



LEGENDS OF THALORANTH

Basics Rule Book



THALORANTH
PUBLISHING



LEGENDS OF
THALORANTH

LEGENDS OF THALORANTH

Basics Rule Book

Everything you need to play your first game in the world of Vaeloranth. No prior experience required.

PLAYER'S SECTION | GAME MASTER'S SECTION | YOUR FIRST ADVENTURE

Thaloranth Publishing

LEGAL INFORMATION

Legends of Thaloranth Menagerie: Volume One Monsters

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Chapter

INTRODUCTION

This book is a complete game.

Legends of Thaloranth: Basics contains everything two to five people need to sit down, create characters, and play through a full adventure in the world of Vaeloranth. When you are done, if you want more, more Origins, more Paths, deeper rules for social encounters, mass combat, and political intrigue, the Player's Guide and Game Master's Guide are waiting for you. But you don't need them tonight.

What you do need is this book, some paper, pencils, and players willing to commit to a story together.

What Kind of Game Is This?

Legends of Thaloranth is a diceless tabletop roleplaying game set in Vaeloranth, a world rebuilding itself after catastrophe. The game is narrative-first: there are no dice, no random rolls. Instead, every challenge is resolved by comparing your character's capabilities against a fixed difficulty number. Success comes from preparation, clever thinking, and the choices you make, not from luck.

The system uses four Stats, a skill tree built on top of them, and a resource called Action Points that powers everything your character does in a tense scene. It is fast to learn, mechanically honest, and designed to keep the story moving.

How to Use This Book

The book is divided into three parts:

- **Part One: Player's Section**, How to create a character, including all the rules you need to play.
- **Part Two: Game Master's Section**, How to run the game, set difficulties, and run your first sessions.
- **Part Three: Your First Adventure**, A complete introductory adventure ready to run tonight.

New players should read Part One. The GM should read all three. Everyone at the table can skim the Quick Reference at the back.

PART ONE

THE PLAYER'S SECTION

This section walks you through creating a character step by step. By the end, you will have a complete character ready to play. If something is unclear as you read, keep going, it will make more sense when you see it all together.

Chapter 1

CORE CONCEPTS

Before you build your character, you need to understand three things about how Legends of Thaloranth works. These three concepts underlie every rule in the game.

Stats Are Who You Are

Every character is defined by four Stats: Power, Agility, Insight, and Social. These are not descriptions of things your character has learned. They are measurements of what your character fundamentally is.

Stat	What It Measures
Power (POW)	Physical strength, endurance, and the ability to absorb punishment.
Agility (AGI)	Reflexes, speed, precision, and physical grace.
Insight (INS)	Mental acuity, perception, and the capacity to understand complex things.
Social (SOC)	Charisma, influence, and the ability to read and affect other people.

Stats are expressed as numbers, typically ranging from -2 to +4 at character creation (though they can go higher with Origin modifiers). A +0 is ordinary. A +3 is exceptional. A -2 is a genuine limitation that shapes how the world responds to your character.

Skills Are What You Can Do

Skills represent trained capabilities built on top of your Stats. A Base Skill in Melee Combat means you know how to fight. A Sub-Skill in Swordsmanship means you are specifically trained with a blade. A Specialization in Bladework means you have refined that training to a high degree.

The skill system has three tiers:

- **Base Skill:** Unlocks the category and is a prerequisite for Sub-Skills. Provides no bonus on its own.
- **Sub-Skill:** Provides +1 to checks in that specific area. Requires the Base Skill.
- **Specialization:** Provides +2 to checks in a very specific application. Stacks with the Sub-Skill for +3 total. Requires the Sub-Skill.

Everything Costs Action Points

Action Points (AP) are the engine of the game. In any tense or dramatic situation, combat, a high-stakes negotiation, a dangerous climb, everything your character does costs AP. Moving to a new position costs AP. Making an attack costs AP. Boosting a check that matters costs AP.

AP refreshes fully at the end of each scene. Between scenes, your characters rest, regroup, and start the next situation at full capacity. The interesting decisions happen within a scene, as you choose how to spend what you have.

ACTION POINTS

$$\mathbf{AP = (Power + Agility) \times 2}$$

A character with Power +2 and Agility +2 has 8 AP per scene.

Chapter 2

CREATING YOUR CHARACTER

Character creation in Legends of Thaloranth is a series of decisions made in order. Each decision shapes the ones that follow. Work through these steps in sequence.

The Steps at a Glance

- Step 1: Concept & Background
- Step 2: Choose Your Origin
- Step 3: Distribute Your Stats
- Step 4: Calculate Derived Values
- Step 5: Choose Your Paths
- Step 6: Spend Your Skill Points
- Step 7: Choose Your Advantages
- Step 8: Select Your Equipment
- Step 9: Define Personality, Flaws & Goals
- Step 10: Record Everything

Step 1: Concept & Background

Before anything else, decide who your character is. Not their stats, their identity. What do they want? Where do they come from? What are they willing to do to get what they want?

You don't need a complete backstory. You need enough of a foundation that when the GM asks "what do you do?" you know the answer comes from a real person, not a collection of numbers.

Consider these questions:

- What drives this person, what do they want, fear, or protect?
- What is their relationship to the world, are they a product of it, a rebel against it, or a newcomer to it?
- What kind of trouble do they attract?
- What is one thing they are not willing to do, no matter what?

"I am not what the world expects, I am what I demand of myself.", common saying among Thaloranth adventurers

Step 2: Choose Your Origin

Origins are the seven ancestral peoples of Vaeloraranth. Your Origin determines your starting stat modifiers and grants you one Origin Trait, a special ability that reflects your people's heritage. Origins are applied after you distribute your Stats in Step 3.

Five Origins are available in this Basics set. The full Player's Guide contains all seven.

Human

Versatile • Adaptive • Driven

Humans are the most widespread people in Vaeloraranth. They have no single homeland, no single tradition, only relentless will and the capacity to become almost anything. What defines a human is the speed and breadth of their adaptation.

Stat Modifiers: None

Origin Trait: Adaptive Edge, Humans begin play with one additional Advantage (see Step 7). This represents the breadth of human experience and background.

Sylvani

Graceful • Long-memored • Reserved

The Sylvani are an ancient people bound to the natural and spiritual rhythms of the world. They move through life with an ease that borders on supernatural, and they carry centuries of memory in their culture. They can be aloof, not from arrogance, but from a perspective shaped by time that most people simply don't have.

Stat Modifiers: Agility +2, Insight +1, Power -1, Social -2

Origin Trait: Harmony of Motion, Once per session, a Sylvani character automatically succeeds on one Agility-based check outside of combat. This does not apply to attack checks.

Forgeborn

Enduring • Stoic • Built for the Long Fight

The Forgeborn are shaped by generations of labor in mountain halls and deep-earth sanctuaries. They are physically formidable and culturally patient, slow to anger, slow to trust, but immovable once committed. They value mastery, loyalty, and the kind of strength that does not need to prove itself.

Stat Modifiers: Power +2, Agility -1, Social -1

Origin Trait: Stonebound Endurance, Once per session, a Forgeborn character ignores the mechanical effects of exhaustion, encumbrance, or physical strain for one full scene.

Meadowkin

Sociable • Perceptive • Light on Their Feet

The Meadowkin are a small, quick-eyed people known for their warmth, their networks of friends and favors, and their uncanny ability to navigate social situations that would strand anyone else. They are not naive, they simply prefer to solve problems through connection rather than confrontation.

Stat Modifiers: Social +2, Agility +1, Power -2, Insight -1

Origin Trait: Quick Read, Once per session, a Meadowkin character may ask the GM one yes/no question about an NPC's honest intentions in a social scene. The GM must answer truthfully.

Tinkersprite

Inventive • Restless • Technically Relentless

Tinkersprites are small, wiry people with brilliant minds and an obsessive relationship with how things work. They thrive in workshops and arcane labs, see every problem as an engineering challenge, and are often underestimated right up to the moment they aren't.

Stat Modifiers: Insight +2, Agility +1, Power -2, Social -1

Origin Trait: Tinker's Reflex, Once per session, a Tinkersprite may improvise a functional device or tool from available materials. The GM determines feasibility. Simple devices always succeed. Complex ones may require a check.

Step 3: Distribute Your Stats

You have 5 points to distribute across your four Stats. All Stats begin at 0. The maximum you can assign to any single Stat during character creation is +3. This cap applies to your own choices, Origin modifiers applied in the next step can push Stats higher.

You may also assign negative values to one or more Stats, down to a maximum of -2 per Stat. Each negative point assigned gives you one additional point to spend elsewhere. A character who takes -2 in Power has 7 points to distribute instead of 5.

What Do Negative Stats Mean?

Negative Stats are not failures. They are commitments. A character with -2 Power and +3 Social is not a weak character, they are a character who has made a clear choice about what kind of person they are. The world responds to both halves of that choice. Your limitations are as defining as your strengths.

After distributing your base points, apply your Origin modifiers. Origin modifiers can push Stats above +3. The cap applies only to your own distribution choices, not to the final total.

Stats cannot go below 0 after Origin modifiers are applied, they floor at 0.

Step 4: Calculate Derived Values

Your Stats generate six derived values that define your character's practical capabilities in play. Calculate each of these now and record them on your character sheet.

Vitality Points (VP)

VP is how much punishment your character can absorb before being incapacitated. Damage dealt to your character reduces VP. When VP reaches 0 you are incapacitated, you cannot act, and you are in immediate danger. If VP reaches a negative value equal to your Power score, your character dies.

VITALITY POINTS

$$VP = (\text{Power} + \text{Agility}) \times 2$$

Action Points (AP)

AP fuels everything your character does in a structured scene. Attacks, movement, spell casting, skill boosts, all of it costs AP. AP refreshes fully at the end of each scene.

ACTION POINTS

$$AP = (\text{Power} + \text{Agility}) \times 2$$

Luck Points (LP)

LP represents positioning, relationship investment, and fortune. Use LP to boost Wealth checks or Saving checks 1-for-1. LP also has a secondary use: after an outcome is determined, you can spend LP to introduce a minor beneficial twist, subject to GM approval. LP recovers once per in-game day.

LUCK POINTS

$$LP = \text{Insight} + \text{Social}$$

Spell Points (SP)

SP is the resource of magical practice. Spending SP casts spells. SP recovers fully between scenes when you have adequate downtime, and after full rest. Characters without the Arcana skill still technically have SP, they just have nothing to spend it on.

SPELL POINTS

$$SP = (\text{Insight} + \text{Arcana total}) \times 3$$

If you have no Arcana skill, your SP is 0.

Wealth Points (WP)

WP abstracts your character's economic resources. When you attempt to purchase something, compare your WP to the item's Purchase Point Value (PPV). If your WP meets or exceeds the PPV, the purchase succeeds without reducing WP, it's within your means. If your WP falls short, the purchase fails and WP drops by 1, representing the strain of overextending.

WEALTH POINTS

$$\text{WP} = (\text{Insight} + \text{Social}) \times 2$$

Armor Rating (AR)

AR is the target number an attacker must meet or exceed to land a hit on your character. It is not a damage reduction value, it is a binary threshold. An attack that meets or exceeds your AR deals full damage. An attack that falls short deals nothing.

ARMOR RATING

$$\text{AR} = \text{Agility} + 5 + \text{Armor Bonus} + \text{Shield Bonus}$$

An unarmored character with Agility +2 has AR 7.

Step 5: Choose Your Paths

Paths are the ten character archetypes that define your character's development direction. Your Paths determine what kind of character you become, a warrior, a diplomat, a shadow operative, an arcanist. Each Path provides general abilities and contains Sub-Paths for deeper specialization.

You may follow a number of Paths equal to your Insight score. If your Insight is +2, you can have up to 2 Paths. For this Basics set, most starting characters will have 1 or 2 Paths.

Paths in the Basics Set

Fighter, Physical combat, endurance, weapon mastery. Weapon Mastery: +1 damage with all proficient weapons. Endurance: +1 to Power checks resisting fatigue or injury.

Rogue, Agility, misdirection, precision. Agile Movement: +1 to Agility checks for dodging, parkour, acrobatics. Quick Reflexes: +1 to initiative and sudden reaction checks.

Diplomat, Social influence, leadership, negotiation. Silver Tongue: +2 to Persuasion and Negotiation in social or political scenarios. Insightful Observer: +2 to Insight checks reading emotions or detecting lies.

Magus, Arcane study, spell variety, magical theory. Arcane Mastery: +1 to general magic checks. Mana Reserves: +1 to checks maintaining spellcasting under pressure.

Explorer, Survival, navigation, wilderness expertise. Trail Sense: +1 to checks navigating unfamiliar terrain. Wilderness Endurance: Ignore penalties from environmental exposure for one scene per session.

Sub-Paths, full Path ability lists, and five additional Paths are in the Player's Guide.

Step 6: Spend Your Skill Points

Skills are learned capabilities built on your Stats. Your Skill Points budget is:

$$\text{STARTING SKILL POINTS}$$
$$\text{SP} = (\text{Insight} + \text{Social}) \times 3$$

Spend these points to purchase Base Skills, Sub-Skills, and Specializations. Each costs 1 point. You cannot purchase a Sub-Skill without its Base Skill. You cannot purchase a Specialization without its Sub-Skill.

The Skills below are the core set available in this Basics volume. The Player's Guide contains the full list.

Combat Skills

Skill	Description & Sub-Skills
Melee Combat (Power)	Fighting with close-range weapons. Sub-Skills: Swordsmanship, Axe Mastery, Mace/Club, Polearm, Parry & Block, Grappling.
Ranged Combat (Agility)	Distance weapons. Sub-Skills: Archery, Crossbow, Thrown Weapons, Sling.

Exploration Skills

Skill	Description & Sub-Skills
Athletics (Power)	Physical feats. Sub-Skills: Climbing, Swimming, Endurance Feats, Lifting & Carrying.
Stealth (Agility)	Moving unseen and unheard. Sub-Skills: Urban Infiltration, Wilderness Concealment, Shadowing.
Investigation (Insight)	Finding hidden things and analyzing scenes. Sub-Skills: Search, Research, Deduction.
Survival (Insight)	Wilderness navigation, foraging, tracking. Sub-Skills: Navigation, Foraging, Animal Handling.

Social Skills

Skill	Description & Sub-Skills
Persuasion (Social)	Convincing, negotiating, charming. Sub-Skills: Convincing, Negotiating, Charming, Gathering Information.
Deception (Social)	Lying, disguise, misdirection. Sub-Skills: Lying, Disguise, Sleight of

Skill	Description & Sub-Skills
	Hand.
Intimidation (Social)	Coercing through fear or dominance. Sub-Skills: Direct Threat, Presence.
Leadership (Social)	Directing and inspiring groups. Sub-Skills: Inspiring Allies, Commanding Followers, Strategic Decision-Making.

Knowledge Skills

Skill	Description & Sub-Skills
Arcana (Insight)	Magical theory and practice. Sub-Skills: Arcane Tradition, Natural Tradition, Divine Tradition, Void Tradition, Magical Identification.
History (Insight)	Knowledge of past events, cultures, and powers. Sub-Skills: Ancient History, Recent History, Institutional Knowledge.
Medicine (Insight)	Treating injuries and illness. Sub-Skills: First Aid, Diagnosis, Surgery.
Engineering (Insight)	Mechanical systems, construction, devices. Sub-Skills: Mechanical Devices, Construction, Trap Craft.

Step 7: Choose Your Advantages

Advantages are specific traits and abilities that fall outside the Stat and Skill system, they are personal quirks, background boons, and specialized capabilities that reflect who this character is specifically.

Starting Advantages are determined by your Insight score: you receive a number of Advantages equal to your Insight. Characters who chose Human as their Origin receive one additional Advantage from their Adaptive Edge trait.

Sample Advantages (Basics Set)

Keen Senses, +2 to Insight checks involving perception, detection, or awareness.

Durable, Increase your VP by 2. This reflects exceptional physical toughness.

Well-Connected, You have a contact in a specific institution or city. Once per session, you can call in a favor.

Quick Study, Once per session, treat a skill check in an area where you have no Sub-Skill as if you had the relevant Sub-Skill.

Composed, Once per scene, you may ignore a Disadvantage penalty applied to a Social check.

Combat Instincts, You always act before NPCs when initiative is tied.

Silver Lining, When you fail a check by exactly 1, you may choose to treat it as a partial success (GM narrates the complication).

The Player's Guide contains the full Advantages list.

Step 8: Select Your Equipment

Starting equipment is purchased with your Wealth Points. Use your WP total to buy gear or select one of the starting kits below. You may also spend WP on individual items if you want a custom loadout.

Starting Kits

Kit	Contents
Adventurer's Kit (3 WP)	Longsword, leather armor, bedroll, 2 torches, dagger, trail rations (1 week), rope.
Scout Kit (4 WP)	Short bow (20 arrows), camouflage cloak, dagger, studded leather armor, trail rations (2 weeks), waterskin, flint and steel.
Rogue Kit (4 WP)	Short sword, leather armor, grappling hook, lockpicking tools, disguise kit, dagger, urban provisions (1 week).
Knight Kit (5 WP)	Longsword, medium shield, chainmail, lance, heraldic banner, trail rations (2 weeks).
Mage's Kit (3 WP)	Spellbook, component pouch, dagger, traveler's robes, writing materials, candles (6), trail rations (1 week).

Armor

Armor	Details
No Armor	AR Bonus: +0 No penalties
Leather Armor	AR Bonus: +2 No penalties
Studded Leather	AR Bonus: +3 No penalties
Chainmail	AR Bonus: +6 Penalty: -2 to Stealth and Athletics checks
Plate Armor	AR Bonus: +8 Penalty: -6 to Stealth and Athletics checks
Light Shield	AR Bonus: +1 No penalties
Medium Shield	AR Bonus: +2 No penalties

Weapons

Weapon	Details
Dagger	Base Damage: 2 + Power Can be thrown
Short Sword	Base Damage: 3 + Power
Longsword	Base Damage: 4 + Power
Axe	Base Damage: 5 + Power Two-handed
Short Bow	Base Damage: 3 + Agility Range: same zone or adjacent
Longbow	Base Damage: 4 + Agility Range: same zone or adjacent

Step 9: Personality, Flaws & Goals

Stats, skills, and gear define what your character can do. This step defines who they are.

Personality

Give your character two or three defining personality traits. These are the qualities other characters will notice first, not virtues, not vices, just consistent patterns of behavior. Stoic and methodical. Warm but privately suspicious. Confident to the point of recklessness.

Flaws

Choose at least one flaw, not just a weakness, but an active challenge they carry into every scene. A flaw should generate friction, not just limit competence. Distrust of authority. Inability to leave a fight unfinished. A debt they can't repay. Flaws are where the most interesting character moments come from.

Goals

Give your character one immediate goal (something they want this session) and one long-term goal (something that will drive them across an entire campaign). Goals don't have to be noble. They have to matter.

Relationships

Connect to the other player characters. Do any of you have shared history? Are you bound by loyalty, debt, or coincidence? Is anyone a rival, a protector, or a wildcard? Inter-party relationships are one of the most powerful story engines in the game.

Step 10: Record Everything

Transfer all your choices to your character sheet. Double-check the following before play:

- Base Stats and Origin modifiers applied correctly
- All six derived values calculated (VP, AP, LP, SP, WP, AR)
- Paths recorded with their general abilities noted
- Skills, Sub-Skills, and Specializations listed
- Advantages recorded
- Starting gear listed with any relevant modifiers noted
- Personality, flaw, and goals written down somewhere visible

Example: Kiera the Shadowblade

Origin: Human | Paths: Fighter + Rogue

Stats: Power +2, Agility +4, Insight +3, Social +1

VP: $(2+4) \times 2 = 12$ | AP: 12 | LP: 4 | AR: $4+5+2$ (leather) = 11

Skills: Melee Combat, Swordsmanship +1, Stealth, Urban Infiltration +1, Deception

Advantages: Keen Senses, Combat Instincts (Human: +1 extra = Quick Study)

Equipment: Twin daggers, leather armor, grappling hook

Personality: Stoic, calculating, quietly loyal to the helpless.

Flaw: Distrustful of authority. Acts before consulting allies.

Goal: Dismantle the corrupt system that destroyed her home city.

Chapter 3

HOW CHECKS WORK

Most things your character attempts are handled through a simple comparison: your total against a target number called the Difficulty Class (DC). If your total meets or exceeds the DC, you succeed. If it falls short, you fail, or succeed at a cost, depending on how close you came.

THE CORE FORMULA

$$\text{Stat} + \text{Skill} + \text{Modifiers} \geq \text{DC}$$

No dice. No randomness. Your choices determine outcomes.

Difficulty Classes

Difficulty	DC
Easy	5
Moderate	10
Challenging	15
Difficult	20
Legendary	25

Advantage & Disadvantage

When circumstances strongly favor or work against a character, the GM may apply Advantage (+2) or Disadvantage (-2) to a specific check. These reflect the situation, not permanent modifiers.

- **Advantage +2:** Negotiating with someone you've already helped. Climbing with proper equipment and good weather.
- **Disadvantage -2:** Climbing a wet cliff in a storm. Persuading someone who actively distrusts you.

Spending Action Points on Checks

A character can spend AP to boost a check after seeing that it might fall short, but before the outcome is determined. Each 1 AP spent adds +1 to the total. This is a deliberate cost, not a fallback: spending AP here means not spending it on something else this scene.

Standard cost to boost a check: 1 AP per +1.

Luck Points on Checks

Luck Points can be spent to boost Saving Checks (the GM calls for these when a character faces a threat rather than attempting an action) or Wealth Checks. Each 1 LP spent adds +1 to the relevant total. LP refreshes once per in-game day.

What Counts as a Check?

Not everything requires a check. If a character is competent at something and the situation isn't dramatically uncertain, the GM should simply let it happen. Checks exist for meaningful uncertainty, moments where failure is interesting, not just inconvenient.

The GM sets DCs based on the fictional situation, not the character's ability. A DC 15 climb is a DC 15 climb regardless of who is attempting it. What changes is whether the character can meet that number.

Chapter 4

COMBAT

Combat in Legends of Thaloranth is resolved through the same check system as everything else, your total against a target number, but it happens in structured rounds, with every action costing Action Points.

The Combat Turn

Combat is played in rounds. Each round, every participant takes a turn. On your turn you have your full AP pool available and can spend it in any combination of actions you can afford.

Initiative

At the start of combat, the order of turns is determined by Agility. Higher Agility acts first. Ties between player characters and NPCs go to the player character. Ties between two player characters go to the higher Power score.

What Actions Cost

Action	AP Cost
Make a melee attack	2 AP
Make a ranged attack	2 AP
Cast a spell (offensive)	2 AP + SP cost
Cast a spell (non-offensive)	2 AP + SP cost
Move within your current zone	1 AP
Move to an adjacent zone	2 AP
Boost an attack or check	+1 AP per +1 bonus
Boost damage after a hit	+1 AP per +1 damage
Boost your AR against an incoming attack (reaction)	+1 AP per +1 AR
Stabilize an incapacitated ally (Medicine check)	2 AP
Use a minor item or draw a weapon	1 AP
Interrupt an enemy action (if viable)	4 AP

Attacking

Melee Attacks

To make a melee attack, compare your attack total against the target's Armor Rating (AR). If your total meets or exceeds their AR, the attack hits and deals damage. If it falls short, nothing happens.

$$\text{MELEE ATTACK}$$
$$\text{Power} + \text{Melee Combat} + \text{Sub-Skill} + \text{Specialization vs. Target's AR}$$

Ranged Attacks

Ranged attacks work the same way, using Agility instead of Power. A ranged weapon can target characters in the same zone or an adjacent zone without penalty. Targeting characters two or more zones away costs 2 additional AP.

$$\text{RANGED ATTACK}$$
$$\text{Agility} + \text{Ranged Combat} + \text{Sub-Skill} + \text{Specialization vs. Target's AR}$$

Damage

A hit deals damage equal to the weapon's base damage plus the governing stat. There is no damage reduction from AR, AR determines whether the attack lands, not how much it mitigates. A hit deals full damage. A miss deals none.

Attack Type	Damage Formula
Melee weapons	Base Damage + Power
Agility-based melee (daggers, rapiers)	Base Damage + Agility
Ranged weapons	Base Damage + Agility
Spells	Spell Base Damage + applicable enhancements

After confirming a hit, a character may spend additional AP to boost damage: 1 AP per +1 damage. This is declared after the hit but before damage is applied.

Defense

Armor Rating

Your AR is the threshold attacks must clear. It combines your Agility, a base of 5, your armor bonus, and any shield bonus. Armor is protective in combat, its penalty applies only to Stealth and Athletics checks outside of combat.

Defense Boost

When an attacker declares an attack against you, you may reactively spend AP to raise your AR against that specific attack. This is declared after the attacker announces their attack but before the outcome is determined. Each 1 AP spent adds +1 to your AR for that attack only.

Vitality Points & Incapacitation

Every hit reduces the target's VP by the damage dealt. When VP reaches 0, the character is incapacitated, they cannot act and are in immediate danger. An incapacitated character must be stabilized within the scene or they continue to deteriorate.

Stabilization requires a Medicine check at Moderate DC (10), costs 2 AP, and requires the treating character to be in the same zone. A stabilized character is alive but unconscious, they cannot participate in combat and cannot recover VP through natural means until they receive active healing.

A character dies when their VP reaches a negative value equal to their Power score. A character with Power +2 dies at -2 VP.

Zones

Combat doesn't use a grid. Instead, scenes are divided into Zones, distinct areas defined by the narrative context of the space. A rooftop, a courtyard, a narrow corridor, a burning cart. A typical combat scene has three to seven zones.

Movement within a zone costs 1 AP. Moving to an adjacent zone costs 2 AP. Some zones have Tags that affect what happens within them:

Zone Tag	Effect
Elevated	+1 to ranged attacks made from this zone. -1 to attacks targeting this zone from below.
Obscured	-2 to ranged attacks into or through this zone.
Hazardous	Movement into this zone costs +1 AP. Characters beginning their turn here may face damage.
Narrow	Maximum 2-3 characters can occupy simultaneously.
Fortified	+2 AR to defenders against ranged attacks from outside.

Rest & Recovery

Between Scenes (Short Rest)

AP recovers fully at the end of each scene. SP also recovers between scenes, provided there is adequate downtime before the next scene begins. If a scene ends in immediate danger, the GM may rule that SP does not recover.

Full Rest (Daily)

A full 8-hour rest recovers LP. It also allows natural VP recovery: $(\text{Power} + \text{Agility}) \div 2$, rounded down. A character who is unconscious or incapacitated does not benefit from natural VP recovery, they require active healing.

Chapter 5

MAGIC

Magic in Vaeloraranth flows through the fabric of reality. It is not bound by class or bloodline, any character can develop magical capability through investment in the Arcana skill and the Spell Points that skill generates. What limits a magical character is the cost of that investment, not an arbitrary restriction.

Spell Points (SP)

SPELL POINTS

$$SP = (\text{Insight} + \text{Arcana total}) \times 3$$

A character with Insight +3 and Arcana +2 has SP 15.

SP is spent to prepare and cast spells. SP recovers fully between scenes with adequate downtime and after full rest.

Casting

Non-offensive spells (buffs, movement, utility effects) resolve automatically. Offensive spells targeting a character require an attack check:

SPELL ATTACK

$$\text{Insight} + \text{Arcana} + \text{Tradition Sub-Skill} + \text{Specialization} \\ \text{vs. Target's AR}$$

If a caster takes damage in the same round they are casting, they must make a Moderate DC Insight saving check. Failure means the spell fails and the SP is lost.

Spell Enhancements

Spells can be enhanced at the time of casting by spending additional SP:

- +1 SP per additional point of damage
- +2 SP to double the spell's range

- +2 SP to double the spell's duration

Basic Spells

Spell	Description & Cost
Ball (Damage)	Area effect in one zone. Base damage 4. Type: Acid, Cold, Fire, or Water. Cost: 2 SP cast.
Cone (Damage)	Damage in a cone from caster. Base damage 3. Type: Acid, Cold, Fire, or Water. Cost: 2 SP cast.
Barrier (Defensive)	Grants +5 AR to all allies within 10 feet for 5 rounds. Cost: 2 SP cast.
Heal (Healing)	Restores 4 VP to one target. Cost: 2 SP cast.
Light (Utility)	Creates bright light in a 5-foot radius for 4 rounds. Cost: 2 SP cast.
Detect (Utility)	Reveals hidden objects, creatures, or magical presences within the zone. Cost: 2 SP cast.

The Magic Traditions

The Arcana skill contains four Tradition Sub-Skills, each representing a different school of magical practice. Investing in a Tradition Sub-Skill (+1) grants access to that tradition's spell list and improves casting checks. A character may invest in multiple traditions, they are schools of thought, not factions.

Tradition	Focus
Arcane Tradition	Systematic, scholarly magic. Spells of force, manipulation, and magical detection.
Natural Tradition	Attunement to living forces. Spells of growth, weather, animals, and healing.
Divine Tradition	Devotional magic. Spells of protection, light, restoration, and judgment.
Void Tradition	Dangerous, boundary-crossing magic. Spells of shadow, entropy, and forbidden knowledge. See the full Player's Guide for full treatment.

Chapter 6

EXPERIENCE & ADVANCEMENT

Characters grow through Experience Points (XP). XP is earned through play and spent between sessions to improve your character.

Earning XP

Characters earn 1 XP per scene, regardless of what kind of scene it was. The GM may award bonus XP for exceptional creativity, teamwork, overcoming a major personal obstacle, or completing a significant story milestone.

A Note on Advancement

XP is awarded at a steady pace to keep progression consistent. In the Basics game, an adventure of three scenes yields 3 XP, enough to meaningfully improve one area of your character. The Player's Guide contains rules for longer campaigns and the full advancement table.

Spending XP

Improvement	Cost
Improve a Skill (add Base Skill, Sub-Skill, or Specialization)	1 XP per point
Increase a Stat	3 XP per point
Purchase a Path Point (advances Sub-Path abilities)	3 XP per point
Unlock an Advantage	4 XP
Increase Wealth Points	6 XP per point

PART TWO

THE GAME MASTER'S SECTION

This section is for the person running the game. Your job is not to tell the story, it is to create the conditions for the story to happen. You play the world: its people, its threats, its consequences. The players play their characters. The story emerges from the collision between those two things.

RUNNING THE GAME

The GM's Three Jobs

1. Set scenes with enough specificity that players know what their characters can perceive and act on.
2. Adjudicate checks by setting DCs that reflect the actual difficulty of the situation, not the character's capability.
3. Narrate consequences that follow honestly from player choices, including failures.

Setting Difficulty Classes

DCs are set by the situation, not calibrated to the characters. If the cliff is wet and the wind is strong, it's a Difficult (DC 20) climb regardless of how skilled the characters are. What changes is whether they can meet that number.

Use these as your baseline:

Difficulty	When to Use It
Easy (5)	A competent character succeeds routinely. Failure here signals something unusual.
Moderate (10)	The standard difficulty of meaningful challenges. Most everyday obstacles in dangerous work.
Challenging (15)	Requires real investment or clever positioning to clear reliably.
Difficult (20)	Requires exceptional capability or significant AP investment.
Legendary (25)	The outer edge of mortal capability. Reserved for climactic moments.

When Not to Call for a Check

Not everything requires a check. If a character is competent and the situation isn't genuinely uncertain, let it happen. Checks exist for dramatic uncertainty, moments where failure would be interesting, not just a speed bump.

Don't call for a check when: the character has the relevant skill and there's no meaningful time pressure or opposition. Don't call for a check when: failure would simply stop the story cold with no interesting path forward.

Running NPCs

NPCs are built from the same framework as player characters, but simplified. For most encounters in the Basics set, you need only:

- **VP:** Minor NPCs: 8-20 VP. Moderate threats: 20-40 VP. Major threats: 50+ VP.
- **AR:** Unarmored: 5-7. Light armor: 8-10. Heavy armor: 12-14. Exceptional: 15+.
- **Attack Total:** Weak: 4-6. Average: 7-9. Dangerous: 10-13. Elite: 14+.
- **AP:** Give NPCs 8-14 AP for standard encounters. Don't track it precisely, use it as a pacing guide.

The Scene Economy

A session is a collection of scenes. Each scene has a situation, a set of stakes, and a conclusion. AP refreshes between scenes, this creates a natural rhythm of intense engagement followed by a moment to breathe before the next situation.

For a first session with new players, aim for three scenes: one social or skill-based scene, one exploration or investigation scene, and one combat scene. This gives every player at least one scene where their character shines.

Consequences, Not Punishment

When players fail a check or make a decision that goes wrong, the job is not to hurt them, it is to move the story forward through a new situation created by that failure. Failure should open doors, not close them. The door opens in a direction the players didn't plan for, but it is still a door.

The Social Framework

Social encounters work exactly like other checks. The GM sets a DC based on how hard it actually is to achieve the desired social outcome, then players use Social + relevant skill + modifiers. Advantage and Disadvantage apply based on the situation.

NPC Attitude provides baseline DCs for social encounters. Track where NPCs start and how player actions move them:

NPC Attitude	Effect on Social Checks
Helpful	Will go out of their way to assist. Social DCs reduced by 5.
Friendly	Positively disposed. Social DCs at standard.
Neutral	No particular feeling either way. Social DCs at standard.
Unfriendly	Resistant or suspicious. Social DCs increased by 3.
Hostile	Actively opposed. Social DCs increased by 5. Combat possible.

PART THREE

YOUR FIRST ADVENTURE

CHAOS IN THE GRAND MARKETPLACE

Adventure Overview

This adventure is designed for 2–5 players and can be completed in a single session of 2–4 hours. It focuses on social encounters, skill-based problem solving, and one optional combat escalation. It is set in the Grand Marketplace of Radia, the beating commercial heart of Thaloranth.

Detail	Value
Players	2–5
Session Length	2–4 hours
Primary Focus	Social, investigation, optional combat
XP Awarded	1 XP per scene (3 scenes = 3 XP total)
Setting	The Grand Marketplace of Radia

The Setup

The party arrives at the Grand Marketplace of Radia, a sprawling, vivid hub of commerce where trade caravans from across the continent converge, street performers compete with merchants for attention, and the smell of roasted spices competes with the press of bodies.

As they move through the marketplace, a sudden commotion draws attention: a merchant's cart has overturned, spilling goods across a main avenue. A small group of street children is taking advantage of the chaos, lifting fruit, trinkets, and attention while the crowd erupts into disorder.

What begins as a simple civic disruption quickly reveals layers: a desperate merchant, five distinct and troublesome children, and, if the players dig, evidence that the chaos was engineered by someone with interests larger than stolen fruit.

GM Notes: Before You Begin

Tell the players the following as they enter the marketplace:

Read Aloud

The Grand Marketplace of Radia is everything at once. Vendors shout competing prices. Aromas from street kitchens cut through the crowd. Banners bearing noble crests hang above stalls selling everything from enchanted tools to imported cloth.

Then, ahead: the crack of wood, a cascade of goods scattering across the cobblestones, and a shout. A merchant's cart lies on its side. Half the street is blocked. The crowd, already thick, is packing in.

And somewhere in that crowd, you catch a flash of movement. Small hands. Quick feet. Children.

Act One: The Overturned Cart

The party's first challenge is the cart itself: a portly spice merchant named Grellon is losing his livelihood to the crowd and the cobblestones. He appeals to the party for help.

Scene 1: Grellon's Plea (Moderate DC 10)

Grellon flags down the party. He's panicked, stained with saffron, and very loud. He needs the cart uprighted, the spices recovered, and the crowd calmed, in roughly that order.

Possible approaches:

- **Power check (DC 10):** Lift the cart. Teamwork reduces the DC by 2 per additional assisting character, to a minimum of DC 6.
- **Agility check (DC 10):** Sprint and recover scattered spice bags before they're trampled.
- **Persuasion check (DC 8):** Rally bystanders to help. Clever or amusing delivery grants Advantage.
- **Insight check (DC 10):** Identify the most valuable spice bags to prioritize.

Success: Cart is righted. Grellon offers a pouch of rare crimson spice (worth 1 WP, usable in rituals or negotiations).

Failure: The cart remains down. More goods are lost. The next scene begins with the crowd already hostile.

Scene 2: Crowd Control (Challenging DC 12–15)

The blocked avenue is creating a pressure cooker. Merchants are shouting at each other. A shoving match is brewing near the wine stall.

Possible approaches:

- **Social check (DC 12):** Calm tempers and redirect frustration.

- **Deception check (DC 8):** Announce something false that draws people elsewhere ("The Duke's procession is coming through the silk district!").
- **Performance or Persuasion (DC 10):** Create a scene, a speech, a song, something that takes the crowd's attention.

Success: The crowd disperses. Local vendors become Friendly toward the party.

Failure: Market security arrives and views the party with suspicion. Disadvantage to Social checks in the marketplace for the rest of the session.

Act Two: The Children

Five children are working the disruption. Each is a different type of problem requiring a different type of solution.

Tessa (The Acrobat)

Balanced on a market awning, juggling stolen fruit. She will not come down unless she wants to.

- **Agility (DC 10):** Climb up and retrieve her.
- **Persuasion (DC 8):** Coax her down. Promising to teach her something impressive grants Advantage.

Bram (The Runner)

Slipping through the crowd with a stolen trinket.

- **Agility (DC 12):** Chase and catch him without upsetting more stalls.
- **Deception (DC 10):** "Guards are coming!" or "You dropped something!"

Lila (The Charmer)

Casually chatting with a jewelry vendor while pocketing rings behind her back.

- **Insight (DC 10):** Catch her in the act before the vendor notices.
- **Social (DC 8):** Smooth things over with the vendor before it becomes a scene.

Harkin (The Tinkerer)

Has disassembled half of a mechanical toy and is "improving" it.

- **Engineering (DC 8):** Repair the toy and outwit him.
- **Intimidation (DC 10):** Scare him off, but risk tears and a scene.

Milo (The Leader)

Watching from the edge. Calm, assessing, in control.

- **Persuasion (DC 10):** Reason with him to call off the others.
- **Performance (DC 8):** Impress him. He respects capability.

If They Handle 3 or More Children

Milo is impressed. He nods. "Not bad, travelers."

If pressed, he lets slip: "Someone paid to have this happen. I don't know who. I know we were supposed to keep you busy."

This is the hook to the Optional Escalation below.

Act Three: Resolution

The marketplace returns to its rhythm, or doesn't, depending on how the party handled things. Narrate the outcome based on their performance.

Outcome	Result
Full Success (5 of 6 challenges met)	Grellon and the market vendors are grateful. Party gains +1 to all Social checks in Radia markets. Milo drops the smuggler hook.
Partial Success (3–4 challenges met)	Cart is restored, some children escape. Grellon is grateful; other vendors are neutral. Reputation is neutral.
Failure (fewer than 3 challenges met)	Market is chaotic. Guards view the party as suspects. Complications arise later, accusations, local distrust.

Optional Escalation: The Smuggler's Distraction

If the players pursue Milo's hint, they discover that the children were a distraction for a larger operation: a thieves' ring has been using the marketplace chaos to move contraband through hidden passages beneath the market district.

This discovery can launch a full campaign arc if the GM wants to extend the adventure. For a one-shot, it simply provides satisfying context and an opportunity for one more skill scene or combat encounter.

Optional Combat: The Fence

If the party confronts the fence coordinating the operation:

Name: Davan Cors, marketplace information broker

VP: 22 | AR: 9 | AP: 10 | Attack Total: 8 (dagger)

Has 2 hired guards: VP 18 | AR 10 | AP 10 | Attack Total: 7 each

Davan will attempt to flee rather than fight. He has information worth more than his loyalty to whoever hired him.

QUICK REFERENCE

Core Formulas

Value	Formula
Vitality Points (VP)	$(\text{Power} + \text{Agility}) \times 2$
Action Points (AP)	$(\text{Power} + \text{Agility}) \times 2$
Luck Points (LP)	Insight + Social
Spell Points (SP)	$(\text{Insight} + \text{Arcana total}) \times 3$
Wealth Points (WP)	$(\text{Insight} + \text{Social}) \times 2$
Armor Rating (AR)	Agility + 5 + Armor Bonus + Shield Bonus
Skill Points (starting)	$(\text{Insight} + \text{Social}) \times 3$
Starting Advantages	Equal to Insight score (+1 for Humans)
Number of Paths allowed	Equal to Insight score

Difficulty Classes

Difficulty	Target Number
Easy	DC 5
Moderate	DC 10
Challenging	DC 15
Difficult	DC 20
Legendary	DC 25

Combat Quick Reference

Action	Rule
Melee attack	Power + Melee Combat + Sub-Skill vs AR Cost: 2 AP
Ranged attack	Agility + Ranged Combat + Sub-Skill vs AR Cost: 2 AP
Spell attack	Insight + Arcana + Tradition vs AR Cost: 2 AP + SP
Boost a check or attack	+1 AP per +1 bonus (declared before outcome)
Boost damage after a hit	+1 AP per +1 damage (declared after hit)
Defense Boost (reaction)	+1 AP per +1 AR (declared after attacker announces)
Move within zone	1 AP
Move to adjacent zone	2 AP

Action	Rule
Stabilize ally at 0 VP	2 AP + Medicine check DC 10 (same zone required)

Origins at a Glance

Origin	Modifiers & Trait
Human	No stat modifiers. +1 bonus Advantage (Adaptive Edge).
Sylvani	Agility +2, Insight +1, Power -1, Social -2. Auto-succeed first Agility check per session (non-combat).
Forgeborn	Power +2, Agility -1, Social -1. Ignore exhaustion/encumbrance for one scene per session.
Meadowkin	Social +2, Agility +1, Power -2, Insight -1. Ask GM one yes/no NPC question per session.
Tinkersprite	Insight +2, Agility +1, Power -2, Social -1. Improvise a tool or device once per session.

Conditions

Condition	Effect
Fatigued	-1 to Power, Agility, or Insight checks (GM's choice). From overexertion or lack of rest.
Inspired	+1 to one check of the player's choice this scene.
Blinded	-2 to all visual tasks.
Rooted	Cannot move zones this round.
Wounded	-1 to Power or Agility checks until treated.
Hidden	+2 to Stealth or first action if undetected.
Suppressed	-2 to Path abilities and spell activation.
Charmed	-2 to actions taken against the source of the charm.