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OF BEASTS, HEROES, AND DEMONS

Long ago, the people were undisturbed. They built sprawling castles and mighty fortresses, and fought wars with one another, but no threats beyond people came to them. The people knew of a time before, a time of Beasts and fear, but they thought that time was all long gone.

Nothing stays gone forever, though, and the Old Beasts awoke. They crawled out of their caves and flew down from their mountain lairs, laying waste to the lands. The kingdoms rallied together, and knights leading whole armies fought and fell, but none had the Resolve to stop any of the Beasts.

Without Resolve, the people were doomed. Their bodies were weak, and their spirits even more so. Then, the first Hero appeared. She pushed back the Beasts in her kingdom, and before long more Heroes found their Resolve and joined her. With Resolve, these Heroes found they could not die, they could not be stopped. They defeated the Beasts, slaying them and driving them off one by one until the lands were safe once again.

Without Beast to fight, the Heroes pushed themselves on, doing epic deeds of their own accord. Some fought to protect their people, others challenged armies to win new territory, some simply lost their Resolve and ceased to be Heroes. Others wandered and did as they would instead of what their Destiny demanded, and they slowly fell victim to the Plague.

The Plague started without any obvious symptoms, Heroes who were more affected simply began to feel the urge to perform terrible actions. After a while, some Heroes began to develop incredible features; glowing halos, stone flesh, powerful wings, fiery breath. These features ranged from the beautiful to the monstrous, making the Heroes a sight to behold. As time went on, the features continued to develop and transform the Heroes, the terrible urges increased and multiplied, and the Heroes became something else.

When the Plague fully overtook a Hero, they lost their Resolve and became a Demon. The Plague did not stop there, though, and they grew more terrible and unnatural with time, unleashing lesser monsters, Spawn, upon the lands. One by one, the great Heroes

that defeated the Old Beasts became Demons, and they proved themselves more terrible monsters than the Beasts by far.

IN THE HERE AND NOW

The Demons continue to appear without fail, their Spawn roaming the lands. There is no method to their madness, and they form a crawling chaos attempting to engulf the world. The great structures built before the Beasts came again rest in ruin, Demons making homes of civilization's broken bones.

But it is not all destruction and decay. Relics of old Heroes wait to be used to defeat the Demons, and the few deities that have escaped the Demons' clutches continue to grant Resolve to new Heroes. These deathless forces drive onwards, their choices shaping the world. The wise work towards their Destiny, the foolish spiral into the clutches of the Plague.

CREATION

Each player takes turns in one of three different roles: Hero, Villain, and World. Each role has different duties in the telling of the stories that Another Hero is all about. In order to fill those roles, the players must create a world for the stories to take place in, and characters for those stories to revolve around. How the stories are told can be found below in the Storytelling section. How to create the world and the characters can be found right here.

This section assumes that there are three players sitting down for Another Hero. It is possible to play with more or less, but the ideal number is three. If playing with only two players, all of the tasks that the World is responsible for are taken up by the Villain. If there are more than three players, the players without a current role can choose to work with the Villain, World, or simply to listen to the story unfold.

Throughout storytelling, the roles cycle, and each player has an opportunity to experience the different roles. While the roles can be assigned in any way, the recommended method is to have the Villain be the player sitting to the left of the Hero and the World sitting to the right of the Hero. During creation, each player makes a Hero that they will play as when they are in the Hero role, an

antagonist to the Hero on their right, and an ally or contact for the Hero on their left. After creating these characters, all players work together to create the map where everything will take place.

Before beginning a new tale, each player creates a Hero of their own, characters for the other Heroes to interact with, and all of the players work together to create the map where the story will take place.

BIRTH OF A HERO

Hero Creation

There are six steps to creating a Hero:

- Choose a name
- Choose an Alignment
- Choose a Destiny
- Note starting Resolve and Plague
- Establish Codes
- Select Tempers

THE NAME

The name is not just a thing to call the Hero, it defines who the Hero is. For newer Heroes, it is often a simple, single name. For those that have already made their mark on the world it is regularly a title, describing what the character has already done/where the character comes from as well as being their identifier.

Some examples include:

- Desdema the Slayer of Che'Aqual
- Rakim the Fiend
- Kazad of the Noble Forest
- Heart of Malevolence
- The Last Son of Balar
- Odyssa Helmbreaker

Though this step is listed first, it can be done at any point during Hero creation. If you are having trouble, finish some of the other steps and see if the Hero's name becomes easier to choose.

THE ALIGNMENT

Each Hero is granted their Resolve by a powerful entity. In exchange for this gift of incredible power, the entity is able to require the Hero to follow certain Codes of behaviour. These Codes are aligned with the ideals and goals of the entity. In addition to the gift of Resolve, the entity grants the Hero a Temper, a tool or ally empowered by a combination of the Hero's Resolve and the entity's own power.

- Homeland Heroes: Servants of the citizens of their home. They protect their people and drive away threats.
- Relic Guardians: Watchers of the powerful Relics left behind by Heroes that have lost their Resolve.
- Covenant of Doctors: Those that fight Demons at the source - they help other Heroes avoid succumbing to the Plague.
- Brotherhood of Contentment: Those that work to eliminate both Heroes and Demons, returning the world to a safer time.
- Slayers: Hunters and killers of Demons, no matter the cost or collateral.
- Plaguebound: The Heroes that seek to become Demons, breaking the bonds of their Codes.

Additional information on each Alignment as well as example Codes and Tempers is available below at the end of the Creation section.

THE DESTINY

While a Hero's Alignment determines a small number of their Codes, and thus how they act, the true driving force behind a Hero is their Destiny. The Destiny is what draws an entity to give the gift of Resolve in the first place. As a Hero gains more and more Resolve, their Destiny takes greater hold over their actions (in the form of additional Codes). The more power a Hero has, the more driven they are to fulfill their Destiny.

Destinies can be reachable goals, or something that can be strived towards constantly. Whichever it is, the Destiny is regularly tied to the Alignment; entities prefer Destinies that are already in line with their own interests.

Destiny Examples:

- Slay the Mountain Demon Che'Terrak
- Defend the country of Zaena
- Catch the Fish Demon Dowk Epp
- Avenge the death of my family at the hands of the Slayer Hero
- Drive the Demons from the world
- Return Bontavia to its ancient glory

RESOLVE AND PLAGUE

Having Resolve makes the Hero unkillable and unstoppable. They do not age, they do not grow ill from anything less than Demon poison, and they recover from even that eventually. Resolve is ranked from one to ten. At creation, the Hero starts with a rank of two.

Every odd rank in Resolve (1, 3, 5, 7, and 9) results in a Code related to the Hero's Destiny. At Resolve one and five, the Hero gains a Code related to their Alignment. Growth in Resolve results in additional Codes for the Hero to follow, but also results in greater ability for the Hero to overcome conflict. See below for information on Codes during Hero creation.

In addition to the Codes granted by growing Resolve, the Hero gains the ability to empower additional objects and allies. For every rank in Resolve, the Hero may have one Temper. At Resolve one, the Temper is connected to the Hero's Alignment. All other Tempers are various objects and allies that the Hero empowers with their Resolve. See below for information on Tempers during Hero creation.

With the gift of Resolve comes the curse of the Plague. Plague slowly transforms the Hero into a horrific monster of ever growing power. Plague is ranked from one to ten. So long as a Hero has ranks of Resolve, Plague may never drop below one. At creation, the Hero starts with a rank of one.

At Plague ranks two, six, and eight, the Hero gains Codes tied specifically to their Plague. These Codes drive the Hero not to fulfill their Destiny or aid the goals of their Alignment, but instead to perform terrible acts. At Plague ranks four, six, eight, and nine, the Hero manifests markers that show they are slowly becoming

Demons. This marker can be anything from horns to halos, stone skin to angelic wings.

Additional information regarding Resolve, Plague and how they work appears in the Storytelling section below.

THE CODES

The Codes a Hero has are the expectations their Alignment and Destiny place upon them. As a Hero grows in Resolve, their Alignment and Destiny gain additional hold. Codes cannot force a Hero to act in a certain way, but violating a Code results in the Hero gaining a rank of Plague.

As a Hero's Plague develops, it too applies Codes. Fortunately, a newly created Hero does not have enough Plague to suffer from any Codes related to it.

At creation, a Hero has one Code from their Alignment, and one Code from their Destiny.

Example Destiny Codes:

- o Slay no Demon before Che'Terrak
- o Collect the Demonbranded of Che'Terrak
- o Slay any Spawn encountered in Zaena
- o Drive bandits out of Zaena's territory
- o Go hunting for Dowk Epp every day
- o Eat only the Spawn of Dowk Epp
- o Only move towards the last known location of the Slayer Hero
- o Give no aid to those that aided the Slayer Hero
- o Never back down from a Demon
- o Kill at least one Spawn a day
- o Clear the Spawn from Bontavia's ruins
- o Retrieve all the Relics of Bontavia's founder

For sample Alignment Codes, see the Alignment information at the end of the Creation section. For sample Plague related Codes, see the Plague information in the Storytelling section. Information on gaining and losing Codes during storytelling appears in the Resolve and Plague rules in the Storytelling section.

THE TEMPERS

In the same way that an entity can bestow Resolve onto a Hero, a Hero can bestow some of their power onto an object or person and make them a Temper. Tempers are limitless in variety, and can be applied by the Hero in countless ways. The Hero's hands and will are not always enough to change the world, and Tempers give them an additional edge when striving to overcome the strife they inevitably face. Unfortunately, Tempers are far more fragile than Heroes, and rarely survive the brutal conflicts that Heroes regularly encounter.

When first empowered by an entity, a Hero is gifted not only with Resolve, but with a Temper tied to both their own Resolve, and the power of their Alignment's entity. Unlike normal Tempers, this is indestructible - much like the Hero themselves. Alignment Tempers reflect the nature of the Alignment they are connected to - a Doctor is unlikely to have a sword as a Temper much as a Slayer with a Plague mask would be a strange find.

At creation, a Hero has two Tempers, the one from their Alignment and one general Temper.

Example Tempers:

- o Stone Dragon Gauntlets (dragon-shaped gauntlets of unnatural weight)
- o Steel Fist Staff (a staff tipped with a fist that transforms at the will of the wielder)
- o Band of the Falcon (a loyal band of warriors)
- o Sizeless Tent (canvas capable of assuming any size and shape)
- o Rusted Prison (an old steel fortress filled with countless captured Spawn)
- o Black Ice Boat (unmelting ice cut into a worthy vessel)
- o Sunless Hawk (a companion hawk that reflects no light)
- o Red Moon Scarf (a scarf that glows with the full moon and shines on secrets)

For sample Alignment Tempers, see the Alignment information at the end of the Creation section. Information on gaining and losing Tempers during storytelling appears in the Resolve rules in the Storytelling section.

HERO CREATION SUMMARY

- Name
- Alignment
- Destiny
- Resolve (rank 2)
- Plague (rank 1)
- Codes (one from Alignment, one from Destiny)
- Tempers (one from Alignment, one general)

THE PEOPLE OF THE WORLD

Character Creation

During storytelling, the roles of the players cycle. While one player acts as the Hero (and controls the actions of his Hero and Tempers), another acts as the Villain (all of the antagonistic forces challenging the Hero), and a third acts as the World (the neutral and helpful elements in the setting). First and foremost, the story of each Hero unfolds as they interact with other characters, be they Demons, Heroes, people, or yet other things. As a result, it's important that the Villain and the World for each Hero create characters for the purpose of developing that Hero's story. And so, for every Hero a player creates, they will also create two characters - one for when they are in the role of Villain, and one for when they are acting as the World. During play more characters may come into the story as it unfolds, but this step ensures a basic cast will exist from the beginning.

VILLAINOUS CHARACTERS

The player acting as a Villain is responsible for creating an antagonist for another player's Hero. The antagonist character should be designed not to defeat a Hero, but instead to be relevant to the Hero and aid in the development of an interesting story. The best place to start is with the Hero's Destiny. If the Destiny is to slay a Demon, that Demon is the obvious choice. If the Hero is destined to protect their kingdom, a Hero leading an army from another country could form an excellent antagonist. Alternatively, the Hero's Alignment can be used as the basis, the antagonist being a conflicting character to the Alignment's Codes. This step is performed after the creation of the Hero so that there

is adequate information to form a relevant antagonist to the Hero's Destiny/Alignment. Just enough detail to have an interesting and consistent enemy for the Hero is necessary. There are three recommended types of antagonists: Demons, Heroes, and people. Though these are by no means the only options of the Villain (living Relics and individual Demon Spawn are also great options), they are the most common, and the quite able to provide a Hero with interesting conflict.

Demons:

When creating a Demon, there are some basic pieces of information that you need to know: the name, appearance, Condition, and Spawn.

○ Name: Most Demons have several names, generally describing their appearance and/or past actions. The Mountain Demon Che'Terrak is also known as the Stone-Flesh Mound, and the Devourer of Uwegon Kingdom.

○ Appearance: This is where it gets interesting. Demons range from near-human forms to completely horrific masses that rend the mind. As Demons age, the Plague warps them more and more, and they become less and less human as time goes on.

○ Condition: The twisted Destiny of the Hero that the Demon once was. A Hero that was destined to protect a place is likely to become a Demon striving to destroy it. This should either directly impact the player's Hero, or impact the setting in such a way that a Hero working towards their Destiny/for their Alignment will be forced into conflict with the Demon.

○ Spawn: What do the Spawn look like, and how many are there? The Spawn should generally reflect the Demon they come from in appearance - a Demon with feathered wings and bird-like talons is likely to have bizarre gaping birds serving it. Some Demons have a small group of Spawn, others have vast armies thousands strong.

Heroes:

Similar to Demons, you just need the basics when creating an antagonist Hero: name, appearance, Destiny, Alignment. As an antagonist, these details should be chosen in order to create conflict between the Hero player's Hero and the antagonist Hero. Coming up with names, Destinies, and Alignments is covered above. As for appearance, note if there are any particularly visually notable features and/or Tempers. This Hero is not acting

as a typical Hero - they are simply a character in another Hero's story - so information like specific Tempers and Resolve and Plague ranks are not important.

People

Unlike Demons and Heroes, people have tremendously little ability to change the setting. It takes an extremely wise and influential person to amass enough power to create conflict for a Hero. As a result, a fair bit of thought should be put into the goals of the person (what they are trying to do that could give them the drive to interfere with a Hero) and the backing the person has (what group of people they have supporting their endeavours). Name and appearance are the same as designing a Hero (minus obvious Tempers), but goal and backing are unique to people.

- o Goal: What the person wants to accomplish. Similar to a Destiny, but a new one can be formed once achieved or it can even be changed should they decide something else is more important. Depending on the Hero they are serving as an antagonist to, goals like "conquer the neighboring kingdoms," "overthrow the king," and "steal the Relic from the Guardian's tower" could work well.

- o Backing: The type of backing that a person has will be heavily tied to their standing in society and will have a large impact on what sort of conflict they create for the Hero. For most people, they will be the leader of some group: a king or general will have armies at their disposal, and a master assassin could have an entire guild of killers to call upon. The rare person will have the backing of a Relic instead of other people (Relics are Tempers no longer tied to a Hero, and can be used by anyone that obtains them). A person with a Relic can work towards their goals in different ways, and can go toe to toe with a low Resolve Hero.

HEROES VERSUS HEROES

As a general rule, if a Hero is the main antagonist, this should not be the Hero that the Villain is playing when they are in the role of Hero. That Hero could be used in a helpful, neutral, or antagonistic role, but it's usually best when they are not the primary antagonist. Another Hero is about story building, and not about competition between Heroes.

WORLDLY CHARACTERS

As the Villain is responsible for creating an antagonist for another player's Hero, the World is tasked with creating an ally or contact for another player's Hero. This character should be designed to help or guide the Hero, though potentially at a cost. While they may send the Hero into conflict, there shouldn't be conflict between the World's characters and the Hero (that's what the Villain and their characters are for). Like antagonistic characters, allies or contacts should use the Hero's Destiny and Alignment as a starting point. A Hero from the same Alignment could make an excellent contact for any Hero, or the general of a local army would be an excellent ally for a Homeland Hero.

To create a character, follow the same steps as above for Heroes and people (Demons should not be allies/contacts in all but the rarest of circumstances).

While it is perfectly fine for the World to use their Hero as an ally or contact for the Hero player, when acting as the World, your Hero is merely a character in another's story. As such, they cannot engage in the Conflict Cycle, and are only playing a supporting role. Even if you intend to use your Hero to be an ally or contact while playing as the World, create a character during this step to help fill out and populate the world.

DRAWING THE MAP

Setting Creation

With only characters, the world is incomplete. In order for the characters to interact and conflict to take place, there has to be a location for that to occur. The world of Another Hero is limitless, stretching on forever. Rather than supply a pre-established map, the map is created for each tale. It is a custom setting designed to fully support the story being told. In order to ensure that adequate locations are present, each player creates three locations (one to aid their Hero, one to hinder their Hero, and one that's neutral to their Hero).

When putting the locations on the map, keep in mind that the proximity and location alters the basic function of the setting. Additionally, don't mark locations as vile/epic/neutral. What is vile for your Hero could be neutral or even epic for another.

Epic Locations:

Every Hero has some location that acts as a safe haven or source of aid. For many Heroes, this is something tied to their Alignment. Homeland Heroes usually have their homeland (be that a city, region, or entire country) as an epic location. The Brotherhood of Contentment have monasteries of Heroes and their allies, and even Plaguebound can have an epic location in the form of their future lair. Epic locations independent of Alignments are common as well, and can be anything from a glen that no Demon can enter to the blacksmith's shop that forges their Tempers.

Example Epic Locations:

- Spawn Hunters' Hall
- Reliquary Tower
- City of Zaena
- The Ruins of Bontavia
- Valley of Heroes
- Lake of the Once Queen

Vile Locations:

As Heroes have their safe places, they also have lands that are dangerous for them to tread. The Hero's Alignment, Destiny, and antagonist can all serve as inspiration for their vile location. Beyond simply being a place that is dangerous for the Hero to be in, keep in mind that there should be a reason for the Hero to have to go there. Demon lairs, enemy cities or countries, and the base of a rival Hero all make excellent vile locations.

Example Vile Locations:

- The Twisted Tree-corpse
- Den of Desires
- Dowk Epp's Spawn's Sunken City
- The Plague Mines of Karyote
- Sprawling Graveland
- The Shifting Labyrinth-Maw

Neutral Locations:

The vast majority of locations are likely to be neutral to a Hero, and a map could easily be filled from edge to edge with locations that don't care about the Heroes. Since neutral locations are harder to draw into the story, only one is needed per Hero.

Example Neutral Locations:

- The Lake Witch's Shack
- The Jagged Monastery
- Swamp of the Colorless Fog
- City Shrine of the Lost Entity
- The Restless Mountain
- The Great Stone Forest

ALIGNMENTS

Following are details on each of the Alignments: the entities, their goals, some general ideas about members of the Alignment, and sample Codes and Tempers to be used for characters (or as inspiration for developing your own).

Homeland Heroes

The goddess of hearth and home, Esta empowers people to protect their homes. She sees cities as the heart of civilization, and civilization as the ultimate purpose of people. In order to protect cities, civilization, and people, Esta creates Heroes that will guard their homes and hunt the Demons that threaten them. The goddess works tirelessly to keep her sacred places safe by creating Heroes that will ensure their safety.

Homeland Heroes are often empowered from those that are destined to protect their city or hunt down threats to their homes. Those from the same city or region regularly work together, but there is rarely any formal organization to their groups.

Example Codes:

- Do not leave the town/city
- Do not allow Spawn/Demons to harm citizens
- Do not allow Spawn/Demons into the town/city

Example Tempers:

- Citizen-forged Shield (a tower shield forged by local blacksmiths)
- Stone of the Hearth (an ever-warm stone, capable of starting campfires to drive back Spawn)
- Faithful Steed (a powerful steed that can always find the way home again)

Relic Guardians

Laevena, the first Hero, has long since transformed from her heroic state and become an entity in her own right. She takes great interest in the Relics of past Heroes, the transformed Tempers left behind by Heroes that have lost their Resolve. She empowers people to watch over the Relics, protecting the world from their terrible might. To Laevena, Relics are deadly memories best left forgotten, and modern Heroes should keep them disconnected from the world or simply ignore them. She hopes to see the world shaped by those still living, and not Heroes whose time has passed.

Relic Guardians are granted Resolve to aid them in achieving their Destinies, their task to watch over a Relic is the price they pay to gain that Resolve. Unless guarding the same Relic or working towards similar Destinies, it is relatively rare for them to work with other Heroes.

Example Codes:

- Keep the Relic inactive
- Protect the Relic from theft
- Feed the Relic with Spawn/Demons

Example Tempers:

- Grey Armor (stone and steel full plate)
- Watcher's Hood (a hooded cloak that shows the wearer nearby Relics)
- Squire (an aspiring Relic Guardian, aiding an empowered Guardian)

Example Relics:

- The Stone-City Gem
- The Great Gaping Lion
- Old Storn's Lightning Rod
- The Thirteenth Castle
- The Phoenix Flower

Covenant of Doctors

The god of blood, Omrak is the guardian of health and vitality for the people and Heroes of the world. His foes are all illnesses, and chief among them, the Plague. Omrak often chooses Heroes with

clear and easily followed Destinies, making them all the more resistant to the Plague. Covenant Doctors are urged to prevent the Plague from gaining power over other Heroes, be it by aiding them in fulfilling their Destiny, or encouraging them to follow their Codes. How the Doctors accomplish this is not a concern for Omrak, and he is, after all, the god of blood.

Covenant Doctors come from a wide range of people, but are generally those predisposed to aid others. The Doctors often stay together in hospitals, sharing their wisdom on fighting off the Plague with one another. The Doctors are most commonly found paired up with another Hero, guiding them, aiding them, and protecting them from the Plague.

Example Codes:

- Don't allow another Hero to violate a Code
- Convince a Hero to accept their fate instead of overcome it (thereby lowering their Plague)
- Protect any known Plaguebound from themselves

Example Tempers:

- Plague Mask (a mask granting protection from every disease and poison)
- Resolute Scalpel (an oversized scalpel that cuts flesh like air)
- Placebo's Nectar (a powerful healing drink, able to bring people back from the brink of death)

Brotherhood of Contentment

Lanta, self-proclaimed king of the gods, desires a world with significantly more control. Beasts, Demons, and Heroes are all elements that he would see removed, destabilizing forces that the world is better off without. Lanta has a dream for a perfect world - a world without numerous powerful beings shaping events, a world of only people. To realize this dream he empowers people with Destinies that lead them against Demons and Heroes alike, eliminating threats to his utopia.

As the name of the Alignment implies, Fraters work together to make the world safer. Demons are dangerous, and Heroes doubly so, and Fraters rarely act alone. On occasion, they will join forces with other Alignments, but only when a truly impressive threat is apparent and only if no other Fraters are available to aid them.

Example Codes:

- Maintain moderate Resolve (Rank 5 or lower)
- Convince a Hero to accept their fate instead of overcome it
- Do not allow Spawn/Demons to harm people

Example Tempers:

- Book of Heroic Sin (a tome that magically lists the names of Heroes that have harmed innocents)
- Black Steel Manacles (manacles that become impossibly heavy when placed on a prisoner)
- Hammer of Judgement (a large hammer capable of driving a nail through nearly any substance)

Slayers

The old Beast, Klon'ost, still roams the lands and lives on for the hunt and battle. Its kindred brought to extinction by the Heroes, Demons have filled the space they once held. Klon'ost wants the Demons hunted to the last, that a new generation of Beasts might appear again. Klon'ost holds no ill will against the Heroes of old, they were simply acting as hunters and had every right to kill their prey. Instead of fighting the modern Heroes, Klon'ost has begun to empower its own hunters, granting Resolve to those that would slay the Demons without mercy.

Slayers are chosen for their willingness to hunt and kill Demons and their Spawn, no matter what the cost. No amount of collateral damage is too much for Klon'ost, so it finds those with hate in their hearts and nothing left to lose. Now and again other Heroes will work with a Slayer, but in the end they are rarely willing to go far enough to keep up with these apex predators.

Example Codes:

- Slay any encountered Demon
- Show no mercy to any foe
- Waste no time aiding innocents when there are enemies nearby

Example Tempers:

- Spawn-cutting Scythe (a weaponized scythe that cuts Spawn with ease)
- Hunting Lantern (a magical lantern that casts a beam towards a Demon when Spawn flesh is burned in it)
- Companion Hound (a huge hunting hound, bred to fight Spawn)

Plaguebound

Long ago, Mekbahs was a kind and generous god. The god of hope, he worked to fill all people with an inner light and powerful optimism. His Heroes led their people to a better world, letting them see their hopes and dreams come to fruition. One of his greatest Heroes fell to the Plague, and the bond that the Alignment created passed the Plague on to Mekbahs himself. Though his purview is still hope, he seeks only to see that hope destroyed as more and more are overtaken by the Plague. In order to bring this about, he empowers those with difficult Destinies or natures that are likely to conflict with the ideal of hope.

The Plaguebound are a strange group, largely chosen for their drive to violate Codes and contradict their own Destinies. They often join with one another to use their incredible power to create festivals of incredible decadence, all while ignoring the call of their Destinies. Other Heroes consider them fools at best, and a danger to be destroyed at all costs at the worst.

Example Codes:

- Never fight another Hero
- Always place other's needs above one's own desires
- Never accept defeat

Example Tempers:

- Everfull Chalice (a glittering chalice always filled with powerful intoxicants)
- Hope's Torch (an ever lit torch that inspires people to great feats)
- Elkav's Whip (a wicked whip of bone shards)

CREATION SUMMARY

Characters (one of each per player):

- a Hero
- an antagonist for the Hero on your right
- an ally or contact for the Hero on your left

Map (one of each per player)

- epic location
- vile location
- neutral location

Total: nine characters, nine map locations (for three players)

STORYTELLING

Another Hero is a game about creating a narrative with a group of friends. To reflect this intention, the rules are designed to aid in crafting a story instead of creating scenarios to win or a detailed simulation of a world. The details are left intentionally vague concerning the setting and the people in it, so that they can be crafted according to your preferences. Since this is a game about storytelling, we'll call it that instead of gameplay.

For those coming from other pen and paper games, Another Hero will likely seem like a very large departure from the norm. Don't worry about making your Hero achieve everything they want to. Don't worry about being a perfect Villain and stopping them at every turn. Enjoy creating the tale, and have fun seeing the story unfold.

In order to play, you need three players (two is possible, as is four or more, but three is recommended), a character sheet for each player, a blank page for a map, and a single ten sided die. All of the following information will explain how to use those items to craft your own legends.

STORIES AND SYSTEMS

Roleplay

As previously mentioned, there are three roles that are filled during storytelling: Hero, Villain, and World. Each session of the game, you'll go through chapters where different players fill those roles. Who is which role when is up to your group, but the recommended method is: the Villain sits to the left of the Hero, and the World sits to the right. After completing a chapter (at least one conflict cycle), the roles should shift one place to the left. The Villain becomes the Hero, the World becomes the Villain, and the Hero becomes the World. Each role has specific duties and expectations, which are detailed below.

Hero

The Hero player has two primary tasks: play as the Hero, and initiate the chapter. They are also responsible for controlling any sentient/animate Tempers that they may have (unless they request that the World take over them for the sake of dialogue). When playing as the Hero, the Hero player explains the actions they

attempt, determines what choices to make during Conflict Cycles, and speaks as the Hero when talking to characters controlled by the Villain and the World. So long as they are not engaged in a Conflict Cycle or interacting with characters controlled by other players, the Hero player can simply describe what the Hero does and where they go.

To initiate chapters, the Hero player states the Hero, the setting/starting point, and the goal of the chapter. This sets the scene for the group so that they know what they have to work with as far as characters, conflict, and locale. The goal of the chapter should be a clear and definite goal, something that the Villain can attempt to prevent or make more difficult to achieve.

Chapter initiation examples:

- Desdema sets out from Zaena to seek new clues to Togyu's whereabouts.
- Rakim crawls free from the castle wreckage, ready to track down the stolen Relic.
- The Last Son of Balar leads the army out of the city, hoping to talk down the opposing legion rather than battle it.
- Odysa pushes her boat out onto the lake, fishing for the Spawn that lurk under the waters.
- Heart heads into the mines, searching for a metal that might be forged into a Demon slaying blade.
- Kazad steps into the cave, searching for her missing Squire.
- Avartos wakes up and continues up the stairs of the Tower to the Red Moon.

Villain

The Villain player has two main responsibilities: controlling antagonistic forces (whether they are characters or events within the world), and initiating Conflict Cycles. When controlling antagonists, it's important to remember that the goal is not to defeat the Hero, the goal is to create an interesting story. Be careful not to get caught up in the goals of the antagonists, the Villain is responsible for controlling them, not for ensuring that they defeat the Hero.

Initiating Conflict Cycles is vital, as it establishes when the Hero has to respond in specific ways to the situation at hand, rather than simply try to do anything they like. The Villain needs to make it clear that a Conflict Cycle is starting, and should either state it

directly, or make it very clear that the Hero is trapped in a genuine Conflict.

Conflict Cycle initiation examples:

- The Spawn of Togyu surround Desdema, blocking off her advance. The Conflict Cycle begins.
- The thief Hero sends his apprentice off with the Relic as Rakim arrives. He'll have to defeat the thief to catch up with the Relic.
- The general grows tired of talk, and shouts to his legion to charge. Balar's Son is swept up in the Conflict Cycle.
- A horde of Spawn drag Odysa down to the depths. Overcoming them and escaping is her only hope.
- As Heart spots the vein of ore, a massive tunnel worm Spawn crawls out of a tunnel and notices her. It rushes forward, maw open wide.
- Kazad's Squire approaches her, his mind warped by the whispers of a Demon. The Conflict Cycle begins.
- Demonbound chains ensnare Avartos. They tighten and begin to rend his flesh.

World

The World also has two main responsibilities: controlling all neutral and friendly characters in the setting and arbitrating disagreements between the Hero and the Villain. Similar to the Villain, it's important to remember that the characters are there as a part of the Hero's story. It's not about trying to draw focus onto those characters or drive the story towards their goal, it's about creating an interesting story centered around the Hero currently being played by the Hero player.

If issues/disagreements come up during the Conflict Cycle between the Hero and the Villain, the World is the player that gets to make the final decision. The two most important things to keep in mind when doing this is: how sensible the potential outcomes are (not just in a "is it physically possible within the setting" sense, but also from a "how well does this work for the feel of the narrative being told" sense) and which outcome makes for a better story. It's a tough task to be responsible for, but a very important one to keep the game fair and flowing.

Though the Hero player will remain the Hero player for the entire chapter, there are times when it is a good idea to have the Villain

and the World change roles. If the Villain's Hero is drawn into the story as an ally of the Hero player's Hero, the Villain and World should swap roles to simplify things. If the World has an excellent idea for a Conflict Cycle initiation, or one of the characters that the World is controlling becomes an antagonist, the Villain and World could swap roles (though they certainly don't need to - the Villain can just take over controlling the now antagonistic character). Use your best judgement for when to have the Villain and World switch roles, and don't be afraid to do it if it will keep things running smoothly.

Two Player Stories

Playing with only two players? That's not an issue at all. Simply have the Hero player take over friendly characters, the Villain take over neutral characters, and a coin toss take over arbitration if it's needed.

Four or More

Groups with more than three players will also have an easy time adapting. Follow the guidelines up to now (take turns being the Hero, the Villain is on the Hero's right and the World is on the Hero's left) and use the additional rules below to give the extra player a role to perform.

The additional players choose to ally with the Villain or World. Those with the Villain play additional antagonists or just give the Villain interesting ideas. Those with the World can play as their own Hero character (as an ally or contact) or can take up the roles of various other allies and contacts as the story permits.

The Villain can allow their allied players to take control during Conflict Cycles if desired, and the World can turn arbitration into a vote among the extra players. The responsibilities of the roles of Villain and World can be delegated to allied players, or the allied players can simply be additional actors in the story.

HEROES HELPING HEROES

If the World is using their Hero character in the current chapter it's important to remember that, like all of the characters under the World's control, the World's Hero is not the central character. The World cannot engage in a Conflict Cycle using their Hero - only the current Hero player can enter into a Cycle with the Villain.

CHAPTERS

Each session of Another Hero consists of one or more chapters. A chapter is at least one Conflict Cycle, and focuses on a single Hero. It's possible to have more than one Conflict Cycle per chapter, but only one is required. While you can have a session with less Chapters than players, it's best to give each player at least one Chapter as the Hero per session.

RESOLVE

Resolve is the core of any Hero, it's the result of their covenant with an entity, and the power that lets them exert their will upon the world. The number of Ranks a Hero has in Resolve reflects their current level of power. A Hero with a single Rank can easily fight dozens of people, tackle a Demon Spawn, and lift a fully grown pack animal. A Hero with five Ranks can handle small armies, fight a young Demon, and topple a stone tower with a single shove. At ten Ranks, a Hero can battle a mighty legion, slay an ancient Demon, and move a mountain.

Resolve is not a static or permanent condition; it can increase, decrease, or vanish altogether. Resolve can only be increased or decreased through Conflict Cycles. The impact of increasing or decreasing Resolve should be handled at the end of the Conflict Cycle it occurs in (rather than interrupting it) unless it brings the Hero below one Resolve. Once a Hero drops to zero Resolve, they become just another person, their Tempers become Relics, and their story is over (at least for now).

RESOLVE AND CODES

- o Destiny Codes:
Ranks 1, 3, 5, 7, 9
- o Alignment Codes:
Ranks 1 and 5

WAYS TO GAIN RESOLVE

- o Attempt to Overcome a Conflict
- o Receive Consequences during a Conflict Cycle

WAYS TO REDUCE RESOLVE

- o Accept a Conflict or Consequences

PLAGUE

Resolve cannot exist without Plague, just as life and death are tied together. As Plague grows, it manifests as Codes and markers. The Codes seek to drive their actions, even as the markers make it obvious that the Hero is slowly succumbing to the Plague.

Plague is a far more terrifying affliction than Resolve is a mighty benefit. While Plague can be lost and gained like Resolve, it is also gained any time that a Code is violated (even Codes tied to Plague). The amount of Plague that can be gained outside of Conflict Cycles is limited to two per Chapter to avoid instantly spiralling into a Demon. Resolve cannot defeat the Plague, but it can at least prevent it from growing too quickly.

The impact of increasing or decreasing Plague should be handled at the end of the Conflict Cycle it occurs in (rather than interrupting it) unless it brings the Hero up to ten Plague. Once a Hero reaches ten Plague, they become a Demon, their Tempers become Demonbranded and transform into horrific creatures, and their story is no longer that of a Hero.

Example Plague Codes:

- o Let at least one of Che'Terrak's Spawn go free
- o Once per month, sacrifice a person to the Mountain
- o Tell any encountered Demon or Spawn that you are from Zaena
- o Meet emissaries to Zaena only with force, never with friendship
- o Help no person on Dowk Epp's Lake
- o Treat the city's well with Dowk Epp's poison
- o Let no one who has spoken to the Slayer Hero live
- o Give the Slayer Hero's Tempers to Demons
- o Give any fought Demon a chance to escape
- o Never aid another Hero
- o Harm no Demonbranded in Bontavia
- o Let no people survive in Bontavia before it is restored

Example Plague markers:

- o A soft glow from the eyes
- o All held metal appears gold
- o White feathered wings
- o An echo occurs when speaking
- o A halo shines from behind the head
- o A tail

- Eyes in the center of the palms
- Horns on the head
- Flesh turns to scales/ stone
- Tusks
- Leathery wings
- Claws
- A radiating heat or cold

PLAGUE, CODES, AND MARKERS

- Plague Codes:
Ranks 2, 6, 8
- Plague Markers:
Ranks 4, 6, 8, 9

WAYS TO GAIN PLAGUE

- Attempt to Overcome a Conflict
- Violate a Code

WAYS TO REDUCE PLAGUE

- Accept a Conflict or Consequences

THE CONFLICT CYCLE

Every Conflict Cycle should help drive the story forward. This is where the action occurs; battles are fought, heroic feats are performed, and Demons unleash their horrific might. Conflicts don't need to be truly epic events, but they should be where the difficulties opposing the Hero come to light. The Conflict Cycle is a chance for the Hero to overcome their oppositions, or reach their current limits. Once the Villain has made it clear that a Conflict Cycle has started, the Hero and Villain take turns playing out the conflict, and the World ensures that the decisions made serve the story.

The Hero responds to the initial conflict and any consequences that the Villain names by choosing one of three options: accept, overcome, or deny.

○ If the Hero chooses to respond to a conflict/consequence by accepting it, their Resolve and Plague both drop by one. They make no effort to work against the conflict, and the Conflict Cycle ends there.

○ If the Hero attempts to overcome to the conflict/consequence, their Resolve and Plague both increase by one. They use the power of their Resolve to overcome their circumstances and the Villain is given the opportunity to respond. Keep in mind, there are three things a Hero attempting to overcome a

conflict/consequence can never do: raise or lower Resolve, raise or lower Plague, or kill a Hero

○ If the Hero chooses to deny the conflict/consequence, the Villain must reduce the conflict or consequence in severity or scale or change it to something else entirely. The World is the final judge of what is an acceptable reduction/change (or if a reduction or change should even be made). Once the conflict/consequence has been reduced or changed, it returns to the Hero's turn, but they can only accept or overcome (denying is no longer an option).

The Villain responds to the Hero's attempt to overcome a conflict or consequence by choosing one of three options: accept, consequence, or deny.

○ If the Villain chooses to respond to the Hero overcoming a conflict/consequence by accepting it, the Conflict Cycle ends there. This should be used when the Hero's idea is particularly brilliant or story appropriate, and it would make sense to end the Cycle then and there.

○ If the Villain chooses to assign a consequence to the Hero overcoming a conflict/consequence, they essentially create a new conflict. This can be anything from an injury, to destruction of a Hero's equipment or allies, or even something unorthodox - like a large passage of time. Keep in mind, a consequence cannot raise or lower Resolve, or raise or lower Plague.

○ If the Villain chooses to deny the Hero attempting to overcome the conflict/consequence, the Hero must either reduce the impact of their overcoming feat, or sacrifice a Temper in order to achieve overcoming the conflict/consequence (Villain's choice of which one is required). The World is the final judge of what is an acceptable reduction/sacrifice (or if a reduction or sacrifice should even be made). Once the Hero's attempt at overcoming has been reduced or a Temper sacrificed, it returns to the Villain's turn, but they can only accept or assign a consequence (denying is no longer an option).

The World is the arbiter of any issues that arise, and is responsible for making suggestions to help maintain balance and good story flow. If the Hero is attempting to do something beyond what their Resolve should allow, the World should suggest that the Villain denies the Hero's overcoming feat. If the Villain has created an unrealistic conflict or consequence (or even just one that doesn't serve the story), the World should suggest that the Hero

denies the Villain's conflict/consequence. The World should keep an eye out for Code violations and point them out. If you are the World, don't just wait for troubles to bring to resolution - offer suggestions and help the story move forward.

PRE-BUILT STORY

Below is a list of characters, locations, and chapter initiations that can be used to run a game without any creation work. Each of the three players chooses a letter (A, B, or C), and they get a set of characters for use. The locations are already established and put on a map, and there are a couple of chapter initiations per Hero to help get things rolling. If you read the rules and just want to dive in without spending time building everything from scratch, this is the place to start.

For Player A:

Hero:

- o Name: Glenae, Frater of the Seven Pillars
- o Destiny: Return the Hero Xolzet to Contentment
- o Tempers: Map of the Heart (shows Xolzet's location) and the Entity Stone (a stone with a hole in it that allows visualization of Resolve)
- o Codes: Never exceed Resolve with Plague, Stay within a mile of Xolzet
- o Alignment: Brotherhood of Contentment

Character (for Player C's Hero):

- o Type: Mortal archer
- o Name: Dahric
- o Appearance: Always wearing heavy but archer-friendly armor and carries a large pack with all of the essentials
- o Goal: Protect the Gurat Valley from Demons and Spawn
- o Backing: Relic – The Hungry Bow (fires Demon-cutting arrows and transforms into a maw that bites into Demons and Spawn at close range)

Enemy (for Player B's Hero):

- o Type: Hero
- o Name: Duke Acrabs of Daalmir
- o Appearance: Wears the powerful Crown of Red Iron and wields the Spawn-Claw blade.
- o Destiny: Eliminate the Silver Warband and its leader

o Alignment: Slayer

Locations:

- o Epic: Seven Pillars Monastery
- o Vile: The Glowing Cave of Mach'lukaf
- o Neutral: Xolzet's Workshop

For Player B:

Hero:

- o Name: Obrue, the Silver Warlord
- o Destiny: Conquer the Castle of Daalmir
- o Tempers: Kecwid's Flask (an ever-full flask of a tonic that enhances the power of mortals) and the Silver Warband (a dozen loyal and skilled soldiers)
- o Codes: Sacrifice one mortal a week to the Kecwid, Let no encountered warrior from Daalmir survive
- o Alignment: Relic Guardian
- o Relic: Kecwid, the Sightless Crypt-Slug

Character (for Player A's Hero):

- o Type: Hero
- o Name: Xolzet
- o Appearance: Wears steel armor over Citizen-Woven Robes, fights enemy armies with the burning and blinding Sun-Stave
- o Destiny: Defend the Castletown of Daalmir
- o Alignment: Homeland Hero

Enemy (for Player C's Hero):

- o Type: Demon
- o Name: Che'Pyret, the Lake of Flame
- o Appearance: A roiling lake of lava, occasionally manifesting a face or extending melting tentacles
- o Condition: Consume the lands in the shadow of the Gurat Mountain (notably Zaena and Daalmir)
- o Spawn: Black, burned boar-like beasts that claw out from the lake, and over-tall humanoids, charred down to the bone in most places

Locations:

- o Epic: Kecwid's Grave Swamp
- o Vile: Castletown of Daalmir
- o Neutral: City of Zaena

For Player C:

Hero:

- o Name: Zoeng Topma
- o Destiny: Devour the Demon Che-Pyret
- o Tempers: Desdema's Ice-blade (an ice-sword forged from the corpse of Che'Aqual), Blue Lago (the Spawn-eating horse)
- o Codes: Slay any encountered Spawn of Che'Pyret, Kill at least one Spawn a day
- o Alignment: Slayer

Character (for Player B's Hero):

- o Type: Mortal general
- o Name: Nodra of Zaena
- o Appearance: Tall and muscular, wearing heavy plate – usually riding her horse and wielding a greataxe
- o Goal: Expand Zaena's holdings
- o Backing: Army – the loyal warriors of Zaena

Enemy (for Player A's Hero):

- o Type: Demon
- o Name: Mach'lukaf
- o Appearance: A humanoid with four large white wings (each containing one eye), a rib cage stretched wide exposing the heart, and an eyeless face stretching up to a crown of bone horns
- o Condition: Corrupt the Seven Pillars
- o Spawn: Small, gremlin beasts with no face save a huge eye, and legless doves with a ribcage maw of jagged rib-teeth

Locations:

- o Epic: The Crumbling Tower
- o Vile: The Lake Under the Mountain
- o Neutral: Che'Aqual's Corpse-River

