

ZWEIHÄNDER REFORGED EDITION: SESSION ZERO

The characters, situations, and world of ZWEIHÄNDER are a work of fiction. This game was designed and produced by a team with diverse beliefs, experiences, and identities.

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Dedicated to Ali, Jack, Charlie & Mum

Produced by Jared Nielsen and World of Game Design



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CHAPTER 1: WELCOME TO ZWEIHÄNDER

ZWEIHÄNDER is a cooperative role-playing game set in a fantasy world of gothic horror. It's a place of gallows humor, social intrigue, mystery, horror, and vendettas meted out using iron, blackpowder, and sorcery.

What is Reforged Edition?

The Reforged Edition is an evolution of the original Revised Core Rulebook and Starter Kit. It isn't a new edition but a remaster, applying everything we've learned over the last six years of gameplay. It encompasses numerous changes to the core assumptions of gameplay and incorporates the feedback we've received from our playtesters and valuable community feedback. It also provides a host of character options and further refinements to the system.

Chiefly, this book is backward compatible with the original game line. We've provided conversion notes in the Reforged full book, so you can bring your entire **ZWEIHÄNDER** library up to speed with this book.

A Morally Gray World

This game is one of brutality, ruthlessness, comeuppance, and superstition. But it isn't based on the traditional dichotomy of good versus evil. It is instead a game of moral nuance, cast in shades of gray between rare extremes of black and white.

This world is one where the upright perishes while the unjust lingers. Society stands on the edge of both existential and literal collapse. Order tends to prevail over anarchy, but the cost is high. While a brighter tomorrow exists, it is only for a vaunted few.

Humanity & Forgotten Ancestries

ZWEIHÄNDER is humanocentric; thus, humans are the default ancestry in the game, and everyone speaks their shared tongue. However, you can also play one of the Forgotten: ancestries of unusual history and ambitions, such as the enigmatic masked siabra, living statues of pure innocence called the awakened, and the woodwise, dwellers of the under-root.

Survivors, Not Adventurers

It's assumed that your player characters, called survivors, were ordinary people who never strayed far from their place of birth. Eventually, they confronted their own death and survived. But they didn't escape without a scar—one that could be physical, emotional, or spiritual. This led to an all-new outlook on life.

Following this life-altering experience, your survivor carries a memento of that near-fatal moment. Leaving practically everything behind, your survivor banded together with others who'd faced their own brush with death. Their lives are now filled with introspection, epiphany, and catharsis.

Superstition & Stratification

An ever-present fear of the unknown compels the social classes that dominate traditional society. People's perceptions of the supernatural world around them are just as crucial as the diseases that ravage the countryside. Superstition reigns supreme.

Most people are locked in a staid and fearful existence. Aristocrats enjoy endless privilege, while the lowborn struggle to make ends meet. Sandwiched in between are up-and-comers called commoners, who neither the aristocracy nor the lowborn appreciate.

Occultism & Heresy

Ordinary people have little, if any, understanding of the inner workings of magic. In fact, many have an irrational fear of it. Those who call themselves clerics or wizards are often venal charlatans consumed by delusions of grandeur.

Though the gods are distant and uncaring, their fickle gifts are sometimes bestowed upon a vexing few. Those the gods reject steal power from a place beyond reckoning called the Ethereal Veil. True sorcerers are either worshiped by the ignorant, publicly castigated by the fearful, or marked for death by the church.

No More Heroes

This isn't a game of *zero to hero*, but zero to one. It's not a story where your survivors will change the world. Instead, the world will change them. This is a personal story, one where survivors will struggle to retain their sense of self as they root around in the filth. There are no happy endings or heroes, only people trying to survive.

Low Fantasy & High Stakes

Monsters aren't the only danger; people can be equally monstrous. Villagers can readily drag a tuned-up knight off their steed and beat them to a bloody pulp. And, in this game, there is no remedy to reattach an arm hacked off by a peasant's sickle. There is no godly boon to wipe away the shock of a friend being torn to pieces by a raving mob. No prayers can revive the dead from the Well of Souls.

In **ZWEIHÄNDER**, health doesn't miraculously recover overnight. Naps don't heal stab wounds. Diseases are a real threat. People must eat, recover from their illnesses, and take time to care for their wounds. But some scars—both physical and psychological—are just too deep to mend.

Violence & Compassion

In a dark fantasy world, death means something. However, mercy and sacrifice are more meaningful. Your survivor stands against the disillusionment, pessimism, and depravity of society.

Given these considerations, it is easy to believe that nihilism guides your survivor's journey. But, they've grown resilient against the horrors most are so terribly susceptible to. It makes them some of the only people capable of standing against the darkness.

Tragic Flaw & Inner Strength

Your survivor will uncover profound mysteries, reveal double dealings, and expose wickedness at its very core. Will they rise above the brutality or become what they despise? The conflict between your Inner Strength and Tragic Flaw is at the heart of these stories.

In their search for the truth about themselves and the world around them, survivors often jump into horrific situations that will test their resolve. Every trial gradually erodes the foundation of who they are while desensitizing them. Too many brushes with gray decision-making and terrifying monsters can affect a survivor's capacity for clear, rational thought. They will either adapt to it or surrender to the darkness.

Bonds With Other Survivors

Despite its entropic grasp, the survivor's psychological struggle is vital to the story. It drives many of the underlying themes of this game and promotes a concrete reason for survivors to band together and rage against the dying of the light. Their Bonds inform how they survive in a world poised against them.

Hope is often a pale glimmer, and even a significant victory is just a footnote in the annals of history. Don't let this discourage you, though—what survivors do together in the present matters most.

Mature Content & Safety Tools

ZWEIHÄNDER is intended to foster an environment of maturity and respect. The story will sometimes pit your survivors against enemies who use heinous, prejudicial, and other vile acts to justify their ends. Your survivors will fight against these institutions with all their might, just as we must confront prejudice in real life.

If your group needs a safety tool to guide their experience, you'll find one in [Chapter 2: Learn To Play](#). You can also download Entreat the Darkness from DriveThruRPG.

Reading This PDF

Most rules are written in the second person, i.e., speaking to you, the player, implying you are role-playing a survivor. Unless explicitly stated otherwise, rules that apply to you also apply to foes and creatures the Game Master controls.

Throughout the book, we use the singular “they” and its inflected forms—them and their—for non-specific or unknown genders.

Capitalized words in Bold are terms relevant to gameplay, and when **underlined and bold**, they're chapter references. Light sepia boxes are for everyone to read, dark red boxes are tips for the gamemaster, white boxes are instructions to follow, and gray boxes are for gameplay examples.

This PDF is not representative of the layout, artwork, or final product. Some options not included in this PDF.

Share your experiences on our Discord at <https://discord.gg/Zweihander>

Our Themes & Inspirations

Dark Fantasy: *Kentaro Miura's Berserk*

Ethical Dilemma: *The Witcher*

Folk Horror: *The Witch*

Folk Tales: *Grimms' Fairy Tales*

Gothic Horror: *Bloodborne*

High Action: *Brotherhood of the Wolf*

Historic Accounts: *Thirty Years' War*

Medieval Mystery: *Black Death*

Mercenary Stories: *The Black Company*

Occult Magic: *Vagrant Story*

Politicking: *Tactics Ogre*

Profession-based System: *WFRP*

Psychoactive Journeys: *A Field in England*

Renaissance RPG: *Maelstrom*

Soap Operas: *Game of Thrones*

Supernatural Threats: *Castlevania*

CHAPTER 2: LEARN TO PLAY

The golden rule is this: keep the game moving forward! If you forgot a specific rule, ignore it and look it up later. If a rule gets in the way of having fun, work together to create a house rule for your table.

How Gameplay Works

The game uses an intuitive percentile dice (**d100**) system. It produces fast, meaningful results by removing rolls and bookkeeping that don't keep the action moving. Complexity is layered in slowly, and rules can be easily ignored in favor of telling a compelling story.

When you and some friends sit down to play a game, it's called a **session**. They tend to last from 1 to 3 hours in the real world. You'll need anywhere from two to six friends to play a session, but it can also be played one-on-one.

Your player characters, called **survivors**, are the focus of the session and central to the story. The rules are designed to present you with meaningful choices. This is a tense tabletop role-playing game, with fights happening at decisive moments. Words can be just as dangerous as weapons, so use both to your advantage.

Every session will include one or more challenges guided by a storyteller/rules referee called the **Game Master**. Your sessions move in a free-flowing, scene-by-scene conversation like a television show. And whenever a critical situation arises with uncertain outcomes, the GM will have you use dice to determine what happens.

In each scene, you'll participate in the four pillars of gameplay, with each requiring your wits, words, and weapons to survive. You'll often talk "in-character" in narrative time, a free-flowing back-and-forth form of storytelling called narrative scenes.

When narrative scenes become tense, you will engage in **intrigue scenes**. When a scene leads to you trying to escape or if an enemy runs away, you will switch to a **chase scene**. You'll use **travel scenes** for long periods of travel across the wilderness. However, whenever you battle against foes to further the story, you'll move into structured time for a **fight scene**. These scenes frequently cross over with one another.

Multiple scenes strung together make up an **adventure**, and they can transpire over hours, days, weeks, months, or years of in-game time (the passage of time from your survivor's perspective). Time in-game moves in flux with the story, sometimes moment-by-moment, other times fast-forwarded and even backward for flashback scenes as needed.

A series of adventures is called a **campaign**, where your survivors will change and grow with the travails they face.

Unlike board games, the only way to "win" in **ZWEIHÄNDER** is to have a good time. Together, you'll go on perilous undertakings. Your survivor will win hearts and minds by being bold in the face of danger. They'll undergo personal trials and take on indelible scars. But the stories you tell

and the memories you make with one another will allow everyone to win.

Setting the Mood

To fully enjoy the game, find a quiet place to play, get snacks, put on some thematic music, and remember to hydrate! If playing remotely, ensure you've got the right tools, such as Roll20, Foundry Virtual Tabletop, or conferencing software like Zoom.

Role-playing a Survivor

You and your friends play characters called survivors. They were once average, everyday people (as average as you could be in a medieval-inspired, dark fantasy world). But they faced their death and somehow survived, forever changed by their experience. Your survivor finds themselves among others who've also lived to tell the tale and have embarked on a new path.

Your survivors are the story's main character. You'll role-play as if you are them: acting, feeling, and thinking like them. This also means you're responsible for highlighting their strengths and weaknesses while playing to the relationships they've built with other survivors.

Survivors are damaged people looking for answers. Their methods and views are likely very different from yours, but they are still a person with feelings, hopes, and dreams.

Reward Points

In some tabletop role-playing games, killing fantastical monsters and plundering dungeons are the typical ways to improve characters. However, **ZWEIHÄNDER** encourages players to be rewarded for role-playing their survivor's

Inner Strength and Tragic Flaw in tense situations.

At the end of every session, you will gain **Reward Points** (called RP), a form of metacurrency you will spend to Unlock your survivor's abilities. Spending RP is not a consideration of Session Zero.

Being The Game Master

One of your friends (or maybe even you!) will take on the challenging role of the Game Master (**GM** hereafter). A GM is the lead storyteller, conjuring up an adventure's dark horrors and unusual mysteries. You'll control other friends and enemies the survivors interact with and the monsters they fight.

Survivors, Allies & Foes

Survivors are always player characters, while others controlled by the GM are called non-player characters (NPCs) or creatures. An ally is any living or unliving NPCs willing to participate in your cause (you are also your own ally). Foes are someone who isn't you or an ally.

This game accommodates a playstyle where role-playing drives the story, but you and the players are partners in telling the story. Skip the mundane parts of the adventure, focusing on action, intrigue, and mystery.

Finally, you're the rules referee, making final game mechanic decisions. Making rulings is far more important than mastering the rules. Focus on moving the story forward if the session slows to a crawl.

What to Expect

A session tends to work like this:

Step 1: The GM Sets The Scene By Describing What Your Survivors See And Experience. A scene is drawn from a written undertaking or campaign but may also be a story of their devising. It'll play towards your survivor's senses and present story hooks for them to follow up on. In the included adventure, *The Chateau*, the GM will likely read the boxed text aloud to set the scene.

Step 2: You Will Interact With Other Players And Friendly Or Unfriendly Creatures In The Scene, Saying How Your Survivor Reacts To What They Discover. In a free-flowing conversation, you'll ask the GM questions about your survivor's surroundings and situations. The GM will ask you to write down on index cards the names of people you meet, new places you uncover, and essential things you discover (called People/Places/Things Cards). A GM will call for dice rolls when activities have potential risks.

Step 3: The GM Describes How The World Reacts To Your Choices And Narrates The Outcome. Every survivor is an individual with different agendas and interests. A GM will sometimes ask you to talk specifically about what your survivor is doing and how they feel. Other times, they will ask how you as a group will proceed.

Step 4: If A Scene Erupts Into A Fight, You'll Use Dice To Drive The Drama. Using the abilities from your **survivor sheet**, the GM pits you against mundane and terrifying monsters. A fight usually ends in retreat, surrender, or death.

Step 5: Scenes Don't Always Have To Culminate In A Fight Scene; Some May Break Into A Chase, An Investigation, A Tense Negotiation, And Journeys. When other kinds of scenes come to a close, the GM moves players back to the first step, and so on. Fluidity is critical, so these steps should change and flow with the story as needed.

Acting & Narrating

Some players act out their survivor's actions using improv in the first person. Others prefer to narrate their actions, explaining them in the third person. Mix these styles up as needed:

Tim (As Cale Marius), Acting: *With his sword in hand, I say, "Lay down your arms, or die in obscurity!"*

Tim (As Cale Marius), Narrating: *Cale draws his rapier and says something menacing that will scare the cutthroats into dropping their weapons!*

Flashback Scenes

With GM approval, players can set scenes to flesh out their survivor's backstory. These scenes can take place in the present or as a flashback.

Adam (As Tuck Fitzroy): *I want to set a scene that happened in the past where he could have extracted the name of the cutthroat's leader. I want it to give me an upper hand in this situation.*

GM: *Yep! Okay, so we cut away to Tuck. He's at a winesink with one of his goons and is deep in his cups. Adam, what would you suggest happens in this scene?*

Pausing A Scene

This book will teach you to tell engaging, mature, and nuanced stories. Consent and agreement are vital to collaborative storytelling. To achieve that, everyone must have a fun, inclusive gaming experience. But that doesn't mean you must avoid visceral scenes of brutality and terror.

If uncomfortable content comes up, you can Pause the Scene by crossing your hands in front of your face, like an X. All action stops so that you can speak aloud (or write it on a piece of paper for the GM to read privately) the discomforting content. You never have to provide reasoning as to why it makes you feel that way. The GM will then recalibrate the scene.

For further guidance, download the free **Entreat The Darkness** TTRPG Safety Tool at [DriveThruRPG](https://www.drivethurpg.com/).

Special Dice

Six-Sided Die (d6): These are typically used for inflicting Damage with Combat-based Skill Tests. You'll generate results from 1 to 6. Rolling high on a d6 is good!

For purposes of dealing Damage and Peril, when you roll face "6", roll another 1d6 and add it to the total. There is no cap to the number of face "6s" you can roll.

Ten-Sided Die (d10): These are used for rolling Initiative and Peril, falling, fire, and Damage with spells. Always treat face "0" as a value of 10 unless rolling percentile dice. Rolling high on d10 is good!

For purposes of dealing Damage and Peril, when you roll face "10", roll another 1d10 and add it to the total. There is no cap to the number of face "10s" you can roll.

Percentile Dice (d100): These are a pair of differently-colored 10-sided dice. One die is the tens die, and the other differently-colored die is the units die. Rolling low on d100 is good!

Rolling d100 is how you calculate your chances to succeed at doing things in the game. You'll generate results ranging from 1% to 100%.

Reading Unusual Dice Results

Face "6" on tens & face "9" on units = **69%**
Face "9" on tens & face "6" on units = **96%**
Face "0" on tens & face "0" on units = **100%**
Face "0" on tens & face "1" on units = **1%**
Face "1" on tens & face "0" on units = **10%**

Primary Attributes

Primary Attributes represent all creatures' raw physical, mental, and social capabilities. They range in numeric values between 32% to 65%. The higher the value, the more likely you will succeed in your actions.

Agility is your speed, dexterity, and physical readiness.

Brawn is your durability, endurance, and physicality.

Combat is your ability to use standard weapons and blackpowder.

Fellowship is your charisma, likability, and social savvy.

Intelligence is your ability to learn, spatial recognition, and mathematics.

Perception is for your five standard senses and ability to react.

Willpower is your mental resolve and force for magic.

Skills & Tests

Sooner or later, a decisive situation will arise, a point of no return that a conversation alone cannot fix. Then it's time to break out d100 to roll a Skill Test! Simply describe an action you want to take, and the GM will tell you which Skill to Test. Ranks in a Skill, combined with Ranks in its related Primary Attribute, determine what dice to roll.

Skills Descriptions

Combined with your Primary Attributes, Skills determine how effectively you can perform specific actions in the game. Each Skill Rank confers a +10% cumulative bonus to use a Skill (to a maximum of three Ranks or +30%). However, you don't need Ranks to try Testing a Skill.

Every Skill below is listed by its proper name. The related Primary Attribute follows, briefly describing how it can be used. Talk with the GM if you want to use a Skill differently.

Athletics

(Brawn-based): Participating in feats of strength. It reflects your ability to climb surfaces and ropes, tread water and swim without tiring, propel vessels while rowing, overpower others in contests of strength, and push heavy objects.

Awareness

(Perception-based): Noticing minute details and sounds, eavesdropping, lipreading, and spotting snares designed to trap or kill. You'll also use it to gather information through the five senses. For understanding motives or using memory, use Insight.

GM Tip: Don't Roll to Find Clues

If players describe that they are searching an area with Awareness, never have them roll dice to find clues or traps. Let them discover it freely, requiring Tests to deduce their meaning or how to disarm them.

Blackpowder

(Combat-based): Wielding weapons that utilize alchemical substances as a propellant. It allows you to safely handle small and large quantities of blackpowder while knowing how to load and adequately fire them. This covers the gamut of both one and two-handed blackpowder weapons.

Coordination

(Agility-based): Being dexterous, maintaining balance, and moving gracefully. You can use this Skill to escape restraints, avoid falling debris, and manipulate objects delicately. It also can be used to stay on your feet.

Craft

(Willpower-based): Create useful supplies, such as blackpowder, laudanum, and weapons. You can also use it to jury-rig items, counterfeit money, falsify writing, and create false works of art.

Disguise

(Fellowship-based): Acting as another social class and hiding your identity from others. The more you know about the people or person you're trying to hide from or mimic, the more effective your disguise is. For hiding intentions and motives, use Guile.

Folklore

(Intelligence-based): Knowing the histories and notable people of the world. It also confers an understanding of other cultures. It is also the practice of worshiping the principal gods of the known world. For deeper knowledge about the higher mysteries of magic, use Occultism.

Gamble

(Intelligence-based): Fixing fights and playing parlor games such as cards, darts, and dice. You can use it to spot common mistakes, assess risky maneuvers, and prey upon your opponents' weaknesses. It's also used to cheat at games of chance.

Guile

(Fellowship-based): Using bluster, intimidation, and underhandedness to get what you want. Use it to manipulate others' feelings and to hide emotions or motives. It's also used to play word games. To inspire others, use Persuasion.

Handling

(Brawn-based): Domesticating and training of common animals. You can also sail water vessels, from large ships to small rowboats. It also represents your ability to drive stagecoaches and other vehicles. Finally, it covers animal care and maintenance of vehicles and vessels.

Insight

(Perception-based): Remembering events and sensing underlying intentions. It relies on hearing and vision. For your normal five senses, use Awareness.

Leechcraft

(Intelligence-based): Understanding the spiritual workings of the body and how the wounded can be treated by paying heed to the temperaments. It is used to Bind Wounds to heal Damage, Bloodletting for diseases, and treat Afflictions and Injuries with Chirurgery.

Layman's View of Medicine

Modern ideas about germs and bacteria are unknown. Sickness is attributed to excess humours (bodily fluids), miasma (bad air), and the influence of evil spirits. To that end, Leechcraft represents the knowledge of physiology and its interconnection with the spiritual world.

Melee

(Combat-based): Wielding makeshift and other handheld weapons. It allows you to identify other melee weapons and make simple repairs. It also allows you to cobble together new makeshift weapons from new and used materials.

Occultism

(Willpower-based): Channeling the divine magic of a deity from the Well of Souls and weaving the strands of the arcane from beyond the Ethereal Veil. It can identify strange symbols, interpret omens, and form pacts with entities from the Vault of Night.

Persuasion

(Fellowship-based): Change attitudes, beliefs, or emotions, and haggling over prices. You can also use it to entertain, write poetry, and provide leadership. For lies, false accounts, or con games, use Guile. To intimidate someone, use Guile.

Ranged

(Combat-based): Wielding weapons used at a distance. This includes shooting bows, targeting with arbalests, and throwing weapons. It also allows you to perform general repairs on them. For firearms, use Blackpowder.

Resolve

(Willpower-based): Keeping calm under pressure. It allows you to steel your mind, focusing on your inner strength to resist mental Peril. You can also extract answers from an unwilling subject through interrogation using physical and psychological torture.

Stealth

(Agility-based): Using concealment in the wilderness, hiding in crowds, and causing distractions to move about without being seen or heard. You can also lay in wait to ambush others. Stalking someone in a group and hiding caches of loot or hiding horses and vehicles are also part of this Skill.

Survival

(Perception-based): Determining routes using landmarks and the stars. You know about local flora and fauna and can live off the land, hunt, and forage for food. It also confers street knowledge and how to navigate safely through local gangs and politics.

Thievery

(Agility-based): Performing sleight of hand and picking pockets. You can bypass locked doors and chests without a key, disable security contrivances and elaborate traps, and use simple misdirection to palm objects. To sneak, use Stealth, and for lies, use Guile.

Toughness

(Brawn-based): Leaning on your stamina and endurance to overcome fatigue. It reflects the ability to undergo exposure to the elements, avoid physical Peril, and hold your breath underwater. To resist horrific situations, use Resolve.

Rolling a Skill Test

Step 1: Before Stating An Action You Wish To Take, Determine How Stressed And Tired Your Survivor Is By Looking At The Peril Condition Track. It represents the hardship your survivor has endured between periods of rest. The value ranges from no penalty to -20%.

In the middle of a fight with a watchman, Sarah's survivor, Suspirianci, wants to rig a lantern with a charge of blackpowder to explode. She is currently at -5% to Skill Tests on the Peril Condition Track, so Suspirianci begins with a -5%.

Step 2: State An Action Your Survivor Will Take, And The GM Will Declare The Difficulty Rating Of The Test And The Skill You Need To Roll For.

Difficulty Rating imparts additional ease or hardship to a Test. Most are treated as (Normal +/-0%). But sometimes, the GM will assign hardship or ease (Difficulty Rating) due to external factors:

Easy: +20% To Your Skill Test

Normal: +/-0% to Your Skill Test

Hard: -20% To Your Skill Test

The GM tells Suspirianci to roll a Hard Blackpowder Test. She is suffering a -5% on Skill Tests from the Peril Condition Track, and the Test is (Hard -20%), making it a -25%.

Step 3: Find The Skill On Your Survivor Sheet And Count The Skill Ranks You've Unlocked. Each Rank adds +10%. You can still try a Test even if you don't have Ranks in a Skill.

Suspirianci is at -5% from the Peril Condition Track, and the Difficulty Rating is (Hard -20%). Since she has three Skill Ranks in Blackpowder (+30%), she'd have a 5%.

Step 4: Find The Primary Attribute Value Related To The Skill And Add It To This Value. Primary Attributes represent your raw mental, physical, and spiritual capabilities. Every Skill is related to one Primary Attribute, with a value ranging from 32% to 65%.

Suspirianci is at -5% from the Peril Condition Track, and the Difficulty Rating is (Hard -20%), but she has three Skill Ranks in Blackpowder (+30%) for a total adjustment of +5%. Blackpowder is related to her Combat value of 59%, so she'd have 64%.

Step 5: Grab d100, Call Out To The GM What Your Total Chance Is, And Roll The Dice. Your total chance can be at most 99% but cannot be less than 1%. If the results are equal to or less than your total chance, you succeed at the Test. If the results exceed the total chance, you fail the Test. If the dice show matching numbers (such as a '4' and '4'), you generate either a Critical Success or Critical Failure.

Suspirianci has a 64% chance on her Blackpowder Test. She rolls a 46%. Suspirianci succeeded on her Test!

Success & Failure

The context of the scene or the GM will interpret what happens whenever you succeed on a Test. Whenever you fail, however, something goes wrong. The GM will work with you to narrate those consequences. Always remember that failure must not stop the story completely. Even when a player fails, there must be a way forward—perhaps at the cost of time, risk, or sacrifice. The GM will be the ultimate judge.

Finally, you can choose to automatically fail a Test at any time (such as having your survivor become Drunk).

Crit Success & Crit Failure

Sometimes, when you roll a d100, the first number on the tens die matches the unit die (such as rolling a face “3” on your tens die and a face “3” on your unit die). This results in two outcomes:

Critical Success: You achieved what you wanted in a daring way! Along with succeeding on your Test, you also trigger other special effects tied to fight actions, spells, Talents, or a narrative benefit. However, you cannot re-roll a Critical Success using Fortune Coins or Talents.

Suspirianci has a 64% chance on her Blackpowder Test. To Critically Succeed, she'd have to roll a 55%, 44%, 33%, 22%, or 11%.

Critical Failure: You messed up in a memorable way! Along with failing your Test, you also trigger other special effects tied to fight actions, spells, and Talents, or a narrative drawback. However, you cannot re-roll a Critical Failure using Fortune Coins or Talents.

Suspirianci has a 64% chance on her Blackpowder Test. To Critically Fail, she'd have to roll a 66%, 77%, 88%, or 99%.

Rolling 01% Or 100%: A result of 1% (faces “0” and “1”) is always treated as a Critical Success, and a result of 100% (faces “0” and “0”) is always treated as a Critical Failure.

Assist Die

You can help other survivors with their Skill Tests. Some weapons and Talents can also contribute. To assist on a Test, you must have at least one Skill Rank in the Skill being Tested. Hand 1d10 to the player you're assisting.

Unlike regular Tests, you will roll 2d10. Pick the better result (usually, the lower number) for your tens die. Then, assess the units die by rolling a separate 1d10 to determine the outcome. Calculate your final result to see if you succeeded or failed the Test. You can only take advantage of 1 Assist Die on a Test.

Pipistrella has a Skill Rank in Blackpowder and offers to help Suspirianci concoct her Blackpowder explosive device. Suspirianci rolls 2d10 and produces a result of "9" and "5". She picks the result of "5" for the tens die, then rolls a final 1d10 and comes up with a "3". This produces a calculated result of 53%.

Hindrance Die

In certain situations, you may suffer a Hindrance Die. It works nearly the same as above, but instead of rolling 2d10 for your tens die value and choosing the better result, pick the worst one. You can only suffer 1 Hindrance Die on a Test.

Edge Cases: If you are faced with a situation where you gain an Assist Die but suffer a Hindrance Die, they cancel each other out.

Fail Forward

Sometimes, a failed Test doesn't always mean total failure. For example, when you're sneaking, a GM may ask for a Stealth Test. The circumstances may be so much in your favor that failing the Test won't reveal your location, but it might alert guards to the presence of an intruder.

Instead of outright failing your Test on a failure, the GM will declare that it's Fail Forward (e.g., roll a Fail Forward Athletics Test to climb). Failure would result in suffering 1d10+1, 2d10+2, or 3d10+3 Peril, based on the relative challenge and conditions of the Test a GM assigns. However, Critical Failures still have tragic results (such as falling while climbing).

Flip To Succeed

In exceptional cases, you will Flip To Succeed in the dice results. Roll your units and tens dice together, but don't designate which die is which. Instead, compare both outcomes and pick the most favorable result.

What if Suspirianci could Flip To Succeed in Blackpowder Tests? If she'd rolled 95%, Suspirianci would "flip" the dice, treating it as 15% (the better result).

Flip To Fail

Sometimes, you will be asked to Flip To Fail the dice results. Roll your units and tens dice together, but don't designate which die is which. Instead, compare both outcomes and pick the worst result.

What if Suspirianci was in a situation that called for her to Flip To Fail on Blackpowder Tests? If she'd rolled 18%, Suspirianci would "flip" the dice, treating it as 81% (the worse result).

Edge Cases: You cannot flip the results of 1% or 100%. Furthermore, if you Flip To Succeed and the situation calls for Flip To Fail, they cancel each other out.

Narrate The Outcome

Remember: everyone is telling a shared story. Rolling Skill Tests represents a pivotal moment—begin by outlining your desired outcome so everyone understands the stakes. After rolling the dice, interpret the result and narrate the events. Explain your survivor's actions, speech, and thoughts.

Resisting Effects

You will sometimes be required to resist a foe's effects. The Difficulty Rating always translates into the opposite value on the chart. However, if a foe rolls a Critical Success, you cannot attempt to resist (and visa versa).

Attacker's Difficulty Rating Was . . .	Defender's Difficulty Rating Is . . .
Hard -20%	Easy +20%
Normal +/-0%	Normal +/-0%
Easy +20%	Hard -20%

Suspirianci's Blackpowder Test was (Hard -20%) to rig a lantern to explode. The watchman who picks it up gets an (Easy +20%) Coordination Test to avoid the explosion.

Exceptions-based Mechanics

This is a game of exceptions-based rules, and effects don't stack. This means that if a fight action, effect, spell, or Talent makes an exception to a core rule, the exception takes precedence.

Distance, Size, & Time

Horizontal Distance: Measured in paces. 1 pace is equal to 2 steps. Human cultures sometimes say something is "a stone's throw away," a walking distance of less than 1 minute. There are 1,560 paces in a mile. Three miles is equal to 1 league.

Personal Height: Measured in stature. Folk often say that a person is Small, Average, Large, Huge, or Gargantuan in stature. Animals tend to be **Small**, humans are **Average**, while water panthers that prowl the swamps are **Large**. Giraffes that wander distant vistas are **Huge**, whereas the

behemoths of the sea hunted for their blubber are **Gargantuan**.

Building Height: Measured in storeys. A storey is equal to the height of 3 Average people. A tower's height is typically 3 storeys, a castle keep is usually 15 storeys, whereas the stars in the Vault of Night are impossible to measure.

Vertical Height For Weapons: When measuring distances with weapons for vertical height, simply assume 6 paces equals 1 storey.

Time: 1 minute is equal to 60 moments. Human cultures sometimes call 1 hour "a stone's turn" (the distance it takes for the sun to move 1 hour on a sundial).

Hours & Weeks: 6 hours is equal to 1 shift. There are 4 shifts in a day. Most human cultures tend to work 2 shifts a day, 6 days a week, taking a day of religious observance off work.

Calendar & Year: One week is 7 days, 28 days a month, and 336 days a year. Human cultures call the days Firstday, Seconday, Thirdday, etc. The months are the Lairs of the Zodiac, named after the 12 constellations that rise closest to the northern star. Most people mark each of the four solstices as the turn of the seasons from spring, summer, autumn, and winter. Heavenly bodies make one cycle around the world in 1 year.

Fortune & Misfortune Coins

When the dice don't work in your favor, you can call upon a dramatic resource to even the odds. Once a session formally starts, players can spend 1 Fortune Coin from a shared pool to gain any of these benefits:

Change a d6: When you or someone else rolls 1d6, spend 1 Fortune Coin to treat the result as face "6". However, you cannot spend more than 1 Fortune Coin to change multiple dice into their highest value on the same Turn.

Gain an Action Point: In a fight scene, spend 1 Fortune Coin to gain 1 Action Point (AP). There is no limit to the number of Fortune Coins you can spend to gain AP on the same Turn.

Reduce Damage or Peril: Immediately after suffering Damage or Peril, spend 1 Fortune Coin and roll 1d10. Reduce the Damage or Peril you suffered by the value you rolled. If you roll face "10", roll another 1d10 and add it to the total. There is no cap to the number of face "10s" you can roll. However, you cannot spend more than 1 Fortune Coin on the same Turn.

Re-roll a Skill Test: Immediately after you roll a d100, spend 1 Fortune Coin to re-roll it, but you must accept the results. You cannot spend a Fortune Coin to re-roll a Critical Failure.

Fortune Begets Misfortune

Whenever a player uses a Fortune Coin, it immediately converts into a Misfortune Coin and goes into the GM's Misfortune Pool.

The GM may use Misfortune Coins to take advantage of the above benefits for NPCs and creatures they control. Once a GM spends a Misfortune Coin, it transfers back into the players' Fortune Pool as a Fortune Coin.

Resetting Fortune & Misfortune

When the session ends, all Fortune & Misfortune Coins are set aside, and the ritual to determine the Fortune & Misfortune Pools begins anew.

Gameplay Rituals

When you start or end a session, follow these rituals to bookend it:

Starting a Session

All Players Roll Initiative: The GM needs a formalized structure to control the flow. Each player rolls 2d10 and adds it to their survivor's Initiative Modifier. One player records the results, highest to lowest, on a piece of paper or a marker board called the Initiative Ladder, visible to everyone. Fortune and Misfortune Coins cannot be used to modify Initiative.

Set Fortune & Misfortune Pools: As a session begins, every player rolls 1d6. For every dice that lands on faces "1 to 5", put 1 Fortune Coin into a shared bowl in front of players (the Fortune Pool). If it lands on face "6", put 1 Misfortune Coin into a bowl for the GM (the Misfortune Pool). The GM then puts 1 free Misfortune Coin into the Misfortune Pool.

Players Participate In "Previously On . . ." The GM will kick off a reminder of the last session. Then, players will recap what happened and review their People/Places/Things Cards. Did they make new allies or enemies? Did your survivors unearth a deadly secret? Did any uncomfortable content come up from a previous session you

want to omit from future ones? Were there any house rules you wanted to introduce or change?

Ending a Session

The GM will ask players 3 questions about the session. Based on the answers, each player will individually record Reward Points (RP hereafter) earned for that session. RP should be spent before a session begins or at the very end of it to unlock new abilities.

The Three Questions

Did you show up to the session? Gain 50 RP

Did you call upon one of your Tragic Flaws at least once? Gain 50 RP

Did you call upon one of your Inner Strengths at least once? Gain 50 RP

The players talk about the session & spend RP. Guided by the GM, each player will go around the table to briefly chat about how the story impacted their survivor. Did the story lead to new understandings? Were there any house rules you wanted to introduce or change? Spend any RP to Unlock abilities.

Finally, plan for the next time you'll gather for the next session!

CHAPTER 3: YOUR LIFEPATH

Players and the GM should be in the same space to create their survivors together. This is a time when you'll spend an hour setting the tone, discussing what you want to see in the game, and taking the dice for a test drive.

The Nine Truths

ZWEIHÄNDER provides the rules of gameplay; worldbuilding is the responsibility of the GM. However, nine fundamental truths will inform your mindset around creating your survivor.

Every player should meet and work together to create their survivors. Print out a survivor sheet for each player. Everyone will also need a d100, 2 paper clips, and a pencil.

Before creating your survivors, take turns reading the Nine Truths aloud.

The First Truth: In the world you know, it is a time in which humanity abounds. Retribution and violence are hallmarks of the world you live in—the stench of venality wafts from every cobbled street and gloomy hillside. You know little of the place beyond where you were raised but have grown accustomed to this harsh reality.

The Second Truth: Elves and other ancestries of the dawn age are mostly extinct. Collectively, these folk are called the Forgotten. Their species come from civilizations that fell long ago and are more extraordinary than humans. The Forgotten have only recently resurfaced to the modern world, and seek a place to belong. These outcasts should make great allies if you can earn

their trust. Your survivor may even be one of the Forgotten ancestries.

The Third Truth: Cultural identity binds communities together as feudal bastions against the unknown. However, these ties can also construct walls between groups or sow discord from within. Prejudice sometimes manifests between the haves and the have-nots. In your case, it is related to the envy of your betters (or their envy of you).

The Fourth Truth: You pay healthy respect to superstitions and the deities but fear their influence over the future. The three principal gods of humankind are the Learner, the Martyr, and the Steward. Some pray to the Custodian, a dying god who stands at the threshold of the Well of Souls. They even beseech forbidden entities, like the Crouching One, for vengeance. But all recognize the Nightfather's influence over fortune and misfortune. Heed the gods and their warnings.

The Fifth Truth: You accept that the delicate equilibrium of black and yellow bile, blood, and phlegm forms the cornerstones of medicine. To address disease, it is customary to partake in peculiar potions, engage in bizarre rituals, and give homage to rustic barber surgeons who are treated as well as the village parson. You pay "tithe" to these surgeons to treat your maladies and wounds, spiritual or otherwise.

The Sixth Truth: You know that people who practice the "higher mysteries" of magic have either negotiated part of their soul with a

godhead or stolen their power. The interwoven threads of the Ethereal Veil keep unfettered magic from seeping into the living world. If you practice magic, your spells must be hidden from the naïve, as they fear it, and from other sorcerers, who seek to steal its secrets from you.

The Seventh Truth: Whether young or old, human or elf, a peasant or a sellsword, you have spent years in your Profession. Your life, shaped by your upbringing, has been relatively conventional. Staying close to your birthplace, you've established strong connections within the community where your skills and trade thrive. But something terrible happened in your recent past.

The Eight Truth: You faced your doom and died, but somehow reawoke three days later. . .and a new path has been laid before you. This extraordinary experience pulled you away from the life and community you knew and set you down a newer, darker path. You have found other survivors who also faced a near-death experience. Drawn together as a bulwark against the world's cruelty, your stories will be filled with discovery, pain, and catharsis.

The Ninth Truth: As you embark on this new journey, you will be put into situations challenging your morals and beliefs. Will you rage against the dying of the light as a glimmer of hope? Will you struggle in the morass of compromise? Or will you simply embrace these dark times for opportunistic ends? The answer is not simple but defines what it means to be a survivor.

The Die Is Cast

Your survivor is a mosaic of a strange but compelling mix of traits that may seem at odds as you move through the survivor creation process. Diversity is a strength, and differences between your survivors will create memorable, lasting stories.

Randomly Generated Lifepath

If you are a first-time player of **ZWEIHÄNDER Reforged**, we strongly encourage you to randomly generate your survivor, so you can experience how a lifepath system works.

If you prefer a more customized build, choose what works best to fit the vision for your survivor.

Your Birth

Your lot has already been decided by the Nightfather, favoring no person over another.

Step 1: Tier

There are three levels of play called Tiers. Each represents your survivor's collective experiences over the course of the story. There are three Tiers: Basic, Intermediate, and Advanced. You begin gameplay in Basic Tier.

Mark on the second page of your survivor sheet that you are in Basic Tier.

Step 2: Ancestry

ZWEIHÄNDER is humanocentric and cosmopolitan; thus, humans are the default ancestry, and everyone speaks their shared tongue. However, you can also play any of the Forgotten ancestries, those of unique historical and cultural traditions.

Languages: If you are human, you speak Auld (the common tongue) and a cultural tongue your GM will help you define. If you are one of the Forgotten, you know your ancestral tongue and Auld.

Ancestral Talents: People are individuals but share a uniquely grouped set of traditions passed down from generation to generation. These Ancestral Talents illustrate regional and cultural diversity within their own kind while expressing the differences between the other ancestries. As humanity is the most abundant ancestry in the world, they possess the most significant range of Ancestral Traits. You will Unlock 1 Ancestral Talent now in Basic Tier and can Unlock new ones at Intermediate and Advanced Tiers.

Either choose human or roll a d100 to determine your ancestry, then write it on the first page of your survivor sheet. Write your languages down on the second page of your survivor sheet. Roll a d100 on its related table to Unlock 1 Ancestral Talent. Write its name and effects on the second page of your sheet.

d100	All Ancestries
1 to 2	Awakened
3 to 4	Dhampyr - Unavailable In Session Zero
5 to 6	Dwarf
7 to 8	Elf
9 to 10	Fane
11 to 12	Firbolg
13 to 14	Gargoyle
15 to 16	Grendel
17 to 86	Human
87 to 88	Midfolk
89 to 90	Selkie - Unavailable In Session Zero
91 to 92	Siabra
93 to 94	Tattertail
95 to 96	Ubasti
97 to 98	Vargr - Unavailable In Session Zero
99 to 100	Woodwose

Human

Languages: Auld & cultural tongue



During the dawn era, your forebears' vainglorious nature brought about a time of suffering when they tried to exert their power over the gods, but failed. This arrogance led to expulsion from the heavenly garden, and humans were made mortal. However, they wasted no time following their banishment. Your ancestors swiftly evolved from the clever apes they were into becoming the most influential civilization in the known world.

Your people revere thinkers and tricksters, priests and charlatans, politicians and provocateurs alike. Humanity foists its arts, gods, and languages upon each other while simultaneously fetishizing the cultural practices of others it assimilates. But their most cherished value is legacy, and you've been taught to nurture ambition. You are destined to leave your mark on this world. If not? An epitaph on your gravestone that honors your deeds in life will suffice.

d100	Human Ancestral Talent	Effect
1 to 2	Adventurous Spirit	At the start of a session, flip a coin. If it lands on heads, move one step up the Damage Condition Track.
3 to 4	Ancestral Spellcraft	Unavailable In Session Zero
5 to 6	Auspicious Birth	Increase any Primary Attribute by +5% (not to exceed 50%)
7 to 8	Birds of a Feather	Unavailable In Session Zero
9 to 10	Blood Bond	Choose one survivor now. When they move one or more steps down the Peril Condition Track, you can suffer in their stead as they ignore it.
11 to 12	Child of Fortune	Unavailable In Session Zero
13 to 14	Child of the Demiurge	Foes classified as Animals and Beasts suffer a Hindrance Die to attack you.
15 to 16	Consult the Gods	Unavailable In Session Zero
17 to 18	Corrupted Blood	When you suffer an Injury, roll 1d6. If it lands on face "6," optionally ignore the Injury but gain 1 Corruption.
19 to 20	Cradled by Fortune	Unavailable In Session Zero
21 to 22	Custodian's Usher	When you move a foe to Dying!, take a Misfortune Coin from the GM and put it into the players' Fortune Pool.
23 to 24	Danger Sense	Unavailable In Session Zero
25 to 26	Derring-do	When you roll a Critical Success with d100 in a fight scene, gain 1 Action Point.
27 to 28	Devil's Advocate	Unavailable In Session Zero
29 to 30	Dimsight	You can see in the dark above ground, provided you are not near a light source.
31 to 32	Distant Lineage	Unavailable In Session Zero

d100	Human Ancestral Talent	Effect
33 to 34	Do As I Do	At the start of a session, select one Talent you've learned. All survivors can take advantage of it as if they had the Talent themselves.
35 to 36	Esoteric Memory	Unavailable In Session Zero
37 to 38	Favored by the Nightfather	When you spend Fortune Coins to re-roll a Skill Test but fail, put it back into the Fortune Pool.
39 to 40	Final Countdown	Unavailable In Session Zero
41 to 42	Forged in Battle	When calculating Damage, add the number of Skill Ranks you have in its related Skill (+1 for 1 Rank, +2 for 2 Ranks, +3 for 3 Ranks) for total Damage.
43 to 44	Fortune's Wheel	Unavailable In Session Zero
45 to 46	Grim Resolve	Immediately after suffering Melee Damage, spend 1 Fortune Coin to completely ignore it. This is usable once per session.
47 to 48	Grotto Sense	Unavailable In Session Zero
49 to 50	Herald of the Crouching One	Whenever you choose to kill a foe when they're Dying!, move one step up the Peril Condition Track.
51 to 52	High Piety	Unavailable In Session Zero
53 to 54	I Get By	You can always provide yourself with food and water to live on in urban areas.
55 to 56	Jack of all Trades	Unavailable In Session Zero
57 to 58	Justice Nevermore	You can automatically escape restraints and cannot be Grabbed in a fight scene.
59 to 60	Learner's Arbiter	Unavailable In Session Zero
61 to 62	Leviathan's Mettle	You can use multiple smelling salts in a 24 hour period without suffering the negative effects.

d100	Human Ancestral Talent	Effect
63 to 64	MacGyver	Unavailable In Session Zero
65 to 66	Martyr's Progeny	When you move down the Damage Condition Track from magic, you move one less step down (to a minimum of 1).
67 to 68	Miraculous Healing	Unavailable In Session Zero
69 to 70	Mountain Among Men	Permanently adjust your [BB] by +1, and two-handed weapons only take up 1 weapon slot.
71 to 72	My Fate is Sealed	Unavailable In Session Zero
73 to 74	Natural Selection	Permanently adjust one Primary Attribute to 55%.
75 to 76	One Foot in the Grave	Unavailable In Session Zero
77 to 78	Preternatural Instinct	Permanently reduce Move Action cost by -1 Action Points (to a minimum of 1 AP).
79 to 80	Rogue Scholar	Unavailable In Session Zero
81 to 82	Scion of the God-Emperor	When you suffer Damage or Peril from magic, spend 1 Fortune Coin to completely ignore it. This is usable once per session.
83 to 84	Seemingly Harmless	Unavailable In Session Zero
85 to 86	Servant of the Steward	When you aren't Starving, add +2 to Peril Thresholds.
87 to 88	Seventh Sense	Unavailable In Session Zero
89 to 90	Shadow Dancer	With a successful Stealth Test, you can disappear entirely from sight, even in front of onlookers. Spend 2 Action Points in a fight scene to do so.
91 to 92	Sterner Stuff	Unavailable In Session Zero
93 to 94	Survival of the Fittest	When you fail a Resolve Test to resist becoming Stressed, Frightened, or Terrified, temporarily increase your Peril Threshold by +3 while in the vicinity of what provoked it.

Human Ancestral Talent		
d100	Talent	Effect
95 to 96	Touch of Brimstone	Unavailable In Session Zero
97 to 98	Twist of Fate	When a Fortune or Misfortune Coin is about to be spent, call out, "The Nightfather intervenes!" The effect doesn't occur, and the coin is discarded. This is usable once per session.
99 to 100	Winter King's Embrace	Unavailable In Session Zero

Awakened

Languages: Auld and any other ancestral tongue



You are one of the awakened—a living statue sculpted in the image of another and has recently stirred from an eternal slumber. Crafted from inanimate matter by the hands of an artisan, you could have begun as a waxen simulacrum of a minstrel, a vivisectionist's cadaver, a pitcher-bearing Galatean statue, or an outstretched marble deity. Upon “awakening,” your creator's name was the first word uttered; it became your namesake.

You are a hybrid of non-living material and mortal flesh. Your veins may teem with blood, quicksilver, or salt, with organs of living muscle, halite, or clockwork. As you contend with your newfound existence, it is doubtless that your journey will be filled with curiosity and catharsis. Others will teach you what it means to be alive, to be human, to be something the artisan never intended. And with each discovery, parts of yourself will reveal themselves—quite literally—to the world.

Awakened Ancestral Talent		
d100	Talent	Effect
1 to 8	Body of Bronze	You can withdraw your heart from your body for [WB] hours before suffering 3d10+3 Peril every minute after that. The heart casts light outwards by 3 paces.
9 to 16	Clay Construct	Unavailable In Session Zero
17 to 25	Clockwork Innards	When you fail a Skill Test, spend 1 Fortune Coin to Critically Succeed instead. This is usable once per session.
26 to 33	Iron Giant	Unavailable In Session Zero
34 to 41	Living Sculpture	With a successful Resolve or Toughness Test, you stand perfectly still, resembling a lifelike sculpture. When you succeed, add +3 to Damage Thresholds until you move again. If you do so during a fight scene, you must spend 1 Action Point. You can stand still for [WB] minutes at a time.
42 to 49	Magical Machine	Unavailable In Session Zero
50 to 58	Marble Beauty	Once per session, force a foe to resist with an Awareness Test. If they fail, they're Awestruck. While Awestruck, they cannot initiate violence toward you until you initiate violence toward them or their allies.
59 to 67	Quicksilver Innards	Unavailable In Session Zero
68 to 76	Reanimated Cadaver	When you are moved to Dying!, gain 3 Action Points and spend it immediately. If you bring that same foe to Dying!, move to Grievously Wounded instead and ignore the Injury you would have gotten.
77 to 85	Scarecrow	Unavailable In Session Zero
86 to 92	Steam-powered	When you are at -5% to Skill Tests on the Peril Condition Track, increase your Initiative Modifier by +1. If at -10%, add +2 or if at -15%, add +3. These effects aren't cumulative.
93 to 100	Wooden Warrior	Unavailable In Session Zero

Dwarf

Languages: Dwain and Auld



Forged from the world's essences, dwarves possess a chthonic and ever-changing spirit, with plaited hair and beards that trail in their wake. This has led to ridiculous stories about your people, such as how the clans are ruled by half-naked, woad-covered warriors with orange-dyed hair and two axes to grind. While not inherently warlike, this does touch on one of the dwarves' peculiar practices: their lists of grudges.

Your dark-eyed brethren brook no tolerance for foolishness, and neither do you. Each dwarf carries their own list. Once a grievance is recorded, they pursue its settlement with stubborn determination. Once reconciled, they burn the paper and use its ashes to tattoo themselves. This unwavering determination and stubbornness is what led you to a near-death experience. Your ancestral grievances must be set aside if you wish to flourish. As a hammer shapes iron into a sword, your newfound destiny is yours to reforge.

Dwarven Ancestral Talent		
d100	Talent	Effect
1 to 8	Cavesight	You can see in the dark below ground, providing you can hear.
9 to 16	Children of the Earth	Unavailable In Session Zero
17 to 25	Consume Alcohol	While Drunk, you never suffer from its negative effects.
26 to 33	Dwarven Warfare	Unavailable In Session Zero
34 to 41	Grudgebearer	When you roll faces "5 to 6" on a Damage die with Melee weapons, roll another 1d6 and add it to the total.
42 to 49	Ironclad	Unavailable In Session Zero
50 to 58	Physical Prowess	Reference [AB] or [BB] for Movement Rate. You are also immune to the Weaken fight action.
59 to 67	Runemarked Glory	Unavailable In Session Zero
68 to 76	Stentorian Voice	Reference [FB] or [BB] to determine how many people you influence with Fellowship-based Skills. You are also immune to the Taunt fight action.
77 to 85	Stoneheaded	Unavailable In Session Zero
86 to 92	Strength of the Mountain	You can carry up to 6 weapons and 6 tools (instead of the normal limitation of 3).
93 to 100	Unbent & Unbroken	Unavailable In Session Zero

Elf

Languages: Empyrean and Auld



Long ago, majestic beings of light and shadow escaped the elemental prisons within the Vault of Night. Their transcendent, genderless forms occupied an enigmatic form of existence, where reproduction is a matter of Etheric mysticism rather than physicality. As the stars were remade in the first cataclysm, your people's crystal castles fell from the Vault of Night to the living world below. In an event they refer to as The Fall, they'd found their empyrean immortality had been robbed. They took upon the collective name of elf, a word meaning "star-fallen."

You appear every bit as fey, androgynous, and inhumanly bewitching as your ancestors. However, unlike the elves of yore, you are born of flesh and blood, are mortal, and have other human needs. Alas, the elves are afflicted, their existence now but a transient spark against the eternal blaze of longevity that once was. This harsh curse manifests as a cold detachment or profound melancholy inside you. You cannot wait to cast aside this mantle of human-like impermanence once you discover your true destiny.

Elven Ancestral Talent		
d100	Talent	Effect
1 to 8	Ageless Knowledge	Reference Occultism or Resolve to resist magical effects.
9 to 16	Deadly Aim	Unavailable In Session Zero
17 to 25	Fey Treachery	When you first deal Damage against a foe in a fight scene, add 1d6 Damage. You can take advantage of this by switching between multiple foes.
26 to 33	Hand of the Veil	Unavailable In Session Zero
34 to 41	Immortal Blessing	Whenever you awaken from 6 consecutive hours of sleep, move one step up the Damage Condition Track. You can do this once every 24 hours.
42 to 49	Lament of the Ages	Unavailable In Session Zero
50 to 58	Meditative State	You only need 3 consecutive hours of sleep to restore your Peril Condition Track. In addition, you are always restored to Fine, even in unsafe places.
59 to 67	Mistwalker	Unavailable In Session Zero
68 to 76	Nature's Own	When moving through rural areas, you leave no trace of your passing and cannot be found with magic or Skills.
77 to 85	Nighteyes	Unavailable In Session Zero
86 to 92	Way of the Bow	When you roll faces "5 to 6" on a Damage die with Ranged weapons, roll another 1d6 and add it to the total.
93 to 100	Wyrdsight	Unavailable In Session Zero

Fane

Languages: Fanetouch and Auld



As the stars exploded and life came to be, the reptilian-like fane (*feyn*) emerged from the primordial muck. They were a hyper-intelligent species, logicians who denied the existence of gods and the miracles surrounding them. Yet the fane was not long for this world, as your people were decimated in the first cataclysm. Those who remained crawled back to the swamps and pondered their future.

Few of your folk remain in this world. Most meet a gruesome end in their struggle for truth. But you didn't. When you stood face-to-face with death, you had an epiphany: the fane are destined to die out. You'll carve out your own path to seek the truth. On this road, you'll need to rely on strangers who don't completely understand what it means to be abandoned by the gods.

Fane Ancestral		
d100	Talent	Effect
1 to 8	Amphibious Ancestry	You can see and breathe underwater, provided you are below its surface.
9 to 16	Blend In	Unavailable In Session Zero
17 to 25	Coldly Calculating	You're immune to mind control magic and can see through illusions.
26 to 33	Cut & Run	Unavailable In Session Zero
34 to 41	Hide of Serpentine Scales	When unarmored, add +2 to Peril Thresholds.
42 to 49	Liquid Poise	Unavailable In Session Zero
50 to 58	Monstrous Leap	You can leap up to 1 storey without fail and can drop 1 storey without suffering falling Damage.
59 to 67	Nimble Undulation	Unavailable In Session Zero
68 to 76	Razor-sharp Claws	Gain +5% to attack with Melee weapons and +1 Damage.
77 to 85	Serpentine Fangs	Unavailable In Session Zero
86 to 92	Third Eye	You can see in the dark below ground, providing you can hear.
93 to 100	Tongue of Snakes	You can speak a myriad of languages associated with amphibians, reptiles, and snakes. You also have one of these allies as a companion (Small Animal with the Minion Template). Spend 1 Fortune Coin to see through their eyes for 10 minutes. Should it ever suffer Damage, they immediately flee and return to you 24 hours later.

Firbolg

Languages: Auld and any other ancestral tongue



“Ogre” is a name used in storybooks to describe befuddled, corrupted brutes who ate humans. Damn the stories, though, that's not you! You come from a sturdy stock of people called the firbolg (*fear-bolg*), and just like your ancestors, you have wide shoulders and gravitate toward big stories and larger-than-life experiences. Bright clothing, a celebratory attitude, and crude humor are your hallmarks.

Possessed with insatiable wanderlust, you gravitate towards those who show an inkling of this same spirit for adventure. Despite your strong sense of independence, you have little tolerance for dishonesty. When truth and honor are withheld, you tend to lash out at its perpetrators. Violently. But your fate is not sealed, nor is that of your friends. You'll smash destiny in the face with your face if need be!

Firbolg Ancestral Talent		
d100	Talent	Effect
1 to 8	Big Folk	Permanently adjust your [BB] by +1, and two-handed weapons only take up 1 weapon slot.
9 to 16	Broad-bellied	Unavailable In Session Zero
17 to 25	Camaraderie	For every survivor in a fight scene, add a cumulative +1 to Movement Rate.
26 to 33	Calloused Body	Unavailable In Session Zero
34 to 41	Frightening Bellow	When you succeed at Persuasion Tests to intimidate someone, they also suffer 1d10+[BB] Peril.
42 to 49	Hunger Pangs	Unavailable In Session Zero
50 to 58	Leathery Skin	When unarmored, add +2 to Damage Thresholds.
59 to 67	Mighty Thews	Unavailable In Session Zero
68 to 76	Ogrish Curse	When you suffer an Injury, roll 1d6. If it lands on face "6," optionally ignore the Injury but gain 1 Corruption.
77 to 85	Overwhelming Grip	Unavailable In Session Zero
86 to 92	Rotgut Spray	Spend 1 Action Points in a fight scene to immediately inflict 1d10+[BB] fire Damage against an Engaged foe. You then become Drunk. If you do this a second time in a 24 hour period, you move to Exhausted! and fall unconscious for 24 hours.
93 to 100	Vigorous Metabolism	Unavailable In Session Zero

Gargoyle

Languages: Auld and any other ancestral tongue



Stone towers and cathedrals are decorated with silent, looming grotesques and chimeras of limestone. Some whisper that these statues were once human, turned to stone for their sins. Unfortunately, you are one of these cursed beings. Not every gargoyle is hewn from the same slab. Some of your kin turn to stone as they sleep. Others escaped these age-old constraints, able to walk in daylight or soar overhead upon leathery wings.

You used to walk among humanity unnoticed, betraying your identity only when you shrugged off your cloak or by the rustling of your stunted wings. Were you a vigilant guardian of the city, prowling the darkness to confront those who posed a threat? Or did you live in disguise as a simple peasant, silently working and returning to the rooftops as the sun set? Either way, your life changed the day when your rookery was demolished. Now a new path is lain before you; it's time to contend with the curse that turned you into a gargoyle. Perhaps there's a way to become human again.

Gargoyle Ancestral Talent		
d100	Talent	Effect
1 to 8	Chimeric Facade	You never grow hungry, and only need to sleep for 3 hours to recover your Peril Condition Track to Fine. However, you cannot use laudanum or smelling salts, and a healer must substitute Craft to move you up the Damage & Peril Condition Tracks.
9 to 16	Crumbling Grotesque	Unavailable In Session Zero
17 to 25	Dark Flight	Spend 1 Fortune Coin to fly at your Movement Rate for up to 6 hours. If you suffer Damage or Peril during this time, you must succeed on a Resolve Test or you fall.
26 to 33	Ethereal Innards	Unavailable In Session Zero
34 to 41	Fend off Evil	Foes classified as Beyonders, Corrupted, and the Supernatural suffer a Hindrance Die to attack you.
42 to 49	Fleshcage	Unavailable In Session Zero
50 to 58	Horrific Claws	Gain +5% to attack with Melee weapons and +1 Damage.
59 to 67	Limestone Body	Unavailable In Session Zero
68 to 76	Mind's Eye	You're immune to mind control magic and can see through illusions.
77 to 85	Monstrous Grip	Unavailable In Session Zero
86 to 92	Rooftop Prowler	Permanently reduce falling, fire, and magic Damage by -3.
93 to 100	Turn to Stone	Unavailable In Session Zero

Grendel

Languages: Bray and Auld



Yours are a satyr-like people who straddle the line between a cult of personality and a force of jackanapes. Eeking out an existence on the fringes of society, your people revel in vice and ritual. Living on communes called a “wild hunt,” they attract like-minded folk who escaped the trappings of civilized life. The wild hunt is constantly in a belladonna's haze. And it's because of their blissful ignorance that you left.

In the depths of a hallucination, you saw your own death. You engaged in a psychic battle with your shadow self, barely surviving. But the grendel of the commune either didn't believe you or couldn't understand its meaning. In those same visions, you saw others who had to confront their own doom. These companions can help you navigate the dark reveries. With them, it is time to form a new wild hunt: one that'll take on the world.

**Grendel
Ancestral**

d100	Talent	Effect
1 to 8	Animal Magnetism	Foes classified as Animals will never attack you.
9 to 16	Calming Disposition	Unavailable In Session Zero
17 to 25	Half-Beast	Permanently reduce Move Action cost by -1 Action Points (to a minimum of 1 AP).
26 to 33	Lamb to the Slaughter	Unavailable In Session Zero
34 to 41	Mender's Hands	Gain an Assist Die when you roll Leechcraft Tests. In addition, you move a patient one additional step up the Damage Condition Track when Binding Wounds.
42 to 49	Musky Odor	Unavailable In Session Zero
50 to 58	Nature's Wisdom	When you fail an Awareness or Handling Test, you may re-roll it but must accept the results. Ignore Peril Condition Track penalties associated with these two Skills.
59 to 67	One With Nature	Unavailable In Session Zero
68 to 76	Rear Up	When you deal Damage with a Melee weapon and the foe moves two or more steps down the Damage Condition Track, they are knocked Prone.
77 to 85	Silent Stalker	Unavailable In Session Zero
86 to 92	War Bray	When you Taunt in a fight scene, foes cannot resist and suffer double the negative effects.
93 to 100	Way of the Wild	Unavailable In Session Zero

Midfolk

Languages: Hobb-talk and Auld



The blessed offspring of the forest settled into human society in the middle of the current era (thus their namesake). Living in large pastoral communities called a hobb, the midfolk strive to live in natural harmony with the world around them. They ingratiate themselves with one another to support the greater good. Like the bees they raise, midfolk work together in colonies, each having their own duties. While its farmers keep the apiaries and the farms, the irregulars protect the hobb, and the elected reeve decides the fate of the hobb.

A collectivist mindset is nearly inexorable to your very being. But for all of your family's communal sensibilities and friendliness, you are different. Back at the hobb, you met with a wandering oracle. They foretold the way you were going to die. On the road, you faced your doom but was somehow pulled out of its way, surviving. You now seek out the truth and will catalog your journey for future generations.

Midfolk Ancestral Talent		
d100	Talent	Effect
1 to 8	Bend Like a Reed	Reference [BB] or [FB] to determine your Damage Thresholds. You are also immune to the Taunt fight action.
9 to 16	Cat-like Reflexes	Unavailable In Session Zero
17 to 25	Chaos is a Ladder	Whenever you or another survivor near you Critically Fails a Skill Test, move one step up the Peril Condition Track.
26 to 33	Craven	Unavailable In Session Zero
34 to 41	Deep Sleeper	You only need 3 consecutive hours of sleep to restore your Peril Condition Track. In addition, you are always restored to Fine, even in unsafe places.
42 to 49	Farsight	Unavailable In Session Zero
50 to 58	Fieldwarden	Gain +5% to attack with Ranged weapons and +1 Damage.
59 to 67	Fleet-footed	Unavailable In Session Zero
68 to 76	Humble Beginnings	When you fail a Folklore or Handling Test, you may re-roll it but must accept the results. Ignore Peril Condition Track penalties associated with these two Skills.
77 to 85	Low Blow	Unavailable In Session Zero
86 to 92	Rational Mind	You're immune to mind control magic and can see through illusions.
93 to 100	Well-Fed	Unavailable In Session Zero

Siabra

Language: Stillsign and Auld



The enigmatic, utterly otherworldly siabra (*see-ah-bra*) live on the fringes of society. Your culture is centered around worshiping a revered ancestor, one who has been carefully preserved and kept safe by sacred warriors. The siabra have three fingers on each hand and have unusual eyes. They communicate using “stillsign,” a series of gestures using body, hands, and facial expressions. The siabra reserve words for moments of intense emotion.

Traditionally, siabra wear ceremonial masks that embody a single expression important to your culture. It is considered shameful to reveal your face to outsiders. But you broke tradition and were exiled for it. You now haunt the roads, carving a new path forward. A new name is all you need on this pilgrimage: Dustman, Revenant, or Silencio are great choices. However, all roads inevitably lead back to the will of your ancestors.

Siabran Ancestral Talent		
d100	Talent	Effect
1 to 8	Mask of Apprehension	Permanently reduce all Peril you suffer by -3.
9 to 16	Mask of Contempt	Unavailable In Session Zero
17 to 25	Mask of Delight	When a fight scene begins, you always benefit from a Surprise Round.
26 to 33	Mask of Fear	Unavailable In Session Zero
34 to 41	Mask of Fury	When you roll faces "5 to 6" on a Damage die with Ranged weapons, roll another 1d6 and add it to the total.
42 to 49	Mask of Guilt	Unavailable In Session Zero
50 to 58	Mask of Intrigue	Once per session, force a foe to resist with Awareness. If they fail, they're Awestruck. While Awestruck, they cannot initiate violence toward you until you initiate violence toward them or their allies.
59 to 67	Mask of Joy	Unavailable In Session Zero
68 to 76	Mask of Revulsion	When a foe first moves to Engaged with you, they must succeed on a Resolve Test or suffer from the Taunt fight action.
77 to 85	Mask of Sabotage	Unavailable In Session Zero
86 to 92	Mask of Shame	You Flip To Succeed in Awareness Tests to find hidden foes. When you succeed, move one step up the Peril Condition Track.
93 to 100	Mask of Sorrow	Unavailable In Session Zero

Tattertail

Languages: Chitterchant and Auld



Contrasting with the widespread belief of your kind being an unkempt, rat-like people, you and your kin are meticulously well-groomed and carry a noble bearing. Tattertail society operates within a complex, feudal framework upheld by a system of dynastic marriages and internal power struggles. A mark of your aristocratic status is the ceremonial removal of one's tail upon adulthood, in a rite known as the Shearing. Those who retain their tails are viewed as crude and defying norms.

Despite the stories, your dwellings are not in nests of the sewers but rather in lofty, forgotten towers and dilapidated estates. It is from these heights where Tattertail society masterminds their rise to power, subtly bending humans to their will as unseen rulers and influential figures. However, when diplomacy fails, Tattertail assassins step in to ensure that the desires of the elite are realized. Few as your people may be, you have broken free of these machinations of the Tattertail to make your own future. You will not be trapped by this orchestration of violence.

Tattertail Ancestral		
d100	Talent	Effect
1 to 8	Cloak & Dagger	Gain +5% to attack with Melee weapons and +1 Damage.
9 to 16	Dynastic Scion	Unavailable In Session Zero
17 to 25	Nose for Danger	You Flip To Succeed in Awareness Tests to find hidden foes. When you succeed, move one step up the Peril Condition Track.
26 to 33	Prehensile Tail	Unavailable In Session Zero
34 to 41	Servile Appearance	In a fight scene, foes will not target you with Attack Actions on their first Turn.
42 to 49	Shadow Diplomacy	Unavailable In Session Zero
50 to 58	Skitter Away	When you move to Dying!, flip a coin. If it lands on heads, move to Grievously Wounded instead.
59 to 67	Slim Wrists	Unavailable In Session Zero
68 to 76	Slow Mutation	When you suffer an Injury, roll 1d6. If it lands on face "6," optionally ignore the Injury but gain 1 Corruption.
77 to 85	Upper Crust	Unavailable In Session Zero
86 to 92	Web of Intrigue	You're immune to mind control magic and know when someone is lying.
93 to 100	Whiskersight	Unavailable In Session Zero

Ubasti

Languages: Auld and any other ancestral tongue



There was once a place of golden oceans of sand. Its oasis people worshiped a pantheon of animalian gods and were ruled by priest-kings. But they desired nothing more than to be revered as deities themselves. So, in their hubris, they created your ancestors: clever, human-like, feline people called ubasti (*ooo-bah-stee*). This rebellious act led to a war that bathed the realm in a deluge of fire, turning seas of sand into black glass. The ubasti disappeared into the annals of history.

While the ubasti inevitably met their doom, you escaped with your first life. Reborn on strange shores in the modern age, new-found humanity awoke inside you. You are plagued with strange visions of the past, delivered by your makers, that say the undying priest-kings will never be satisfied until your spirit is extinguished. Pray for mercy or be prepared for death, as their headsmen will be waiting at the crossroads to collect your remaining eight lives.

Ubasti Ancestral Talent		
d100	Talent	Effect
1 to 8	Blue-blooded	Gain +5% to attack with Ranged weapons and +1 Damage.
9 to 16	Cat Scratch Fever	Unavailable In Session Zero
17 to 25	Feline Orientation	Treat falling Damage as Peril instead.
26 to 33	Hunter & Prey	Unavailable In Session Zero
34 to 41	Jinx	Foes cannot spend Misfortune Coins to re-roll Skill Tests against you.
42 to 49	Mind Power	Unavailable In Session Zero
50 to 58	Nine Lives	When you would gain a Scar, flip a coin. If it lands on heads, ignore it. Mark 1 check on your survivor sheet each time you ignore a Scar. Once it reaches 9 checks, Nine Lives is no longer effective.
59 to 67	Saber-toothed	Unavailable In Session Zero
68 to 76	Sight Beyond Sight	You don't suffer Hindrance Dice for attacking at long range or in fleeting shadows.
77 to 85	Survival Instincts	Unavailable In Session Zero
86 to 92	Thunder Cat	When you Charge, you cannot be targeted by Ranged weapons until the start of your next Turn.
93 to 100	Without Bounds	Unavailable In Session Zero

Woodwose

Languages: Rootling and Auld



When the elven sanctuaries came crashing down over the living world, their servants fled into the wilderness. The ancestral woodwose (*woodwoze*) established a new home betwixt the underroot. Having spent so much time within the trees, their growth stunted, and their skin turned bark-like. Throughout the ages, your kin have moved like shadows among the trees, their existence as quiet as the rustling of leaves.

Your people have only recently emerged from the reaches of primeval groves. Tales of the woodwose' origins are many, often speaking of defiance against the elves in a time since forgotten. But with skin as tough as the heart of an oak and a will of sharpened stone, the re-emergence of your people compels you to take destiny into your own hands. It is time to step out of the roots and into the light to spread your limbs.

**Woodwose
Ancestral**

d100	Talent	Effect
1 to 8	Bloody Glee	When you move a foe to Dying!, take a Misfortune Coin from the GM and put it into the player's Fortune Pool.
9 to 16	Cragborn Intuition	Unavailable In Session Zero
17 to 25	Denizen of the Root	Spend 1 Fortune Coin to turn entirely to bark, in a hibernative state, for up to 6 hours. You cannot be harmed by normal weapons during this time, and move one step up the Peril Condition Track for every hour you're in this state.
26 to 33	Escape Artist	Unavailable In Session Zero
34 to 41	Roll With It	When rolling d100 to determine which Injury you suffer, roll three times and choose the preferred result.
42 to 49	Rule of Three	Unavailable In Session Zero
50 to 58	Sharp Practice	You Flip To Succeed in Guile Tests to tell lies. When you succeed, move one step up the Peril Condition Track.
59 to 67	Skeleton Key	Unavailable In Session Zero
68 to 76	Squatling	Foes Flip To Fail to use Blackpowder and Ranged weapons against you. However, you cannot use your stowed weapon slot.
77 to 85	Tirade of Misery	Unavailable In Session Zero
86 to 92	Tunnel Vision	You can see in the dark below ground, provided you are able to use your hands freely.
93 to 100	Underfoot	Unavailable In Session Zero

Step 3: Appearance

Worlds in **ZWEIHÄNDER** are populated by a diverse, rich panoply of people of different body types, ethnicities, and identities. These markers have zero bearing on game mechanics and story. Forgotten ancestries may also have very different considerations for appearances. If any of the values don't line up with how you see your survivor, change them as you wish or create your own descriptors.

Pick a gender that best describes your survivor's identity. Then, roll a d100 to determine your stature, build, and a distinguishing mark. Write all these values on the first page of your survivor sheet.

d100	Stature
1 to 33	Short
34 to 67	Average
68 to 100	Tall

d100	Build
1 to 15	Frail
16 to 30	Slender
31 to 70	Average
71 to 85	Athletic
86 to 100	Stout

d100	Distinguishing Mark	d100	Distinguishing Mark
1 to 2	Albino complexion with jet black hair	51 to 52	Metal plate on my skull that bulges out at times
3 to 4	Blackpowder shot wound on my face	53 to 54	Noticeable limp from an old war wound
5 to 6	Bloodshot eyes that sometimes weep blood	55 to 56	Perfect teeth encrusted with tiny jewels
7 to 8	Brands on my wrists from heresy	57 to 58	Permanent make-up beneath my eyes
9 to 10	Brightly painted hair and arms	59 to 60	Piercing blue eyes that chills you to the bone
11 to 12	Calloused hands with knuckles covered in scars	61 to 62	Plaited hair with bands of gold and silver
13 to 14	Colored glass eye that I can change out	63 to 64	Prominent blue veins.
15 to 16	Dangling earring that jingles	65 to 66	Scar in the shape of a crescent across my face
17 to 18	Dark purple birthmarks	67 to 68	Severely burned skin, revealing bone below
19 to 20	Deep crescent scar across my face	69 to 70	Single silver eyebrow that softly glows
21 to 22	Diamond-shaped tattoo on my cheek	71 to 72	Shock of white hair that stands up

d100	Distinguishing Mark	d100	Distinguishing Mark
23 to 24	Different-colored eyes that shift in daylight	73 to 74	Six-fingered hand that I constantly flex
25 to 26	Distinct vitiligo complexion that marks me a rare beauty	75 to 76	Small, delicate scar beneath my eye
27 to 28	Dueling scar on my neck	77 to 78	Sorrowful eyes that makes me look completely innocent
29 to 30	Extremely pale, baby soft skin	79 to 80	Strangely shimmering hair that moves with an unseen wind
31 to 32	Eyes that inexplicably change color	81 to 82	Streaks of colored hair that draws others to touch it
33 to 34	Fierce undercut with a tattooed head	83 to 84	Near imperceptible glowing symbol in the center of my forehead
35 to 36	Freckles that form a strange pattern on my face	85 to 86	Tattoo of a gaping maw on my neck
37 to 38	Glasgow smile that ripples up to my cheeks	87 to 88	Tattoo-covered body from head to toe
39 to 40	Gold-capped teeth	89 to 90	Thousand-yard stare that could pierce a mountain
41 to 42	Golden nose ring connect to a chain	91 to 92	Three vertical red brands on my chin
43 to 44	Haunted look of someone deeply disturbed	93 to 94	Two missing fingers replaced with a silver and gold prostheses
45 to 46	Intricate braid that holds small charms	95 to 96	Unusually bright, captivating eyes that twinkle
47 to 48	Leaves that inexplicably grow on my arms	97 to 98	Well-manicured appearance and pleasant smell
49 to 50	Lichtenberg scar across my body	99 to 100	Well-muscled body that's oiled up

Step 4: Social Class

Despite your ancestry, the caste you were born into informs your speech patterns, mannerisms, and style. It also determines how many silver pieces you begin gameplay with.

Benefits of Your Social Class

When attempting to interact with someone of your same Social Class using Fellowship-based Skills, gain an Assist Die.

Roll a d100 to determine your Social Class, and write it on the first page of your survivor sheet. Write your starting silver pieces on the second page.

d100	Social Class	Starting Silver Pieces
1 to 50	Lowborn	11 silver pieces
51 to 90	Commoner	22 silver pieces
91 to 100	Aristocrat	33 silver pieces

Your Life

You spent a good part of your life toiling away. It may not have been peaceful, but it made you a living.

Step 5: Primary Attributes

Primary Attributes represent all creatures' raw physical, mental, and social capabilities. At this stage of creation, they range in numeric values between 32% to 50%. Your Upbringing and Profession will further adjust these values.

The higher the value, the more likely you will succeed at Skill Tests:

Agility is your speed, dexterity, and physical readiness.

Brawn is your durability, endurance, and physical prowess.

Combat is your ability to use ranged and melee weapons.

Fellowship is your charisma, likability, and social savvy.

Intelligence is your ability to learn and study facts.

Perception is your senses and ability to react.

Willpower is your mental resolve and ability for magic.

Decide as a group which of one of these three approaches everyone will use to generate Primary Attributes. Then, write these values on the first page of your survivor sheet.

Randomization: Roll 2d10, add the two values together, and then add 30 to determine the final sum. That means if your dice land on faces "9" and "8," you'll end up with 47% (9+8+30). Generate seven values and assign them however you like to your Primary Attributes.

Point Buy: Each Primary Attribute begins with a value of 30%. Distribute 85 points among them, not to exceed 50% in any single Primary Attribute.

Standard Array: Assign one of these values however you like across the seven Primary Attributes: 50%, 45%, 45%, 40%, 40%, 40%, and 35%.

Step 6: Upbringing

Nature versus nurture is an age-old debate, but there is little doubt that the conditions you were raised in affect you on a deep level. Your Upbringing gives you a one-time adjustment to one Primary Attribute. It also determines your starting Profession.

Roll a d100 to determine your Upbringing and permanently change your one-time Primary Attribute Adjustment by +5%. Write both on the first page of your survivor sheet.

Some survivors will also get a suit of armor; write it down on the second sheet. Write its Damage Threshold Adjustment as well, as you'll need it when extrapolating your Damage Thresholds later in the process.

d100	Upbringing	Primary Attribute Adjustment	Starting Armor	Armor Damage Threshold Modifier
1 to 14	Academic	Intelligence +5%	NONE	NONE
15 to 29	Cultured	Fellowship +5%	Quilted armor	+1
30 to 43	Forsaken	Agility +5%	Hide armor	+1
44 to 56	Industrious	Brawn +5%	Hide armor	+1
57 to 70	Militant	Combat +5%	Brigandine armor	+3
71 to 85	Opportunistic	Perception +5%	Quilted armor	+1
86 to 100	Reverent	Willpower +5%	NONE	NONE

Academic: You were raised to be an avid reader, learning that knowledge is the ultimate weapon. Whether taught by schoolmarm or nascent arcanists, you were taught to stay curious. You value intellectualism, and you came out ahead of your peers.

Cultured: From penny theaters to penny dreadfuls, you were raised in cultures other than your own since birth. Taught the values of expression, you take immense pride in your abilities. You have the gift of gab and are well-liked by all.

Forsaken: You were raised outside of common society and had little chance to integrate until now. Maybe you grew up on the streets, were raised among wolves, or are the last scion of a noble house. You've learned to avoid danger and know where to look for it.

Industrious: You were raised in a family of laborers. Whether crofters or servants, your family forced you to work to put food on the table. Your hands are chapped, your back rippling, and your demeanor brusque. You would rather pinch a penny than pay another laborer.

Militant: You were raised in a family where discipline ruled your life, as it meant the difference between survival and death. Your family may trace their lineage to a line of countless ancestors who met their doom at the end of a sword instead of in a sickbed.

Opportunistic: You were raised to take advantage of every situation and have had to be underhanded to get what you want. You've learned that most folks are just another angle. You have learned to understand others' intentions and can see between truth and lies.

Reverent: You were raised to celebrate the gods. Rituals are a part of life, and you have lived by

the holy works. Or, maybe you were an orphan who listened to the doomsayers on the street.

Step 7: Profession

Professions are the hallmark of **ZWEIHÄNDER**, representing people from different walks of life. It imparts several abilities to you, including a unique Professional Talent. This will be one of the most important steps in the process, so be sure to follow every instruction below.

Referencing your survivor's Upbringing, roll a d100 three times on its related table below to generate 3 different Professions. Read the brief descriptions of each, choose the most intriguing one, and write your Profession's name on the first page of your survivor sheet. Feel free to share the description of your Profession aloud. If your Profession has a plus sign (+) by it, you can learn spells. Mark a plus sign on your survivor sheet for now.

Your Profession also begins with 2 tools. They are specialized instruments of your trade. You can carry up to 3 different tools. Write them down on the second page.

Skills, Professional Talents, and Derived Secondary Bonuses are not a consideration of **Session Zero**.

Academic Professions

d100	Profession	Brief Description	Tool	Tool
1 to 6	Actor	Magician of the stage, captivating audiences with charm, costumes, and wit.	makeup kit	scripts
7 to 13	Antiquarian	Devoted seeker of knowledge, history, and hidden truths, braving forbidden places.	artifact catalog	magnifying lens
14 to 20	Apothecary	Blending archaic remedies and navigating the thin line between potion and poison.	herb jars	mortar & pestle
21 to 27	Arbiter	Devoted to order, wielding both sword and justice with unyielding resolve.	gavel	law book
28 to 34	Diabolist +	Dabbler in dark arts, seeking primordial knowledge and facing condemnation.	grimoire	occult tools
35 to 40	Engineer	Master builder and inventor, transforming materials into structures and siege engines.	measurement tools	schematics
41 to 46	Envoy	Diplomatic deal broker, turning rivalries into cooperation with pressure and persuasion.	diplomatic seals	letters of marque
47 to 52	Etherealist +	Weaver of spells from the Ethereal Veil, believing in mortal control over magic.	astral chart	grimoire
53 to 58	Informer	Sly gatherer and seller of secrets, indispensable yet untrusted.	coded message book	disguise kit
59 to 65	Investigator	Analyzes criminal activity, linking clues in a "mind palace" to reconstruct narratives.	casebook	magnifying glass
66 to 72	Messenger	Agile courier navigating obstacles to deliver crucial information across perilous distances.	sealed letters	weatherproof scroll case
73 to 79	Pamphleteer	Disseminator of printed materials, shaping public knowledge and challenging authority.	broadsheets	sling bag
80 to 86	Scribe	Skilled in writing and translating older texts in a world reliant on the written word.	glasses	writing kit
87 to 93	Theologian +	Scholar of divine mysteries, exploring faith's depths and its implications on society.	grimoire	holy book
94 to 100	Wand Wizard +	Master of arcane arts, wielding wands to channel spells with precision and power.	grimoire	heavy robes

Cultured Professions

d100	Profession	Brief Description	Tool	Tool
1 to 6	Astrologer +	Interprets celestial bodies, divines the future, and seeks lost heavenly knowledge.	grimoire	star charts
7 to 13	Bailiff	Collects tolls, enforces local government and faces resentment and displacement.	badge of office	legal writs
14 to 20	Basebrawler	Athletic competitor in a violent medieval game, combining physicality and teamwork.	balls & bases in sack	team tabard
21 to 27	Bravo	Flamboyant fencer, walking a fine line between fame and infamy.	fancy cape	Venetian mask
28 to 34	Cadet	Military student mastering warcraft, tactics, and leadership, aspiring for glory.	military uniform	training manual
35 to 40	Camp Follower	Supports armies through various roles and surviving through adaptability.	cooking pot	healing herbs
41 to 46	Chef	Culinary artist, wielding knives with skill, and sometimes fighting with them.	kitchen utensils	recipe book
47 to 52	Courtier	Political schemer, using insight and flattery to manipulate and ascend.	etiquette guide	intricate fan
53 to 58	Entertainer	Brings joy through performance, walks a line between fame and danger.	book of poetry	musical instrument
59 to 65	Explorer	Adventurous diplomatic rogue, seeking new lands for glory, facing dangers with luck.	astrolabe	map
66 to 72	Fop	Charismatic social butterfly, living lavishly while hiding a loner's melancholy.	elegant cane	polished codpiece
73 to 79	Freebooter	Robin Hood-esque hero, stealing from the rich, fighting with charm and wit.	heavy boots	old maps of lost treasures
80 to 86	Minstrel	Adept storyteller and jack of all trades, captivating with tales.	musical instrument	songbook
87 to 93	Provocateur	Mystery and spycraft, adept in social infiltration and seduction.	disguise kit	book of contacts
94 to 100	Valet	Master of discretion and social maneuvering and skilled in subtle intrigue.	ledger	tailoring kit

Forsaken Professions

d100	Profession	Brief Description	Tool	Tool
1 to 6	Beggar	Lives in poverty, relying on quick judgments for survival.	false appendage	tattered cup
7 to 13	Blasphemer	Denies the gods' dominion, finding strength and freedom in defiance.	book of blasphemes	forbidden texts
14 to 20	Con Artist	Master forger, creating perfect counterfeits for profit, living a life of secrecy.	disguise kit	forged documents
21 to 27	Courtesan	Uses allure to gain wealth and information, capable of influencing high society.	elegant robes	perfume
28 to 34	Footpad	Solves disputes with violence, enforcing will with intimidation or brute force.	crowbar	dark cloak
35 to 40	Gong Farmer	Deals with waste and vermin, seen as an omen of plague.	mask	shovel
41 to 46	Guttersnipe	A street-smart rogue engaging in petty theft, skilled in urban survival.	coin clippers	street map
47 to 52	Hedgewise +	Wields ancient magic without formal training, living in fear of persecution.	grimoire	herbs
53 to 58	Mortician	Specialist in death rituals, burying the dead, navigating the delicate trade of mortality.	death records	embalming tools
59 to 65	Old Believer +	A pharmacologist blending ancient wisdom, herbs, and magic into remedies.	grimoire	religious icons
66 to 72	Pit Fighter	Gladiator thriving on spectacle and violence.	fighting pit map	polished winner's codpiece
73 to 79	Pugilist	Bare-knuckle fighter, embracing brutality of pugilism for survival and pride.	eye iron	training manual
80 to 86	Rake	Fallen aristocrat, mingling with society's dregs, leveraging charm and wit.	book of secrets	love letters
87 to 93	Vagabond	Master of manners and courtly traditions, navigating intrigue with discretion and guile.	backpack	tent
94 to 100	Wrestler	Athlete-performer, captivating audiences with costumes, wit, and daring stunts.	costume	training oil

Industrious Professions

d100	Profession	Brief Description	Tool	Tool
1 to 6	Animal Tamer	Solitary living, taming creatures from pigeons to bears.	creature treats	whistle
7 to 13	Artisan	Skilled crafters producing civilization's essentials, honing their trade.	tool set	paper & charcoal
14 to 20	Barber Surgeon	Essential medical figure, performing surgery with a blend of skill and messiness.	barber's razors	chirurgery tools
21 to 27	Bounty Hunter	Ruthless tracker of the wanted, lives between lawfulness and solitude.	book of crimes	manacles
28 to 34	Cheapjack	Traveling peddler selling shoddy goods with sleazy charm, thriving on deceit.	haggler's guide	merchandise backpack
35 to 40	Coachee	Skilled driver, delivering people and goods against all odds.	route maps	stovepipe hat & storm cloak
41 to 46	Gamekeeper	Survivalist, protector of woodlands, living in solitude with a bond to nature.	snares	wildlife guide
47 to 52	Jailer	Guardian of prisoners, enduring their pleas, skilled in interrogation.	skeleton keys	torturer's kit
53 to 58	Laborer	Engages in hard, often overlooked work, crucial to society's function.	massive jug	thick leather gloves
59 to 65	Nomad	Lives a transient life, adapting to environments, valuing freedom and family.	tent	traveling cloak
66 to 72	Peasant	Hardworking field worker, sustainer of families through relentless labor.	pocket prayer book	seed pouch
73 to 79	Sailor	Adventurous seafarer, braving vast oceans, living with freedom and peril.	compass	sextant
80 to 86	Servant	Invisible laborer in aristocratic service, privy to secrets, enduring long hours.	book of gossip	uniform
87 to 93	Stevedore	Dockworker, enduring physically demanding tasks and protecting cargo.	endless bottle of booze	loading hook
94 to 100	Trapper	Fur and pelt hunter, setting traps in solitude, trading in luxury and game.	skinning blade	traps

Militant Professions

d100	Profession	Brief Description	Tool	Tool
1 to 6	Berserker	Fierce warrior channeling rage into prowess, terrifying enemies with ferocity.	heavy animal furs	war paint
7 to 13	Dragoon	Mounted soldier skilled in rapid strikes, blending cavalry and infantry tactics.	horse tack	spurs
14 to 20	Foot Soldier	Backbone of armies, disciplined and versatile, excelling in formation.	battle standard	tabard
21 to 27	Hedge Knight	Wandering knight, upholding chivalry and seeking honor through deeds.	code of chivalry book	horse tack
28 to 34	Hireling	Mercenary for hire, offering specialized skills for temporary service.	contracts	travel bags
35 to 40	Irregular	Unconventional soldier, employing guerrilla tactics and surprise.	camouflage kit	guerrilla warfare manual
41 to 46	Marine	Elite soldiers specialized in naval boarding actions and warfare, fiercely loyal.	boarding axe	naval codebook
47 to 52	Nightwatcher	Guardian of the night, vigilant against unseen threats after dark.	lantern on pole	nightwatch cloak
53 to 58	Outrider	Scout and messenger, excelling in reconnaissance and rapid communication.	horse tack	telescope
59 to 65	Quartermaster	Vital logistician, managing supplies and equipment, ensuring readiness.	log book	scales
66 to 72	Reeve	Local official overseeing justice, bridging the community and the ruling authority.	badge of office	land registries
73 to 79	Rune Warrior +	Warrior wielding enchanted runes, blending physical with mystical.	grimoire	rune stones
80 to 86	Sellsword	Mercenary motivated by coin, loyalty bound to the highest bidder.	contracts	heavy coin purse
87 to 93	Slayer	Hunter of monsters and dark creatures, fearless in the pursuit of monsters.	creature bestiary	creature call
94 to 100	Squire	Apprentice to a knight, learning the ways of chivalry, combat, and noble service.	polishing kit	squire's handbook

Opportunistic Professions

d100	Profession	Brief Description	Tool	Tool
1 to 6	Anarchist	Champion of change, using anarchy to shake foundations and revel in chaos.	fire starting tools	propaganda posters
7 to 13	Bonepicker	Scavenger of belongings, turning tragedy and forgotten remains into personal gain.	bone tools	scavenging bag
14 to 20	Buccaneer	Sea-bound raider thriving on plunder, camaraderie, and open waves.	chest w/backstraps	pirate flag
21 to 27	Burglar	Master of stealth and theft, excelling in the art of acquiring wealth undetected.	crowbar	grappling hook w/ rope
28 to 34	Charlatan	Master deceiver employing disguises and smooth talk to swindle and manipulate.	disguise kit	testimonials
35 to 40	Fence	Criminal underworld broker, dealing in stolen goods with a life of secrecy.	book of prices	secret ledger
41 to 46	Fugitive	On the run, living a life marked by brief freedoms and constant survival.	disguise kit	map of safe houses
47 to 52	Gambler	Dashing charmer betting on life's fortunes, always playing for high stakes.	loaded deck of cards	loaded dice
53 to 58	Graverobber	Exploiter of the dead, braving supernatural dangers for macabre trade.	lantern	shovel
59 to 65	Jester	Court's provocateur, wielding satire as a weapon, entertaining and offensive.	book of japes	juggling bag
66 to 72	Quacksalver	Peddler of false cures, exploiting the desperate with dubious remedies.	potion bottles	quack medicine book
73 to 79	Racketeer	Manipulator and leveraging criminal enterprises for protection and profit.	crowbar	protection money ledger
80 to 86	Rustler	Cattle thief living on the fringe, challenging the law and rustling livestock for profit.	branding iron	telescope
87 to 93	Smuggler	Master of clandestine trade, moving forbidden or taxed goods past authorities.	false documents	hidden pockets in clothes
94 to 100	Vigilante	Shadowy avenger meting out justice where the law fails, shielded by anonymity.	belt-pouches	costume

Reverent Professions

d100	Profession	Brief Description	Tool	Tool
1 to 6	Adherent +	Devoted follower of a faith or ideology, spreading beliefs through example.	grimoire	prayer beads
7 to 13	Apostle	Fledgling warrior-priest inspiring devotion through violence.	book of prayers	holy wine & wafers
14 to 20	Chosen +	Believed to be selected by a higher power for a great purpose or mission.	amulet	grimoire
21 to 27	Cultist +	Member of an illegal group with extreme devotion to a forbidden cause or entity.	grimoire	ritual knife
28 to 34	Doomsayer	Proclaims impending disaster, warning others of future calamities.	book of heresies	self-flagellation tools
35 to 40	Friar	Religious monks committed to community service, prayer, and spreading faith.	brewing kit	holy book
41 to 46	Hermit	Lives in solitude, seeking enlightenment or escape from societal norms.	diaries	meditation mat
47 to 52	Minister	Clergy member providing spiritual guidance and performing sacred rites.	Roman collar	sermon book
53 to 58	Monk	Lives in monastic order, dedicated to a life of prayer, work, and study.	book of chants	meditation beads
59 to 65	Pilgrim	Travels to sacred sites seeking enlightenment or fulfillment of a vow.	pocket prayer book	sacrificial bowl
66 to 72	Sin Eater +	Absorbs others' sins through ritual, cleanses souls through personal sacrifice.	grimoire	ritual bowl
73 to 79	Skald	Poet and historian, preserving and recounting the lore and legends.	musical instrument	war paint
80 to 86	Spiritualist +	Communicates with spirits, seeking to bridge the mortal world and the afterlife.	grimoire	spirit board
87 to 93	Witch +	Often misunderstood magician, harnessing natural energies.	grimoire	magical tools
94 to 100	Witness +	Observes and testifies to miracles, with a religious or moral imperative.	grimoire	holy texts

Step 8: Derived Secondary Attributes

These abbreviated values equal the tens digit of the related Primary Attribute plus any Secondary Attribute Modifiers your Profession confers to you.

For example, if you had a 60% Combat and 2 Secondary Attribute Modifiers, you'd have an 8 Combat Bonus [CB]. Each is abbreviated throughout the book:

Agility Bonus [AB] affects Movement Rate and some weapon Damage.

Brawn Bonus [BB] affects Damage Threshold and some weapon Damage.

Combat Bonus [CB] affects most Blackpowder, Melee & Ranged Damage.

Fellowship Bonus [FB] affects how many people you influence and magic.

Intelligence Bonus [IB] affects healing and total supplies you can carry.

Perception Bonus [PB] affects Initiative Modifier and distances with weapons.

Willpower Bonus [WB] affects Peril Threshold, crafting, and modifiers for magic.

Derive these values based on your Primary Attribute now on the first page of your survivor sheet.

Step 9: Damage & Peril Condition Tracks

Damage comes from being hurt by weapons, falling, fire, acid, and other situations. Peril is a concept that represents mental agony and physical fatigue.

Suffering Damage

When this happens, you move one or more steps down the Damage Condition Track. When you are healed, move up it instead. But the further down you go, you will suffer Injuries and gain permanent Scars:

Damage Condition Track

Alive: You have old scars, stitches, and sutures. This is the default “unharmed” condition.

Lightly Wounded: You have cuts or light bruising with mild pains.

Moderately Wounded: You have deep bruises, cuts, or lesions.

Seriously Wounded: Your body is covered in deep bruises or cuts.

Grievously Wounded: Your clothing is soiled in blood and sweat.

Dying!: When you first reach this state, you suffer an Injury. If you are suffering from 4 or more Injuries or Afflictions (or a combination thereof) and the duration isn't up, you are slain unless you take on a permanent Scar.

Your survivor begins at Alive; place a paperclip over it.

Calculating Damage Thresholds

Calculate your BASE Damage Threshold by adding [BB] + your armor's Damage Threshold Modifier (the armor you gained as a part of your Upbringing). Calculate all other Damage Thresholds as BASE + 6, BASE + 12, BASE + 18. For instance, if your [BB] is 5, your Damage Thresholds would be 5 / 11 / 17 / 23. Write these values on the first page of your survivor sheet.

Suffering Peril

When this happens, you move one or more steps down the Peril Condition Track. When you sleep, move up it instead. But the further you go down, the less effective your Skills are, and the more likely you will suffer Afflictions and gain permanent Scars.

Peril Condition Track

Fine: You're the very picture of health! This is the default "unhindered" condition.

Imperiled: You're operating under minimal strain.

-5% To Skill Tests: Your blood is running hot, and you have labored breathing.

-10% To Skill Tests: Your body gives way to tiredness and can barely focus.

-15% To Skill Tests: You toil with every step you take, and your vision is blurred.

Exhausted! -20% To Skill Tests: If you are Stressed, Frightened, or Terrified while Exhausted!, you suffer an Affliction. If you are suffering from 4 or more Afflictions or Injuries (or a combination thereof) and the duration isn't up, you are slain unless you take on a permanent Scar.

Your survivor begins at Fine; place a paperclip over it.

Calculating Peril Thresholds

Calculate your BASE Peril Threshold by adding [WB] + 3. Calculate all other Peril Thresholds as BASE + 6, BASE + 12, BASE + 18. For instance, if your [WB] is 7, your Peril Thresholds would be 10 / 16 / 22 / 28. Write these values on the first page of your survivor sheet.

Step 10: Initiative Modifier & Movement Rate

Your Initiative Modifier is added to a die roll to determine the order of actions in scenes.

You'll generally roll it at the onset of a session by rolling 2d10, adding it up, and then adding it to your Initiative Modifier. Movement Rate determines the base number of paces you can move in a fight scene.

Determine your Initiative Modifier by adding 3+[PB]. Your Movement Rate is 3+[AB].

Write both on the second page of your survivor sheet.

Your Survival

Your old life is over, and you were irrevocably changed when you faced death and somehow managed to survive. You were left with an indelible mark from that experience.

Step 11: Age

Each crease etched onto your face and calluses on your hands narrate a story of fleeting years, suffering, and heartache. Even the young have already tasted the bittersweet draught of life.

This is the age that you faced your Brush With Death.

Roll a d100 to determine your current age. These broad descriptions are inclusive of human and Forgotten ancestries, but feel free to determine specific age if you feel it necessary. Write it on the first page of your survivor sheet.

d100	Age
1 to 10	Young
11 to 70	Adult
71 to 90	Middle-aged
91 to 100	Old

Step 12: Brush With Death

Less than a year ago, you had a near-death experience. This moment shaped the life you live now: you're a survivor. Your Brush With Death provides an opportunity to explore emotions and complexities not often addressed in other role-playing games. Utilized thoughtfully, it will make your experience with **ZWEIHÄNDER** a profound one for you and the other players. Your survivor may have other Brushes With Death as the story progresses.

Roll a d100 to determine your Brush With Death or create a new one. Write it on the first page of your survivor sheet.

d100	Brush With Death
1 to 2	A chair eerily swayed at the top of the stairs, and as I sat in it, it pitched me over the edge.
3 to 4	A decrepit stagecoach made me its unwilling passenger on a journey to the underworld.
5 to 6	A dim light from a dead end revealed a lurking menace beyond.
7 to 8	A haunting melody by the lake lured me into a watery grave.
9 to 10	A haunting tune lulled me into a deep sleep from which I almost didn't awaken.
11 to 12	A night of carousing led to a near-fatal ambush that killed my friends while I survived.
13 to 14	A pedlar's strange artifact sealed my fate with a single touch.
15 to 16	A venomous bloom emitted a belladonna haze that put me into a deep coma.

d100**Brush With Death**

17 to 18	A whisper from my family's crypt nearly bound my soul to its residents.
19 to 20	An errant stroke of a stranger's pen released toxic ink, nearly marking my last word.
21 to 22	An old bell tower had remained silent for years, but its sudden toll sent me over the edge.
23 to 24	An old trunk beckoned, and upon opening it, it swallowed me into its emptiness.
25 to 26	An unexpected chime at the witching hour announced a dark presence at my door.
27 to 28	As a candle's flame flickered, a whisper warned me of a conflagration that nearly burned me alive.
29 to 30	As a windmill's gears spun up, an unseen force pushed me into its grinding mechanism.
31 to 32	As I clasped my grandmother's brooch, my vision was flooded from her tormented past.
33 to 34	As I investigated an unmarked grave, a pair of rotting hands pulled me into the soil beneath.
35 to 36	As I walked out my front door, I didn't see the shovel aimed at my head.
37 to 38	As the snare tightened around my leg and the world went dark, I knew I had made a mistake.
39 to 40	As the war hammer met my skull, I was startled by the lack of flesh on the hand that swung it.
41 to 42	Between the walls, footsteps echoed. . . someone was following, and they meant ill intent.
43 to 44	Crossing an old bridge at dusk, I emerged into a mist-shrouded realm of horror.
45 to 46	Curiosity got the better of me when a trap sealed my fate in the castle's dungeon.
47 to 48	Every uneven tick of the clock was a missed heartbeat, its off-beat rhythm sealing my fate.
49 to 50	Eyes from a painting of a ghoulish hellscape drew me into its frame of horror.
51 to 52	Footprints from another age led me to fall into a deep cavern.
53 to 54	I know hunger and desperation drove them to feast upon my flesh.
55 to 56	I ran towards the sound of a crying baby, but it wasn't a child I found at the path's end.
57 to 58	I should have paid more attention when my father taught me how to properly fell a tree.
59 to 60	I thought cheating at dice was a petty crime, but they proved me wrong.
61 to 62	I thought it an exaggeration to die of fright until I saw the unknown malignant face in my mirror.
63 to 64	I told them everything I knew, but they still pushed my bound and weighted body from the ship.
65 to 66	I was quite pleased with the newly found silken scarf until it tightened around my neck.
67 to 68	Leaning over the village well, a pair of rotten arms and wet, dark hair engulfed me in their grasp.

d100	Brush With Death
69 to 70	My own shadow came to life and hunted me down in the forest.
71 to 72	My shouted blasphemy was answered by the devout with cudgels and fists.
73 to 74	Shapes moved behind a curtain, and curiosity got the better of me as I fell through the glass.
75 to 76	The aroma of a seemingly innocent pastry concealed its deadly secret ingredient: poison.
77 to 78	The blade slid into my gut, but the look of satisfaction in my friend's eyes surprised me the most.
79 to 80	The haunting aria of a troop of actors drew me into a grim tour of their theater.
81 to 82	The light drew our ship in, leading us to crash onto unknown shores.
83 to 84	The rain-slick tiles on the roof proved to be my undoing.
85 to 86	The voices lied when they told me my offered blood would be returned to me with great power.
87 to 88	The warnings that I should not travel in the winter storm had not been an exaggeration.
89 to 90	Trying on a seemingly benign shoe it took me on a strange journey in its long-dead owner's life.
91 to 92	Upon robbing a crypt, its guardian spirit marked me as its successor.
93 to 94	What I thought was a single leech was instead a writhing mass I didn't imagine possible.
95 to 96	When I opened the forbidden grimoire, it had a single name written on all its pages: my own.
97 to 98	While mesmerized by the flames of a campfire, I was robbed by highwaymen and left for dead.
99 to 100	Whilst wandering through an overgrown menagerie, plants with a sanguine thirst ensnared me.

Step 13: First Scar

Although you persevered in the wake of death, you were left with a physical impairment, emotional trauma, or a spiritual wound. This is your first Scar, and each represents a journey of healing, struggle, and change. Your first Scar enhances role-playing opportunities while reflecting the merciless nature of the world. You will gain more as you face the Custodian's embrace once more.

Roll a d100 to determine your first Scar. Write it on the second page of your survivor sheet.

d100	Scar	Effect	d100	Scar	Effect
1 to 2	Blunted Intellect	Unavailable In Session Zero	51 to 52	Lethargic Mind	Suffer -1 to Initiative Bonus.
3 to 4	Brittle Bones	When suffering Injuries, roll twice and select the worst result.	53 to 54	Lily-livered	Unavailable In Session Zero
5 to 6	Cabin Fever	Unavailable In Session Zero	55 to 56	Lingering Disease	Whenever you are exposed to a disease, the GM will select a second one you will have to successfully resist as well.
7 to 8	Choleric Temperament	When you deal Damage and don't move a foe down the Damage Condition Track, you move one step down the Peril Condition Track.	57 to 58	Mark of Shame	Unavailable In Session Zero

d100	Scar	Effect	d100	Scar	Effect
9 to 10	Combat Anxiety	Unavailable In Session Zero	59 to 60	Nightfather's Due	For every 10 silver pieces you earn, 1 must be donated, or you cannot take advantage of Fortune Coins until you do.
11 to 12	Distant Heart	Permanently reduce your [FB] by -1.	61 to 62	Nightmare Disorder	Unavailable In Session Zero
13 to 14	End of Line	Unavailable In Session Zero	63 to 64	Old War Wound	Whenever you roll d100 to suffer Injuries, add +10% to the result.
15 to 16	Erratic Pulse	When you move down the Peril Condition Track due to a failed Resolve Test to avoid being Stressed, Frightened, or Terrified, you move one additional step down.	65 to 66	Ominous Whispers	Unavailable In Session Zero
17 to 18	Eternal Insomnia	Unavailable In Session Zero	67 to 68	Painful Memories	Whenever you are in a situation that resembles your Brush With Death, Flip To Fail Willpower-based Skill Tests.
19 to 20	Facial Scar	Permanently reduce your [FB] by -1.	69 to 70	Panic-stricken	Unavailable In Session Zero

d100	Scar	Effect	d100	Scar	Effect
21 to 22	Failing Heart	Unavailable In Session Zero	71 to 72	Persecution Complex	You cannot recover your Peril from sleeping in rural places unless you take a dose of laudanum before resting.
23 to 24	False Nose	You Flip To Fail Skill Tests to resist the effects of alcohol and poison.	73 to 74	Phantom Limb	Unavailable In Session Zero
25 to 26	Fear of Mirrors	Unavailable In Session Zero	75 to 76	Plagued by Nightmares	You cannot recover your Peril from sleeping in urban places unless you use smelling salts before resting.
27 to 28	Flashbacks	Whenever you are in a situation that resembles your Brush With Death, Flip To Fail Combat-based Skill Tests.	77 to 78	Pyrophobia	Unavailable In Session Zero
29 to 30	Flock of Death	Unavailable In Session Zero	79 to 80	Severed Fingers	Permanently reduce your Combat by -3%.
31 to 32	Frostbite Scars	Permanently reduce your Agility by -3%.	81 to 82	Shattered Rib	Unavailable In Session Zero
33 to 34	Gnarled Hand	Unavailable In Session Zero	83 to 84	Shattered Vertebrae	Permanently reduce your Initiative Modifier by -2.
35 to 36	Hard of Hearing	You Flip To Fail Awareness Tests that require precise listening or hearing subtle sounds.	85 to 86	Skull Plate	Unavailable In Session Zero

d100	Scar	Effect	d100	Scar	Effect
37 to 38	Haunted Memories	Unavailable In Session Zero	87 to 88	Sluggish Pace	Permanently reduce your Movement Rate by -1.
39 to 40	Heatstroke Trauma	When exposed to extreme heat, you must succeed in a Toughness Test to avoid becoming Stressed.	89 to 90	Trembling Hands	Unavailable In Session Zero
41 to 42	Hole in Skull	Unavailable In Session Zero	91 to 92	Troubled Soul	When you move down the Peril Condition Track due to a failed Resolve Test, temporarily reduce your Initiative value by -1.
43 to 44	Hollow Trances	When you are Terrified, you cannot move unless you spend 1 Fortune Coin.	93 to 94	Tunnel Vision	Unavailable In Session Zero
45 to 46	Iron-hearted	Unavailable In Session Zero	95 to 96	Unsettling Aura	Small Animals won't approach you. Should you harm them, they will focus their ire on you, ignoring your allies' attacks.
47 to 48	Jittery Nerves	When you are Stressed, Frightened, or Terrified, Flip To Fail Agility-based Skill Tests.	97 to 98	Weak Grip	Unavailable In Session Zero
49 to 50	King's Disease	Unavailable In Session Zero	99 to 100	Weight of the World	Suffer -1 to Movement Rate.

Step 14: Memento

A Memento of that perilous moment accompanies you everywhere you go. As a tangible fragment of your Brush With Death, this object is laden with symbolic weight. Whether it is a cherished cameo, the emblematic ring of your once-great house, a half-broken toy, or a military accolade from a time you'd rather forget, your Memento is a constant companion, reminding you of your resilience and the ephemeral nature of life.

Benefits of Your Memento

When you're in a scene related to your Brush With Death, hold the Memento to ignore all Peril Condition Track penalties. These benefits last until you escape or defeat the situation.

Consider both your Brush With Death and Scar. What would this Memento look like? Write it on the second page of your survivor sheet under Small Objects.

Step 15: Personality Traits

In the wake of your death, you developed two distinctive and wildly different traits. Your Tragic Flaw and Inner Strength serve as role-playing tools, aiding you in navigating the complex dilemmas of **ZWEIHÄNDER**.

Go to the next page to determine your Tragic Flaw and Inner Strength.

Tragic Flaw

Inner turmoil, doubt, and raw emotions are characterized by your Tragic Flaw. It is a dark reflection that came from your Brush With Death and often hinders your personal growth or relationships. Recognizing and addressing these imperfections is a key part of your story.

Benefits of Your Tragic Flaw

Call upon your Tragic Flaw in a scene when it makes sense for the narrative, and you will gain additional Reward Points at the end of the session. If you are a practitioner of magic, or face death again, you will gain new Tragic Flaws.

Reward Points are spent on Unlocking new abilities.

Roll a d100 to determine a Tragic Flaw or create a new one. Write it on the first page of your survivor sheet.

d100	Tragic Flaw	d100	Tragic Flaw
1 to 3	Apathetic	50 to 53	Greedy
4 to 7	Arrogant	54 to 57	Hostile
8 to 11	Bitter	58 to 61	Hypocritical
12 to 15	Callous	62 to 65	Ignorant

d100	Tragic Flaw	d100	Tragic Flaw
16 to 19	Condescending	66 to 68	Impulsive
20 to 22	Cowardly	69 to 72	Insensitive
23 to 26	Cruel	73 to 76	Irresponsible
27 to 30	Cynical	77 to 80	Jealous
31 to 34	Deceitful	81 to 84	Lazy
35 to 38	Disloyal	85 to 88	Reckless
39 to 42	Disrespectful	89 to 92	Selfish
43 to 45	Egotistical	93 to 96	Stubborn
46 to 49	Envious	97 to 100	Vengeful

Inner Strength

Your Inner Strength is your resilience against life's adversities. This defines you as more than a survivor—it transforms you into a symbol of hope and perseverance. Embracing it is key to your personal growth, giving depth to your narrative and presenting opportunities for the GM to craft challenges that highlight it.

Benefits of Your Inner Strength

Call upon your Inner Strength in a scene when it makes sense for the narrative, and you will gain additional Reward Points at the end of the session. If you are a practitioner of magic, or face death again, you will gain new Inner Strengths.

Reward Points are spent on Unlocking new abilities.

Roll a d100 to determine an Inner Strength or create a new one. Write it on the first page of your survivor sheet.

d100	Inner Strength	d100	Inner Strength
1 to 3	Adaptable	50 to 53	Empathetic
4 to 7	Altruistic	54 to 57	Energetic
8 to 11	Ambitious	58 to 61	Enthusiastic

d100	Inner Strength	d100	Inner Strength
12 to 15	Appreciative	62 to 65	Forgiving
16 to 19	Compassionate	66 to 68	Grateful
20 to 22	Confident	69 to 72	Humble
23 to 26	Cooperative	73 to 76	Mindful
27 to 30	Courageous	77 to 80	Motivated
31 to 34	Creative	81 to 84	Optimistic
35 to 38	Curious	85 to 88	Resourceful
39 to 42	Dependable	89 to 92	Steadfast
43 to 45	Diligent	93 to 96	Strategic
46 to 49	Disciplined	97 to 100	Versatile

Step 16: Name & Bonds

There aren't any strict naming conventions you need to follow. When in doubt, select something evocative that rolls off the tongue easily.

Colorful names like Ser Sebastian Bastian, Danziger Eckhardt, Calliope DuVrey, and Blixia Killbride have a distinctive ring, ones that aren't easily forgotten.

Once decided, sign your survivor's full name on the first page of your survivor sheet.

Form One Bond

Strange and inexplicable forces drew you together with other survivors. It often appears as a hollow ringing in one's ears, the hackles rising on the back of the neck, or a sense of déjà vu when you first meet another survivor. But among the survivors in your party, two of you share a singular, nearly supernatural Bond with one another. Your Bond with them may be that of friendly rivals, former enemies, kinsfolk, lovers,

fellow orphans, as a student and teacher, or something else.

As you move into new Tiers, you will forge new Bonds. Bonded Talents are always cooperatively used, so you and the other player must agree when the Bond is activated during gameplay.

Pick one other survivor. One of you must roll d100 on the following table to determine a unique Bond you and the other survivor share. Read it aloud to cement those Bonds together as you and another survivor Unlock 1 Bond Talent from the table below. Write the name of the survivor and the Bond Talent on the second page of your survivor sheet.

In cases with an uneven number of players, 3 survivors share the same Bond Talent. For 1 on 1 play, assume the Bonded survivor passed on, and the player's survivor still carries the Bond Talent.

d100	BOND TALENT	DESCRIPTION	EFFECT
1 to 5	Blood Oath	Bound by a solemn oath, you share a bit of each other's life force.	At any time, you can move one step up the Damage Condition Track and your Bonded survivor will move one step down. You must be able to see one another to use this.
6 to 10	Bound by Magic	Your magical natures are intertwined, enhancing your occult powers.	Unavailable In Session Zero

BOND			
d100	TALENT	DESCRIPTION	EFFECT
11 to 15	Comrade in Arms	Through your many trials in combat, you have learned to perfect each others' defenses.	While standing Engaged during a fight scene, you and the Bonded survivor add +1 to Damage and Peril you deal. You must be able to see one another to use this.
16 to 20	Dream-linked	Linked by your dreams, you gain insights from a shared subconscious.	Unavailable In Session Zero
21 to 25	Fated to Meet	You avert dire outcomes for one by sacrificing opportunities.	Swap places on the Initiative Ladder anytime, or give up your Turn to your Bonded survivor during a fight scene. You must be able to see one another to use this.
26 to 30	Fellow Orphans	Bound by shared loss, you find solace together.	Unavailable In Session Zero
31 to 35	Former Enemies	Forged in the flames of conflict, your bond allows you to shield one another, a symbol of reconciliation.	Any time your Bonded survivor stands Engaged with you and moves two or more steps down the Damage Condition Track, they can move one less step down as you suffer it in their stead. You must be able to see one another to use this.
36 to 40	Friendly Rivals	When working together in battle, you try outdoing each others' moves.	Unavailable In Session Zero
41 to 45	Keepers of a Secret	You've developed a way of communicating with each other that borders on preternatural, a conlang of words, emotions, and hand signs.	You and your Bonded survivor can speak using an empathic language like telepathy. You must be able to see one another to use this.
46 to 50	Kinsfolk	Bound by blood, your familial ties allow you to sense when the other is in danger.	Unavailable In Session Zero
51 to 55	Linked by Prophecy	Prophecy has bound your destinies together, granting you glimpses of potential futures.	Unavailable In Session Zero

BOND			
d100	TALENT	DESCRIPTION	EFFECT
56 to 60	Old Flame	From the ashes of your relationship, you've learned to anticipate and counter each other's weaknesses.	Unavailable In Session Zero
61 to 65	On the Run Together	Constant danger has honed your instincts to stay a few steps ahead of the law.	When Engaged with your Bonded survivor, you Flip To Succeed Stealth Tests. You must be able to see one another to use this.
66 to 70	Protector & Charge	This bond grants the protector enhanced abilities to defend their charge.	Unavailable In Session Zero
71 to 75	Reincarnated Souls	Linked by lives lived long ago, you occasionally gain flashes of your former lives together.	When you can see one another, add your Bonded survivor's Skill Ranks to your own Skill Tests. You cannot exceed 3 Skill Ranks.
76 to 80	Spirit Keepers	You can call upon the strength of the departed, offering aid in times of need.	Unavailable In Session Zero
81 to 85	Star-crossed Lovers	A deep emotional connection allows you to empathize and share in each other's pain.	At any time, you can move one step up the Peril Condition Track, while your Bonded survivor will move one step down. You must be able to see one another to use this.
86 to 90	Student & Teacher	The teacher teaches the student, and the student lends insights from a fresh perspective.	Unavailable In Session Zero
91 to 95	Tragic Survivors	Your shared experiences have taught you how to shield one another from mental anguish.	When you fail to resist becoming Stressed, Frightened, or Terrified, your Bonded survivor who can see you may re-roll Resolve using their abilities, but you must accept the results of the re-roll.
96 to 100	Twins Stars	Almost as one soul in two bodies.	Unavailable In Session Zero

Step 17: General Talents

Unavailable For Session Zero.

Step 18: Supplies & Weapons

You gain the following supplies: 1 Supply Rating of laudanum & smelling salts. Write them on the second page of your survivor sheet.

Roll d100 on the table below to determine one Melee and Ranged weapon. Substitute Blackpowder in place of Ranged at your option.

Write down each weapon the second page.

Write 2 Supply Ratings of your Blackpowder or Ranged weapon's ammunition on the second page.

d100	Melee Weapons	d100	Melee Weapons
1 to 4	basebrawl mace	50 to 52	military lance
5 to 7	battle axe	53 to 55	misericorde
8 to 10	blackjack	56 to 58	morgenstern
11 to 13	bohemian earspoon	59 to 61	mortuary sword
14 to 16	bollock dagger	62 to 64	pike
17 to 19	broadsword	65 to 67	pole cleaver
20 to 22	bullwhip	68 to 70	rapier
23 to 25	court sword	71 to 73	sabre
26 to 28	cudgel	74 to 76	shiv
29 to 31	dirk	77 to 79	sickle
32 to 34	estoc	80 to 82	splitting maul
35 to 37	firehardened spear	83 to 85	staff
38 to 40	flanged mace	86 to 88	stiletto
41 to 43	garrote	89 to 91	threshing flail
44 to 46	knuckleduster	92 to 94	war hammer
47 to 49	main gauche	95 to 100	zweihander

d100	Ranged Weapons
1 to 10	arbalest crossbow
11 to 20	bolas
21 to 30	composite bow
31 to 40	hunting bow
41 to 45	javelin
46 to 55	light crossbow
56 to 65	longbow
66 to 75	shepherd's sling
76 to 85	throwing axe
86 to 100	throwing knife

d100	Blackpowder Weapons
1 to 20	arquebus
21 to 40	blunderbuss
41 to 60	dragon pistol
61 to 80	flintlock pistol
81 to 100	turnout pistol

SURVIVOR SHEET COMPLETE!

We hope you enjoyed creating your first survivor for **ZWEIHÄNDER Reforged Edition: Session Zero!** Be sure to share out your experience with us on our community partnered Discord at

<https://discord.gg/Zweihander>

