under the flagstones of the path, for instance. The GM should roll these skill checks since the players should not know whether they succeeded or failed.

A minimal success reveals the presence of only the least subtle of traps and triggers; the GM may determine that increasingly better-crafted lid-traps require good, great, or fantastic search checks to find. Note that this will only detect pits, slides, and other tilting floor slabs that would be revealed by the exertion of around 60 lbs. of weight; such things are not revealed if the GM decides these things are triggered by something other than weight. Also, prodding is not a careful or considered activity, and many triggers may be discovered by setting them off – the only advantage to the players will be that they are not standing in the exact space where the trigger is!

It is not possible for characters to check for secret doors or find mechanisms while those in the front are prodding for pits; those activities require no movement by the party. The skill checks associated with prodding for pits may not be reattempted; it is assumed that the party will discover the presence of an unfound pit by walking into it.

Scale Surface

When no rope or ladder is available, sometimes characters must climb up a vertical surface by using only those handholds and footholds present. Such climbs can be dangerous; more than a few adventurers have died by falling to their deaths.

When the party must climb up to a 50' high wall or cliff, 3 MPs are spent, and each character adds 2 fatigue points. Each character must then make a Feats of Agility check, with any modifiers to climb checks. A minimal success means the character has scaled an easy wall – one with plenty of irregularities to provide points of contact, and one whose surfaces are rough enough to permit a firm grip. Good, great, and fantastic successes may be required for increasingly difficult walls, up to very sheer and smooth walls, or possibly climbs that require characters to be upside down for part of the time.

Failing the skill check means that the character falls; the GM uses percentile dice to determine how far along the climb the fall occurs. 1d6 hp damage is incurred for each 10' fallen. Since climbing a rope is so much easier than scaling a wall unassisted, it is common for a party to send their best climber up by using the scale surface activity, then have them secure and lower a rope for the rest of the party to use.

Search a Room

This activity takes up 1 MP, and no risks are checked during this time. During this time, even an area packed with furnishing, shelves, books, knick-knacks, litter, or other objects can be pawed through in search of interesting items.

Such a search allows the characters to know a basic inventory of all readily obvious objects in an area not to exceed 400 square feet in area. No Seeing skill check is required, but this search only turns up items that can be readily spotted without effort. Seeing checks may be made in secret by the GM if they determine that something is well hidden in this area, such as a jewel hidden in an otherwise innocuous skull. If something has been deliberately hidden in a secret compartment within the area, it will not be spotted by a character unless they engage in the check for secret doors activity (see below).

Note that characters will not find anything unless the GM decides there is something there to be found! The GM may determine that an area is so crowded with material that additional MP costs and other penalties apply; for instance, if the characters come across an enormous garbage heap the size of a swimming pool, the GM may decide that 3 MPs are consumed during this laborious task – plus all the searchers acquire such a pungent odor that monsters will be able to smell them coming up to 60' away!

Set a Trap

Those characters who may be expecting pursuit by hostile individuals may wish to leave an unpleasant surprise behind for their enemies to encounter. By spending 3 MPs, adventurers may construct either a deadfall or a snare – refer to the rules in the Exceptional Hazards section later in this chapter. Creating a trap takes time and requires characters to move around the area to gather resources; the group is exposed to all risks in the area.

Swim Current

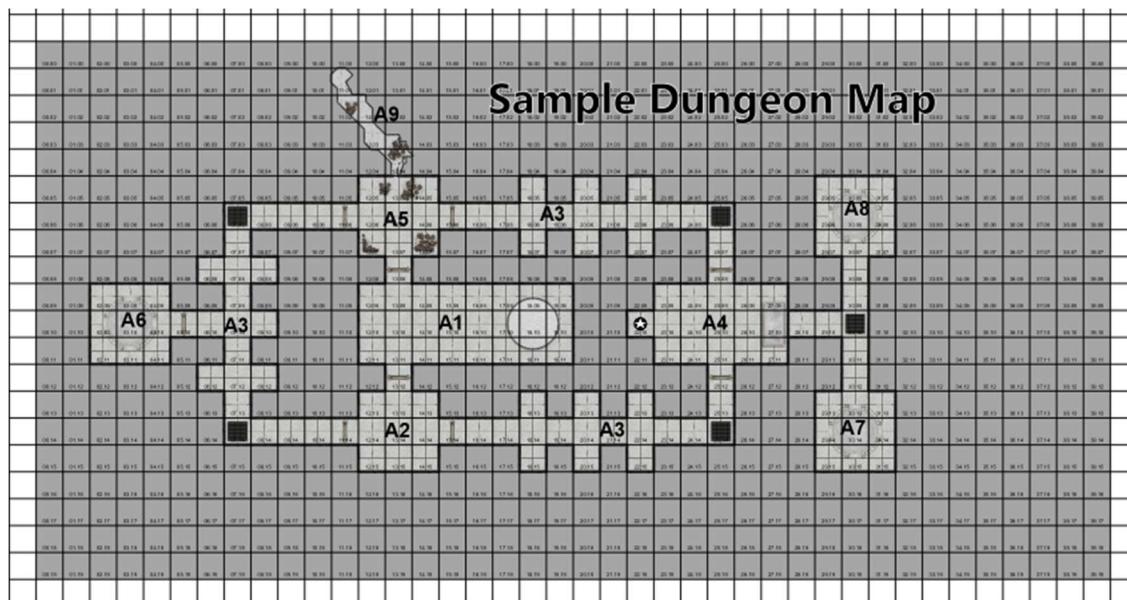
The movement rate associated with swimming is described above, but battling currents makes this task only more difficult. Whether the current is a cross-current that the adventurers must swim through, or attempting to paddle upstream, this movement is extremely taxing – all swimming characters expend a fatigue point, and one extra MP, when moving through up to 50' of currents. These costs are doubled if the currents are present in more than 50' of the area of movement. While the characters are moving in this way, they suffer the added risk of *washout* (2).

Continuing the adventure of the example characters, the party reaches the dungeon and begins to explore.

Example: At sunset on March 1, the party discovered the rune-carved circular stone slab sealing off a 20' diameter opening atop an otherwise featureless hill. Exhausted and in need of recovering strength and resources, they hastily made a camp, set a watch schedule, and settled down to rest for the night.

Monster encounter checks were rolled every four hours, but nothing disturbed their rest. Because they had tents, blankets, and bedrolls, and because Andaluz has proficiency with the Healing skill, all lost hit points were recovered overnight. Spell points were recovered. Erskine and Filworth, the desperados, were paid 1 GP each to continue their service. Everybody ate food and drank water.

The GM prepares another GM Exploration Record for March 2. The GM also has a keyed dungeon map which looks like this:



In this case, since the party knows nothing about the dungeon yet, there is no player version of this map. However, they are certainly welcome to draw what they encounter into the Iron League Journal, and that can serve as a record of what they find.

The party starts operations at first light at 6AM on March 2. The weather check reveals that an ominous fog has arisen on the hilltop this morning, which would certainly have an impact on overland travel, but which will not affect dungeon exploration. The party has already spent the night examining the slab for traps and has concluded that there are not any present. As they have not found any way of lifting the massive stone out of the way, they determine that their only option is to break it. Fortunately, they have come prepared with sledgehammers and iron spikes, and although none of the adventurers have the Stonecraft skill, they are able to assist the strong Denali with supplemental blows and suggestions for strategic stone breaking. Denali makes a fantastic result on a Strength-based skill check, and the stone slab cracks! The party members scurry backward as chunks of the stone seal fall into a circular shaft. The

*chunks fall a long way before landing with an earth-shaking crash far below. A thin cloud of dust rises out of the well. The party has spent 2 MP with this **breach** action. (By default, a party's movement is assumed to be normal, neither creeping nor hustling, granting them 6 MP per hour.)*

The adventurers peer down into the 20' diameter hole. All is dark within the limits of their vision; even Corelli's infravision reveals that the shaft drops straight down beyond 60'. Andaluz breaks out the 50' ropes carried by the desperados and knots them together into a longer strand. Bylaric drives a steel spike into the edge of the hole to anchor a rope. Corelli lights a torch and drops it into the hole. It falls almost 100' feet and lands on stone rubble cluttering some sort of horizontal surface below. Denali peers into the hole, and the GM makes a Seeing check on their behalf.

"I think I see movement down there," they say.

"Of course you do," says Bylaric. "I'll go first."

The party decides that their two desperados will remain in the camp topside, minding the rope and the camping gear. The four characters will climb down a rope – Bylaric first, Andaluz second, Corelli third, and Denali anchoring the rear. Furthermore, the characters use another section of rope to tie themselves together, which they hope will mitigate the risk of somebody slipping and falling. The party begins climbing.

*Climbing down a rope is just as wearying as climbing up one – every 50' of climbing uses 2 MP and gives each party member a point of fatigue. There is also a risk of **falling**, reduced from (2) to (1) owing to the party being roped together. The party climbs almost all the way down to the bottom of the rope, consuming the rest of the hour. They have now picked up 3 points of fatigue; already Corelli with a low Constitution score has acquired the **fatigued** condition. Bylaric pauses 20' above the bottom; the shaft has emerged into a large chamber, dimly lit by the guttering torch – they are on the east side of area **A1** on the map. The GM describes the ancient carved stone walls of the room, the rubble on the floor that is the remnants of the fallen seal, and six creatures scuttling around – animated undead **skeletons**!*

After an initial moment of concern, the party realizes that the skeletons, while undoubtedly menacing and hostile, lack the intelligence to climb up the rope to get them. They also don't seem to have any ability to attack at range, so they remain at the bottom of the rope, clawing impotently upwards. After some discussion, Corelli and Bylaric tie themselves off to the rope while the other two steady them, and then they rain down sling stones on the skeletons. After a few rounds of one-sided combat, the fight is over – the skeletons have been reduced to immobile shards. The party climbs down from the rope; they have consumed another 1 MP (and picked up another point of fatigue) with the combat. They are all weary, and this room seems safe enough, so they spend another 3 MP on a series of Short Rests.

*After they have recovered somewhat, the party begins a methodical **search** of the room. They split up to cover the entire area, turning over rubble to find anything obvious that may be seen, but the room is large enough (2400 square feet) that four characters searching still requires 2 MP. Bylaric finds a pair of silver candlesticks, and they stow these in their backpack for safe transport home. This action consumes the rest of the 7-8 AM hour; another point of fatigue is marked.*

*The party decides to proceed through the door to the south. They examine it and discover it is less of a door and more of a heavy slab of stone placed upright in a frame; it has no hinges or latch, and the only way through it seems to be to force it open. The GM rules that getting through this unsealed portal is more of a **batter door** action rather than a **breach**, but it requires a great success to force it open. Denali gets to work on it with Bylaric's assistance, and by using a crowbar they manage to muscle the heavy obstacle to one side. 1 MP is spent, and the party finds themselves in an empty chamber (area **A2**) with ornate carvings on the wall. As they move into this room, the GM rules that the party has moved 100' feet in this*

dungeon, so another 1 MP is marked off. Additionally, since these are smooth, flat tunnels, the GM checks for the risk of **monster encounter (2)** (increased because of the noise of battering the door), but nothing appears.

The party performs another **search** of the room, and this time the area is small enough that all four characters can cover it using 1 MP. They find nothing; the GM knows from their notes that the carvings around the wall can be translated to provide a hint that an invisible treasure is floating in midair 15' feet off the ground in the center of the room. At this time the players do not try to translate the writings, however, so this treasure is not found, and the search turns up nothing. Frustrated, the characters decide that since this room has doors in the north, west, and east walls, the blank south wall seems suspicious. They spend 1 MP checking for secret doors along that wall, with Corelli searching the west square, Bylaric searching the middle, and Andaluz searching the east square, while Denali keeps watch. They find nothing, and they decide to spend another MP checking again, but there is no secret door in that wall to find, so their search is fruitless. Since this room seems relatively safe, the party chooses to take another Short Rest to remove the fatigue point they are about to get, since this completes the 8-9 AM hour.

Rested up, the party turns their attention to the door to the east leading to area **A3**. (There are three different areas marked **A3** on the map, because each of these areas contains something similar.) They use the **batter door** action, again successfully, to force open the stone slab. Unfortunately, this noisy work has drawn the attention of the two undead **zombies** that were lurking in the burial crypts beyond; as soon as the door is open, they shamble through and attack! There is a short and brutal fight, and although the zombies possess a supernatural vitality, the characters' greater speed and skill with weapons and magic carries the day. This combat consumes 1 MP and gives every character 1 fatigue point. The corridor beyond is lined with burial niches, each one with two or more moldering inanimate bodies, mummified and interred standing up with funerary goods at their feet. The setting is unsettling, but since the corridor seems safe, the party chooses to take two Short Rests here. They then perform a **search** action, and their inventory of the burial goods turns up a collection of coins – mostly copper and silver, but some gold pieces as well – and a piece of fine beaded jewelry that is undoubtedly valuable! Various characters mark these treasures on their Inventory pages, and they move toward the east end of the corridor. The GM notes that they have moved another 100' in the dungeon, marks one last MP (which concludes the 9-10 AM hour), checks for **monster encounter (1)** (none appears), and each character marks a point of fatigue.

At the corner, known to the GM but not obvious to the characters, is a covered pit trap – this type of hazardous encounter will be discussed later in this chapter. Unfortunately, Denali steps onto the trap, the lid tips up, and Denali falls into a 10' deep hole! This causes damage that fortunately the Ranger survives, but some time and effort must be spent extricating the victim from the trap; this consumes 1 MP, just as if it were a combat. The party resolves to **prod for pits** when they walk through the corridors from now on – an action that consumes more MP, but such caution might catch a similar trap the next time!

Beyond the pit is a door leading to area **A4**. The door is successfully **battered** again, costing 1 MP and revealing a temple beyond. The temple has a huge stone altar on the east side of the room lit by a glowing green lantern, and what appears to be a statue of a skull with a skeletal snake body in an alcove to the west. The party warily enters the room, and Bylaric is drawn to investigate the statue more closely since it has glittering gemstone eye. To his surprise the statue animates! It is a **necrophidius**, a very tough constructed guardian, and it attacks the party. Andaluz urges the party to retreat by leaping over the pit trap, and when the mindless necrophidius follows, it falls into the pit! The party decides the limbless creature is incapable of escaping the pit without help, so they leave it for the moment (although Bylaric wants to go back and get those ruby eyes!) The fight has consumed another 1 MP, and each character adds 1 point of fatigue.

*The party **searches** the temple. That glowing green lantern seems to provide light inexhaustibly; it must be a magic item! Corelli chooses to carry it instead of using a torch to see by; this light source burns cool and therefore doesn't spoil the Elf's infravision. They find no other treasure or items of interest, but Bylaric is interested in the altar itself. It is massive, perhaps large enough to contain a hidden treasure? The party therefore performs a **check for secret doors** action. Bylaric finds no secret compartments, but their search does reveal that the entire heavy block of stone is on rollers – it looks like it can slide to one side!*

*Although they are tired, the party excitedly engages in the **find mechanisms** action. Corelli finds an artfully concealed protrusion on the wall that can be pressed inwards; there is a grinding sound as the heavy altar slides to the north, revealing a 4' high opening leading into another corridor! Unfortunately, the GM's notes state that a terrible undead **ghoul** is waiting on the other side, and it springs through the hole to attack! The party is already weary and out of magic; it is not clear that they will win this fight!*

The GM Exploration Record for this trip into the dungeon currently looks like this:

GM EXPLORATION RECORD			GM: sample GM		Campaign: Vertical Tombs of Tarquon			Real World Date/Time sample date		
Starting Characters: Andaluz, Bylaric, Corelli								Starting Location: Tomb of Derregnet		
Game World Date: March 2			Moon: waning			Weather: foggy				
Time:	MP 1	MP2	MP3	MP4	MP5	MP6	MP7	MP8	Character Joins	Character Leaves
midnight-1 AM										
1-2 AM										
2-3 AM										
3-4 AM										
4-5 AM										
5-6 AM										
6-7 AM	Breach		Climb		Climb					
7-8 AM	Combat A1	Short Rest	Short Rest	Short Rest	Search A1	→				
8-9 AM	Batter Door	Walk	Search A2	Check A2	Check A2		Short Rest			
9-10 AM	Batter Door	Combat A3	Short Rest	Short Rest	Search A3		Walk			
10-11 AM	Pit Trap	Batter Door	Combat A4	Search A4	Check A4	Find A4				
11-noon										

Keyed Encounters

One of the most fun activities that GMs must engage in is the constructing of keyed encounters for their players to enjoy. Unlike the unkeyed encounters described in the preceding sections, there is no randomness to these areas – the GM decides exactly what is going on in the encounter's setting. The more information a GM prepares for an encounter, the less they will need to invent while play is underway!

For each keyed encounter, here is a list of some of the things a GM may need to consider to be prepared for any eventuality:

- What is the layout of the area? Often a gridded map used in the dungeon describes the encounter area well enough, but for encounters in the wilderness, or for very elaborate and detailed spaces, a smaller-scale map just for that encounter might be useful.

- What creatures are found in the area? How intelligent are they? What skills and equipment do they have? Will they be awake or asleep, watchful or unalert, or possibly occupied at a task? Will they be inherently hostile to the adventurers, or friendly, or neutrally inclined?
- What obstacles or complications are found in the area? What furniture or equipment is present, and what impact might it have on the encounter? Are there pits or other traps around the area?
- What valuable objects are in the area – coins or gems or jewelry; art and other precious objects; expensive gear or other equipment; magic items?
- What is obvious and what is concealed? If something is hidden, how can it be revealed? Are there secret doors or compartments that can be found?
- How is the space illuminated? Are there any factors that may make perception easier or more difficult in the area?
- How is the space secured? Are there doors or gates at the entrances and exits, and are they locked or barred? Are there alarms of some sort, or watchful guard animals? If anybody is keeping watch, where do they watch from, and what areas can they see?
- Can the occupants of the space give an alarm, and who can hear it? What reinforcements might come, and how long will it take for them to arrive? Are there avenues for escape by the occupants, and where do they lead? What circumstances would lead to the denizens of the encounter area either giving an alarm or fleeing? Even if no alarm is given, could creatures in nearby encounter areas hear noise and come to investigate?
- Are there other salient details that may become important? Is the floor slippery? Is there a strange and untraceable odor that might lead to a hidden grating in the wall? Is the area filled with clouds of annoying flies? Is there a scattering of gravel through the area that makes it harder to be stealthy? Is there a peephole that allows one to view what's going on in the next encounter area?

It is up to the GM to determine how much of this should be written down. Every GM has a different style of preparation; some prefer to have more information prepared, so that they need to do less thinking on the fly, while others would rather only have some skeletal notes at the ready, and the rest of the detail-work can be invented during play.

One example of something a more prepared GM could do is create **boxed text**, or a prewritten description of what the characters first see and hear when they initially enter the encounter area. This text is placed inside a rectangular border, or box, to distinguish this description from the rest of the encounter area's information. The boxed text is intended to be read aloud; the rest of the GM's information should only be doled out as the players learn it.

Each keyed encounter needs to start with a key: a number or letter, placed on the GM's copy of the outdoor or dungeon map, which corresponds to that encounter. It may be convenient to devise a system of keying that allows the GM to quickly find their notes on that encounter.

For instance, if there are a series of dungeons and encounter areas in a wilderness area, the GM might key them each with a capital letter – the first one with an A, the second with a B, and so on. That letter would be placed upon the hex where that encounter area is located. Then, when the players enter the hex and go to encounter area A, the GM goes to the A section of their notes to remind themselves what's there.

If the encounter area is a single cave, or perhaps an outdoor clearing, such that there is only a single encounter to be experienced, then all notes would appear next to A. However, if A is a substantial dungeon complex, with multiple rooms and separate encounter areas, then the corresponding dungeon map might have a key with A1 for the first room, A2 for the next, and so on. Then a separate block of notes would appear next to A1, A2, etc.

In general, the keying of the encounters is not revealed to the players, and when they need to add details to the players' maps, the players must choose how to tag various features on their copies.

How adventurers explore keyed encounter areas is no different from how they experience unkeyed encounters. They still can perform all the activities listed under outdoor or dungeon exploration, and the rules still work the same way, including the MP costs that must be spent, random risks that may be encountered, etc.

The specific information contained in the keyed encounters is overlaid on top of the hazards and penalties that may be features of the rest of the adventuring area; all risk rolls are still made at the usual rates while exploring keyed areas, for instance. The GM must decide whether activities undertaken in keyed areas trigger the usual set of risks, or if there are additional risks that may challenge the characters in addition to the norm.

Perceiving Things

Exploration is all about going to new places and learning what you can. Using the five traditional senses is an essential part of exploration, as that's an important way to pick up information. Being perceptive is helpful in lots of ways:

- You see the mouth of an interesting cave beckon as you wander the countryside.
- You spot the gleam of a golden coin hidden in the wreckage of a collapsed vault.
- You hear the whispers of a group of *goblins* as they prepare to ambush you.
- You note a faint seam in the floor – a pit trap, just where you were about to step!
- You smell the reek of rotting meat as you enter the graveyard, suggesting *ghouls* abound.
- You feel your way along an altar, looking for a delicate button that opens a secret door.
- You taste a subtle bitter overtone to the wine the oddly friendly merchant poured for you – could it be poison?

Of the five senses, two are important enough to warrant their own skills – Seeing and Hearing. The other three senses – taste, touch, and feel – are less useful to characters because they are not as powerful. It is still possible to use these senses by making Intuition checks, however. For Seeing and Hearing, the skills described in Chapter 3 govern here.

How much can you see or hear? In ideal conditions, with clear open air and unbroken lines of sight, a person can see quite a long way. Similarly, when there is no ambient noise and the air is still, a person can conceivably hear things happening very far away. The GM's challenge is to determine what that character can see or hear in such conditions. Additionally, conditions are rarely ideal; the GM must determine to what degree imperfect conditions impact a character's ability to perceive.

Supposing a character is hiking through hilly terrain. They reach a relative high point, with an impressive view in every direction, and they decide to pause for a moment to visually scan the countryside in all directions. The GM has written all the characters' Seeing and Hearing skills on the GM Exploration Record, so they know the character's Seeing skill. The GM should make the skill check on behalf of the character, rolling the die where the players at the table cannot see the result, because it's important that the players not know how successful the result is. The GM secretly establishes what might be visible to the character and consults the following table:

Table 6-10: TOTL Seeing and Hearing Ranges

Range	Seeing Detail Level
0'	seeing ants on a wall, finding the simplest possible secret compartment
5'	reading small words on a page, finding the simplest possible pit trap
10'	reading large words on a page, discerning an object the size of a pin
20'	reading runes carved into a wall, discerning an object the size of a coin
40'	discerning an object the size of a book, identifying a spell being cast
80'	discerning a humanoid's arms and armor, discerning spell-casting
160'	discerning the number of small creatures, discerning a humanoid's race
320'	discerning the number of medium-sized creatures, seeing the existence of small creatures
640'	discerning number of large creatures, seeing the existence of medium-sized creatures
1280'	seeing the existence of large creatures, discerning the size of an army
.5 mile	discerning number of structures, recognizing movement
1 mile	discerning structures from natural terrain, noting smoke in clear sky

Range	Hearing Detail Level
0'	hearing the movement of a beetle, listening at a door for sounds beyond
5'	discerning whispered speech, hearing the sound of a dagger being drawn
10'	hearing the sound of a bow being drawn, hearing a rat squeak
20'	hearing the sound of a sword being drawn, comprehending quiet speech
40'	comprehending loud speech, identifying a spell being cast
80'	discerning quiet speech, discerning spell-casting
160'	discerning loud speech, comprehending shouted speech
320'	discerning arrow fire, discerning a dog barking
640'	discerning shouted speech, discerning melee combat
1280'	discerning screaming, discerning a horse galloping
.5 mile	discerning drum music, discerning explosive magic
1 mile	discerning a collapsing building, discerning a large dragon's roar

The information listed in the table next to each range is what can be perceived at that distance with a minimal success at the skill check. So, if the GM determines that a ruined castle lies a mile away, a character who succeeds at a minimal success gains that information. If the character fails, no information is gained. Note that sometimes there is no information to be gained; the GM makes the skill check roll, but no information is provided regardless of the level of success.

Some things that can be perceived at distance may be particularly hard to spot, either because it is unusually subtle for something of its size or noisiness, or because it has been well concealed or masked. In such cases, the GM may choose to assign the difficulty of detecting that item to a distance category one or two places farther away than its actual distance. Similarly, if the GM judges that something that can be perceived sticks out in a particularly obvious manner, they can assign it to a distance category one or two places closer than its actual distance.

The GM has great latitude here in making things easier or harder to perceive for story reasons. It is not cheating the players if a GM decides that locating a particularly difficult adventuring location would be bad for the story (and possibly hazardous to the characters' health!), and therefore make it artificially hard to find. Conversely, if the

GM wants to be sure that the characters will spot the entrance to a particular dungeon, they should feel free to make the relevant perception check very easy, or not even require a check at all!

Achieving greater than minimal success has the potential to provide additional information. For a good success at a Hearing or Seeing check, the GM provides information one row higher on the table. A great success yields results two rows higher, and a fantastic success accesses the information from three rows higher.

Therefore, if our example character succeeds on their Seeing check by five (a good success), they may not only notice the outline of the castle's ruined walls rising above the trees a mile away, but they might also note a tiny speck seeming to orbit the tallest tower – an enormous flying creature of some kind. If they rolled exceptionally well and beat the Seeing check by ten (a fantastic success), they might note that there are three specks. It is always at the GM's discretion regarding how much or how little information is divulged.

When a character concentrates on using their senses to the fullest, they have the best chance of success. Sometimes, however, a character isn't really looking or listening for anything, and may even be concentrating on something else, when the GM may determine that there is something that the character has a chance to perceive. This is called **passive perception**.

When such a check is deemed necessary by the GM, they make the roll for the character in secret, such that the players don't know a check is being made. When making a character's passive perception checks, a character's effective Wisdom score is 2 lower – your brain doesn't perceive perfectly when it's distracted. In our previous example, the character may not have chosen to stop and look around, but they might be marching quickly through the countryside trying to reach a good camping spot before it gets dark. The GM might allow the character a passive Seeing check to spot the jagged shell of the ruined castle with the last rays of twilight.

Conditions are often not ideal for either Hearing or Seeing, and many of the terrains and conditions described in previous sections result in penalties to these skills to reflect this. Some terrains and conditions also limit the characters' line-of-sight, as listed in the Movement Tables above. This indicates a hard limit to the amount of information that can be gained from the Seeing and Hearing Ranges chart above, regardless of how well the character rolls on their skill check.

In a closely grown forest or a dense bank of fog, a character cannot see anything a mile away, no matter how perceptive they may be. The same is true inside a building or in a dungeon, but the GM cannot rely on a table for this. Instead, the GM's map will allow the tracing of sight lines so that it can be determined what the players can see.

Note that line-of-sight limitations do not generally apply to the Hearing skill in the outdoors, or even in a dungeon setting, where loud sounds can often carry for great distances; however, each closed door between the listening character and the noise's source represents a cumulative -2 penalty to the Hearing skill. When in a terrain that limits line-of-sight, the GM may allow the characters to climb to a high point to get a better view; in this case, the GM may choose to reduce or eliminate the line-of-sight limitation.

An important limitation on vision is darkness. During daylight hours, in the outdoors, bright light illuminates the entire surface of the world, and characters can see for a long way. Indoors, or at night, or under the effects of certain magic, light can be greatly reduced, and a character's ability to see can be hampered. For this reason, successful adventuring parties spend considerable effort establishing how they can bring light to banish darkness and explore the unlit portions of the world.

There are four general categories of illumination:

- **Bright Light:** Characters can see normally.
- **Dim Light:** Characters can see the general shapes of creatures or objects, but they may not be able to distinguish detail. Reading and writing are impossible. Colors are difficult to make out, and shadows abound. In general, Seeing checks are made at a -1 penalty.
- **Darkness:** Characters can see very little around them – movement and large shapes, perhaps, but distinguishing what objects and creatures are relies on input from the other senses. Where applicable, Seeing checks are made at a -2 penalty.
- **Total Darkness:** A character can barely see their own hand in front of their face. In rare situations where Seeing checks apply, they are made at a -4 penalty.

During daylight hours, characters typically enjoy bright light conditions in the outside world. This may be modified by exceptional weather, but this should be rare. In the hour before daybreak, and in the hour after sunset, the outside world has dim light. At nighttime, the outside world will be in either darkness or in total darkness. In general, the first and last week of the month (when the moon is least bright) are under conditions of total darkness, while the middle two weeks are in darkness, but this is subject to modification by weather and any other factors the GM judges should apply.

Indoors, or underground, the world is in total darkness unless some other source of light exists. It is up to the GM to determine whether glowing fungi shed some light in the area, or if glowing lava grants a sullen red illumination, or if the light in the room next door shines through enough cracks and crevices to allow some visibility. Otherwise, the only light that exists is provided by the characters.

A light source provides bright light close to the object, then dim light beyond that, and darkness still farther out. If the area illuminated is already in a state of dim light, then only the radius of bright light is important; beyond that, illumination is still dim. Similarly, if the area is in a state of darkness, only the circles of bright light and dim light are important, but if the area is in total darkness, then a third circle of marginally clearer conditions exists.

A light source's ability to illuminate is given a shorthand of #1/#2/#3, where #1 is the radius of bright light shed, #2 is the radius of dim light, and #3 is the radius of darkness.

The following table provides common examples of light sources:

Table 6-11: TOTIL Light Sources

Source	Radius of Bright Light	Radius of Dim Light	Radius of Darkness
Candle	5'	10'	15'
Torch	20'	40'	60'
Lantern	30'	60'	90'
Sunrod	40'	80'	120'
Small Campfire	20'	40'	60'
Large Bonfire	40'	80'	120'
Light Spell	20'	40'	60'
Continual Light Spell	30'	60'	90'
Daylight Spell	60'	120'	180'

Note that the one thing that can be consistently seen in relatively dark conditions are light sources; with a clear field of view, a single torch can be discerned as a pinpoint of light from miles away. The limitation on this is line-of-sight; light can't go around corners. The GM must carefully note not only what light sources are visible to the

characters, but also whether the characters' light sources are visible to others. Nothing betrays adventurers quite like lanterns brought into a completely dark dungeon!

Infravision is the ability of Dwarves, Elves, and other creatures to see into a different visual spectrum. In dark conditions, characters with infravision can see differences in temperature – warm objects appear bright and red, while colder objects shift more towards purple and black. These temperature differences reveal even subtle gradients, and can even discern tiny changes in air temperature, so infravision paints a thorough picture of an area, even when no sources of warmth are present. Bright light produced by a high-heat source spoils infravision.

Elves and Dwarves have infravision with a 60' range, and things within that radius are effectively within a brightly lit area for that character, provided no other heat-producing light is present. Magical darkness obscures infravision as if it were normal vision. Infravision cannot see writing on a page.

Exceptional Hazards

As characters explore keyed encounter areas, they may come across unusual environmental hazards that do not involve the direct action of monsters or other living beings. Some of these hazards may be cunning traps, set to kill or frustrate those who seek to enter the area. Some may be dangerous conditions that have arisen naturally, perhaps because the area's structure has been ravaged by time, or perhaps some kind of natural disaster has occurred.

Such special hazards do not occur randomly; they will only be found if a GM chooses to place them in an area. As such, they may be encounters unto themselves, or they may be part of a larger encounter.

Characters can create traps, but most of them require considerable time and success at Mechanisms skill checks to accomplish; the exceptions are **deadfalls** and **snares** – see below. This list of exceptional hazards is not intended to be complete. The GM is encouraged to dream up their own diabolical menaces!

All types of traps and hazards can be improved upon by the GM, making them harder to spot, harder to disable, or more lethal. The GM may wish to improve an exceptional hazard if they want a particular encounter to be especially challenging, or if the characters have become more formidable through advancement (see later in this chapter) and are no longer significantly threatened by a typical trap's parameters. Here are a few ways that exceptional hazards can be made more dangerous:

- The difficulty to find or disable the hazard can be increased.
- The attack bonus of the hazard can be increased.
- The damage of the hazard's successful attack can be increased.
- The damage of the hazard's unsuccessful attack can be increased.
- The type of damage done by the hazard can be altered or enhanced – for instance, an *attack trap* could feature a sword that is flaming, adding 1d6 hp fire damage.
- Several types of hazards could be combined – a *snares* that triggers a crushing trap, for instance, or a *flooding trap* combined with an *attack trap* featuring spears that jab up from the floor.

When exceptional hazards are made more dangerous, the GM needs to be sure that the characters get credit for this added danger when accounting for XP (see the next section).

A word regarding falling damage: characters can potentially be exposed to extremely long falls, and these can be extremely dangerous. As a rule, the damage sustained is equal to 1d6 hp for every 10' fallen. This damage caps at 20d6 hp; longer falls than 200' do not cause more damage.

In the case of truly long falls, the first round that a character falls, they descend up to 250'. If the drop is longer than that, each subsequent round the character falls another 500' until they hit bottom.

Asphyxiation

One particularly diabolical trap can be to pump most of the oxygen out of a sealed area. This effect can also be naturally occurring in areas with no ready supply of fresh air, such as in a caved-in section of tunnel. When used as a trap, the GM must determine if a minimal, good, great, or fantastic search check is required to spot the *asphyxiation* trap, and whether a Mechanisms check of similar difficulty can neutralize the trap. The GM must also determine what triggers the trap.

Whether naturally occurring or not, the GM must establish what area is deprived of oxygen; that area must be bounded by solid walls and doors or other openings that are sealed airtight. The airless condition persists until the characters find a way out of the affected area, or they can unseal an opening. Every hour breathing creatures are within the area of *asphyxiation*, they suffer the effects of *anoxia* with a penalty of -1 for the first hour, and an additional -1 for each subsequent hour. Additionally, every hour the *asphyxiation* attacks the Toughness defenses of targets within the area; it attacks with a +1 bonus in the first hour, and an additional +1 for each subsequent hour.

On a successful attack, the victim suffers 1d3 points of trauma – see Chapter 7. If the creature falls unconscious, *asphyxiation* automatically deals 1d3 points of Constitution damage every minute until the creature is dead. This kind of trap can be reset.

Attack Trap

These traps make use of a weapon-like apparatus to attack a victim. Whether it is a scything blade that tries to lop off a hand that reaches inside a treasure chest, or crossbow bolts that shoot out of holes in a wall when a character tries to cross a room, *attack traps* rely on the placement of the trigger to target where they attack. This kind of trap is therefore highly subject to being triggered by prodding. The GM must determine if a minimal, good, great, or fantastic search check is required to spot the *attack trap*, and whether a Mechanisms check of similar difficulty can neutralize the trap.

The GM must also determine what triggers the trap, and what type of weapon (or its equivalent) are built into the trap. A typical trap attacks with a bonus of +3 against a single target's AC defense. A successful attack deals the base damage die of the weapon; traps generally do not inflict bonus damage for high Strength. *Attack traps* are often combined with poison; refer to Chapter 7.

If the weapon type of the trap is melee, it can be reset; if the weapon type is missile, the trap typically has a single bundle of ammunition loaded inside it (see Chapter 5), and when that is exhausted, the trap can only be reset if more of the correct type of ammunition is provided.

Cave-in

Like a *deadfall* (see below), this trap drops heavy weights from above onto victims. Unlike a *deadfall*, it attacks multiple characters. The GM must determine if a minimal, good, great, or fantastic search check is required to spot the *cave-in*, and whether a Mechanisms check of similar difficulty can neutralize the trap. The GM must also determine what triggers the trap and how effective the trap is at attacking its targets. *Cave-ins* have a bonus to attacks, which are rolled against the Dodge defense of all targets in the area.

Often how easy it is to find a trap is linked to how well it is crafted with respect to attacks; by default, a minimal search *cave-in* attacks at -2, a good search *cave-in* attacks at -1, a great search *cave-in* attacks at +1, and a fantastic search *cave-in* attacks at +4. The default damage of a *cave-in* is 1d4 hp, but this can be increased at a penalty to its attack score – damage can be 1d6 hp at a -1 penalty to attack, 1d8 hp at a -2 penalty to attack, or 1d10 hp at a -3 penalty to attack.

Also, the area of attack of a *cave-in* is usually a 5' radius circle, but this area can be increased: 7' radius at an additional penalty of -1 to attack, 10' radius at an additional penalty of -2 to attack, and 15' radius at an additional penalty of -3 to attack. Attacks that miss do no damage. This kind of trap cannot be reset.

Crushing

Sadistic trap makers may not be content with a device that merely kills victims; they may wish to create a trap that kills slowly, so that the builder can savor their screams. One kind of trap that accomplishes this is a *crushing* trap, where the victims are trapped by sliding walls or locking doors in a small space, and then a stone ceiling slowly descends to smash the characters to a pulp. The GM must determine if a minimal, good, great, or fantastic search check is required to spot the *crushing* trap, and whether a Mechanisms check of similar difficulty can neutralize the trap.

The GM must also determine what triggers the trap, and how much time the characters have before they must escape. This duration, called a **countdown**, is usually measured in rounds. Once the countdown reaches zero, any creatures still inside the trap are killed. In the last round of the countdown, all creatures inside the trap take a -2 penalty to all attack rolls and skill checks owing to being in a highly confined space.

The GM should take care to minimize the use of inescapable death traps, which are usually not much fun for the players; *crushing* traps should be provided with some means to disable the trap from within, although such a mechanism may be difficult to find or manipulate, or they should be able to find some other means of escape. This kind of trap can be reset.

Deadfall

This trap causes a heavy weight to fall on top of an unsuspecting victim. The GM must determine if a minimal, good, great, or fantastic search check is required to spot the *deadfall*, and whether a Mechanisms check of similar difficulty can neutralize the trap. The GM must also determine what triggers the trap and how effective the trap is at attacking a target. *Deadfalls* have a bonus to attacks, which are rolled against the Dodge defense of a single target.

Often how easy it is to find a trap is linked to how well it is crafted with respect to attacks; by default, a minimal search *deadfall* attacks at +0, a good search *deadfall* attacks at +1, a great search *deadfall* attacks at +3, and a fantastic search *deadfall* attacks at +6. The default damage of a *deadfall* is 1d6 hp, but this can be increased at a penalty to its attack score – damage can be 1d8 hp at a -1 penalty to attack, 1d10 hp at a -2 penalty to attack, or 1d12 hp at a -3 penalty to attack. Attacks that miss do no damage. This kind of trap cannot be reset.

Note that a *deadfall* is one of the kinds of traps that can be created by characters as activities in both outdoor and dungeon adventuring. This is done by making a Mechanisms skill check; the GM rolls the die for the character and keeps the result secret. If the check fails, the trap is created but does not work properly – perhaps the trigger doesn't function, or the trap drops a heavy weight a foot behind the victim. If the check succeeds, a trap is created whose quality matches the results of the skill check – a minimal success yields a default minimal skill trap with a +0 to attacks, a good success yields a default good skill trap with a +1 to attacks, etc. The character gets to choose whether to enhance the trap by giving it a higher damage die but corresponding penalty to attack.

Dust

Extremely fine *dust* can be debilitating to all breathing creatures within the area of effect, and this can make it an effective trap. *Dust* may also be encountered in areas where collapses have recently occurred. When used as a trap, the GM must determine if a minimal, good, great, or fantastic search check is required to spot the *dust* trap, and whether a Mechanisms check of similar difficulty can neutralize the trap. The GM must also determine what triggers the trap.

Dust usually fills a 20' radius area centered on the point of discharge, and the *dust* persists in the area for hours unless strong winds or other forms of ventilation clear the air. *Dust* clouds the air within the area of effect, inflicting a penalty of -2 to Seeing skill checks and yielding a maximum line-of-sight of 20'. Additionally, for each round a breathing creature is within the area of effect, the *dust* attacks with a +3 bonus against Toughness defenses.

On a successful attack, the victim can only take a move action or basic actions that turn; no standard actions may be taken, as the character coughs and chokes on the foul air. A typical *dust* trap has only one charge; once it is released, the trap cannot be reset unless more dust is procured.

Entombment

This slow-killing trap simply drops heavy stone slabs around the victims, confining them in a space, but otherwise leaving them unharmed. If asphyxiation does not kill the characters, it is assumed that thirst and starvation will eventually claim them. The GM must determine if a minimal, good, great, or fantastic search check is required to spot the *entombment* trap, and whether a Mechanisms check of similar difficulty can neutralize the trap. The GM must also determine what triggers the trap.

There may or may not be a mechanism to raise the slabs back up; when there is none, this trap cannot be reset. The GM should take care to minimize the use of inescapable death traps, which are usually not much fun for the players; *entombment* traps should be provided with some means to disable the trap from within, although such a mechanism may be difficult to find or manipulate, or they should be able to find some other means of escape.

Flooding

Like a crushing trap, a *flooding* trap slowly kills breathing victims by sealing them in a watertight area with sliding walls or locking doors, and then water pours into the area, slowly filling it. The GM must determine if a minimal, good, great, or fantastic search check is required to spot the *flooding* trap, and whether a Mechanisms check of similar difficulty can neutralize the trap.

The GM must also determine what triggers the trap, and how much time the characters have before they must escape. This duration, called a countdown, is usually measured in rounds. Once the countdown reaches zero, any breathing creatures still inside the trap suffer the effects of being underwater – see the rules in Chapter 7. Additionally, for some portion of the latter part of the countdown, the characters will be swimming (the GM must determine when this happens), and the rules in Chapter 7 determine how this affects creatures.

The GM should take care to minimize the use of inescapable death traps, which are usually not much fun for the players; *flooding* traps should be provided with some means to disable the trap from within, although such a mechanism may be difficult to find or manipulate, or they should be able to find some other means of escape. This kind of trap can be reset, provided there is some means to drain the water away.

Gas

Certain breathable gases can be used effectively as traps, although pockets of such substances may be naturally occurring in mines and other underground spaces. When used as a trap, the GM must determine if a minimal, good, great, or fantastic search check is required to spot the *gas* trap, and whether a Mechanisms check of similar difficulty can neutralize the trap. The GM must also determine what triggers the trap.

Gas usually fills a 20' radius area centered on the point of discharge, and the *gas* persists in the area for hours unless strong winds or other forms of ventilation clear the air. The effects depend on the type of *gas*; here are several examples:

- **Sleep Gas** – the *gas* attacks all breathing targets within the area with a bonus of +6 against Toughness defenses. On a successful attack, the victim acquires the *asleep* condition for three hours, which is treated as magical sleeping for purposes of awakening. After three hours, victims may make a recovery roll of 15 to awaken, but if they fail another three-hour interval begins. Recovery rolls decrease by 1 for every interval. Removing victims from the area of the *gas* allows them to recover after the current interval wears off.
- **Miner's Despair** – the *gas* immediately extinguishes all non-magical flame within the area of effect, and fires cannot be restarted until the *gas* has cleared. The *gas* also attacks the Toughness defense of all breathing targets within the area of effect with a bonus of +3. On a successful attack, the victim suffers

debilitating lack of coordination and perception – all skill checks and attack rolls are made at a penalty of -2 for an interval of three hours. After the interval, victims may make a recovery roll of 15 to remove these penalties, but if they fail another three-hour interval begins. Recovery rolls decrease by 1 for every interval. Removing victims from the area of the *gas* allows them to recover after the current interval wears off.

- **Fog of War** – the *gas* fills the area with a dense fog, providing a -4 penalty to Seeing checks and yielding a maximum line-of-sight of 10'. The *gas* also attacks the Poise defenses of all breathing targets inside the area of effect with a bonus of +6. On a successful attack, the victim acquires the *confused* condition (see Chapter 7). The effects last for an interval of one round, at which point victims may make a recovery roll of 15 to remove this condition. If this recovery roll is failed, another one-round interval begins. Recovery rolls decrease by 1 for every interval. Removing victims from the area of the *gas* causes the condition to be removed once the current interval wears off.

The GM should invent other *gas* traps to suit their needs. A typical *gas* trap has only one charge; once it is released, the trap cannot be reset unless more *gas* is procured.

Lava

Characters adventuring in deep underground caves in volcanic areas may come across flows of *lava* or bubbling pits of molten rock. *Lava* is not typically used as a trap; it is a naturally occurring hazard. It is always obvious since it gives off considerable heat and smells strongly of sulfur and combustion.

Merely approaching *lava* closely is dangerous; if one approaches within 30', the *lava* makes a +3 attack against that character's Toughness defense, and a success deals 1d6 hp fire damage for every minute of exposure. Within 20' this becomes a +6 attack against Toughness to deal 2d6 hp fire damage per minute; within 10' this becomes a +9 attack against Toughness to deal 3d6 hp fire damage per minute.

Falling into *lava* is automatically lethal, but if a character only contacts it incidentally, the GM may choose to give it a +12 attack against Toughness to deal 6d6 hp fire damage per minute if the attack is successful, or 3d6 hp fire damage if it is not.

Magical Trap

Some types of *magical traps* are described under Spells in Chapter 4; other types may be invented by the GM. The workings of such traps are magical, not mechanical, in nature – the trigger may be a glowing rune that, once traced on a surface, fades from view until it is almost impossible to see; instead of gears or cables, *magical traps* use faintly glowing lines, extremely hard to spot, that serve as conduits of mystical energy, almost like microchip circuitry. Although the workings of *magical traps* operate on principles different from those of mechanical devices, they do work on understandable principles – and those principles can be exploited to disable such devices, if the right person has enough skill to do so.

As a rule, *magical traps* require fantastic search checks to detect, and only a fantastic Mechanisms check has a chance to disable it. The effects of the trap are described under the associated spell entry. *Magical traps*, once triggered or disabled, are generally completely neutralized – their spell must be cast again to reset the trap.

Molds and Slimes

Chapter 8 describes motile and dangerous fungal lifeforms which may be fought as monsters. Other types of fungi don't move but can still be hazardous; several types which are generally found only in dungeon environments are described below:

Brown Mold

Dark *brown mold* looks like thick animal fur growing on surfaces. It absorbs heat rapidly; any creature within 5' of a patch of *brown mold* sustains 1d3 points of trauma per round due to acute hypothermia unless immune to magical cold.

Additionally, the patch of *brown mold* grows as it absorbs heat, gaining 100 square feet in size for each round of heat drain. Any source of heat causes it to grow; applied fire or fire damage causes it to grow by 100 square feet for each die of damage. Magical cold damage destroys a patch of *brown mold*.

Green Slime

Patches of this pale green fungus grow on high stone ceilings and walls in locations where organic life is likely to pass below. Each patch exudes a highly corrosive slime, and when vibrations associated with a moving creature are sensed, *green slime* drips down from the patch. Every creature passing below a patch has a 3 in 6 chance of being attacked by dripping *green slime*, although a good Stealth check can avoid this risk.

The *green slime* attacks with a +4 bonus against Dodge defense. On a miss, the slime hisses harmlessly on the ground and quickly becomes inert, but on a hit the slime dissolves most sorts of matter, including flesh, vegetable material, wood, metal, but not stone. Creatures struck take 1d6 hp damage every round until the *green slime* is scraped off (which will destroy the scraping device), damaged with fire or cold damage (which will usually damage the victim as well), or attacked with a spell capable of curing the *diseased* condition. Additionally, clothing, armor, and other gear may be ruined by the highly corrosive *green slime*.

Material on the ground dissolved by *green slime* quickly sprouts spore-generating bodies, airborne spores rise to the ceiling, and new patches of *green slime* are created. Fire and cold are very effective at eradicating *green slime* patches.

Russet Mold

This substance encrusts hard surfaces with a thin, bumpy coating that looks like rust, although the surface growing the mold need not be ferrous. *Russet mold* can sense the warmth of living creatures with metabolisms, and it puffs out of a cloud of spores at any such creature approaching within 3'.

Targets are attacked with a +4 bonus against the Poise defense. On a successful attack, the victim becomes convinced of the need to ingest some of the *russet mold*, which they will do within a single round unless prevented. Once a victim has consumed *russet mold* spores, they lose 1 point of Constitution every hour unless a spell that can remove the *diseased* condition is cast. Within 24 hours, even if the victim still has points of Constitution remaining, they die, and their body undergoes a rapid metamorphosis. The victim rises as a *vegemite* (see Chapter 8) with no memory of their previous life.

A patch of *russet mold* is killed by applying alcohol, salt, acid, or bright light such as that generated by a *daylight* spell.

Yellow Mold

This fungal growth looks like an airy yellow or orange foam growing on any exposed surface. Any rough handling of the *yellow mold* causes it to eject a yellow cloud of spores within 10'; a good Shenanigans check will allow a character to manipulate surfaces covered with the mold for one round without risking a spore cloud.

Breathing creatures within the cloud are attacked with a +4 toxic bonus against the Toughness defense. On a failed attack, the victim is spared any damage, but on a successful attack the victim is affected by a very fast-acting toxin. The victim suffers an onset effect of 1d6 points of damage to Constitution. Every round thereafter, the toxin attacks again with the same toxic bonus, dealing 1d3 points of damage to Constitution on a hit. Meanwhile, at the end of every round, the victim may attempt a recovery check, which requires rolling a 15 on 1d20 to end the effect on the first round. Every subsequent round the recovery threshold is reduced by 1.

Yellow mold is destroyed by bright light (such as by a *daylight* spell), by applying fire, or by casting any spell that can remove the *diseased* condition.

Pit Trap

Pit traps are among the most basic of trap types: all you need is a hole in the ground whose opening it is possible to stumble into. Indeed, some *pit traps* are naturally occurring – if dead tree branches fall on top of a hollow on the forest floor, and then it becomes covered with dead leaves, it is easily possible for an unwary wanderer to fall through. A key element of *pit traps* is that they are hidden, and even very well-hidden traps can be found.

The GM must determine if a minimal, good, great, or fantastic search check is required to spot the *pit trap*, and whether a Mechanisms check of similar difficulty can neutralize the trap. Likewise, the GM must determine what triggers the *pit trap*. Is it just the placement of sufficient weight on top of the trap that causes it to fall through (in which case prodding might be likely to detect it), or is there a more exotic trigger (such as a pressure plate that causes a 10'x10' pit to open immediately behind the triggering footstep)?

In general, when a *pit trap* is undetected and it opens below a creature standing on the ground, that creature falls in, and it takes damage equal to 1d6 hp per 10' of depth. One more question: does the *pit trap* have other features that only make the trap more terrifying? Examples of combination pit traps may include: a trap with a lid that, once it is triggered, closes and locks; a trap with spikes at the bottom that attack those who fall in (see *attack traps*); a pit containing a monster who attacks anybody who falls into its lair.

Some kinds of *pit traps* have a mechanism controlling its lid, and such mechanisms can be reset; other *pit traps* have only a breakaway covering that only works once – when the trap has been triggered, somebody needs to spend time re-preparing it to work again.

Quicksand

This hazard is composed of exceptionally fine sand, mud, or dust, mixed with water in such proportion that it appears to be solid ground. Appearances can be deceiving, however, and the *quicksand* behaves much more like a liquid or thick mud when weight is placed upon it. *Quicksand* can therefore be a dangerous hazard that can swallow up unlucky adventurers and suffocate them.

This hazard can either be naturally occurring or can be deliberately placed to trap passersby, but either way it is difficult to detect; the GM must determine if a minimal, good, great, or fantastic search check is required to spot the *quicksand*. There is usually no way to disable a *quicksand* trap; it must be avoided or circumvented. *Quicksand* is always triggered by stepping on it, and if an unaware creature steps into it then they are trapped. Prodding the ground reveals *quicksand*.

When a character is trapped, they must make two consecutive Feats of Might skill checks to escape – untrapped companions can assist with this skill check. For every failed skill check, the character takes 1d3 points of trauma while they suffocate. If the character falls unconscious before being rescued, they suffocate and die.

Slide

A *slide* is like a pit in that it opens below an unwary victim; however, instead of dealing falling damage to a creature, a *slide* is intended to transport them down a steep and slippery chute to another location far below. (A *slide* can certainly be combined with a *pit trap*, however, causing a creature to slide down to the level below and then fall into a deep hole!)

The GM must determine if a minimal, good, great, or fantastic search check is required to spot the *slide*, and whether a Mechanisms check of similar difficulty can neutralize the trap. Likewise, the GM must determine what triggers the *slide*. Is it just the placement of sufficient weight on top of the *slide* that causes the victim to fall through (in which case prodding might be likely to detect it), or is there a more exotic trigger (such as a pressure plate that causes a *slide* to open below the creatures immediately behind the triggering footstep)?

In general, when a *slide* is undetected and it opens below a creature standing on the ground, that creature falls in, and they have no opportunity to catch themselves before the *slide* carries them away to someplace else, although nearby allies might be able to make a desperate grab for them. Climb checks would then be required to climb back up the *slide* – unless the *slide* has a hinged door at the bottom that locks once a victim has fallen through! *Slides* that have opening mechanisms can be reset, but those with breakaway coverings cannot.

Snare

A *snare* is a trap designed to render a creature motionless. For unintelligent creatures, a well-crafted *snare* may be impossible for the victim to escape, holding it in place until someone releases it or until it dies of natural causes. More cunning monsters or humanoids may be able to escape a *snare* eventually. *Snares* can take many forms – a tilting block that wedges an ankle between two heavy weights; a concealed net or noose that scoops up captives and suspends them; a shallow hole in the ground lined with downward-facing spikes to injure any who attempt to withdraw their foot.

The GM must determine if a minimal, good, great, or fantastic search check is required to spot the *snare*, and whether a Mechanisms check of similar difficulty can neutralize the trap. The GM must also determine what triggers the trap and how effective the trap is at attacking its targets. *Snares* have a bonus to attacks, which are made against the Dodge defense of its target – in general, a *snare* only attacks a single target.

Often how easy it is to find a trap is linked to how well it is crafted with respect to attacks; by default, a minimal search *snare* attacks at +0, a good search *snare* attacks at +1, a great search *snare* attacks at +3, and a fantastic search *snare* attacks at +6. Attacks that succeed trap the target; attacks that fail do not. This kind of trap can be reset. If a victim is trapped, they take no damage, but attempts to escape might injure them. Each attempt to escape costs 1 MP, and the victim must roll a Feats of Agility or Feats of Might check (companions may help this check). A failed check causes 1d4 hp damage, and the victim is still trapped.

Note that a *snare* is one of the kinds of traps that can be created by characters as activities in both outdoor and dungeon adventuring. This is done by making a Mechanisms skill check; the GM rolls the die for the character and keeps the result secret. If the check fails, the trap is created but does not work properly – perhaps the trigger goes off prematurely, or the ensnaring mechanism is trivially easy to remove. If the check succeeds, a trap is created whose quality matches the results of the skill check – a minimal success yields a default minimal skill trap with a +0 to attacks, a good success yields a default good skill trap with a +1 to attacks, etc.

Steam

When water is heated above the boiling point, it flashes to *steam* – a scalding vapor. In volcanic areas, *steam* can occur naturally; geysers can spout steam through vents at regular intervals, or underground streams can dump water on very hot rocks and produce *steam* continuously. *Steam* can also be a manufactured trap; when a trigger is set off, a valve opens, and hot *steam* fills the area.

In the latter case, the GM must determine if a minimal, good, great, or fantastic search check is required to spot the *steam* trap, and whether a Mechanisms check of similar difficulty can neutralize the trap. The GM must also determine what triggers the trap. If the *steam* is naturally occurring, the GM must determine if it is only sporadically appearing, and for how long it lasts; the GM may allow a Hearing check to warn a character, from the gurgling or sputtering sound coming from a vent, that *steam* is about to appear.

Steam typically floods an area with a radius of 20', and any character within that area is the target of a +6 attack against Toughness which deals 2d6 hp fire damage per minute if successful, or 1d6 hp fire damage per minute if the attack is unsuccessful. Furthermore, the *steam* fills an area with a dense fog, providing a -4 penalty to Seeing checks, and yielding a maximum line-of-sight of 10'. A *steam* trap may shut itself off after a duration, perhaps ten minutes, or it may stay on indefinitely until it is disabled. This kind of trap can be reset.

Experience and Advancement

At the end of each adventuring session, as well as at points where the action must break (such as when a character leaves or joins the group, or when the group suspends play for a while), the GM tallies **Experience Points (XP)** for the players involved in the adventure thus far. Experience Points are a way of keeping track of how much adventurers have learned from their recent activities. Characters who acquire sufficient XP can progress to higher class levels, gaining new abilities, improving existing skills, and honing their spellcasting craft. Characters can gain XP by obtaining treasure, by defeating monsters, by overcoming traps and other hazards, by accomplishing mission goals, and by several other mechanisms.

To assess how much XP is earned, let us introduce the concept of **rank**. Not all sources of XP are equally rewarding to a character's advancement. Being an Iron League member is all about acquiring loot with monetary value, so the characters who are really furthering their careers are the ones who find and bring back the most valuable treasures. Similarly, defeating a monster is a great way for a character to sharpen their adventuring skills, but the best learning comes from overcoming the greatest challenges, so very dangerous monsters are worth more XP than weaker creatures. Accordingly, every possible source of XP is assigned a numerical rank, where rank 1 accomplishments are worth the least amount of XP, and progressively higher ranks are worth more.

When it is time to tally up XP, the GM and the players should begin by looking at the amount of treasure that was acquired since the last time XP was assessed. When an object or a treasure written down on a character sheet is tallied, the player should place a check mark near the item to indicate that it has been counted, as this prevents it from accidentally being counted again in the next tally. The GM should write down each item on a piece of paper, or in the GM's journal, and list the value of that item in gold pieces next to it.

If the item is in coinage, or jewelry, or precious items whose chief worth is in their beauty such that they can be easily liquidated at full value, then the full value of the item in gold piece is written down. If the item is a useful object or tool which can be sold for half value back at base camp, then half the value of the item is written down. If the item is magical, nothing is written down – magic items are not worth XP, since they are not of interest to the Iron League, and they are valuable to the characters in other ways.

Be sure not to group treasures discovered in different encounters: a pouch of 33 gp found in one encounter and a clay urn filled with 61 gp found in another encounter should be written down as two separate treasures and given two separate ranks. Once all the items in a treasure are written down, their gp value is added and rounded up to the nearest integer, and the GM assigns a rank to the treasure according to the following chart:

Table 6-12: TOTIL Treasure Rank

Treasure value in gp	Treasure Rank
0 - 10	1
11-20	2
21-30	3
31-50	4
51-80	5
81-130	6
131-210	7
211-340	8
341-550	9
551-890	10
891-1440	11
1441-2330	12
2331-3770	13
3771-6100	14
6101-9870	15
9871-15970	16
15970+	17

The GM should next assess the value of combats and other encounters with creatures. Characters gain XP for killing or otherwise defeating monsters or other creatures, or possibly for negotiating in encounters where violence could result; no XP should be given for haggling with merchants, gathering information, or other similar interactions where there is no potential risk to life and limb. The GM should write down the rank of each creature defeated; the ranks of monsters are tabulated in Chapter 8.

When multiple monsters of the same type are encountered, write them down as “rank 1 monster, x8” or something similar. Then, adjust the rank of each monster up or down by up to three ranks by following the following rules:

- If the characters fought the creature to a draw but were obliged to retreat without defeating the creature, reduce its rank by 3 (never lower than rank 1).
- If the characters successfully bypassed the creature, possibly stealing its treasure but not actually defeating the creature, reduce its rank by 2 (never lower than rank 1).
- If the characters forced the creature to retreat, but did not actually defeat the creature, reduce its rank by 1 (never lower than rank 1).
- If the characters killed the creature, rendered it helpless, or forced it to surrender, the rank remains unchanged.
- If the creature had some sort of situational and material advantage over the characters (superior position, the element of surprise, in its native element, etc.), increase its rank by 1.

Once all the defeated monster ranks are tabulated, the GM can move on to exceptional hazards. Each such hazard should be assigned a rank by the GM. Experience is awarded for detecting and bypassing such a hazard, or for falling victim to it and escaping – hazards not interacted with directly are worth zero XP. The rank for a trap depends on how hard it was to detect and disable; in general, traps requiring minimal skill checks are rank 1, traps requiring good skill checks are rank 2, traps requiring great skill checks are rank 3, and traps requiring fantastic skill checks are rank 4. These ranks may be increased if the GM has increased the difficulty or hazard level of a trap – the GM should use their judgment here, but exceptional hazards should never be worth more than rank 10.

Finally, the GM should assign ranks to special awards for completing missions, learning important information, solving a mystery, or doing a great job of role-playing through tricky situations. This is where the GM must use their common sense to apply awards.

Was the mission simple and brief, with stakes relatively low? The rank of the experience award should not be greater than, say, the most difficult monster faced during that adventure. Was the mystery something that had been hinted at for many sessions, with multiple adventuring sessions required to reach a conclusion to that story? That special award should be more substantial, possibly significant enough to allow the characters to make great progress towards advancing to another level. The GM should use mission awards to reward players for delving deeper into narrative portions of the adventure that might not otherwise be particularly valuable from a treasure and monster standpoint.

Once all the ranks for various XP awards are established, the GM should use the following table to figure out how much XP each listed item is worth:

Table 6-13: TOTIL Experience Points Awards

Experience Rank	XP Award
1	1
2	2
3	3
4	5
5	8
6	13
7	21
8	34
9	55
10	89
11	144
12	233
13	377
14	610
15	987
16	1597
17	2584
18	4181
19	6765
20	10946

Provide an additional flat 3000 XP award for each experience rank higher than 20 – therefore, a CR 22 creature would be worth 16946 XP. Such threats should be rare!

The XP value of each ranked item is summed, and this is the award given out to each player. The XP total is not divided up; each participating character receives the same award, regardless of their contributions during that session. The players add the XP award for that session to the XP already accumulated by that character and record the new total on their character sheets.

Sometimes sessions are not particularly valuable in experience points – perhaps the players are doing a lot of planning for their next adventure, or their characters are scouting and gathering information. These are activities that may take up time at the gaming table, and these are excellent things to do to improve the life expectancies of

the characters, but these do not directly yield rewards in XP. Accordingly, the GM should observe the minimum XP rule: for each real-world hour, or fraction thereof, that a gaming session takes, the participating characters should earn a minimum of 5 XP. This is not an award added to the XP earned by obtaining treasure, defeating monsters, etc., but is an either-or award. If the GM's XP tally at the end of the session reveals that the characters earned less than 5 XP per hour of gameplay, the GM should scrap that XP tally and give the players the minimum XP instead. Players should not be penalized for being sensible or having fun at the gaming table.

Here's an example of how calculating a party's XP tally would work.

Example: *The adventuring party consisting of Andaluz, Bylaric, Corelli, and Denali have finished a successful trip into the dungeon. They have returned to base in Inathay, and they are about to end a session of play. It is time to tally experience points.*

First the GM lists the treasure that the party found and finds the appropriate treasure rank from Table 6-12. Note that where treasure is found in one place, multiple items are added together to make a single treasure whose value is used to calculate rank, e.g., a set of 2 candlesticks has a total value of 40 gp. Also, note that in the case of the armor and short swords, half book value is applied because their items must be sold at used prices:

Treasure	Found At:	Gold Piece Value	Treasure Rank
1 set: 2 silver candlesticks	A1	40	4
1 Pot of coins	A3	43.74	4
1 Bead jewelry	A3	60	5
1 set of ruby eyes	A4	200	7
1 Gold ring	A7	140	7
1 Ivory Statuette	A8	250	8
1 set of 4 suits leather armor	06.09	12	2
1 set of 4 short swords	06.09	4	1
1 collection of Coins on brigands	06.09	15.61	2

Next the GM lists the monsters that the party encountered, and their base rank as listed in Chapter 8. The GM then determines an appropriate adjusted rank for each one, applying modifiers based on how difficult the encounter was:

Monster	Found At:	Base Rank	Adjusted Rank
4 Land Lampreys	09.07	2	3
6 Skeletons	A1	2	2
2 Zombies	A3	3	3
1 Necrophidius	A4	3	3
1 Ghoul	A7	3	4
1 Gray Ooze	A8	3	3
4 Human Warriors	06.09	1	1

The GM now lists any exceptional hazards defeated, along with a rank for each one:

Exceptional Hazards	Found At:	Rank
2 Pit Traps	A3, A7	1
1 Deadfall Trap	A8	2

This would also be the place where the GM would list any special awards, but the GM rules that none were earned during this session.

Each of these items with ranks is now converted into experience points using Table 6-13. This comes out to 99 XP for treasure, 45 XP for monsters, and 4 XP for exceptional hazards, or 148 XP total. Each character adds 148 XP to their experience total on their character sheet. This is a tremendous haul for a starting party; it's enough XP for a new character to gain a class level, as is described later in this chapter. The players will each go through the process adjusting their character based on their new experience level. NPCs such as Denali can also gain experience and levels, and the GM should make these adjustments between sessions. Desperado hirelings do not gain levels or improve with experience.

End of Session

When a session is over, and it is time to conclude business, there are a few things that need to be done to wrap things up. **Tales of the Iron League** is a game of continuing long-term episodic adventure, and each episode needs to reach a good stopping point so that the next episode can start cleanly. Leave a little bit of time at the end of a session so that these tasks can be taken care of.

The characters need to return to base camp; sessions begin and end there. It is up to the GM if they want to play through any dungeon and wilderness travel necessary to get the characters back home – certainly, it would be realistic to assume that a hazardous journey *to* a dungeon would be equally hazardous *from*. However, few things are less fun than having a group of players who just want to get their characters back to base, only to spend an hour or more trying not to get lost in the woods on the way back.

If the GM wants to skip that step in the interest of expediency and simply tell the players that they return to camp unharmed after a certain amount of time, that might sometimes be best. The GM should not let this shortcut serve as a get-out-of-jail-free card; if the characters find themselves in a difficult situation at the end of their session, they can't just dust off their hands, say "That's it!" and expect to return home safely without resolution.

When the characters return to base, the first thing they need to do is get right with the Iron League administrators and pay their 10% share of the treasure to the Iron League. Using the treasure tally already generated for XP calculation, the GM should determine how much 10% of the total is, and that much comes out of the haul and goes into the coffers of the Iron League. The Iron League isn't picky in terms of what currency or denomination their share is paid in; they are perfectly satisfied to receive their 10% in the form of used armor and weapons, for instance.

A key question for the players is this: will they attempt to cheat the Iron League? When the characters present their haul to the administrator, it is always possible that they might try to conceal something they found during adventuring so that they don't have to pay the 10% share.

The Iron League is aware that greedy and unscrupulous members may attempt to withhold something; it's been tried before. The League uses various methods to check up on their membership, regularly using divination magic and paid informants to rat out parties who don't disclose everything.

The consequences to cheating characters are severe; if the Iron League decides that one or more of their members are breaking the cardinal rule – give the League its tenth share – they will haul the characters in for questioning.

Using magic and unpleasant interrogation, they will do their best to establish the truth, and once they are certain a character is a cheat, that character will disappear, never to be heard from again. The Iron League is good to its members who are good to it, but bad to those who are not.

Once the Iron League's tenth has been removed from the total, it is up to the players to figure out how to split up the rest of the loot among the characters. Any magic items are added into the pile now, too. Magic items don't have an inherent value; it's up to the players to decide how much such an item is worth to them.

It may be that a particular magic item is so valuable that possessing it would be the only part of the treasure that character would get, forgoing any portion of the rest of the treasure for the right to own that item. Conversely, some magic items are communally usable, and even though one character must carry it and use it, it really benefits the entire party – a scroll with curative spells is a good example of this. In this case, even though this item must be written down on one character's sheet, it could be that the party agrees this item is intended for group use, and it doesn't come out of that character's share; however, that character wouldn't have the right to sell that item, since it doesn't just belong to them.

All sorts of deals are possible among players to establish a fair split for treasure. It is recommended that the GM not get involved in any arguments between players regarding who gets this or who gets that. If there are unresolved conflicts, the GM should encourage the players to roll dice to randomly determine the winner of such feuds.

At the end of the treasure division, each item in the treasure haul needs to be written down on a character sheet, or it must be sold and converted to gold which must also be written down. Everything must appear on a character sheet; even if the item is something that is left in storage at Iron League headquarters, there is a space on each character's Inventory to account for such items – squirrelled away in an individual's footlocker back in their room. Note that regardless of whether a piece of treasure is kept by an individual or exchanged for gold, the party receives XP for obtaining that treasure.

Once the characters have some money, they may wish to do a little shopping. They don't have to; such arrangements could also be left until the beginning of the next session. However, if a player knows what equipment they expended during that session, or if they have a clear idea of what spells they want to try to acquire, it's best to pursue those things while they are fresh in one's mind. The character can spend some gold back in base camp at the end of the session, adjust their Inventory accordingly, and then start the next session already ready to go.

It is assumed that characters who return to base at the end of a session will rest there for sufficient time to recover fully for the next adventure. All hp and ability score damage should be restored; all fatigue and trauma should be erased. Any ongoing conditions that are relatively short term should be erased; longer term conditions such as curses and charms persist. If any condition is threatening the life of the character, it must be resolved before the session ends! Characters begin a new session with a full complement of spell points.

The end of a session is also the time to advance characters. The players should review the amount of XP their characters have earned, and compare it to the following chart:

Table 6-14: TOTIL Class Advancement

XP Total	Midpoint	Character Level
0-99	49	1
100-199	149	2
200-299	249	3
300-499	399	4
500-799	649	5
800-1299	1049	6
1300-2099	1699	7
2100-3399	2749	8
3400-5499	4449	9
5500-8899	7199	10
8900-14399	11649	11
14400+		12

If the chart shows that a character has earned enough XP to advance to the next level, congratulate that player and allow them to update their character. (Some characters may choose not to level immediately, instead using experience points to add spells to spellbooks (see Chapter 4) or create magic items (see Chapter 9); nobody is ever required to level when they have enough XP.) Refer to the tables in Chapter 2 for the abilities that a higher level character gains. Additionally, refer to Chapter 4 for any new spells that Arcane spell casters may acquire.

Each character who gains a level will gain more hit points. When this happens, the player has a choice: they may roll the appropriate die for the character's class, and add that to the total, or they may roll all the hp dice for the character's class and new level. This second option may be desirable if the player has rolled new hit points poorly several levels in a row.

In no event does the second option result in losing hit points; the character always gains at least 1 hit point as the result of leveling. The player should roll the appropriate die for their new hit points in front of the GM, and then they should add that amount of hit points to the character's permanent total.

Note that it is possible for exceptionally industrious adventurers to earn enough XP to gain two or more levels in a single session; when this happens, the player must advance the character one level at a time – deciding how to roll for hit points for the first level, seeing the results, and then moving on to the next one.

Similarly, when a character increases their level, the player must decide how to allocate custom points. Every time a character gains a level, they receive three more custom points. These points may be combined with custom points banked from previous levels and spent to improve the character's abilities, or they may be banked for a later time. The potential uses for custom points are as follows:

- If you spend ten points, you can add a 2nd tier character special ability. See Chapter 2.
- If you spend six points, you can add a 1st tier character special ability. See Chapter 2.
- If you spend five points, you can add one to an ability score. Ability scores may be increased no higher than 20.
- If you spend four points, you may add one spell to an Arcane spellcaster's spellbook. The spell must be of a level the character is capable of casting at their new experience level. This does not cost any XP or material costs; the spell appears immediately in the character's spellbook.
- If you spend three points, you can add one to your total number of surges.
- If you spend two points, you can obtain proficiency in a new skill at proficiency level 1; alternatively, if a character already has a skill and their new level is high enough (see Chapter 3), spending two points

allows you to advance skill proficiency by one level. You cannot advance any skill by more than one level of skill proficiency per level of advancement.

- If you spend two points, you can obtain proficiency in one new weapon.
- If you spend two points, you can obtain proficiency with a shield or with a heavy helm.
- If you spend two points, you can obtain proficiency with armor with one higher Armor Class than you can currently use.
- If you spend one point, you can add a new language at the smattering level of proficiency, or you can increase one language up one step towards fluency. Refer to Chapter 3 for more details. You cannot advance any language by more than one level of language proficiency per level of experience.
- If you spend one point, you can permanently increase your maximum hp by 1.
- You can bank a custom point to use later. During gameplay, the player can spend a banked custom point and require that any single die rolled at the table, by the player or anybody else including the GM, must be rerolled. This decision must be made immediately after the die roll's result is seen, and the results of the new die roll are final.

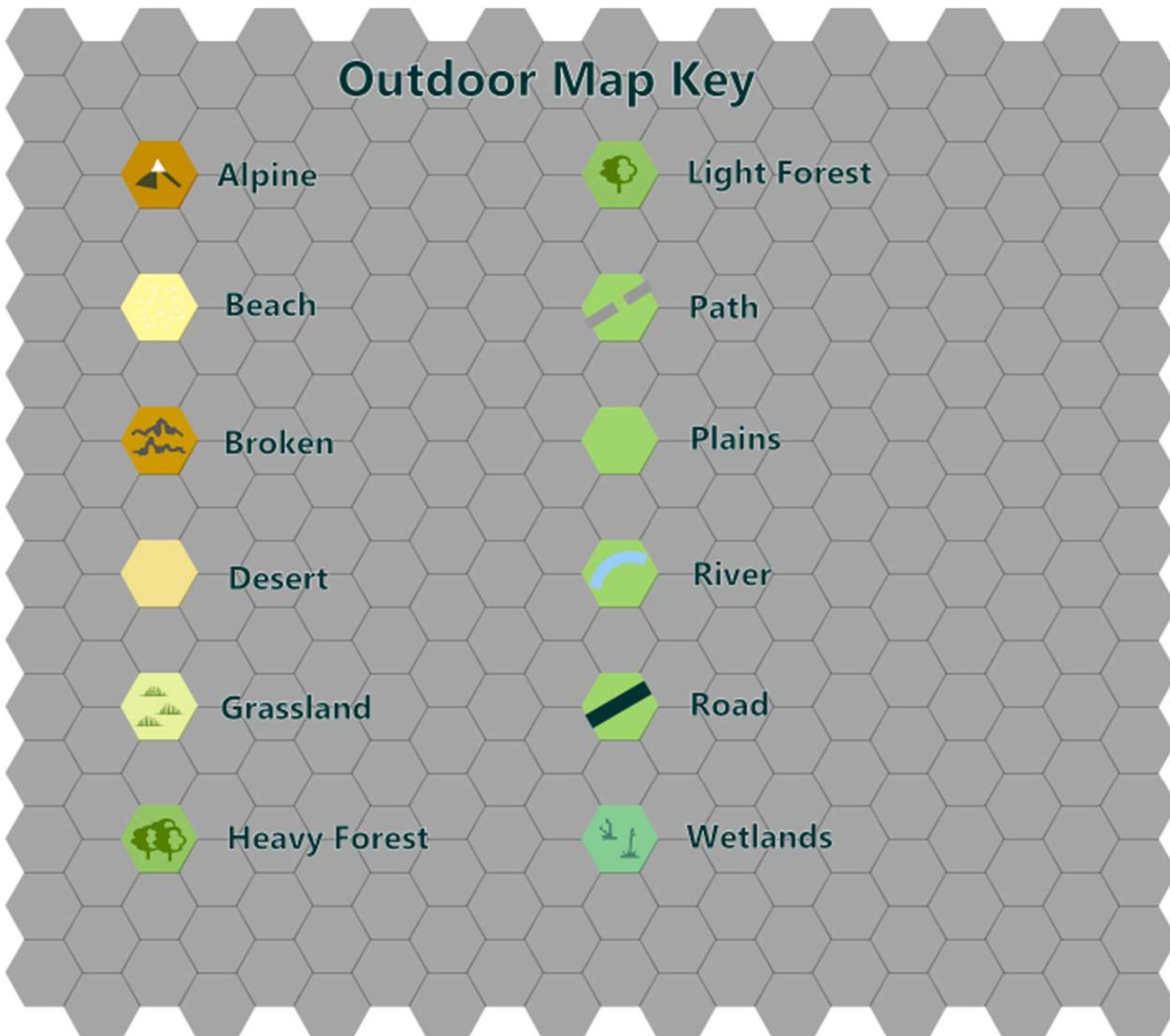
Note: Custom points earned during a level increase become available after the new level's hit points are rolled; therefore, only a custom point banked previously can be used to alter hit point rolls. A banked custom point can be saved for the next level advancement.

Finally, when a character's level increases, there may be changes to attack bonuses, defenses, surges, and class abilities that must be changed on the character sheet. If the character is an Arcane spellcaster, the rules in Chapter 4 apply for acquiring a new spell. All these changes may involve a lot of erasing and crossing-out on the character sheet, and this can make a character sheet unusable in a short period of time; the GM should keep a supply of blank character sheets on hand in case a player needs to recopy their character after all changes are made.

Note that just because characters acquire sufficient XP to gain a level doesn't mean that they suddenly and instantly become better at what they do. Advancement of characters occurs between two sessions, and the character realizes the benefits of advancement only during rest, relaxation, and downtime back at base camp. Often characters may want to retain experience points without levelling; one reason for this is creating magic items, and the rules for this are described in Chapter 9. After characters reach level 12 there is no more ability to advance by increasing levels; however, at this point characters have a new option: they may trade in 1000 XP for a single custom point. This, too, must occur between sessions.

The players aren't the only ones who have some work to do at the end of the session. The GM should take this opportunity to update their adventure logs and square away their exploration records. The GM must also think about what effect the party's recent explorations have had on the game world.

Where monsters were eliminated or driven out of an area, will they come back, will some other monsters fill the void, or will the area remain unpopulated? Will any new occupants bring any new treasure with them? Broadening the view from outside the immediate area of the most recent adventuring, what effects may ripple outward? Will the party's attacks on the local orc population make them more hostile and more alert? Will the adventurers' return to town with a massive haul of treasure inspire rival explorers to attempt a venture in the same location? The GM should update their notes accordingly to ensure that they are ready for the next session. It's best to do this as soon as possible after play ends because it is possible to forget some important detail of what the characters did while they were exploring.



Desperadoes Worksheet

TOTIL DESPERADOS WORKSHEET

TALES OF THE IRON LEAGUE
V 0.13

GM Exploration Record

PERCEPTION SKILLS