SWORDWEAVE

GAME MASTER'S GUIDE

THE WOVEN ATLAS / INTERWOVEN EDITION



v0.1 alpha / Marius Ion / Free digital edition

Credits, rights and edition

SwordWeave by **Marius Ion**. Rules edition **v0.1 alpha**, digital publication 12 October 2026. Writing, design and technical preparation assisted by OpenAI tools under the creator's direction. The official source, current catalogue and corrections are at swordweave.quest. The three core books are free: swordweave.quest/books.

The original rules, explanatory game text, worked examples, tables and instructional diagrams in this edition are licensed under **Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International**: creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0. You may copy, adapt and redistribute that material, including commercially, with appropriate attribution, a license link and an indication of changes. No royalty is required. Reuse does not imply official endorsement.

Suggested attribution

"Based on SwordWeave v0.1 alpha by Marius Ion, swordweave.quest, licensed CC BY 4.0. Changes: [describe your changes]."

The bracketed phrase is an instruction to reusers, not a missing credit in this book.

The SwordWeave name, wordmark and brand identity identify the project; this notice grants no trademark or endorsement rights. Instructional diagrams and the original schematic adventure maps are included in the CC BY 4.0 text-and-diagram scope. Illustrations are AI-generated with OpenAI image-generation tools under Marius Ion's direction; selected system creature art is reused from the original SwordWeave catalogue. Illustration generation records accompany the publication sources. The creator permits sharing the complete illustrated book noncommercially and printing it for personal or table use. Other reuse of separately identified illustrations requires permission; this notice does not assert exclusive copyright in purely generated expression. Keep the complete PDF, print it for your table and share it with friends. Fonts retain their own licenses: Unica One, Aubrey, Syne, Oxanium and IBM Plex Mono use the SIL Open Font License 1.1; embedding does not require licensing your new game text under the font license.

If these books help your games, you can buy the creator a coffee. Support is optional. Reading, downloading, sharing permitted content and playing do not require payment.

Alpha status. This is a complete alpha publication, open to corrections and table feedback. One specific rule remains undecided: additional Vitality upkeep payments triggered by incoming damage, including its threshold and counter handling. It is visibly marked in the upkeep section. Other agreed upkeep requirements remain usable; this edition does not impose that unsettled numerical scheme.

A note from the creator / AI and this alpha

AI was used in creating the SwordWeave platform, these books and their artwork. I am not a programmer by trade. The system's design, and the platform's UI and UX, are my own. For implementation, AI was mostly a set of extra arms: a tool I could work with, like a hammer or a sword. It also reasoned through and solved programming problems; that contribution deserves acknowledgement.

For the book illustrations and heritage artwork, AI took the lead in art direction as well as creating the images. The aesthetic of the profile images was its proposal, and it clicked for me on the first try. I explored some alternatives, but kept returning to that first direction because I loved it. I want to give credit where it is due.

This alpha is a one-person project. I chose to get it into people's hands for feedback and play rather than spend many more months producing the books. I do not currently have the funds to hire artists. My hope for v1.0 is to involve more people across the system, platform, writing, design and artwork. For now, this is what I can make and share, with AI's help. Thank you for giving it a place at your table.

Run a world that can answer.

A guide for the person offering places, people and the next meaningful choice.

Use this beside the shared rules

The Player's Handbook teaches play. The SRD states the framework precisely. Here you prepare situations, make rulings, review creations and keep a changing world understandable.

Choose a useful beginning

For a first session, read chapter 1 and try the sluice in chapter 12. Chapters 2–5 develop rulings and authored costs; 7–9 connect creatures and shared encounters. Chapters 10–14 turn preparation into campaigns and adventures.

Make the game your own

Field studies, prices, places and instruments are examples to adapt. Their presence on a page does not make them mandatory mechanics.

Keep the open rule open

Additional incoming-damage Vitality-upkeep repayment remains unresolved in this alpha. Use actual agreed continuation and consequences; do not impose an invented threshold.

Play from paper

Chapter 15 supplies records and copyable working sheets. Ordinary paper, dice and the actual rules are enough to run these situations.



Your imagination. Your table's game.

Eight promises to carry into preparation, creation and every ruling.

01 Actions have consequences.

Discuss the stakes together, with the DM appraising the attempt. There are no spell slots: ambitious actions can cost vitality, or bring other consequences agreed at your table.

02 Let the story lead.

SwordWeave is a framework for judgment and imagination. Use its numbers as guides. Have fun telling a story; pursue the perfect build when that is the game your table wants.

03 Tell it together.

Players and DM negotiate what happens, build on each other's ideas, and share the spotlight. The aim is a story you enjoy making together, full of moments worth remembering.

04 Rule of cool is king.

Give exciting ideas a chance. Talk through what makes the attempt possible, what it risks, and how you will resolve it. Then see where it takes the scene.

The Library is a place to begin. The game can become something only your table could have made.



Your imagination. Your table's game.

Eight promises to carry into preparation, creation and every ruling.

05 Imagine freely.

The world lives in your shared imagination. Try the strange idea, invent the impossible place, and do the thing your group wants to explore.

06 Everything is a guideline.

Make SwordWeave yours. Bend the framework around your world and playstyle. Change a guideline whenever your group finds a way that serves its game better.

07 Balance is a lie.

No formula can promise balance for every world, character, and situation. Agree what feels fair and fun at your table, and adjust as you play.

08 Begin with a character idea.

Know what you want your character to do, then create primitives, capabilities, and effects for that concept. Authoring your own pieces can be easier than searching the whole community library for a unique idea.

Offer understandable facts. Take player ideas seriously. Agree changes openly when your game needs them.



Find the work you need

Every chapter and reference below links to its opening page.

01 Begin with people 8

02 Make a ruling together 20

03 Review a creation 38

04 Price what changes 48

05 Consequences that continue 67

06 Run a living place 90

07 Build readable creatures 118

08 Direct a shared round 137



Find the work you need

Every chapter and reference below links to its opening page.

09 Prepare encounters 165

10 Keep a campaign moving 185

11 Write an adventure 199

12 The gate that will not open 211

13 The bellhouse of borrowed names 220

14 The road that forgot its marker 229

15 Records for your table 237

Copyable working instruments / 255

Topic and example index / 265



01

Begin with People

Make the first decision possible.



The GM's working promises

Give the players enough to choose

Your preparation is an offer of a world that can respond. Say what the characters can perceive, which changes are approaching and what their actions have already accomplished. Keep a distinction between a secret that can be investigated and information someone needs to make an ordinary informed decision. A person standing beside a visibly broken stair should know it is broken before committing to run across it.

You can be surprised by a solution and still give a clear ruling. Pause, restate the proposed result and find the facts that bear on it. If a detail has not been established, choose a reasonable answer and make it part of the shared place. Do not quietly change the height of the wall because a player remembered to bring a ladder. The ladder is why equipment and preparation matter.

The players bring the protagonists' purposes. You bring other people's purposes, the resistance of materials, incomplete knowledge and a world that continues between scenes. Neither responsibility requires an adversarial relationship. A Watcher can oppose the party fiercely while its GM hopes the players find an interesting way through the situation.

Prepare for the people actually present

Ask how much time and attention the group has today. A three-hour evening after work and a long weekend can use the same situation at different scales. Start close to a decision. Keep a clear place to pause. If a player is absent, agree who can speak for their character and what risks that character will face; a shared sheet is not itself that agreement.

Invite a new player to name one thing their character wants to try. Help them find its ordinary method or the relevant permission on their record. Let a confident player explain a procedure, then return the choice to its owner. Expertise at navigating a sheet should help the whole table rather than decide whose ideas receive time.

When the group pauses for a boundary, remove or change the unwanted material and continue from a shared understanding. No one needs to justify personal discomfort through a character's statistics. Between sessions, ask whether the agreed tone still fits. These are human agreements about play, not priced capabilities.





Keep one page beside the book

Write the immediate situation, three people who can answer questions and the changes that remain after the last session. Add only the creature records, consequences and permissions likely to matter now. Put an unanswered player question beside each relevant person or location. This small preparation can grow when play gives it a reason.

After play, cross out what is resolved, keep what is still true and write one new opening from the changed world. A long archive is useful when searchable; a short current record is useful while someone is waiting for your answer. This guide supplies both extended examples to learn from and compact instruments to copy.

Begin with a playable situation

You do not need a map of a continent to run your first SwordWeave session. You need people who want something, a situation that will change if nobody intervenes, and enough facts to respond to the players' ideas. Prepare the pressure, then let their choices determine the story.

The Player's Handbook teaches the shared procedures; the SRD states them precisely. This guide helps you apply them: agree a ruling, review a creation, give a creature a purpose, prepare an encounter and keep a campaign moving. "Dungeon Master" and "Game Master" mean the same role here. You are also a player, with the world and its other inhabitants as your responsibilities.

What to bring to the first session

Bring the shared rules, a way to record changes, the dice your table uses, and character records. Digital sheets are convenient; paper records work. Establish who can edit shared digital sheets rather than assuming that viewing permission grants editing permission.

Agree the starting budget and equipment, the tone, the expected length of play, and boundaries for content and interpersonal behavior. Discuss character concepts together. A group with a reason to cooperate gives the first scene somewhere to go. A 25-BU starting character

is a default, not a promise that every newly invented power is accepted without review.

Optional guidance. Ask each player for a reason to help the others and a question they want the campaign to answer. Agree an easy way to pause or remove uncomfortable material without requiring personal explanations. Revisit that agreement as the game changes. This is table care, not a mechanical character cost.

Before play, check that everyone knows their current Vitality, applicable check bonuses, movement, reaction slot, relevant permissions and how their capabilities end. Do not require memorizing the entire Market. Ask a new player to explain one working in their own words; resolve ambiguity together.

A first session: the gate that will not open

Original example adventure. The party reaches a canal settlement as water rises against a jammed sluice. Workers need the pressure released. Two Canal Watchers guard a spawning bed downstream and believe opening the gate will destroy it. A maintenance passage can bypass the stuck mechanism, but nobody has checked it since the last flood.

Tell the players what their characters can immediately perceive: brown water climbs the marked gauge; a rope trembles across the channel; workers argue on the bank; one Watcher gestures urgently toward the spawning beds. Begin with "What do you do?" rather than demanding a roll to notice the entire scene.

Prepare these facts, not a mandatory order of events:



Element	What you can reveal and use
Ressa, repair worker	Wants colleagues safe; knows the maintenance passage; will explain it to someone who asks
The Watchers	Want safe flow over the beds; can accept a credible diversion; use the complete record in Worked records
Gate mechanism	Jammed by a snapped timber, not magically sealed; accessible from the bank with suitable tools or a supported working
Maintenance passage	Narrow, wet and partly obstructed; offers another approach if inspected
Pressure	Visibly worsens as time and actions pass; give warning before a route becomes unusable
Outcome	Repair, diversion, evacuation, negotiation or force can change the situation

There is no compulsory sequence of persuasion, fight and repair. If the players recruit the workers, negotiate with the Watchers and divert a narrow channel, let those preparations matter. If they leave, decide where the water goes and which people need help next. The situation continues without requiring them to follow your intended solution.

Teach the first resolution in full

Suppose a character wants to identify the jam. First establish their approach and opportunity. From the safe bank, close inspection might make the broken timber obvious. If they must diagnose it while water shakes the mechanism, uncertainty and risk are meaningful.

Example ruling. You agree a Reason check, DC 12, to identify the jam before a support shifts. A player with Mental 3 and applicable PB 2 rolls 8: 8 + 3 + 2 = 13. They identify the timber. They have not automatically removed it. Describe the useful fact and invite the next decision.

DC 12 is this example's agreed target, not a universal repair difficulty. If their displayed combined bonus is +5, use 8 + 5 rather than adding the attribute and training again. If failure would not change anything and there is time to inspect safely, you may simply give the information. A die roll should answer a question the scene actually asks.

End with changed circumstances

After the immediate crisis, ask what the characters did about the beds, the workers and the broken mechanism. Those answers provide the next session's material. Ressa can become an ally; a damaged storehouse can become an obligation; an exposed old channel can reveal a mystery. A fight need not be the event that earns attention or progress.

Optional guidance. End the first session with a short review: what was easy to understand, what slowed play, which rule needs clarification, and what each character wants next. Agree rewards and new acquisitions with the table. There is no mandatory XP-per-fight or BU-per-session schedule.

Prepare a first session people can enter

A first session should let new players make useful decisions before they understand every family of primitive. Prepare a visible problem, a few people with clear motives, and several plausible approaches. Teach the procedure as those approaches arise. You do not need to perform every rule in one evening.

Before anyone makes a character

Tell the group what kind of situation you are offering. "A canal settlement needs help before a storm" gives players more useful direction than a long list of permitted ancestries. Discuss tone, interpersonal expectations, subjects to avoid, and an easy way to pause or revise a scene. Nobody needs to justify a personal boundary in public.

Agree the starting progression budget, equipment allowance, and whether example constructions are accepted. A 25-BU start is useful for learning because the ledger is small. It is not compulsory. Do not promise that every possible capability at an example price will be valid in this campaign.



Ask for a purpose, a connection, and one ordinary competence from each character. A reason to cooperate can be small: shared employment, a borrowed boat, or an interest in the same missing person. They need enough to enter the scene together, not a completed biography.

Check their records with them. Ask each player to explain a capability, its ordinary use, one limitation, and the bonus they will add to a check. If someone cannot answer, help rewrite the capability before adding more options. A readable narrow build is a stronger teaching tool than a large unexplained package.

Prepare facts instead of a sequence

Write what exists, what people want, and what is changing. Avoid "first they persuade, then they fight, then they repair." A player may repair immediately, persuade someone unexpected, or leave to get help. Your prepared facts should survive those choices.

For the sluice example, the gate is physically jammed, a downstream bed needs protection, workers know a passage, and the rising water threatens routes. Those facts support several solutions. If the party creates a new safe path, use it. If they persuade the Watchers, the creatures do not need to attack anyway to satisfy your outline.

Give important information through more than one source. A worker knows the passage; a painted maintenance arrow points toward it; an old map shows it. You can still hide optional secrets. The immediate problem should not stop because one die failed to reveal the only usable route.

Teach the first roll without shorthand

Describe the uncertainty before naming a practice. Show the full calculation: die, current attribute, applicable training, other modifiers, and DC. Then show the combined sheet bonus and explain that it already includes those contributions.

Use a small consequence the group can understand. A failed diagnosis might cost time and change a route. If injury or death is a real stake, establish it clearly. Do not use a first-session failure to teach that the DM can attach an unrelated punishment after the roll.



When advantage appears, explain conditions and cancel opposing stacks. One remaining stack means two dice; two means three. Select the die and add the static bonus once. A visible example is easier to remember than a paragraph of probability theory.

Introduce a round when timing matters

Use Council, Fast, Measured, and Heavy when actions meaningfully depend on or oppose each other. Explain that the round is shared. Gather coherent Main Intents and ask which need another result. Give the opposition visible behavior.

At first, keep the number of independent enemy workings small. A Watcher turns a current; a second guards a spawning bed. Their different intentions create a useful scene without requiring a hidden action list. Complexity determines track placement; output size is a different question.

Track movement and one ordinary independent Reaction Slot. A player moving 10 ft in Fast with Speed 30 has 20 ft left, not a new allowance in Measured. A reaction needs an actual trigger, opportunity, and scope. Explain these when someone proposes a response, rather than interrupting the opening scene with every exception.

End with a playable next step

Reserve a few minutes for the changed world. Who trusts the party? What remains damaged? Which consequences still apply? What do the players want next? A concise record can make the next session easy to begin.



Ask one question about comprehension and one about enjoyment. “Which rule was hard to find?” produces a different answer from “Which choice did you want more of?” Treat those answers as evidence. The published book cannot substitute for observing your particular table.

Agree any BU rewards separately from the fictional gratitude or treasure. Do not award a mandatory amount just because the scene used combat. Let the table know how advancement will work in this campaign.



Begin with a delivery, not a battle

Field study / Original example · Opening a session

Read the situation	This field study
Pressure	A refused delivery and a frightened recipient
Decision	Investigate, mediate, redirect or fight
Rule focus	Ordinary observation, actual access and agency

What the party can see

A Candlebone Porter waits outside a rain-swollen warehouse door. Its parcel is dry beneath a folded cloak. It knocks, checks the address, then knocks again. Inside, a shopkeeper is trying to push a cabinet across the doorway. The porter's published concept is a forgotten delivery, so give its insistence a subject: the parcel belongs to the shopkeeper's former partner. The shopkeeper fears what accepting it would mean. Those motives can create an encounter before anyone draws a weapon.

Describe the parcel, the locked door and the repeated gesture immediately. Useful observations do not need to be withheld until someone succeeds at Awareness. The party still must decide which person to approach and what result they want.



Make the first question small

DM: *"It offers the parcel when you name the address. The shopkeeper tells you to leave it outside."*
Player: *"I want to know whether the parcel is dangerous."*
DM: *"How are you examining it, and does the shopkeeper permit you to open someone else's delivery?"*

That question distinguishes a physical inspection from a supernatural claim. Looking for wires or heat can be ordinary investigation. A capability that reads memories needs its actual access and conditions. The porter's Necrotic Resistance does not make the parcel cursed. If an uncertain inspection matters, agree what success reveals and what an unsuccessful attempt changes before selecting the relevant check.

Teach the changed situation

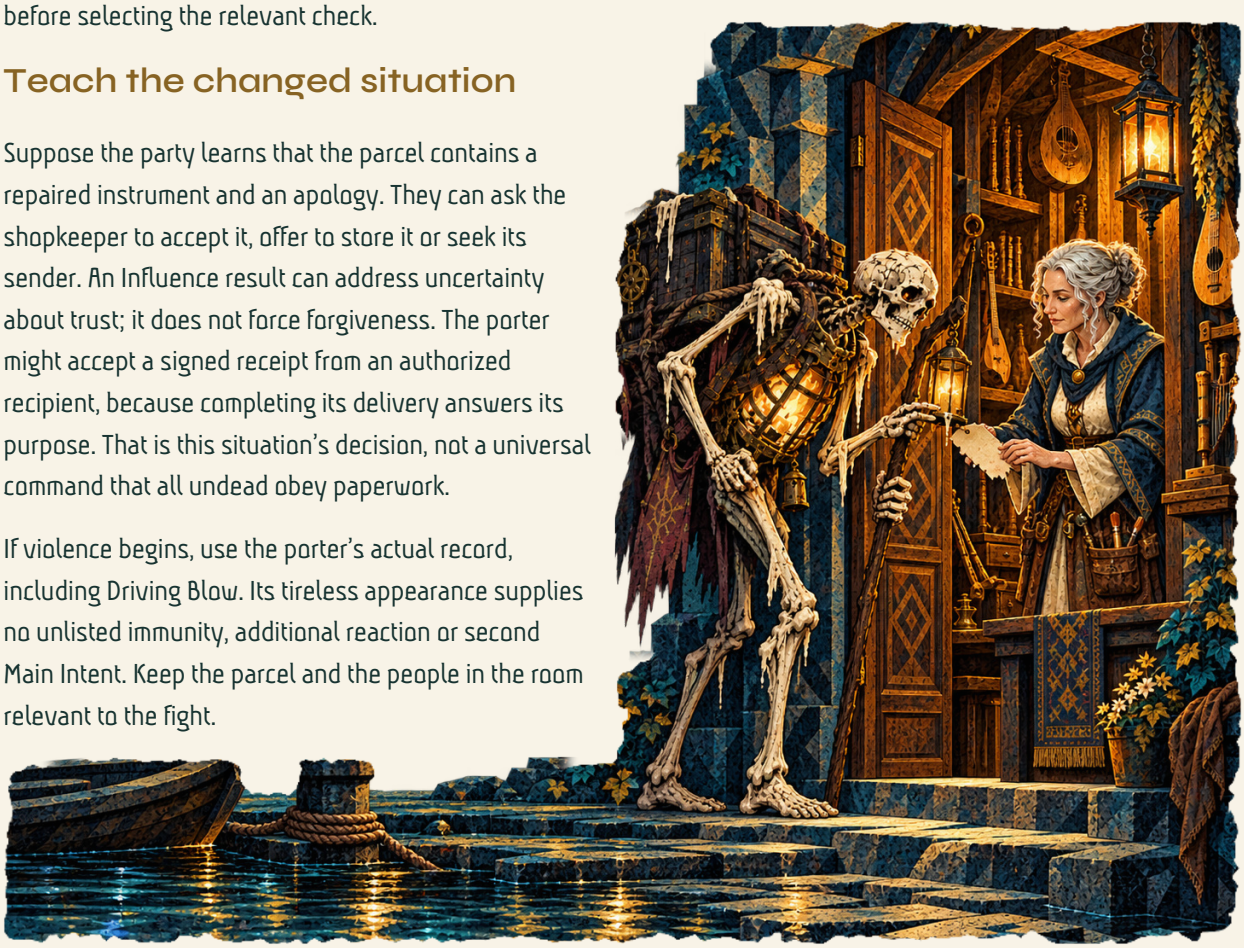
Suppose the party learns that the parcel contains a repaired instrument and an apology. They can ask the shopkeeper to accept it, offer to store it or seek its sender. An Influence result can address uncertainty about trust; it does not force forgiveness. The porter might accept a signed receipt from an authorized recipient, because completing its delivery answers its purpose. That is this situation's decision, not a universal command that all undead obey paperwork.

If violence begins, use the porter's actual record, including Driving Blow. Its tireless appearance supplies no unlisted immunity, additional reaction or second Main Intent. Keep the parcel and the people in the room relevant to the fight.

Leave something worth returning to

End with a concrete change: the shopkeeper has the instrument, the porter has completed its duty, or the parcel remains disputed. Ask who is responsible for it now. The shopkeeper's gratitude can lead to a useful introduction; their anger can make that contact harder. Neither response requires an automatic reward tariff.

For new players, recap one procedure they used: "You named an outcome, chose an approach and learned what your action changed." Avoid turning the recap into a lecture about every primitive family. A modest resolved problem gives them a reason to try the next one, while the unanswered sender provides a natural continuation.

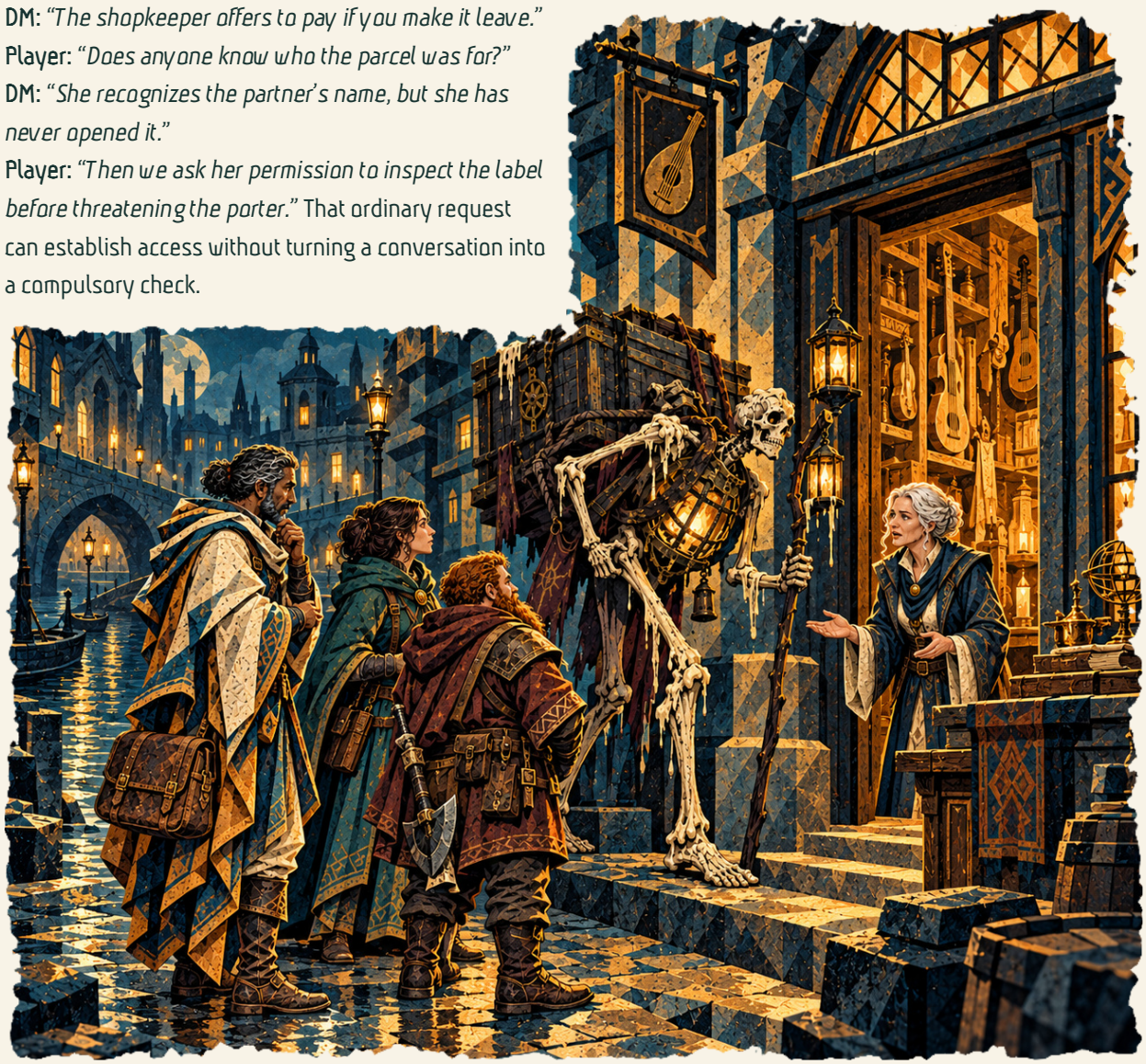


Prepare the people who can answer

Give the shopkeeper three usable facts before play: the parcel arrived with a damaged label; the former partner once owned the instrument workshop next door; the porter has returned every evening since. Give the shopkeeper a present need as well: tonight's supply delivery cannot enter while the porter occupies the doorway. These facts support several approaches without prescribing one solution.

DM: *"The shopkeeper offers to pay if you make it leave."*
Player: *"Does anyone know who the parcel was for?"*
DM: *"She recognizes the partner's name, but she has never opened it."*
Player: *"Then we ask her permission to inspect the label before threatening the porter."* That ordinary request can establish access without turning a conversation into a compulsory check.

Compare the changed scenes. If the party finds the partner at the infirmary, the obstacle becomes a conversation or a delivery route through crowded streets. If they force the porter away, the shopkeeper regains access but the unresolved parcel remains. If they persuade the shopkeeper to store it temporarily, someone has accepted responsibility, with a clear duration or ending condition. Keep the signed-for delivery, the offered payment and the porter's condition as separate facts. None requires a new delivery subsystem.



02

Make a ruling together

Read the actual question before reaching for dice.



Make rulings people can understand

SwordWeave's DIY nature makes clear conversation more useful than a secret exhaustive list of legal actions. A player describes an outcome; you help establish what makes it possible and what matters if they attempt it. Keep the ordinary world available: a character can climb, negotiate, investigate or improvise without buying a primitive for every everyday act.



What question are you answering?

Choose the procedure for the actual uncertainty.

Ordinary and secure

Describe the result; acting alone creates no need for a roll.

Uncertain challenge

Agree a relevant check/DC, success, failure and separate Cost.

Actions meet in time

A clash asks which happens first.

Directly opposed effort

A contest asks whose effort prevails.

Attack or resistance

Use the actual expression; do not add both procedures by habit.

Permission missing

Review access, revise or agree a bounded exception. A high roll is not a new acquisition.



Choose the resolution question

Question	Suitable procedure
Is the result ordinary and secure under these circumstances?	Describe it; no roll is needed merely because an action occurred
Can one actor succeed against an uncertain challenge?	An agreed attribute/practice check against a DC
Whose opposing action happens first?	A clash, using actual timing and context
Whose directly opposed effort prevails?	A contest, using suitable approaches
Does an attack connect or does a recipient resist a working?	The chosen attack or saving-throw procedure; not both automatically
Does a creation permit the proposed behavior?	Read its access and limits before appraising execution

Use the relevant current attribute directly. Training adds applicable PB; expertise uses twice PB where granted. Opposing bias cancels one-for-one; remaining stacks add resolution dice. There is no imported automatic natural-20 success, natural-1 failure or critical multiplier. State any table variation before relying on it.

Present the stakes before commitment

Say what success accomplishes, what the agreed uncertainty concerns, and what failure or Cost would change. A player can narrow or revise an attempt. "You can cross now, but the route is exposed; if the guard wins the timing clash, they can close it first" is clearer than revealing that restriction after the roll.

Separate access from effort. A water-shaping character may attempt a demanding diversion within their permissions. Paying a large Cost does not silently grant resurrection, mind reading or a new domain. If their idea needs a missing ingredient, discuss acquiring it, borrowing an actual source, choosing another approach or agreeing a clearly bounded Rule of Cool exception.

Optional guidance. If a failed check would only prompt the same unchanged roll again, advance time, reveal a different obstacle, offer another approach or simply resolve the safe repetition. Do not secretly convert every failure into a new penalty. Choose the stakes together when the scene can support them.

Ordinary obstacles and unusual powers

A lock's material, mechanism, condition and accessibility matter. Ordinary tools may be enough. A metal permission may support reshaping a metal part; a precise internal modification may need a different verb scope from striking the lock. Creating a key, persuading the keeper and breaking the door remain separate approaches.

Targeting requires locating the target through an applicable sense. A player who cannot locate a hidden creature may propose affecting a known spot or area. They must accept the uncertainty that it is empty. Authored scrying, broad weather control or "any qualifying target within range" can define an exception; read its actual limits. Range alone supplies neither vision nor a targeting lock.

Projected workings travel through an actual path. Minor obstruction gives −2 accuracy; standard half cover −4; total cover blocks the trajectory. Direct manifestation does not use those intervening projected-cover penalties, but still requires valid targeting and access. Neither mode guarantees hitting someone whose location is unknown.

Social scenes are encounters too

Know what each participant wants, fears and can reasonably offer. A persuasive argument can change their decision without supernatural control. A check can resolve uncertainty about an approach; it does not automatically rewrite every belief or remove another person's agency. If a capability truly overrides agency or information, its specific permission, recipients, resolution and ending terms need review.

Example. A Watcher wants the beds protected. Showing a viable diversion addresses that concern. Threatening it answers a different question and may create hostility. The same Influence bonus does not make those outcomes identical. A good proposal can remove the need for a roll if the response is already clear.

Exploration needs observable choices

Describe signs of danger and resources that can support a plan: cracking supports, wind direction, an unstable floor, a route that is closing, a witness with partial information. Do not hide all useful information behind checks. A failed search should not erase something a character can plainly see.

Distance, time, terrain and supplies can matter without becoming a mandatory new subsystem. If the table wants a travel procedure, define what a decision covers, what is consumed and what constitutes progress. Mark that procedure as a campaign choice; do not present an invented ration tariff or weather table as universal SwordWeave law.

Record exceptions without building a trap

When Rule of Cool supports something unusual, record what made it possible. A Small character might wield an oversized sword with a three-slot requirement or an



agreed restriction. That does not grant every Small character unlimited gear or imply a size multiplier for ordinary equipment slots. The fiction and explicit agreement explain the case.

If a ruling proves awkward, discuss a revision between scenes. Keep ownership, purchases and ongoing consequences understandable. Avoid changing a power's meaning silently while a player commits to using it. Campaign consistency supports creativity; it need not freeze an unclear first draft forever.

A workshop in understandable rulings

The following cases are **optional example rulings**, not an extra mandatory tariff. Each shows how a DM can preserve creativity while identifying missing access, changed scope, and consequences. Use the actual circumstance at your table.

The unseen target behind a wall

A player says, "I have Far, so I hit the guard in the next room." Ask how the actor locates that guard and how the working is delivered. Ordinary hearing may reveal an approximate sound without fixing the exact location. A granted sense can supply more information if its rule actually does so.

A projected bolt is blocked by total cover on its path. Direct manifestation avoids intervening projected-cover penalties, but still needs valid targeting and the corresponding behavior. Far does not establish either. The player can target a known spot with an appropriate area construction and accept uncertainty, move to gain sight, use a relevant sense, or propose another authored targeting method.

Say which part is missing. "You know someone spoke in the room, but your present sense does not locate their body precisely; the wall also blocks this projected path" lets the player revise the attempt. "No, your spell cannot do that" does not explain the permission problem.

A flood rather than a bowl

Mira's Water and Verb II support reshaping existing water. A bowl and a surging street are eligible subjects of different scale and pressure. Ask which portion she wants to change, where it goes, how soon, and whether the result must persist.

Offer alternatives tied to those facts: a narrow safe lane, help from workers with boards, or a slower diversion before the storm peak. An agreed cost might restrict Mira while she maintains the lane, damage an outlet, or create a later obligation. Do not convert every larger expression into fixed Vitality damage.

A larger cost does not give her Life access or guarantee rescue of every person in the water. If she wants to heal them as well, review that extra behavior explicitly. Maintaining the channel can spread pressure over time without a compulsory percentage discount.

A small character and a large sword

The base equipped-slot rule is one for an ordinary item and two for a two-handed item. Size does not automatically multiply that final requirement. The Rule of Cool can support an unusual sword with its own authored slot cost or consequence.

Discuss how the character carries, braces, and uses it. A three- or four-slot requirement can make the choice meaningful. A restriction in cramped spaces may fit another concept. Record the actual item terms; do not

create a secret size formula that changes unrelated equipment.

Keep Load, Item BU, ordinary value, and equipped use separate. A sword can be expensive in the setting without a large Item BU figure. Extra slots do not increase carrying capacity. Giving an unusual item permission to work in this scene does not grant automatic reach, damage dice, or resistance.

A strong argument and a frightened person

An Influence check resolves uncertainty in an approach. It does not erase a motive or establish mind control. Ask what the speaker offers and what the listener reasonably believes.

A guard who fears punishment may accept a credible written authorization, a witness, or a plan to share responsibility. A large number alone is not the offer. If the response is secure once those facts are established, no roll is necessary. If uncertainty remains, name what success changes: a temporary passage, a private conversation, or willingness to hear evidence.

A capability that overrides agency belongs to a different construction and needs explicit behavior, recipients, resolution, limits, and consent at the table. Do not use ordinary negotiation as a covert substitute for that permission.

A moment that matters more than a formula

A player wants to leap farther than ordinary movement allows to catch a falling companion. Establish location, available movement, actual reaction opportunity, and the physical route. The table may agree extra movement with a consequence or a bounded cinematic exception.

State the exception before resolution. Perhaps the leap reaches the companion but leaves both hanging from the ledge, or spends a resource and makes retreat difficult. If the proposed consequence is unacceptable, the player can choose another response. Spending a Reaction Slot alone grants neither unlimited distance nor guaranteed rescue.

Record the reason for the ruling: unstable ledge, visible falling ally, reachable handhold, agreed exertion. This preserves consistency without turning the exceptional rescue into permanent flight.

A lasting injury without a hidden package



A character accepts “burned hands.” Ask what that does. A specific −2 to delicate Finesse checks is different from an inability to hold a tool, a reduction of Physical, or loss of an acquired permission.

Record recovery. Dressing and an agreed rest may clear a minor consequence; a severe injury can need another stated treatment. Healing Vitality does not automatically clear either unless the consequence says so. Avoid leaving a player with an undefined indefinite penalty.

Narrative description can coexist with a mechanical rule. The wrapped hands show what happened; the record explains how to play it. A later revision should be discussed, not silently broadened during an important action.

An ambiguous new primitive

A player proposes “Always succeed at hiding.” Ask what information, recipients, conditions, and resolution the rule intends. It could mean a bonus, a result floor, invisibility, erasing evidence, or overriding others' perception. Those are different effects.

Help produce a narrower first version: a specific bonus to concealment through movement under stated conditions, or an authored sense-obscuring behavior with limits. Review price and stacking afterward. Do not assume a chosen BU number makes an unreadable rule understandable.

Test normal, stretched, and outside-scope uses. If a primitive's definition supports contradictory outcomes, fix the definition before judging its cost. A clear



inexpensive rule is more useful than a grand title with a large number.



A sense has a physical subject

Field study / Original example · Sensory targeting

Read the situation	This field study
Anchor	Read the granted sense and its substrate
Tactical change	An alarm brings actual allies, not automatic reinforcements
Record	What was sensed, where and through what

Locate the actual contact

A Hollowbark Listener guards a buried shrine beneath a timber road. Its Substrate Echo grants tremorsense with its stated scope. A traveler on grounded stone and a traveler on a suspended rope walkway are different sensory situations. Start by describing those surfaces rather than declaring that the guardian "knows everything nearby."

The Listener can have ordinary sight or hearing only as its record and circumstances support. Its title does not make it a historian, and the shrine does not give it free telepathy. Read the granted sense before deciding what it locates. Treat the 30-ft reference as part of that actual rule, not as permission to detect through every material in an unlimited buried network.

State what has been learned

DM: *"The trunk turns toward the footsteps on the stone approach."*
Player: *"Then it can see through the wall?"*

DM: *"You have seen it respond to ground contact. That does not yet establish vision through a wall. What do you want to test?"*

A player might stamp at a known point, throw a stone elsewhere or use the suspended route. Resolve the evidence honestly. If the published sense locates an eligible grounded target, that location can support a specific-target working within the rest of its permissions. Range still answers distance, not whether Stone Alarm can do anything the guardian wishes. A signal and an attack remain distinct results.

Run a contest of approaches

Suppose the party wants to pass quietly while an ally draws attention from the far end of the path. Describe the competing noises and contacts. A distraction can create uncertainty without erasing a valid sense. A check can resolve concealment or interpretation under those circumstances; it does not switch off an acquired permission merely because the roll is high.

The Listener's practical tactic is to alarm allies rather than pursue every intruder. That gives the party choices after discovery: stop and explain their purpose, withdraw before help arrives, interrupt a valid alarm or accept the changed confrontation. Do not invent an instant all-shrine response. Establish who can hear the actual signal and how they could reach the scene.

Record a reusable sensory ruling

Write the material connection, observed source and located target in plain words. "Footsteps through the connected stone under the western approach" is more useful than "detected." If the group later returns on a changed surface, revisit the circumstances rather than enforcing the old result mechanically.

The same discipline helps player-created blindsight, scent, scrying and aura reading. Ask what information the actual rule supplies and what would interfere. A sense can locate without identifying, identify a trace without locating its source or reveal an approximate area. Those distinctions make investigation possible while preserving the benefit the character bought. Nobody needs ordinary eyesight when another valid sense provides the required location.

Prepare the alarm as a relationship

Write down who the Listener intends to warn, where those people are and what they would do after a warning. A creature detecting movement is only the beginning of that causal chain. Its actual Stone Alarm must reach an eligible recipient through its authored procedure; an ominous pulse in the description is not permission to alert every inhabitant of the region.

Player: *"I hang from the bridge supports so I do not touch the floor."*
DM: *"That may change whether this tremorsense can locate you. The watchkeeper can still see the bridge from the window."*
Player: *"Then I wait until the keeper checks the far door."* The group has separated two information sources and made a plan addressing both.

If the alarm reaches the watchkeeper, prepare one response grounded in their duty: close the storeroom, investigate the vibration or call the nearby repair crew. If the party speaks with the Listener, the same watchkeeper might become a person who can authorize their visit. A successful bypass changes who knows the



party arrived; a negotiated approach changes who permitted it. Neither grants universal invisibility. Keep those outcomes distinct when someone later asks why the door was found open.



A hidden creature is not a known target

Field study / Original example · Choosing a spot under uncertainty

Read the situation	This field study
Distinction	Evidence of presence is not precise location
Alternative	A known spot with actual area access
Pitfall	Moving the hidden creature after learning the player's choice

Offer evidence without certainty

In a ruined observatory, dust shifts behind a cracked mirror. A Moonspoor Lynx has used its actual Still Camouflage. The party knows that something moved; they do not necessarily know the creature's precise body position. Describe the fresh marks, the displaced glass and the sound. Do not require a roll to hear a sound you have already told them they heard.

Camouflage is not invisibility, and concealment is not total cover. Read the saved ability and the current surroundings. If someone's applicable sense locates the lynx, use that information. If it supplies only an approximate source, say so. The distinction matters before anyone declares a specific-target attack.

Make the alternative explicit

Player: *"I blast the lynx behind the mirror."*
DM: *"You know the scrape came from the alcove. Your present information does not fix its body position. You could inspect from another angle or affect a known spot with a supported area expression."*
Player: *"I aim at the alcove's floor."*
DM: *"That location is clear. What area does your construction actually affect?"*

Agree the spot, recipients, delivery and uncertainty before resolving it. An area working does not guarantee that the hidden creature is inside. If the chosen floor is empty, do not move the lynx into it to reward the clever phrasing. If it is inside, do not move it away to preserve a planned ambush.

Keep investigation useful

A companion can watch the exit while another shifts the light or asks for silence. Those actions have ordinary value even when they grant no numerical bonus. A



purchased advantage applies only if its conditions fit. When opposing bias exists, cancel it before adding resolution dice; do not invent a permanent concealment disadvantage beyond the actual rule or agreed situation.

If the lynx leaves its concealment to attack, update what can now be perceived. Its ambusher label does not grant an automatic surprised round. Any optional surprise treatment belongs to the table's explicit agreement and the facts of this scene. The players may have prepared specifically to prevent that opening.

Let information change the objective

The animal may be hunting a smaller creature trapped beneath the lens, defending a nest or merely seeking a route out. Choose and reveal evidence that fits your situation. Finding that motive creates decisions beyond locating a body. Opening a quiet escape can end the encounter; protecting a scholar might require holding a particular doorway.

Record how the target was located and what the party learned. If a character later builds a sensing capability for similar ruins, that experience can explain the desired permission. It does not automatically award a new sense. Their extraordinary construction still needs its acquired ingredients, limits, price and table review. Investigation informs a build without replacing its ledger.

Let one observation alter the search

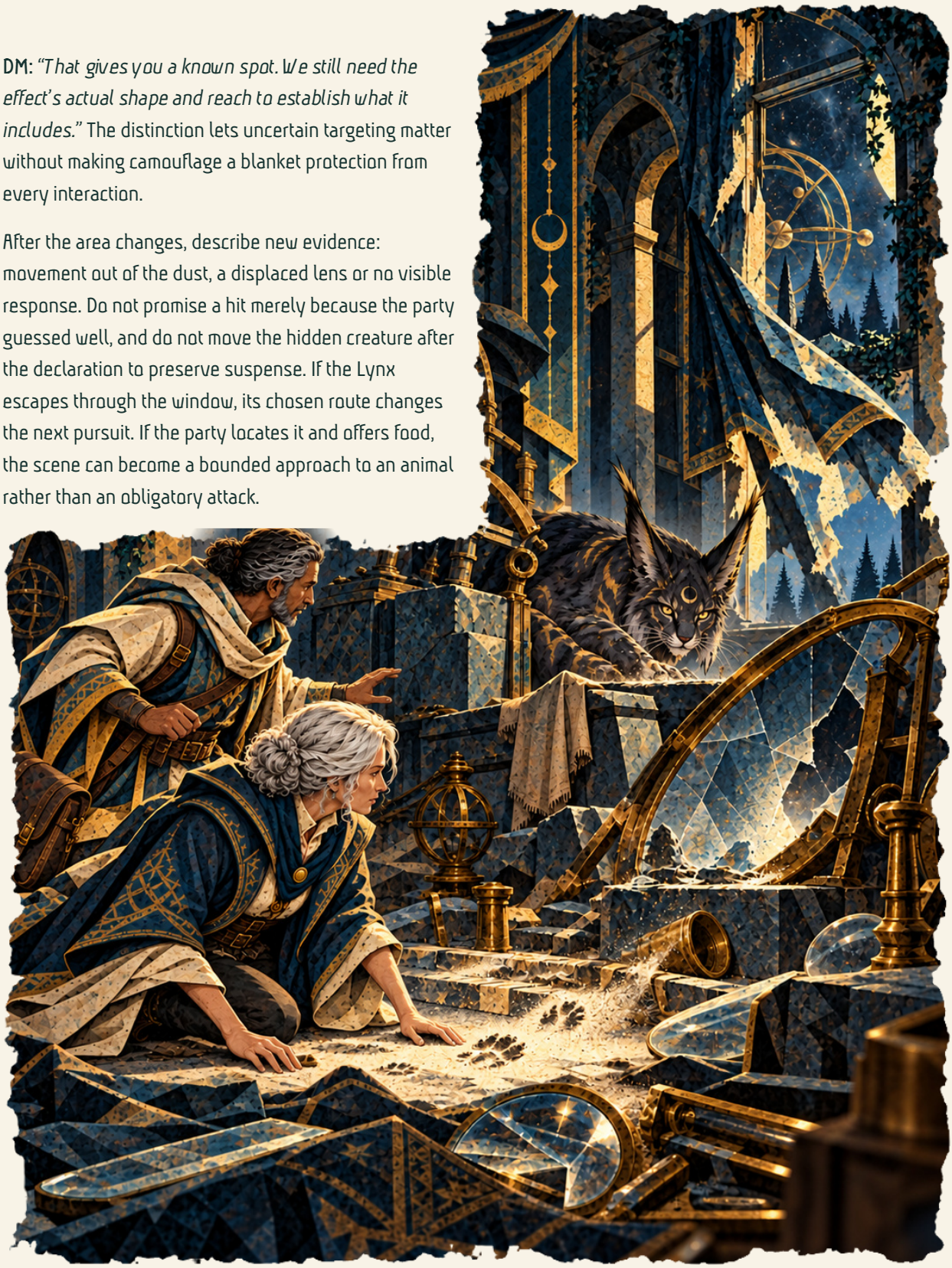
Prepare a room with three concrete observations: a lens turned toward a dusty shelf, fresh disturbed dust beneath it and a loose curtain beside an open window. Decide which observations the Lynx actually caused. The window can be a plausible distraction without secretly being another creature. What matters is that the party can test a hypothesis against stable facts.

Player: *"I watch the dust rather than guessing where the camouflage is."*
DM: *"You see a disturbance near the shelf, but the curtain moves separately in the draft."*
Player: *"I mark the shelf's near edge for an area effect."*



DM: *"That gives you a known spot. We still need the effect's actual shape and reach to establish what it includes."* The distinction lets uncertain targeting matter without making camouflage a blanket protection from every interaction.

After the area changes, describe new evidence: movement out of the dust, a displaced lens or no visible response. Do not promise a hit merely because the party guessed well, and do not move the hidden creature after the declaration to preserve suspense. If the Lynx escapes through the window, its chosen route changes the next pursuit. If the party locates it and offers food, the scene can become a bounded approach to an animal rather than an obligatory attack.



Draw the path before rolling

Field study / Original example · Projected delivery and cover

Read the situation	This field study
Minor obstruction	−2 accuracy on the relevant projected path
Standard half cover	−4 accuracy on the relevant projected path
Total cover	Blocks that trajectory; targeting remains a separate question

Describe three routes

A Rainspout Artillerist occupies a drainage tower over a courtyard. The party can cross open paving, follow a broken railing or pass behind a solid storehouse wall. Its Deliberate Shot uses the actual saved construction.

Tell the players which places the creature can see and where a projected path is obstructed. Height helps explain its position; it does not supply a free range extension or an additional attack.

Use the current projected-cover references: minor obstruction gives −2 accuracy, standard half cover gives −4, and total cover blocks the trajectory. Apply them to the path in question. Do not penalize every courtyard action merely because the scene contains walls somewhere.

Resolve access before accuracy

Player: *"I return fire from behind the storehouse."*
DM: *"Can you see it from there, and where does the shot travel?"*
Player: *"I step to the corner."*
DM: *"That opens a path past the broken railing. The railing partly obstructs this particular projected shot."*

State the agreed obstruction before the attack. If a direct manifestation has valid targeting and its required permission, it does not use intervening projected-cover penalties. That does not mean any character can rename a bolt "direct" to pass through a wall. Delivery is part of



the working's actual behavior. Knowing the tower's position also does not necessarily locate a creature that has retreated inside it.

Change the scene with movement

Crossing to the pump house can create a better line, but movement remains part of the whole-round allowance. A Medium actor with 30 ft who spends 20 reaching the corner has 10 left, including any movement required by a later valid reaction. Advancing to another track gives no fresh 30 ft.

The Artillerist can reposition when a firing place becomes unsafe, using its actual movement and Climbing Speed grant. Do not secretly preserve a perfect firing line from every new location. If the players block the tower's stair or force it behind machinery, describe the cost to its options. They have changed terrain, not merely reduced a resource bar.

Give the tower a purpose

Perhaps the mercenary wants to keep a water valve open for a client, while the party wants to close it before a basement floods. Those objectives explain why either side might move instead of attacking. The valve, workers and stair access should be as clear as the archer's silhouette.

At the next Council, describe the new paths and declared pressures. A collapsed railing might remove cover while making a crossing dangerous. A shut gate might block pursuit without stopping a direct manifestation that still has valid targeting. Apply each change to the relevant action. One simple path sketch



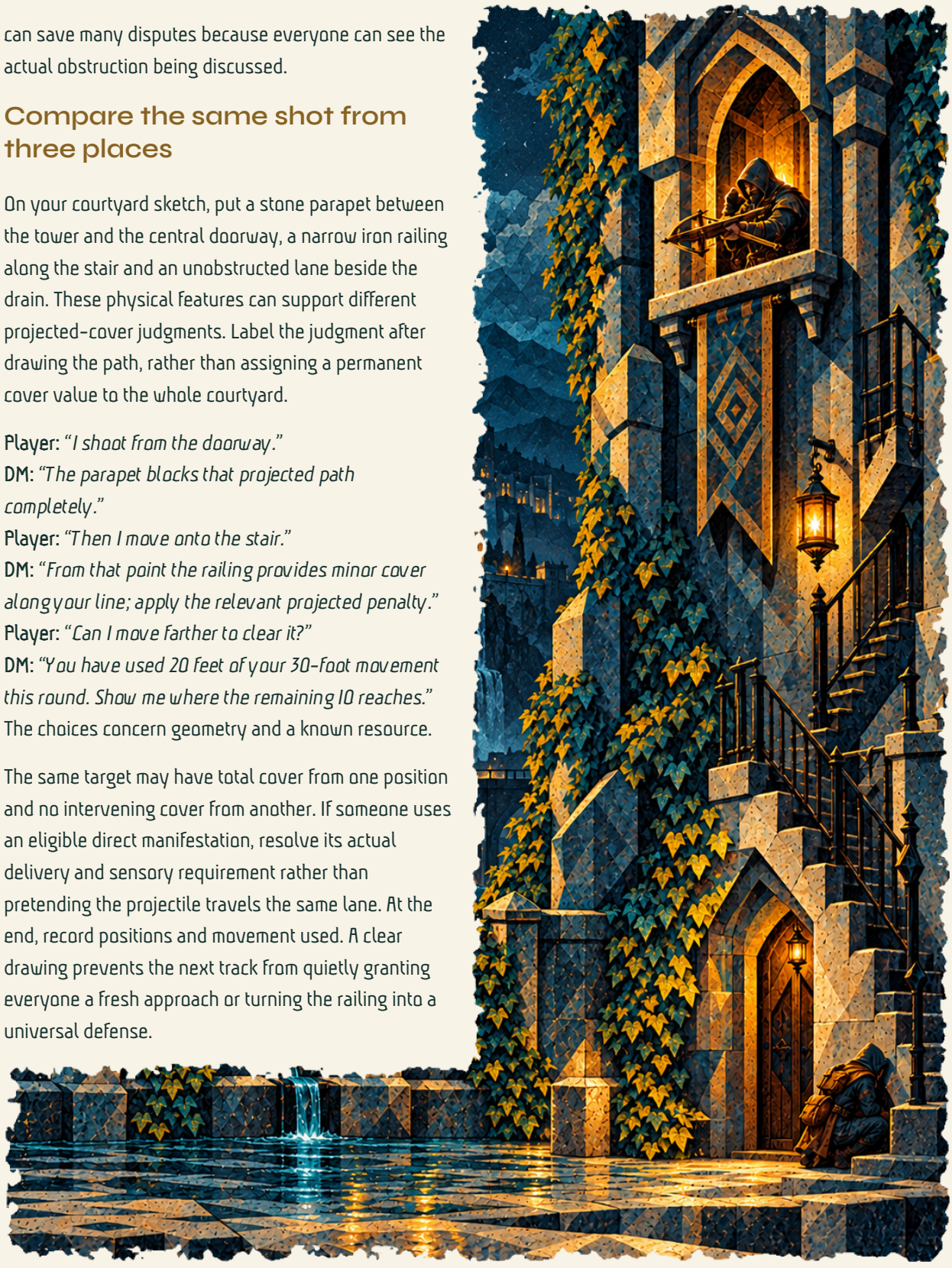
can save many disputes because everyone can see the actual obstruction being discussed.

Compare the same shot from three places

On your courtyard sketch, put a stone parapet between the tower and the central doorway, a narrow iron railing along the stair and an unobstructed lane beside the drain. These physical features can support different projected-cover judgments. Label the judgment after drawing the path, rather than assigning a permanent cover value to the whole courtyard.

Player: *"I shoot from the doorway."*
DM: *"The parapet blocks that projected path completely."*
Player: *"Then I move onto the stair."*
DM: *"From that point the railing provides minor cover along your line; apply the relevant projected penalty."*
Player: *"Can I move farther to clear it?"*
DM: *"You have used 20 feet of your 30-foot movement this round. Show me where the remaining 10 reaches."*
The choices concern geometry and a known resource.

The same target may have total cover from one position and no intervening cover from another. If someone uses an eligible direct manifestation, resolve its actual delivery and sensory requirement rather than pretending the projectile travels the same lane. At the end, record positions and movement used. A clear drawing prevents the next track from quietly granting everyone a fresh approach or turning the railing into a universal defense.



03

Review a creation

Turn a personal idea into a promise the table can use.



One source. Several expressions.

An example to read, question and adapt at your table.

Acquire a permission once.

The same owned source can be referenced in several creations.

Describe a useful expression.

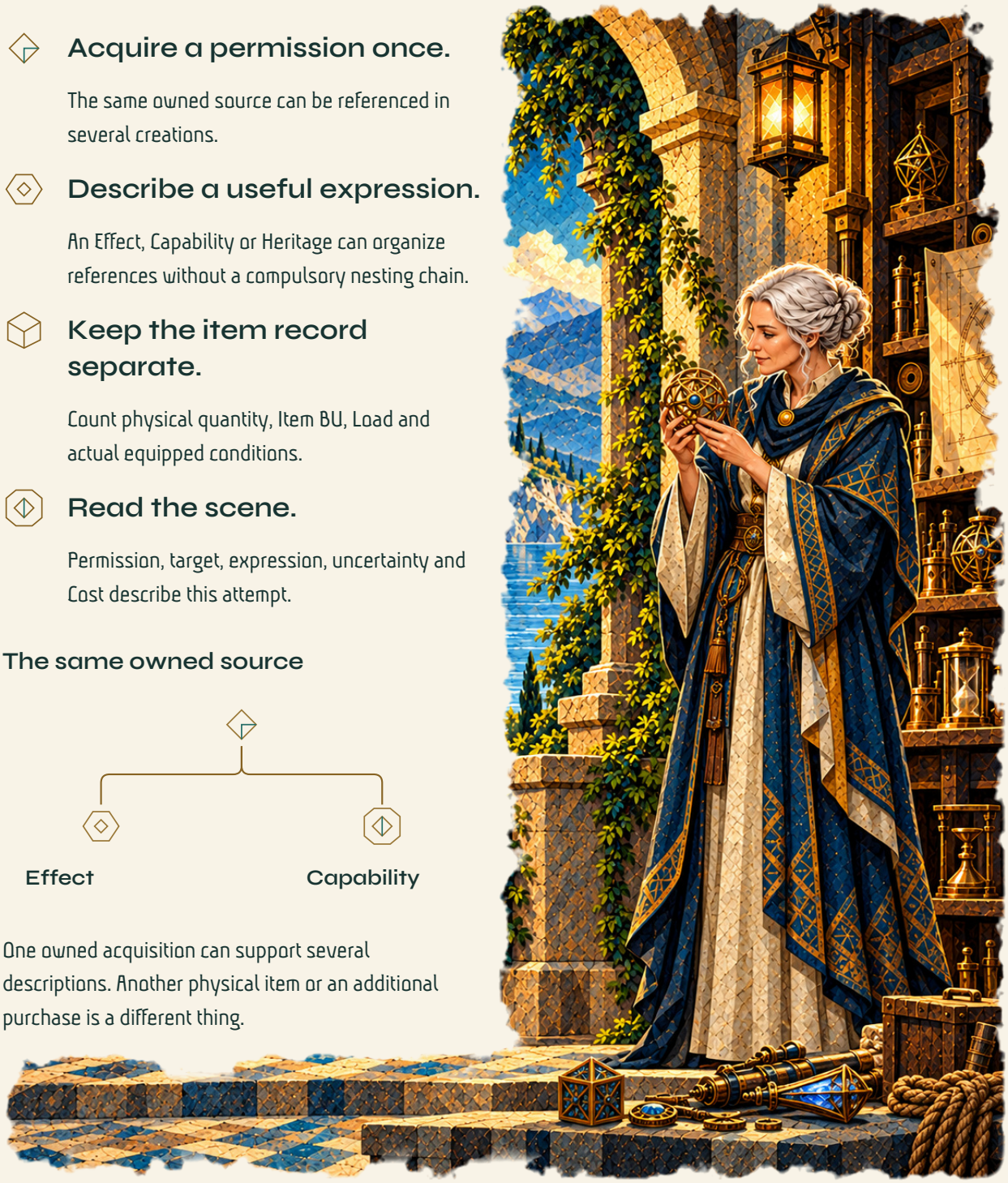
An Effect, Capability or Heritage can organize references without a compulsory nesting chain.

Keep the item record separate.

Count physical quantity, Item BU, Load and actual equipped conditions.

Read the scene.

Permission, target, expression, uncertainty and Cost describe this attempt.



The same owned source

One owned acquisition can support several descriptions. Another physical item or an additional purchase is a different thing.

Review creations and choose consequences

SwordWeave gives players a construction language. Your job is to help the table understand what a creation does, how it fits the world and what a particular attempt puts at risk. An unusual idea is an invitation to examine the situation. Begin with the result the player wants.

Core rule. Establish access, actual scope, stakes, resolution and consequences before commitment. Let the player clarify or revise their intent. Apply the agreed outcome, then continue from the changed situation. The Rule of Cool supports coherent and exciting exceptions; state their scope so an exceptional moment does not accidentally become an unrelated permanent ability.

A review you can use at the table

Read a proposed component with its author. Ask these questions of the definition; do not make a player fill out a form to perform every ordinary action.

Review	What you need to understand
Result	What changes, who benefits and who or what can be affected?
Permission	Which owned ingredients support the change? Is any proposed behavior absent from them?
Conditions	When does it apply? What prevents it? What does a broad phrase such as “protected” mean here?
Composition	Which ingredients are actual acquisitions and which are references to purchases already counted?
Stacking	Do additional occurrences apply? Do sources share a uniqueness restriction? Is a grant being confused with another numerical bonus?
Use	How does the actor perform it, and what uncertainty requires resolution?
Continuation	Does it end immediately, last for a stated duration, or require maintenance? What can interfere?
Price	What suggested BU acquisition price fits this table's scope and restrictions? Keep Item BU separate.

An author's price is a proposal. Library and builder suggestions are useful comparisons. You may accept the proposal or ask for an adjustment, including a cheaper version if its limits make the original price excessive. Explain which part creates the concern. "It affects every target without discrimination or effort" is actionable feedback; "that sounds overpowered" leaves the author guessing.

Keep acquisition and execution separate. A purchased ingredient can support many uses without being bought again. A broad or hurried use can still incur Strain and agreed Cost. Buying another ingredient is one way to establish missing access; increasing effort alone does not silently grant a new behavior.

Review a water-working

Example. Mira owns Verb II, a Water domain permission, Near Range and d8 output. She proposes redirecting ordinary water away from a broken canal gate. Read the actual permissions. Check the water's quantity, distance, resistance and where it will go. Moving water is one question; creating a new permanent gate, locating an unseen saboteur or healing a wounded worker are different results.

For a small flow with time to work, you might agree negligible Cost and no roll. In a collapsing sluice, redirecting the whole surge before it reaches the workers is a demanding attempt. Make its reach, recipients, timing and stakes explicit. Mira can narrow the channel she controls, enlist another character or accept a continuing restriction instead of forcing the whole result at once.

Do not charge her again for the Water permission because it appears in both an effect and its parent capability. Do not assume the d8 ingredient makes every manipulation deal damage. Output applies when an appropriate authored construction and the proposed use establish damage or healing.

Write a consequence people can use

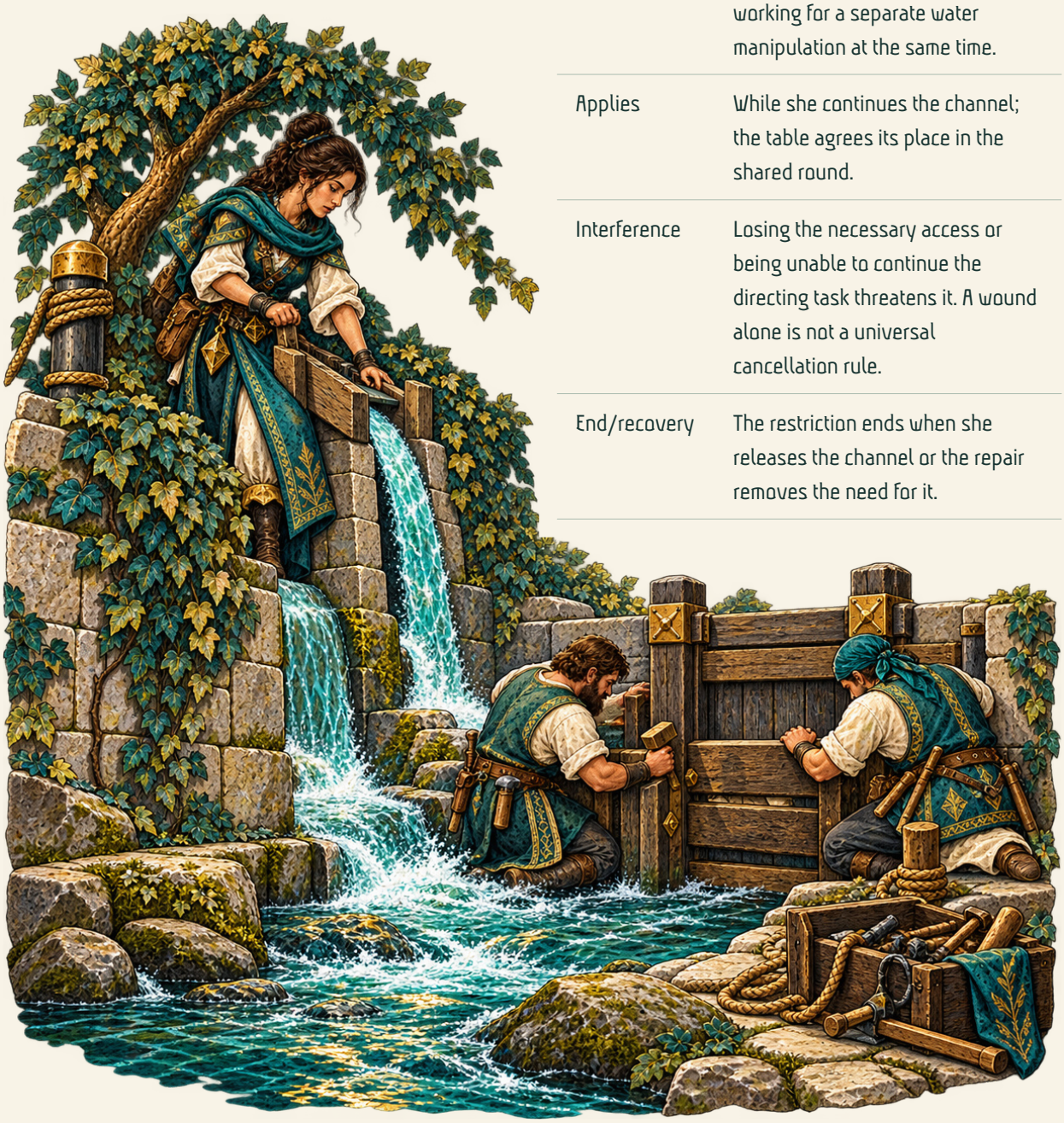
A consequence should change decisions at the table. It can be damage, a mechanical penalty, a restriction, lost access, an obligation, exposure, an environmental change or another narrative result. A number is useful



where the result is numerical. An understandable restriction is useful where a number would hide what happened.

Core rule. Record the actual consequence, its cause, applicable timing or trigger and how it ends. A familiar name does not import another game's condition package.

Record	Example: holding the diverted channel
Cause	Mira keeps the surge diverted while the workers repair the gate.
Change	She must keep directing that channel and cannot use this working for a separate water manipulation at the same time.
Applies	While she continues the channel; the table agrees its place in the shared round.
Interference	Losing the necessary access or being unable to continue the directing task threatens it. A wound alone is not a universal cancellation rule.
End/recovery	The restriction ends when she releases the channel or the repair removes the need for it.



This is a possible ruling for this scene. It does not establish a universal one-capability limit. Several maintained capabilities can coexist; their agreed requirements and costs accumulate. Multiple effects inside one maintained capability share its one upkeep track and one Strain appraisal.

Contrast three possible costs before choosing one:

- **Mechanical:** an agreed amount of Vitality or a stated numerical penalty.

- **Restrictive:** hands, voice, attention or access must remain committed to the task.

- **Narrative:** the diversion floods a storehouse, draws attention or leaves a debt to the workers whose route is blocked.

These may combine, but piling on every category is not an automatic measure of fairness. Match the actual effort and scene. Offer a smaller scope or a different approach when a player dislikes the proposed trade-off. Maintaining a working can spread pressure across time and generally be cheaper upfront than forcing a larger result in one execution; there is no compulsory discount formula.

Alpha rule pending — damage-triggered Vitality upkeep. Additional repayment triggered by incoming damage, including threshold and counter/reset/excess handling, is undecided. This edition does not impose that numerical scheme. Agree any temporary table treatment explicitly. Ordinary continuation requirements remain usable; this does not change non-Vitality upkeep.

Author a creation with its owner

Begin with a promise someone can test

Ask the author to describe a normal use in a place the table understands. “I steady a cracked stone step while someone crosses” is a better starting promise than “I control stability.” It names a subject, an effect on that subject and a reason to care. Ask for an ambitious use and an impossible use next. The boundaries become clearer when all three belong to the same imagined working.

Now identify the actual ingredients. Ordinary craft may be sufficient. An extraordinary change requires its real verb and domain permissions, along with the relevant reach, output and other rules. An effect can organize those ingredients; a capability can make their use readable. Neither label supplies a missing permission or requires buying the same acquisition again.

The author's words and the acquired rules must agree. If the prose promises that every nearby person is safe from a collapsing house, a single-target brace is insufficient. Narrow the description or review a broader construction. Do not let a beautiful name hide a much larger result than the ledger supports.

Workshop: the hand beneath the stair

Original proposal. Sella wants a mason who can hold existing stone in place while others repair it. This workshop is a review method rather than a complete starting character. It does not assign a new compulsory price to stone magic. The table must choose and record the eligible Stone access and the relevant verb, range and any other ingredients in its actual catalogue or authored definitions.

Sella's normal promise is a supported stone step at Touch. Her hands remain on the stone, the support lasts while she attends to it, and the working does not repair missing masonry. Her ambitious promise is holding a larger cracked lintel while workers brace it. That changes scale, urgency and possible consequences; appraise those circumstances before commitment. Her impossible promise is recovering the testimony of a person who once stood on the step. Holding stone supplies no access to memory.

The GM asks whether Sella can move away and leave the support operating. Sella says that is not the intended power. They write the attendance requirement into the definition. They also agree that the supported part can still fail if the surrounding wall gives way; the capability does not make the whole building indestructible. These limits describe the working itself. A separate execution Cost may still arise when Sella strains to hold a dangerous load.

They rehearse a scene without rolling. One worker clears loose rubble while another sets a wooden brace. Sella's support makes that approach possible. When the brace takes the load, she can end her working safely. If she must leave early, the table describes what still supports the step before resolving the danger. A defined ending gives the players a practical choice.

A heritage is a person's history, not an invoice twice

An authored heritage can organize inherited traits, upbringing, training or a personal manifestation. Its story should explain what the player wants to express without declaring that every person from a culture has



the same morals, profession or abilities. Ask which ingredients are actual acquisitions and which details describe ordinary life. List references so another reader can audit the total.

Original example: Lockside Apprenticeship. A character learned canal maintenance, the habits of shift crews and how to find reliable local help. The author chooses to organize an already-owned Knowledge proficiency and suitable existing water-working ingredients under this name. The heritage adds no second charge. Its ordinary social history does not silently grant authority over every canal worker or perfect knowledge of every machine.

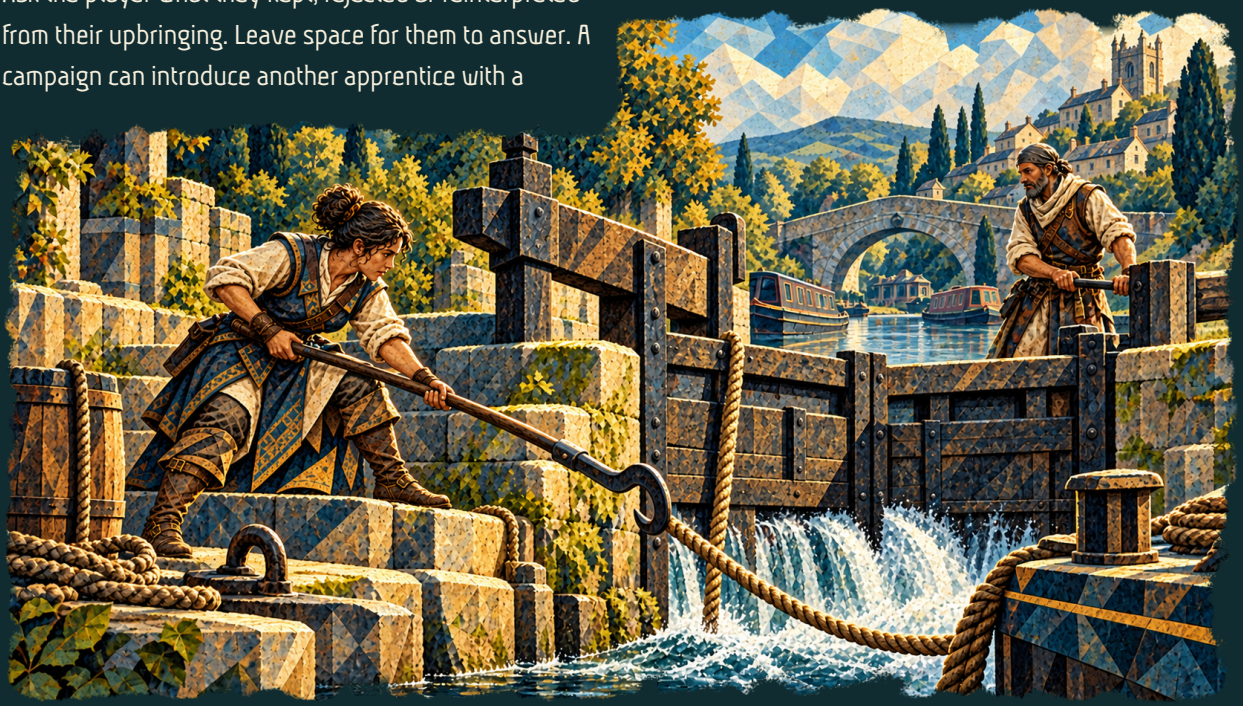
For a different character, the same apprenticeship could be entirely mundane and organize different training. That is a separate authored package, with its own record. A heritage name is not proof that two characters own identical powers. In a public version, include the exact referenced definitions and distinguish optional choices from mandatory ingredients.

Ask the player what they kept, rejected or reinterpreted from their upbringing. Leave space for them to answer. A campaign can introduce another apprentice with a different loyalty without changing the player's history. Shared origins provide relationships and questions; they need not prescribe a personality.

Workshop: an item with a narrow benefit

Begin with the ordinary canal hook already printed in the working records: Item BU 0, Load 2, two equipped slots. A hook can retrieve a reachable rope by ordinary leverage. Its physical length does not grant an extraordinary range band. This baseline remains available even if the group declines every proposed augmentation.

The proposed augmented hook grants +2 to Prowess checks to hold a gate open while equipped and braced on a stable support. The existing example proposes 4 Item BU for review. It changes that check under that condition; it does not raise Physical, alter every Physical practice, add to DC or reduce the item's Load. Record the augmentation in the item ledger and retain the ordinary item's two slots unless an actual rule changes them.



Test the condition in three scenes. At a solid stone gatepost, the support can qualify. On a loose floating board, the premise may fail until the party stabilizes it. During a running sword fight, the hook does not grant a general +2 merely because it is carried. This rehearsal reveals whether the condition has meaning before an important roll depends on it.

An owner lends the hook to a companion. The benefit follows the item's stated equipped and braced conditions; the original owner does not retain it through ownership alone. If the same hook appears in two capability descriptions, it is still one object. If the party buys two augmented hooks, count two items, their Item BU and their actual Load. Ownership references and physical quantity answer different questions.

When the catalogue lacks the ingredient

Write a new primitive as a narrow usable rule, with its subject, operation, numerical value when relevant, conditions, stacking behavior and scope. Compare it with nearby published examples. Discuss the proposed acquisition price with the table. A suggested price is a starting point for review, not an obligation to approve a much broader rule with a familiar name.

For a grant, state what is actually granted. “Can fly” needs the applicable movement behavior and its limits; a story about wings does not by itself establish a new speed. For a modifier, name the exact statistic or check. For a replacement, explain which existing value it replaces. For an exception, say which ordinary restriction it changes. If its operation cannot be explained without “whatever is reasonable,” continue the review before calling it complete.

Inspect the extreme case the author did not intend to exploit. Can copying the reference repeat a purchase? Can a permanent clause remove all future trade-offs? Can a tiny condition be kept true without effort? Can the same source be counted twice under different labels? Repair the wording in cooperation with the author. The aim is a working they can trust, not a test of whether they can win a wording dispute.

Keep the approved version and the reason for an unusual price. If play exposes an error, agree the revision, replacement and affected current state. Do not retroactively charge a player for a normal use the table previously approved. A living alpha needs corrections that preserve trust as well as arithmetic.



A review ends with a decision

Finish with one of three useful answers: accepted as written; accepted with named revisions; or incomplete with a specific missing question. “Maybe, ask when you use it” leaves both sides uncertain about a purchase. For a deliberately flexible capability, the definition can still state which parts are settled and which execution details will be appraised in the scene.

Read the final normal use aloud. Record where the actual acquisitions live, their total, which compositions reference them, and which costs belong only to use. The author should be able to hand the record to another player and receive the same basic explanation. If they cannot, shorten the promise and make the limits visible before adding more embellishment.



04

Price what changes

Keep ownership, scope and execution in their own ledgers.



A purchase is not every use.

An example to read, question and adapt at your table.

MIRA / OWNED ACQUISITIONS

Owned source	BU
Verb II	8
Water I	4
Near	4
d8 output	4
Knowledge proficiency	4
Total acquired	24

24 BU

One acquisition ledger



Reference / no second purchase

Guided Water refers to Verb II, Water I and Near already owned.

Item / its own ledger

The ordinary hook is Item BU 0, Load 2, two slots. A proposed augmentation has its own reviewed price.

Execution / this attempt

Keeping a narrow lane directed is an agreed requirement of use, not another acquisition charge.



Price an idea by reading what it changes

The Library's reference prices provide a common conversation, not a compulsory tariff for every authored rule. A new primitive needs a readable behavior before it can have a useful price. A very high number cannot make an ambiguous permission fair, and a low number is not automatically wrong for a narrow rule that contributes little to the campaign.

This workshop examines proposals at the level where they affect play. The prices below are **authoring examples for table review**, not newly issued canonical entries. When a comparison uses a published reference anchor, it says so. Acquisition, equipment and execution remain separate throughout.

Begin a review with a testable sentence

Ask the author to describe a normal use and a limit. "I want to recognize damaged structures" could support a practice bonus, a sense, expertise or an information-producing working. Those proposals have different effects. Start with the experience they want rather than guessing a large package from the title.

Use a plain first sentence: "Add +2 to Reason checks to identify the cause of visible damage to a manufactured structure after inspecting it at ordinary reach." This gives the operation, recipient, check, purpose and condition. It does not identify damage through walls, locate hidden traps automatically or improve attacks against the structure. The author can decide whether those limits match the concept.

Now test the sentence. Does it help with an old crack under clear inspection? Yes, if a check is actually needed. Does it reconstruct a missing blueprint? No. Does inspecting one wall qualify every structure in the city? No. Would an ordinary inspection already make the answer certain? Possibly; then the bonus does not create a reason to roll. These tests reveal practical scope before price.

Compare a check modifier with a changed attribute





Ilex has Mental 5 and PB 2 from Mental proficiency. Their Knowledge, Reason, Awareness and Influence checks are each +7. Their selected Mental DC is 12. A proposed +1 only to Knowledge makes that check +8 while the others and DC remain unchanged. A proposed +1 Mental at an accepted attribute scope makes Mental 6 and its trained practices +8, and selected DC 13 before other modifiers.

These two proposals are not interchangeable. The attribute also contributes to formulas and saves that actually use its current value. A practice-specific bonus does not. Compare their breadth and stacking before accepting equal prices simply because both say +1. Respect actual caps and permitted operations in the construction; this example does not waive those requirements.

Example review response. "Your 4-BU proposal affects one kind of Knowledge task. That seems understandable here. If you want all Mental uses to increase, write an attribute rule instead and review that wider effect." The response identifies a choice. It does not claim that 4 is the universal correct price for all knowledge or that the table must accept a proposed attribute increase.

Distinguish training from repeated numerical benefit

A proficiency grant establishes the trained state at its stated scope. The chosen proficient attribute already trains its practices and save. Granting the same proficiency again does not repeatedly add PB. An explicit expertise grant, a direct modifier and advantage are different contributions with their own rules.

Torren has Physical-trained Finesse +7. Steady Hands adds +2 during its qualifying rope task, making +9. A second capability referencing that very same acquired occurrence of Steady Hands does not add +2 again. It is another route to an existing acquisition, not another purchased occurrence. A genuinely separate acquired contribution must qualify and obey its authored stacking or uniqueness rules.

Suppose two sources grant advantage and one grants disadvantage on that +9 rope check. Cancel opposing stacks, leaving one advantage. Roll two d20, keep the higher and add +9 once. With three advantages and one disadvantage, two remain: roll three d20, keep the highest and add +9 once. Bias changes the resolution

dice selected; it does not turn +9 into +18 or supply training where none exists.

Review an apparently harmless permanence clause

"The bridge stays repaired" contains more than a duration. It may imply new material, structural strength, indefinite resistance to weather or an information claim that the work is safe. Ask what was actually changed. Ordinary repair can produce a lasting ordinary bridge. A supernatural result can persist if its definition supports that outcome; permanent does not mean indestructible.

A proposed water support is different. Mira reshapes existing water, and this example's support needs continued direction. Renaming it a permanent support does not create stone or make the canal freeze forever. If the author wants a new structural material, review the required behavior and subject. If they want an ordinary repaired support using tools, those ordinary acts remain available without buying every workshop step.

Test interference and ending. Can the bridge be struck? Does removing its anchor matter? Does releasing a maintained support remove the support immediately or according to a stated ending? A clear lasting result can be easier to manage than an undefined permanent enchantment with every possible immunity implied.

Review the phrase any within range

An authored targeting method can change the usual specific-target requirement, but it needs a practical meaning. "Any fish within range" asks how qualifying recipients are identified, what happens to hidden or unknown fish, and which behavior applies. Range alone does not answer those questions. "Any" is not a free omniscience clause attached to every high-tier working.

Perhaps the proposal means a visible shoal the actor can locate. Perhaps it means a specialized influence on every eligible fish within a defined water volume, using an expressly granted method. Those versions differ in knowledge and discrimination. Write whether the actor learns locations or merely changes the eligible area. An effect that influences a region need not automatically report every recipient by name.



Example limit. A reviewed weather working affects an agreed valley without personally locating every raindrop. It still needs the actual domain, behavior, scope, recipients and consequences. It does not make every individual-target attack legal through a mountain. Scope-specific exceptions should be described at that scope.

Ask what a restriction costs the author in practice

A condition that says "only at night" matters differently in a campaign about midnight journeys from one set mostly in daylight. A bonus "only while wearing the coat I always wear" may provide little practical restriction. A lost ability "until the broken bell is repaired" can be severe when the bell is inaccessible. Review the fiction and expected use with the player.

There is no compulsory percentage discount for a condition. Conditions are part of the authored proposal. You may accept the price, ask for a different price or change the scope. Avoid treating the player as an adversary for wanting a concept that is convenient. Your shared goal is a readable rule that supports the agreed campaign.

Test whether the condition can be observed and voluntarily managed. "While calm" may require a subjective argument every round. "After a protected pause to prepare the instrument, until its string breaks or it is put away" gives actual events. That can be a useful revision even if the acquisition price remains the same.

Review a mirror without rewarding a fictional inconvenience twice

An eligible mirrored drawback is an actual acquired rule with its scope, conditions and restrictions. A character's Water working requiring existing water is already limited by its definition. That limitation does not automatically become additional mirror credit. If a player wants a separate accepted drawback, write what it changes beyond the underlying permission.

At level 1, suppose positive acquisitions cost 27 and an accepted eligible personal drawback gives 2 credit. Net spent is 25. Actual used debt is 2, within the level 1 ceiling 4, and positive acquisitions remain below the next-level creation ceiling 35. The debt ceiling is a limit, not an automatic gift of 4. If the drawback only provides 2, it cannot fund 31 positive BU as if all 4 appeared by default.

Ask what the drawback means when it is inconvenient. If a rule revokes flight from its bearer until a stated task is completed, an ally gaining flight does not suppress that loss. If two records refer to the same drawback, their references do not double its credit. If a chosen operation has no automatic opposite, do not invent one from the title. Set To has no automatic mirrored inverse.

Keep an item proposal in its actual ledger

A fixed-hook brace can have Item BU 4 for its conditional +2 Prowess contribution. A creature carrying it still uses its chosen base creature budget for encounter appraisal. Equipping it makes its qualified contribution available and consumes its stated slots. Carrying it while unequipped still contributes its Load but not the equipped conditional bonus.

For two Sluice Wardens, the chosen creature total is 2 × 100 = 200. The two braces add 2 × 4 = 8 Item BU. Combined enemy is 208. Their acquired creature total is 2 × 52 = 104, which describes their builds rather than replacing the appraisal's chosen 200. Do not put the

equipment into 208 creature BU and then add it again for a fabricated 216 total.

An ordinary item can have Item BU 0 and meaningful setting value. A rare brass key might be priceless to the characters but have no extraordinary acquired rule. The availability of a device, its money price, its burden, its final equipped slots and its Item BU answer different questions. A single large number cannot communicate all of them.

Reuse a component without multiplying ownership

Mira's River Hand references Guided Water, an effect containing Verb II, Water I and Near. Canal Impact reuses those acquisitions and also references d8. The four distinct acquisitions total 20. Adding her 4-BU Knowledge proficiency gives 24 spent. Arranging them in two capabilities does not cost 40 before Knowledge. The ledger counts actual occurrences, not every route by which the interface reaches one occurrence.

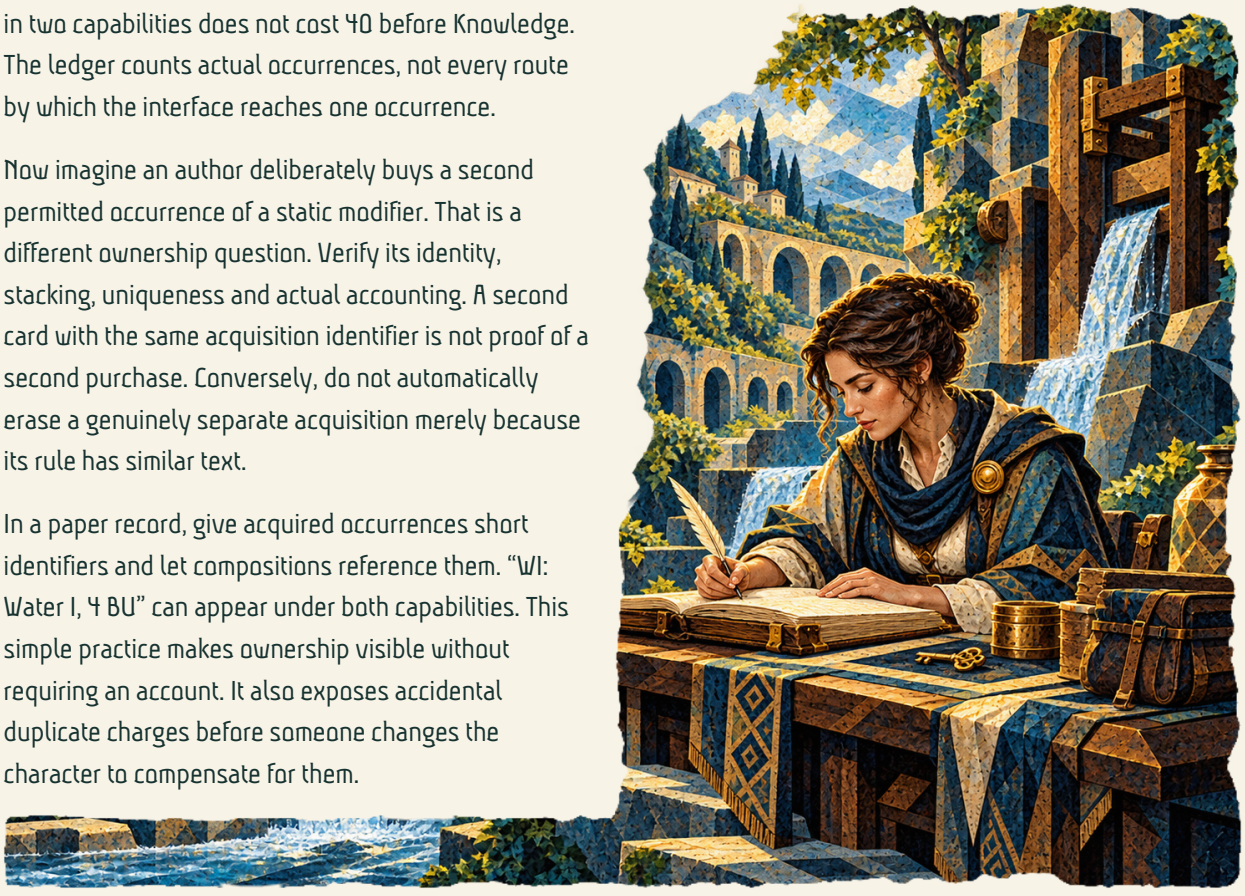
Now imagine an author deliberately buys a second permitted occurrence of a static modifier. That is a different ownership question. Verify its identity, stacking, uniqueness and actual accounting. A second card with the same acquisition identifier is not proof of a second purchase. Conversely, do not automatically erase a genuinely separate acquisition merely because its rule has similar text.

In a paper record, give acquired occurrences short identifiers and let compositions reference them. "WI: Water I, 4 BU" can appear under both capabilities. This simple practice makes ownership visible without requiring an account. It also exposes accidental duplicate charges before someone changes the character to compensate for them.

Test the ordinary, stretched and impossible expressions

For each accepted creation, write three uses. One should be a normal expression, one should stretch its scale or circumstances while retaining its actual behavior, and one should be outside its access. The author and DM can explain the boundary together. This is a review tool, not a requirement to annotate every action during play.

For Water I and Verb II, redirecting a cup is ordinary. Redirecting a surging channel before a rescue is a demanding but related expression. Creating a new living body from water is outside the stated grounded water reshaping permission. A large execution Cost can appraise the channel; it does not buy Life or a new verb on the fly without an actual agreed construction or bounded exception.



For Torren's Iron Knock, striking a located target through existing metal at Touch is normal. Using it while hanging one-handed over a drop may be demanding or incompatible with its needed opportunity. Reshaping a lock into a key is outside its Verb I expression. A title that suggests strength does not convert a direct force action into every alteration of metal.

Finish a review with a usable decision

Accept, revise or postpone the actual proposal. Write one sentence explaining the reason and the agreed version. “Accepted at 4 BU for checks identifying visible structural damage after close inspection; no remote detection” tells the player what they own. “Needs another review” without a question tells them very little.

When you postpone, offer a playable narrower version if possible. The player may begin with a specific sense or check benefit and develop the wider concept later. Do not promise the future version automatically, but do not leave them unable to play their character while you discuss every theoretical edge case.

Record exceptional rulings separately from permanent acquisitions. A desperate one-time rescue can be allowed with agreed consequences without becoming a new always-available capability. A permanent accepted mechanic belongs in the authored record and ledger. That difference prevents both accidental free upgrades and surprise revocation of something the player thought they had purchased.



Keep the work and its price separate

Field study / Original example · Ongoing consequences

Read the situation	This field study
Example requirement	Sing beside the approved lamp source
Actual interference	Loss of source, required task or eligible access
Alpha pending	Damage-triggered Vitality repayment is not resolved here

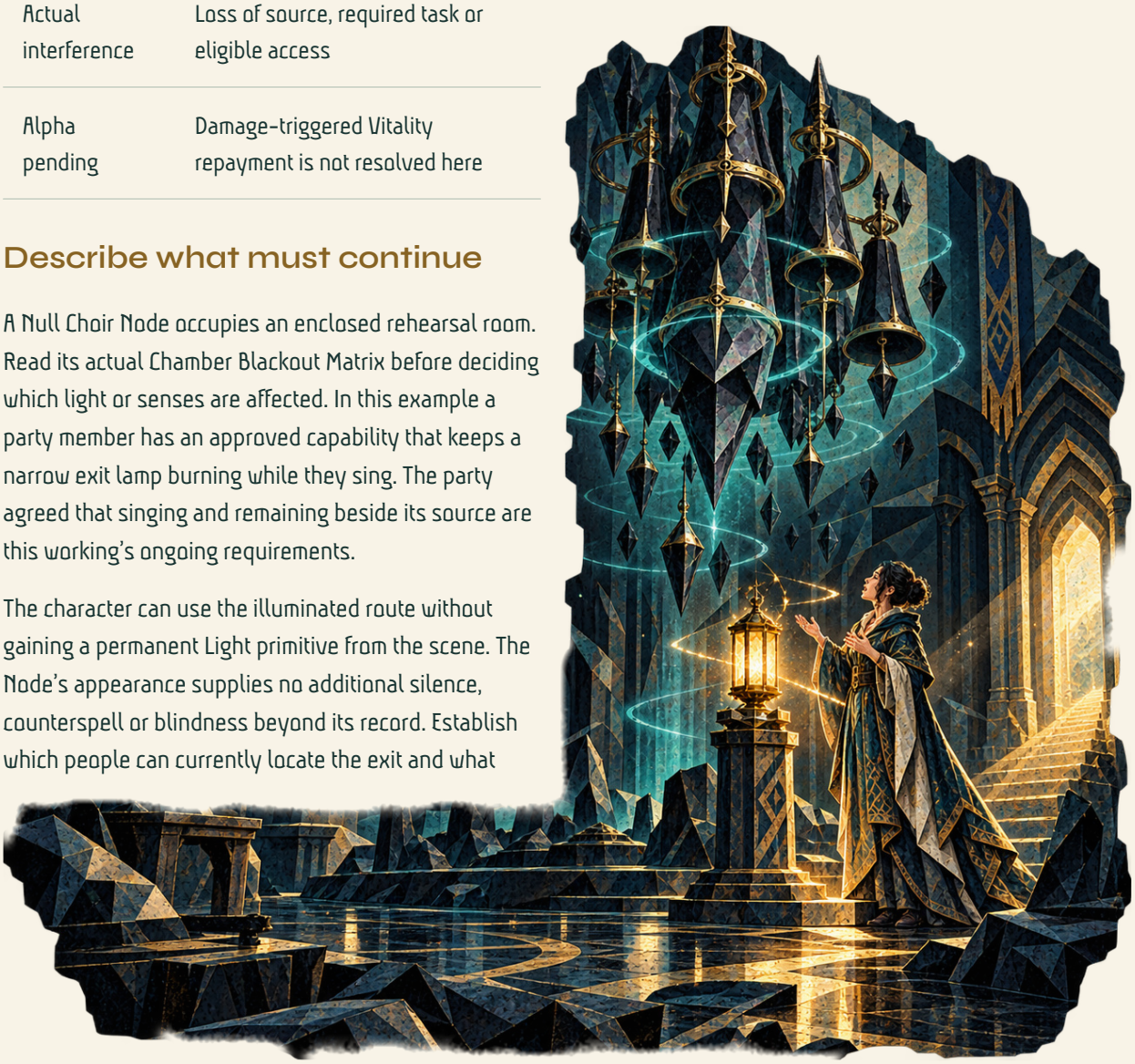
Describe what must continue

A Null Choir Node occupies an enclosed rehearsal room. Read its actual Chamber Blackout Matrix before deciding which light or senses are affected. In this example a party member has an approved capability that keeps a narrow exit lamp burning while they sing. The party agreed that singing and remaining beside its source are this working's ongoing requirements.

The character can use the illuminated route without gaining a permanent Light primitive from the scene. The Node's appearance supplies no additional silence, counterspell or blindness beyond its record. Establish which people can currently locate the exit and what happens if the lamp ends. An observable source makes interruption and protection meaningful.

Agree a cost that fits the action

Player: *"Can I brighten the whole room?"*
DM: *"Your present working keeps the exit lit. A larger expression would change the scale. Are you trying to maintain a safe route or remove all the chamber's darkness?"*
Player: *"Keep the route. I will stay here while the others reach the control."*



That choice can use a restrictive consequence rather than damage. Record the subject, requirement, continuation point and ending condition. Maintaining one capability has one execution, one Strain appraisal and one upkeep track by default, even if it contains several effects. Multiple maintained capabilities have their actual requirements; no automatic single-concentration limit is imported.

Let interference have a cause

If the singer leaves the source or becomes unable to sing, apply the agreed terms. If a hostile action destroys the lamp, use that physical change. A hit that does neither is not a universal cancellation command. Injury can matter through the real consequence, the character's actual ability and the working's rule.

The additional Vitality repayment triggered by incoming damage, including threshold, counter window, reset and excess treatment, remains pending in v0.1 alpha. This scene does not settle it. If your table uses a temporary treatment, identify it as your agreement. Ordinary recurring payments, tasks, restrictions and narrative obligations remain available without that unresolved numerical scheme.

Do not wipe the price at Council

At the next Council, review the lamp's agreed requirement. The new round does not erase the need to sing or release an obligation acquired elsewhere. If the room is opened and daylight now supplies the route, the party can end the lamp deliberately. Describe that new circumstance rather than keeping the upkeep active merely because a box remains marked.

Afterward, record whether the singer can redirect that capability, whether any separate consequence remains and who has reached safety. A continuing working is easier to run when its actual task is visible. The drama comes from protecting or replacing the source, not from forcing every form of upkeep into the same damage counter.

Prepare a replacement before the source ends

Draw the exit lamp, the performer's position and a shutter that can admit ordinary daylight. Decide what blocks access to the shutter and what the Node's actual matrix changes. The party can then pursue a replacement source or a different route while the performer keeps the present route usable. The required singing is an agreed task, not a universal restriction on all maintained work.

Player: *"I keep singing while they move the stool to the shutter."*
DM: *"You remain beside the lamp. The stool now makes the latch reachable."*
Player: *"Once daylight reaches the exit, I stop."*
DM: *"Then your lamp ends under its agreed terms; describe whether the new light actually supplies the needed route."* A completed setup gives a reason to release a continuing obligation.

If the shutter is jammed, the stool is still useful and the lamp still works while its requirements are met. If the lamp ends first, the party's positions and knowledge of the latch remain. Do not reset all work to the chamber's initial state. Record any separate lingering injury or promise independently. The next attempt should begin from the room the players changed, not from an invisible upkeep counter whose unresolved alpha details were silently chosen for them.



Price the promise you actually wrote

Field study / Original example · Reviewing a new primitive

Read the situation	This field study
First decision	Training grant or actual numerical addition?
Price review	Frequency, recipients, stacking and restrictions
Approval test	Ordinary use, a second source and a failed condition

Begin with the claimed change

A player is inspired by the Mnemonic Surgeon and proposes a primitive called Steady Counsel. Their first draft says, "Restore anyone's confidence and remove mental harm." The creature's actual Kindly, Collect Yourself is useful inspiration, but its existence does not define that broad new statement. Ask which result the player wants to acquire.

They clarify: add a qualifying bonus to one named practice while the recipient follows a short spoken instruction. That is a narrower numerical benefit than changing beliefs, restoring Vitality or removing every mental consequence. The original title may stay, but the actual rule must identify recipient, metric, operation, condition and limits before price can be meaningfully reviewed.

Compare two distinct revisions

One revision grants training in a practice. Another adds a flat numerical bonus to qualifying practice checks. Those operations are different. A training grant does not repeatedly add PB to someone who already has the relevant training, while an actual numerical addition can stack under its authored rules. State which revision the player intends.

DM: *"Does this teach the practice, or improve a particular use of it?"*
Player: *"Improve it while the instruction is being followed."*



DM: *"Then name what following means, and whether a recording qualifies."* A condition should be answerable at the table. "When inspired" is unclear unless the group defines what establishes and ends that state.

Judge the authored cost openly

The player selects a BU price. Library anchors can inform that choice; they are not a compulsory tariff. Review how often the rule can qualify, how many recipients it can affect and whether multiple occurrences can accumulate. A narrow single-recipient condition can differ from an always-on party benefit even when both add the same number.

If the price seems wrong for the campaign, explain the behavior that concerns you and request a revised price or narrower rule. Do not accept the broad version privately, then reinterpret it mid-scene to avoid its strength. Approval concerns the actual construction and its agreed price, not whether its name resembles an existing official option.

Try the edge before approval

Test three situations: ordinary use with the recipient attending; a second support source applying simultaneously; and a recipient who cannot hear the instruction. Resolve each from the draft. If the answers are missing, finish the definition before purchase. This small review is more useful than an arbitrary catalogue of every possible abuse.

The Surgeon's own conditional Reason bonus applies only where its actual rule says it does. Its portrait and support identity do not authorize free recovery or unlimited information. Keep that same discipline for the player's inspiration. A DIY creation becomes dependable when another person can read its effect and reach the same result, while its price remains an openly negotiated authoring choice.

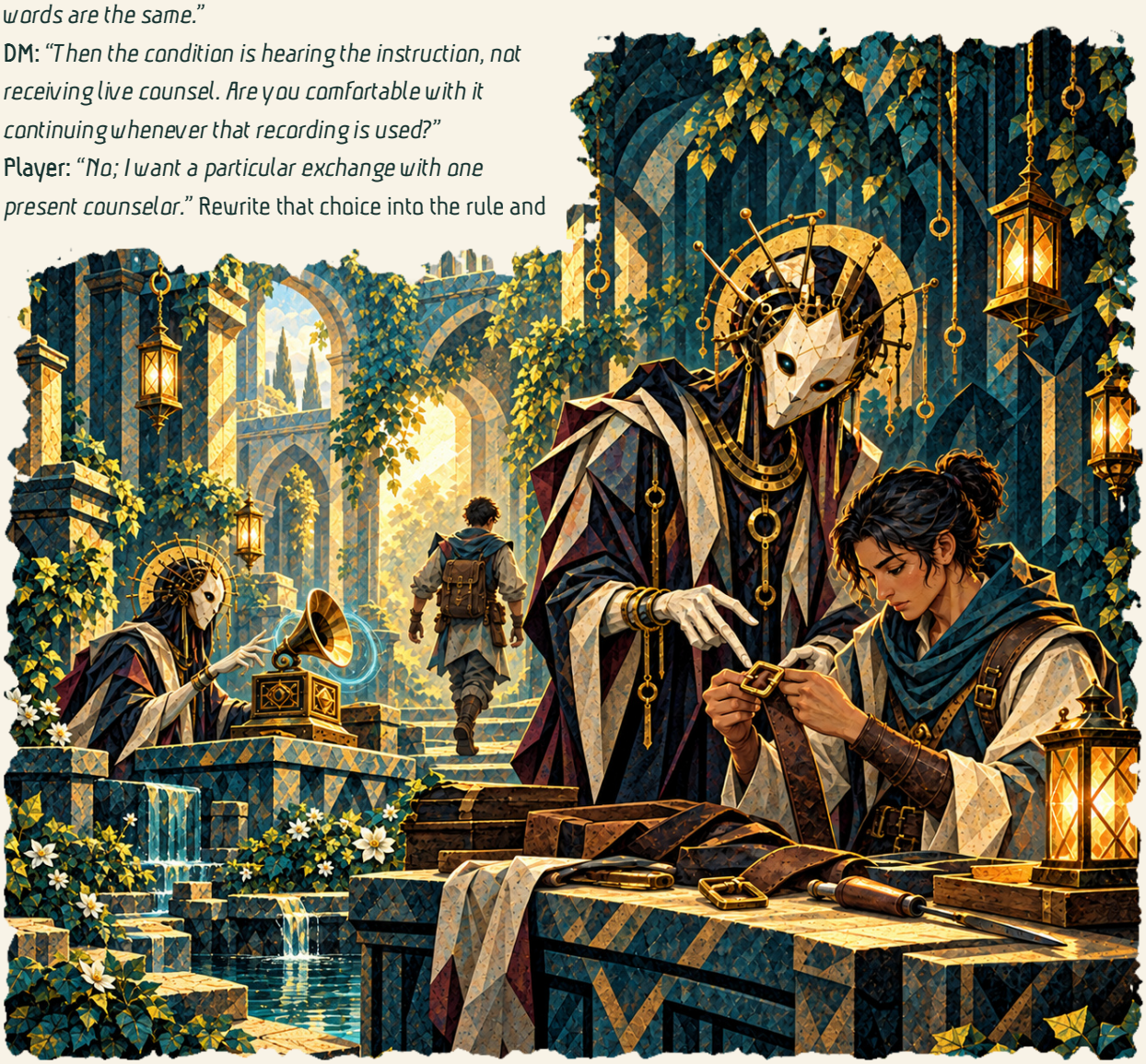


Run the review as a short rehearsal

Use a deliberately ordinary scene: one recipient repairs a buckle while the counselor gives a spoken instruction. Ask the author to identify the exact qualifying practice and numerical operation. Then add a second counselor, a recorded instruction and a recipient who has walked beyond hearing. These changes test the definition without requiring a simulated boss fight.

Player: *"The recording should qualify because the words are the same."*
DM: *"Then the condition is hearing the instruction, not receiving live counsel. Are you comfortable with it continuing whenever that recording is used?"*
Player: *"No; I want a particular exchange with one present counselor."* Rewrite that choice into the rule and revisit the authored price. The conversation has revealed the benefit's real frequency.

Compare the original and revised promises side by side. "Restore anyone's confidence" could imply removed consequences, altered beliefs and unlimited recipients. The revised qualifying bonus claims none of those unless separately acquired. Keep the evocative name and explanation if they help, but read the precise claim when approving a scene. A small rehearsal protects the creator's intended concept while giving other players a reliable boundary they can recognize.



A reference is not another purchase

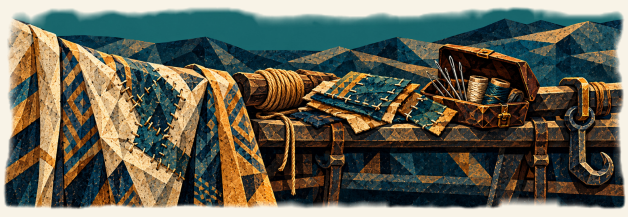
Field study / Original example · Shared acquisitions and equipment

Read the situation	This field study
Acquisition	One bought record, counted once
Organization	Heritage, effect or capability can reference it
Equipment	Extraordinary item acquisitions have separate Item BU

Separate what is owned from where it appears

A Silkgear Patchwright works on a damaged caravan. Its actual Patch the Seam provides the relevant repair behavior. A player who studies it wants to organize their own acquired rules into a heritage, a reusable effect and a capability. They place the same owned Verb I reference into all three.

That is organizational reuse, not three purchases of Verb I. One actual acquisition is counted once in the character's acquired BU even when it appears in several containers or is used directly. If the player deliberately buys another eligible occurrence, that is a distinct acquisition with its own scope and stacking terms. The ledger must distinguish those two situations.



Read the organizations back aloud

Player: *"My heritage contains Repairer's Habit. My Seam effect uses it, and the capability uses the effect."*
DM: *"Which underlying acquisitions do you own?"*
Player: *"This Verb permission and these other rules."*
DM: *"Then those bought records are the ledger. The names organize them."*

A capability can also contain primitives directly. An effect is useful when it groups reusable ingredients; it is not required before every capability. A heritage explains a natural organization of acquired content. None of those labels automatically grants an extra repair, a second Main Intent or another numerical copy. Read actual contributions after identifying the owned occurrences.

Keep the carried tool separate

The Patchwright's mundane needles can be equipment without extraordinary Item BU. A tool containing its own acquired extraordinary rule uses a separate item acquisition ledger. Do not include that item's rule twice by also treating its granted behavior as another paid character acquisition unless the character genuinely owns a separate instance.

Load, equipped slots, Item BU and ordinary value remain different measurements. An ordinary equipped item uses one slot; a two-handed item uses two unless its authored requirement says otherwise. An expensive artisan tool need not have a high Item BU. Conversely, a cheap-looking tool can carry a powerful acquired rule. Its appearance cannot settle those figures.

Verify a scene from the ledger

Ask the player to repair a coat, a cracked wagon frame and a living wound. The first two may be ordinary or extraordinary tasks supported by actual material and verb access. The third is a different subject and result; organizing every rule under "Repairer" does not supply Life access or healing.

Use the caravan scene to expose missing permissions before purchase or revision. If the broad claim was accidental, rewrite it without charging organizational labels as mechanics. Afterward, the reader should be able to point to the actual owned rules, separate equipment costs and one declared working. Clean accounting makes flexible construction easier, rather than forcing every concept into a fixed class package.

Mark the same acquisition with the same identity

Prepare a paper example with three boxes labeled heritage, effect and capability. Put one acquired Verb I record beside them and draw references from that same record into the appropriate boxes. Then place a second genuinely purchased record beside it with its own identity. The first drawing shows reuse; the second shows an additional acquisition that needs its own review.

Player: *"The Seam effect already includes my permission, so adding it to the capability costs me again?"*
DM: *"Which new rule did you acquire?"*
Player: *"None. I am using the same one."*
DM: *"Then the organization changed, not the acquired*



ledger." If another trait genuinely contributes a separate modifier, identify that contribution rather than hiding it beneath the repeated name.

For an item, draw a separate ledger and show which behavior it grants while equipped. Compare the character with the item, without it and with a second eligible owned source. Those three cases reveal accidental double counting and actual stacking questions. The Patchwright's repair scene is a useful test because ordinary tools can help without necessarily having Item BU, while an extraordinary tool's acquired rule must still be accounted for once in its own place.



Say the promise before accepting it

Field study / Original example · Negotiation and continuing obligations

Read the situation	This field study
Offer	Named passage for an explicit search or return promise
Authority	Each negotiator can commit only what they control
Ending condition	Record the event that satisfies the agreed obligation

Make the offer intelligible

A Velvet Oath Broker offers passage into a district closed after an arcane accident. In exchange, it wants a seal returned from the abandoned counting house. The Broker has its actual The Open Door Argument, not unlimited compulsion. Its presence, portrait and title do not make every spoken sentence a magically binding contract.

Prepare the offered access, the named seal and the Broker's reason for wanting it. Decide what the Broker knows about the counting house and what it does not. If danger is known, the party should have a fair chance to inquire before accepting. A bargain can be tense because its benefits and obligations matter, without depending on a hidden pun that rewrites the players' ordinary understanding after agreement.



Clarify who owes what

Player: *"We bring it back if it is there."* Broker: "Then I offer entry for your search, not a promise of return?" **Player:** *"Yes. We will make a good-faith search and report what happened."* This changes the bargain. Make the accepted version explicit rather than keeping two contradictory promises in your notes.

State who receives passage, whether it lasts for one visit and how the district's physical gate works. State who must search, what counts as the requested seal and where a report can be delivered. These are practical terms, not a compulsory contract-building subsystem. If a capability imposes an actual consequence or restriction, read it separately. Mundane agreement, authored argumentative effects and extraordinary binding are different claims with different permissions.

Let persuasion have a subject

The Broker may press for a more favorable bargain through its actual argument. Identify the proposition and the applicable procedure. Someone agreeing that the seal matters has not automatically agreed to surrender every possession or abandon a companion. Resolve the actual influence and preserve the character's available choices under the rule.

Player: *"I show that the district's people need the gate reopened, not just us."*
DM: *"The Broker can authorize your entry. It does not control the entire cordon."*
Player: *"Then we ask it to speak with the gatekeepers too."* That proposed extension needs another person's authority or another eligible effect. Negotiation becomes useful when the table knows which decision each participant can actually make, rather than treating a powerful speaker as the owner of every related outcome.

Compare two discoveries

If the seal is intact, returning it can satisfy an actual return promise. If it was melted into a repair plate, the party has found a changed subject. Whether the promise is still satisfiable depends on the agreed words and circumstances, not a concealed authorial trick. Give them evidence and an opportunity to report or negotiate a substitute.

A search-and-report bargain can be fulfilled despite a failed recovery. A return bargain may remain unresolved until the Broker accepts the evidence or a replacement. Record the continuing consequence's subject, requirement and ending condition. It need not become recurring damage. Do not clear the promise merely because a new Council begins, and do not extend it to unrelated people who never accepted or were never affected by an actual rule.

Prepare the account after the bargain

Write the accepted promise in one sentence the players recognize. Add the benefit already received and the event that would end the obligation. For this example: the Broker admitted the named group for one visit; they owe a search and truthful report about the seal; the report ends that agreed obligation. Another table might choose a different bargain, but the record should be equally clear.

Player: *"We found the plate and brought its maker as a witness."* Broker: "I asked about the seal. Show me why this answers." The resulting exchange can change the relationship through particular facts. A fulfilled bargain may make the Broker a future contact; an honest failed search may reveal a better offer; a knowingly broken promise may close that offered access. Keep those

outcomes rooted in the agreement, not a universal debt score or automatic moral judgment.



05

consequences that continue

Give every lasting change a subject and an ending.



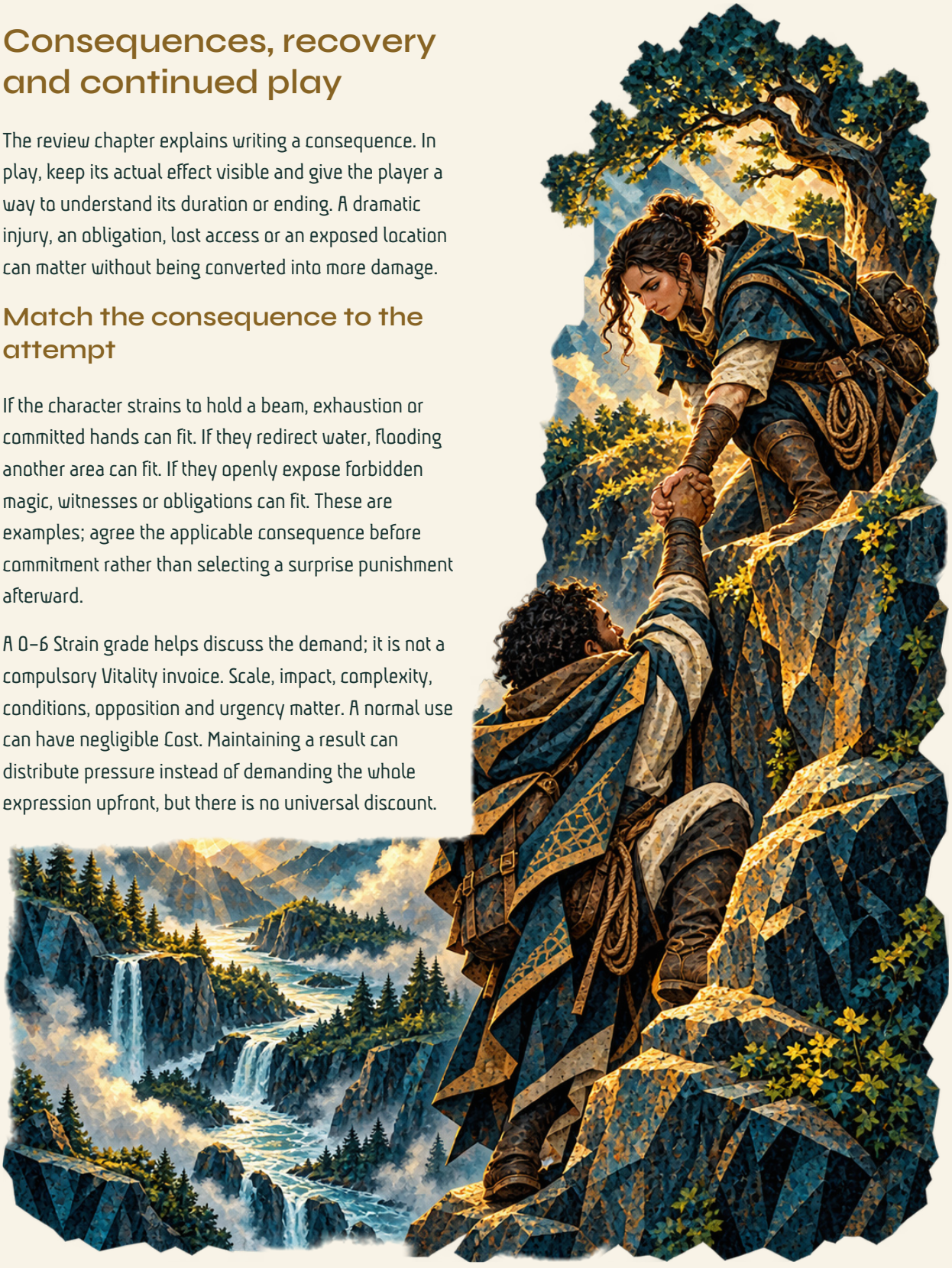
Consequences, recovery and continued play

The review chapter explains writing a consequence. In play, keep its actual effect visible and give the player a way to understand its duration or ending. A dramatic injury, an obligation, lost access or an exposed location can matter without being converted into more damage.

Match the consequence to the attempt

If the character strains to hold a beam, exhaustion or committed hands can fit. If they redirect water, flooding another area can fit. If they openly expose forbidden magic, witnesses or obligations can fit. These are examples; agree the applicable consequence before commitment rather than selecting a surprise punishment afterward.

A 0–6 Strain grade helps discuss the demand; it is not a compulsory Vitality invoice. Scale, impact, complexity, conditions, opposition and urgency matter. A normal use can have negligible Cost. Maintaining a result can distribute pressure instead of demanding the whole expression upfront, but there is no universal discount.



Recover what the ledger actually allows.

Worked example / maximum Vitality 13; short-rest pool 7.

Event	Current / max	Short-rest points left
Before rest	10 / 13	**7**
Short rest heals 3	13 / 13	**4**
Later damage removes 5	8 / 13	**4**
Next short rest heals 4	12 / 13	**0**
Completed agreed long rest	13 / 13	7 / refreshed

Count actual healing

The first rest heals 3 and leaves 4. After later damage, the remaining pool heals only 4.

Long rest is separate

The agreed long rest refreshes the pool; its healing is not charged to that allowance.

Other endings remain

An injury or obligation ends by its own stated recovery condition.



Recovery does not erase every story

DM and players agree whether rest effects apply. A short pause may be 15 or 30 minutes; a long rest is overnight sleep or equivalent recovery, not necessarily eight hours. Time alone does not trigger healing.

The short-rest allowance is half maximum Vitality, rounded up, across short rests until a completed long rest refreshes it. Only actual healing consumes it. At maximum 13, allowance 7: healing from 10 to 13 consumes 3 and leaves 4 for a later rest. Long-rest healing is separate, normally to full; partial recovery may be agreed, and completed long rest still refreshes the short-rest allowance.

An injured hand may need treatment or a specified recovery condition even after Vitality is restored. A promise remains until fulfilled. State those ending terms rather than relying on a vague "rest removes it." If a consequence is meant to recover quickly, say so.

Keep maintained work understandable

Record each maintained capability, its continuation point, requirement and ending terms. One capability has one upkeep track even with several effects; several capabilities can coexist and their requirements accumulate. Loss of access until a task is completed follows that condition, rather than disappearing at the next Council.



A hit alone does not universally cancel a working. Interference requires actual access, timing and resolution. If the actor cannot perform a required task, they cannot continue it. A completed instant action cannot be interrupted retroactively, although its continuing result may be disrupted by a valid new action.

The numerical question of additional Vitality upkeep repayment triggered by damage is explicitly pending in the review chapter. Keep ordinary agreed continuation usable and do not silently impose an unresolved threshold.



Let the change have a shape.

An example to read, question and adapt at your table.

01 Cause and subject

Name what happened and whom or what it affects.

02 Actual change

A number, restriction, obligation, resource or altered place.

03 Continuation

Say when it applies and what must keep happening.

04 Ending

State recovery or termination. Record what remains separately.

Vitality, recovery allowance, continuing work and lingering injury can change independently.



Give consequences a shape people can live with

A consequence is useful when the player understands its actual change and can decide what to do next. It can be numerical, restrictive, environmental or narrative. It can be severe without dealing damage, and it can be gentle without being meaningless. The cause, timing and ending make it playable.

The cases in this chapter are **optional contextual agreements**. They illustrate how to write and administer consequences. They do not create a compulsory injury list, resource pool, exhaustion ladder or fixed price for improvisation.

Separate the attempted price from the uncertain result

Before commitment, explain whether Cost applies when the attempt begins, when it succeeds, when it continues or after a stated event. Explain what failure means as a separate clause. "You accept aching hands to hold the rope; the check determines whether the worker reaches the landing" differs from "on a failed check, the rope burns your hands and the worker remains exposed."

Neither arrangement is universally required. The scene and proposal decide. What matters is that the player can understand the trade-off before choosing. A failed roll does not automatically refund a paid Cost, and it does not automatically demand all possible Costs. There is no universal interruption refund.

Example conversation. A character wants to brace a heavy beam immediately. The table offers a stated shoulder restriction that applies if they make the sudden lift, whether the following secure-support check succeeds or not. The player proposes a lever instead. That changes the approach and may change the agreed restriction or uncertainty. The negotiation is part of play, not an attempt to evade an undisclosed tariff.

Write an injury without importing a condition package

"Strained shoulder" can be purely descriptive or have an actual rule. Decide which. A clear restrictive version is: "Until treated and an agreed rest has occurred, you cannot carry another person without reviewing further effort and consequence." A numerical version might be a stated penalty to a bounded class of checks. These have different effects; do not switch between them whenever one becomes inconvenient.

Record whether an extraordinary permission remains available. An injured shoulder might affect lifting but not every Magical check or all walking. If it does affect a capability's required motion, say so. Names like blinded, stunned or poisoned do not import another game's complete mechanics. Write the actual lost sense, action restriction, numerical change and ending that this consequence uses.

Healing current Vitality does not automatically clear the shoulder restriction. If the agreed remedy is treatment and rest, follow that remedy. If a healing working explicitly treats the injury within its access, resolve that actual behavior. A die permission by itself is not a healing construction, and recovering points is not automatically repairing every narrative harm.

Make loss of access bounded and visible

Temporary loss of access can be a meaningful consequence when it has a cause and return condition. A character overextends a working and agrees that the affected capability cannot be used until they repair its focus. Write what is affected: the one capability, its

particular delivery method or an actual domain permission. These are different restrictions.

Do not broaden the restriction to every related primitive without agreement. If a focus supports a single named capability, losing it does not automatically delete every acquisition beneath the character's heritage. Conversely, if the focus is the actual source of a broad granted permission, losing that source can matter at its stated scope. The record should show the relationship.

Give a reachable recovery route where the fiction supports it. Replacing a string, finding a witness or making a protected preparation can create useful play. An indefinite "until the DM says so" restriction makes planning difficult. The creator's direction allows contextual judgment; it does not require obscuring every ending condition.

Let a narrative cost change a relationship

A character may accept public exposure, an obligation or damage to a place. Write who learns what and what the recipient can reasonably do about it. "The lock keeper saw your forbidden working and expects an explanation before lending tools again" is a usable relationship. "Everyone hates you now" is an undefined global change unless the scene actually supports it and the table agreed that scope.

A promise needs terms. Name the promised task, the beneficiary, the expected time or circumstance and what fulfillment looks like. An obligation to repair a damaged landing is not an automatic prohibition on every other adventure. The group can negotiate a deadline,



delegate with consent or face an understandable consequence of failing to keep the promise.

Separate moral judgment from bookkeeping. A public accusation can be justified and still change a relationship. A successful rescue can create gratitude without erasing the cost accepted to perform it. The world can have complicated responses without the GM using them to punish a player for solving a problem creatively.

Administer upkeep at the agreed maintenance point

Upkeep is an ongoing requirement of a maintained capability. Council is a useful agreed continuation point within the shared rhythm. Record the requirement, the capability, the next point and the ending terms. Do not silently charge a standing requirement several times because its capability contains several effects.

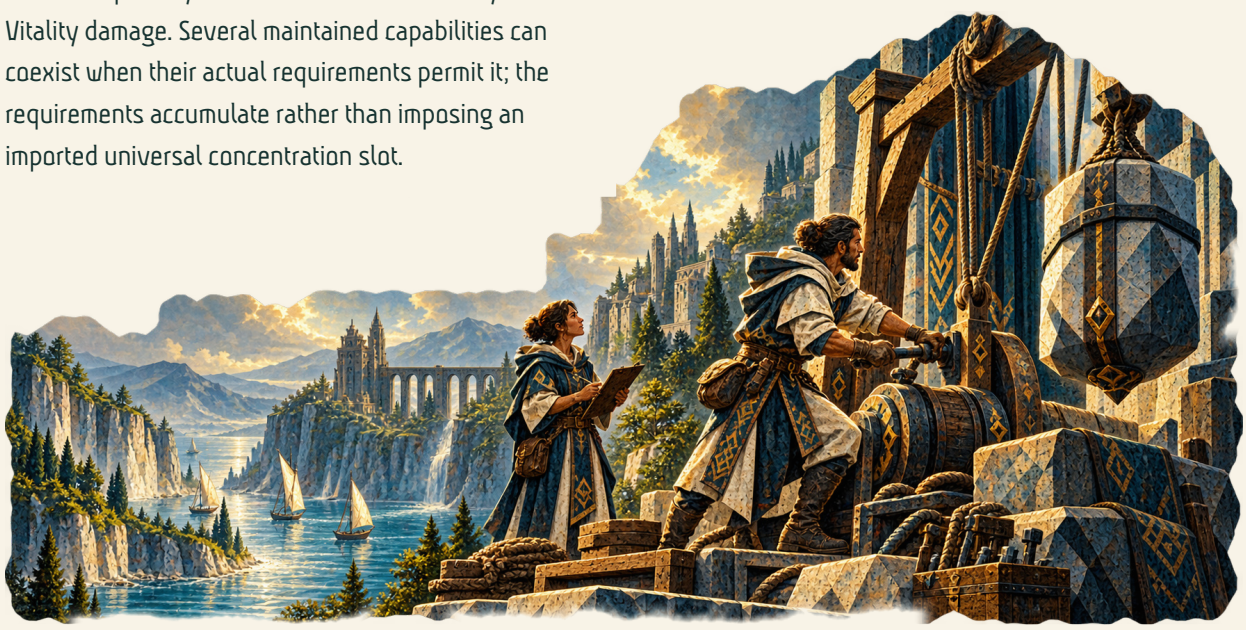
Mira's directed lane can require continued directing. The Custodian's Hold the Counterweight binds one arm. Another reviewed capability might require an ongoing audible chant, a resource contribution or a stated numerical penalty. None of those automatically become Vitality damage. Several maintained capabilities can coexist when their actual requirements permit it; the requirements accumulate rather than imposing an imported universal concentration slot.

When the player cannot meet a requirement, explain the timing of the resulting change. If a chant must remain audible and the actor becomes unable to vocalize, continuation is threatened by a real circumstance. If a restriction ends when the repair is complete, completing the repair matters. A new round alone does not erase a consequence whose stated condition persists.

Compare continuation with an increased instant expression

A character can ask to hold a modest effect over time instead of forcing a much greater result immediately. That often distributes effort or makes the initial demand smaller. There is no mandatory discount percentage. Compare the actual work: an ongoing narrow diversion versus moving the entire surge at once, or a steadily supported lift versus a sudden violent displacement.

Name what makes the continuing option manageable and what it commits. A narrow diversion may preserve hands or access for other ordinary tasks if the agreement permits, or require continuous attention that prevents a separate use of that same working. An instant increase may incur a severe contextual



consequence but leave no maintained task afterward. The player can compare real choices.

Do not let nesting hide the scale. One capability with a water lane, a lighting effect and an unrelated defensive grant still has the full combined demand to appraise. One upkeep track means one organized maintenance record, not one tiny price no matter what is packed inside it.

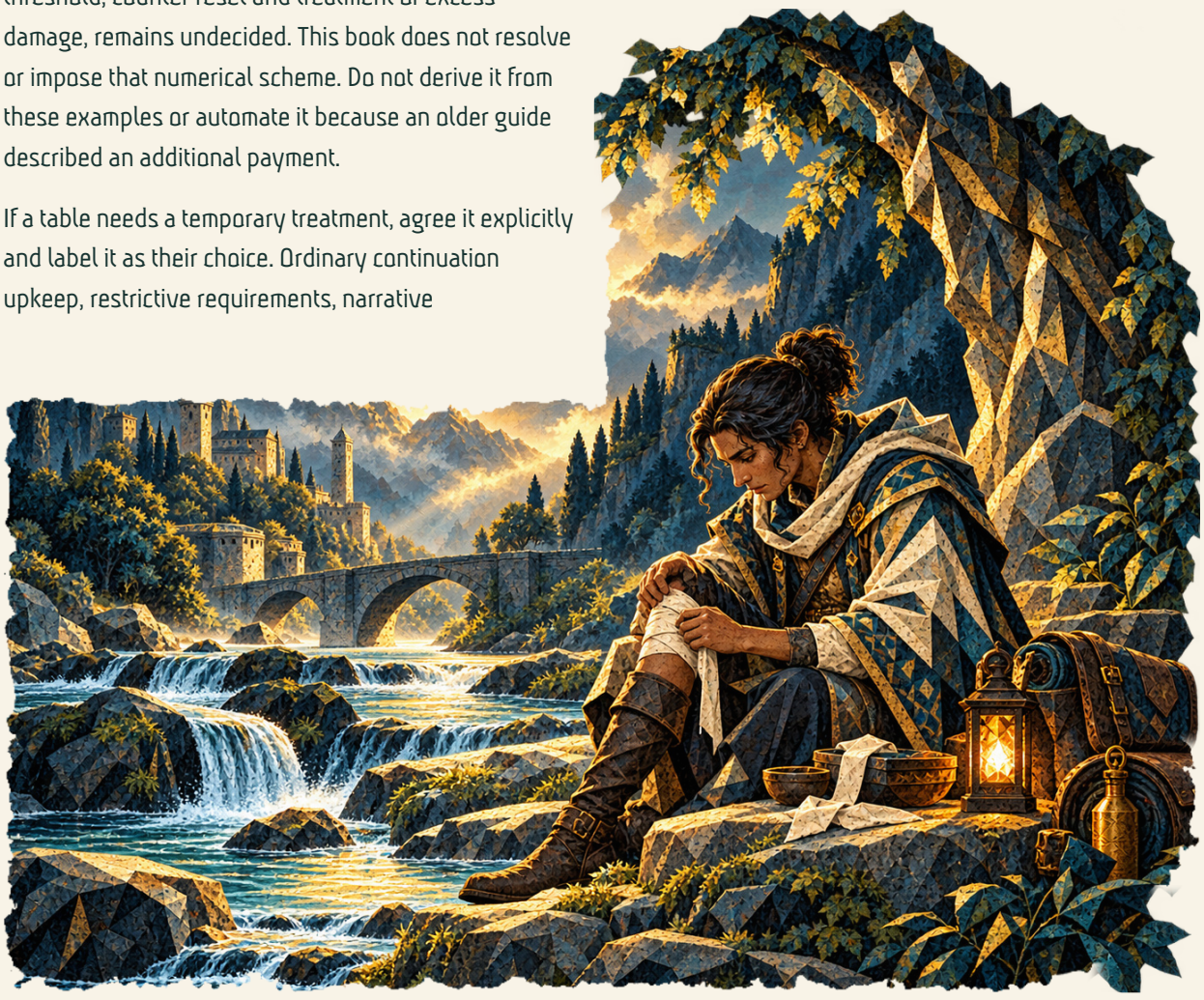
Preserve the one expressly pending upkeep question

Alpha rule pending. Additional Vitality upkeep repayment triggered by incoming damage, including threshold, counter reset and treatment of excess damage, remains undecided. This book does not resolve or impose that numerical scheme. Do not derive it from these examples or automate it because an older guide described an additional payment.

If a table needs a temporary treatment, agree it explicitly and label it as their choice. Ordinary continuation upkeep, restrictive requirements, narrative consequences and contextual interference remain usable. A hit is not a universal cancellation rule. The unresolved numerical detail does not make every sustained capability unusable.

Keep the pending decision in the rules register when revising a creation or writing an adventure. Do not conceal it by replacing all upkeep with damage, or by asserting that damage never matters. Damage can matter through the actual injury or interference in the scene. The specific additional-payment formula is what remains open.

Offer a recovery scene rather than an automatic reset



A short rest is a short pause, perhaps 15 or 30 minutes. A long rest is overnight sleep or equivalent rest, not necessarily eight hours. The group agrees whether the actual circumstances earn either effect. Safe shelter, interrupted sleep, ongoing work and immediate danger can matter. Elapsed time alone does not apply recovery.

Before the pause, explain any proposed adjustment. "The shelter is noisy and you must take turns watching; we can agree a partial overnight recovery" lets the players choose their arrangements. A later surprise reduction after they already relied on full recovery can break trust. The creator's example permits a 70% recovery after a poor night when agreed; it is an illustration, not a compulsory five-hour formula.

At maximum Vitality 13, ordinary short-rest allowance is half 13 rounded up, which is 7. At 10/13, using 3 reaches full and leaves 4. If later damage leaves 8/13, the remaining 4 can restore to 12, not 13. A completed agreed long rest refreshes the allowance; long-rest healing is not charged against it. Ordinary rounding is upward, but you do not add fractional points to a healing ceiling the record cannot hold.

Keep rescue urgency separate from a timer puzzle

At zero Vitality a character collapses. Explain the immediate danger and the contextual rescue countdown; roughly a minute is guidance, not ten guaranteed safe rounds. A drifting body, inaccessible platform or dangerous current can make location and assistance important. Do not keep a player uncertain whether their character is dying while everyone argues over unrelated bookkeeping.

Stabilization needs a dedicated action track, suitable Fieldcraft or actual primitives, and agreed access, resolution and Cost. There is no universal stabilization DC in the shared rules. Success stops the rescue countdown without restoring Vitality or consciousness. Healing above zero normally ends dying and wakes the character unless another actual consequence prevents it.

An active dying character needs rescue before assisted rest. A stabilized character can recover through an agreed assisted rest. Distinguish those states visibly. Massive damage can be outright lethal under its actual rule; use final post-defense damage and current Vitality before clamping a display at zero. Do not turn a zero-clamped number into evidence that every extreme blow caused the same outcome.

Revise a consequence when its meaning proves unclear

If a record says "exhausted" and people disagree about its effect, pause to clarify the original intent. Agree a specific rule and ending. Do not silently choose the broadest possible restriction in the middle of a costly action. If the ambiguity has already affected choices, acknowledge that and make the transition understandable.

Keep a short revision note: previous wording, agreed new wording, who is affected and when it applies. A lighter clarification does not necessarily refund a past Cost; a harsher rule should not be applied retroactively without discussion. The aim is a usable shared record, not a legal argument about who first chose an imprecise word.

At the end of a scene, ask what remains. Current Vitality, used short-rest allowance, obligations, lost access and environmental damage have different endings. A concise review helps players feel the continuity of their decisions. It also prevents a later session from inheriting either an accidental clean slate or a list of penalties nobody remembers agreeing to.

Control should change a choice

Field study / Original example · A prepared predator's terrain

Read the situation	This field study
Control goal	Keep eligible prey near a breach
Readable choices	Stable ledge, narrow shaft, exposed ramp
Pitfall	Expanding the trap after players find a valid bypass

Prepare places worth choosing

A Sinkhole Maw has prepared an unstable hunting ground around a buried pumping station. There is a sound stone ledge, a ladder through a narrow shaft and an exposed cart ramp. Its Gravity Anchor Trap can control an eligible place according to its actual construction. Burrowing Speed supplies a route through ground; neither rule turns the entire ruin into unavoidable damage.

Describe fresh cracks, displaced rubble and a repeated dragging mark near the ramp. Each exit offers something different: the ledge is stable but farther from the trapped worker, the shaft is narrow, and the ramp gives a direct approach. Those differences are physical facts, not a menu of arbitrary bonuses.



Name the controlled area

DM: *"The loose gravel settles toward one marked patch beside the breach."*
Player: *"Is the whole floor pulling us?"*
DM: *"The visible effect is centered there. You can inspect its extent or choose a route that avoids that patch."*

Read the saved trap's recipients, placement, continuation and resolution. If the party crosses its actual boundary, apply the established procedure. If they bypass it, respect the bypass. Do not extend the effect secretly because the predator would otherwise lose its prepared advantage. A strong control ability remains useful when it protects an objective or forces a changed route; it need not cover every possible approach.

Let opposition depend on opportunity

The Maw wants prey near its breach. A party member who climbs the shaft may be inaccessible to a close attack while remaining vulnerable to another actual hazard. A character on the ledge might draw it out. Read where the creature can travel and what working it can perform after that approach. Its Solo label does not grant extra independent actions.

If one actor tries to pull a worker clear while the Maw tries to anchor that same worker, the group can examine a directly opposed effort. If the question is reaching the worker before the predator, it is timing instead. Distinguish the two so control does not become a vague permission to cancel any rescue.



Reward a changed hunting ground

The party may evacuate the station, brace a path, interrupt an eligible trap source or bait the Maw into open ground. Each changes the encounter's relationships. Removing the worker from the breach can complete the objective even if the creature remains alive. Destroying a support might expose a safer path while making later repairs necessary.

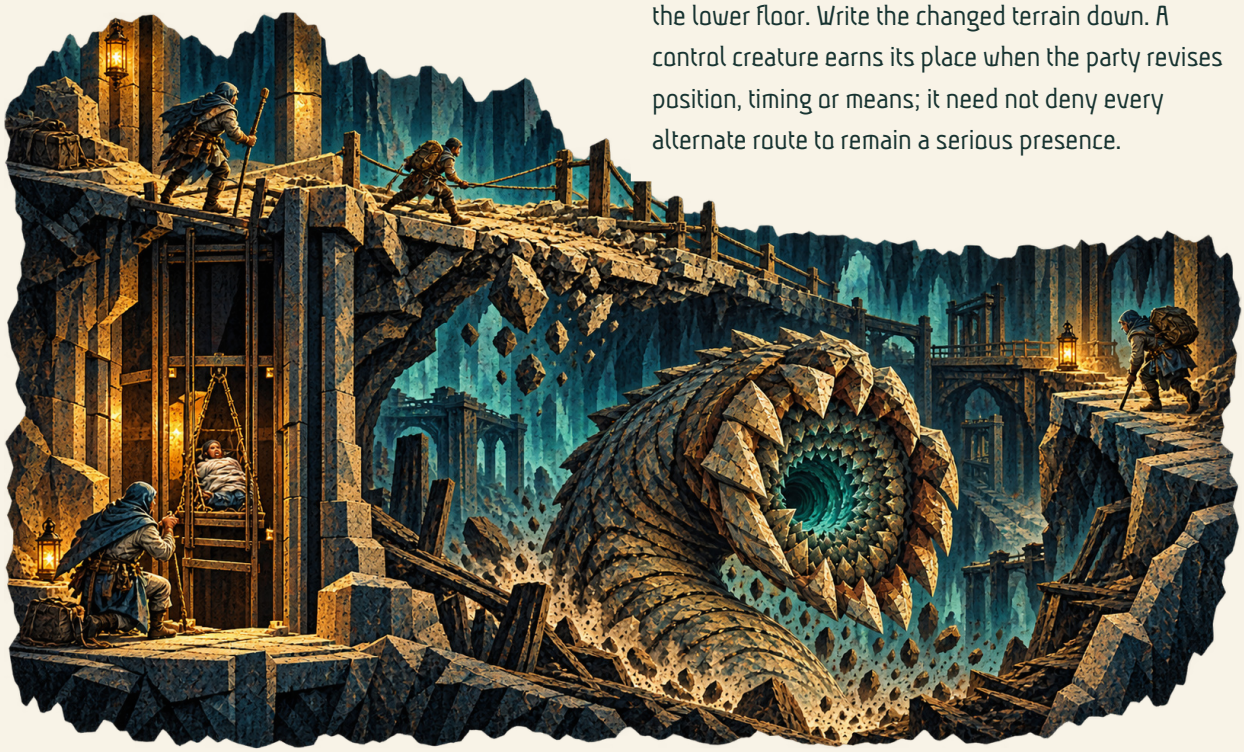
Keep the creature's base budget and separate equipment figure in the appraisal. Do not translate successful terrain use into an invented difficulty category. The useful review asks which routes the party understood, what they changed and whether the control effect was applied within its actual limits. A predator's prepared terrain should teach attention, not punish every unanticipated plan.

Prepare the control as an invitation to adapt

Give the pumping station three routes with different visible needs. The shaft is narrow and difficult to reach with a load; the ramp is broad but crosses the unstable ground; the ledge avoids that ground but passes close to the Maw. These are physical descriptions, not fixed skill requirements. A player may make the shaft usable by changing the load or find a way to support the ramp.

Player: *"We send the injured worker down the shaft first."*
DM: *"Their splint catches on its narrow entry. What changes that obstacle?"*
Player: *"We remove the loose grille and lower them in the sling."* The plan addresses a particular fact. If the Maw interferes, resolve its actual threat against the exposed work rather than charging an automatic damage toll for selecting that route.

Compare two resulting maps. If the ramp collapses after evacuation, the survivors are safe but their supplies remain above. If the ledge becomes secure, the station retains a useful access path while the creature occupies the lower floor. Write the changed terrain down. A control creature earns its place when the party revises position, timing or means; it need not deny every alternate route to remain a serious presence.



Breathing, rescue and recovery are different

Field study / Original example · Underwater pressure

Read the situation	This field study
Separate results	Breathing, release, evacuation, stabilization and healing
Example short rest	Maximum 13; allowance 7; heal 3; retain 4
Long rest	Agreed recovery is independent of the short-rest pool

Prepare a reachable person

A cellar floods while its inhabitants search for a missing child. An Airshare Nautilus carries a breathing apparatus and can use its actual Breath Share. It is a potential ally, not a general exemption from underwater danger. Establish the stair, a submerged doorway, the remaining pocket of air and how the party locates the person beyond it.

The breathing working has recipients, scope and conditions. Read them. Its Swimming Speed does not automatically let a passenger match that speed or turn every rescue into immediate success. A person who can breathe may still be trapped, injured or unable to find the exit. Those are different problems with different possible approaches.

Make the rescue sequence intelligible

Player: *"The Nautilus gives them air, so they are fine."*
DM: *"They can receive the breathing support as written. Their leg is still beneath the fallen shelf. What frees it, and how will you get them to the stair?"*

Use the shared round if freeing, supporting and moving the person have meaningful dependencies or interference. Ordinary lifting can be an eligible approach when the load and access permit it. A capability may change the shelf, but an impressive description does not add an unpurchased domain. Keep the rescue's uncertainties distinct. One success to share breath should not silently heal an injury or complete the evacuation.

Do not replace dying with a rest

If someone has collapsed at zero Vitality, they need actual rescue. Successful stabilization halts dying without automatically supplying Vitality or consciousness. Healing above zero normally ends dying and restores consciousness unless another consequence prevents it. Breath Share alone does not claim either result unless its actual rule explicitly provides it.

Once safe, the group can agree whether the circumstances earn a short rest. For a character with maximum Vitality 13, the ordinary short-rest allowance is 7 after upward rounding. At 10/13, restoring 3 reaches full and leaves 4 for later eligible short rests. Merely remaining in shelter does not spend those remaining points, and an agreed long rest heals independently and refreshes the pool.



Leave the flooded place changed

Rescued residents can identify where the water entered. A door the party forced open may now let it spread; a diverted channel may protect one room while threatening another. Give those physical consequences clearly, rather than retroactively charging a damage price for the breathing assistance.

The Nautilus can become someone to protect while the party works on the source of flooding. Its limited contribution stays valuable because it answers a real need. A support creature does not require a broad healing aura to matter. The record at the end should state who is breathing, who is conscious, who remains trapped and which recovery or treatment actually occurred.

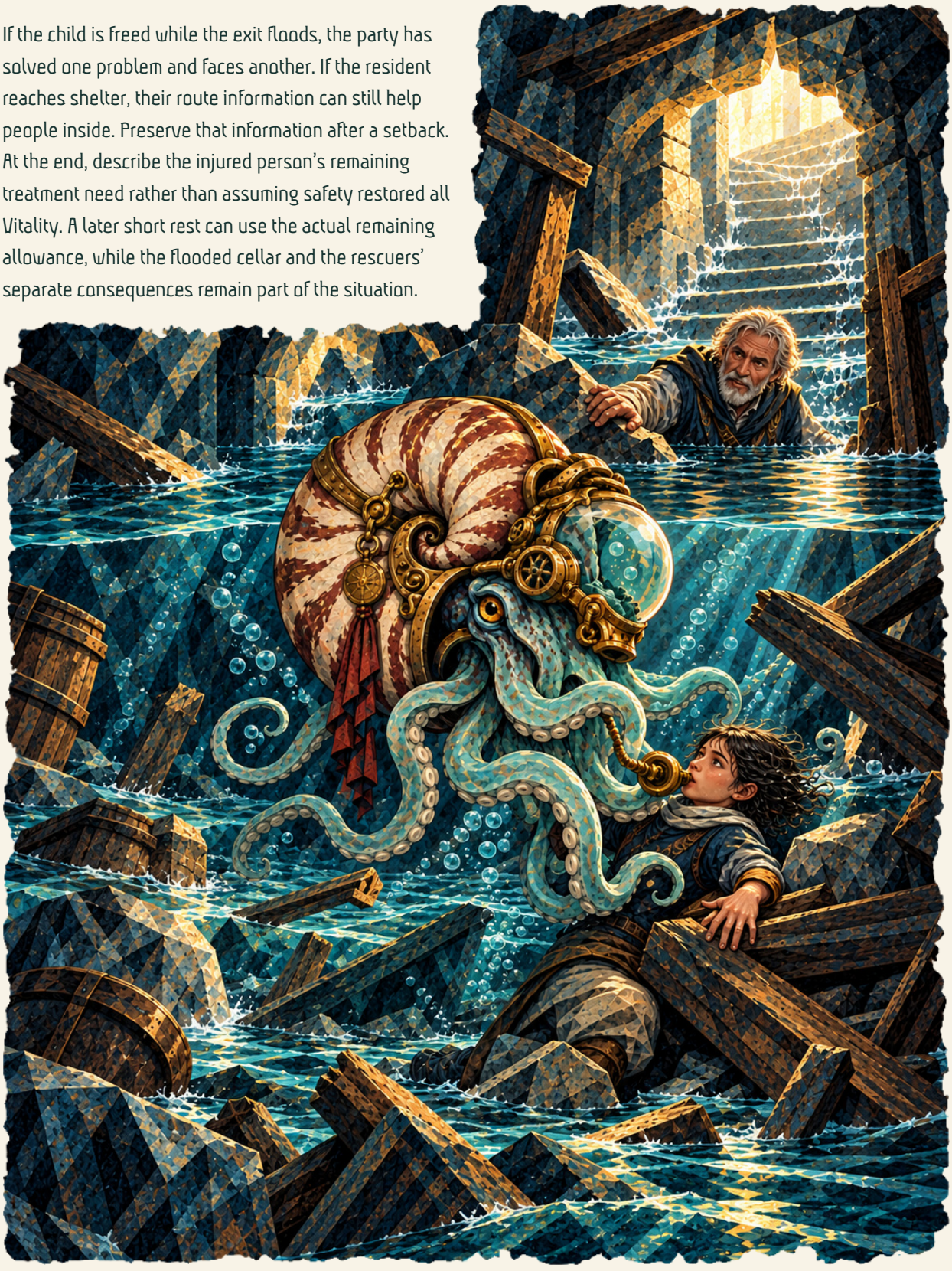
Prepare two people with different needs

Give the child a trapped leg and the older resident a reliable memory of the cellar's former doorway. Their needs and contributions differ. The child may need release and breath; the resident may be able to guide a rescuer but be unable to carry anything. This makes the scene more informative than a row of identical drowning targets.

Player: *"We take the resident out first because they can explain the route."*
DM: *"They know the doorway, but moving them now leaves the child waiting beside the rising water."*
Player: *"Then one of us listens while the Nautilus stays with the child."* That distributes attention and support. Decide what the actual communication and breathing rules permit before the shared round begins.



If the child is freed while the exit floods, the party has solved one problem and faces another. If the resident reaches shelter, their route information can still help people inside. Preserve that information after a setback. At the end, describe the injured person's remaining treatment need rather than assuming safety restored all Vitality. A later short rest can use the actual remaining allowance, while the flooded cellar and the rescuers' separate consequences remain part of the situation.



Build the injury, not a species stereotype

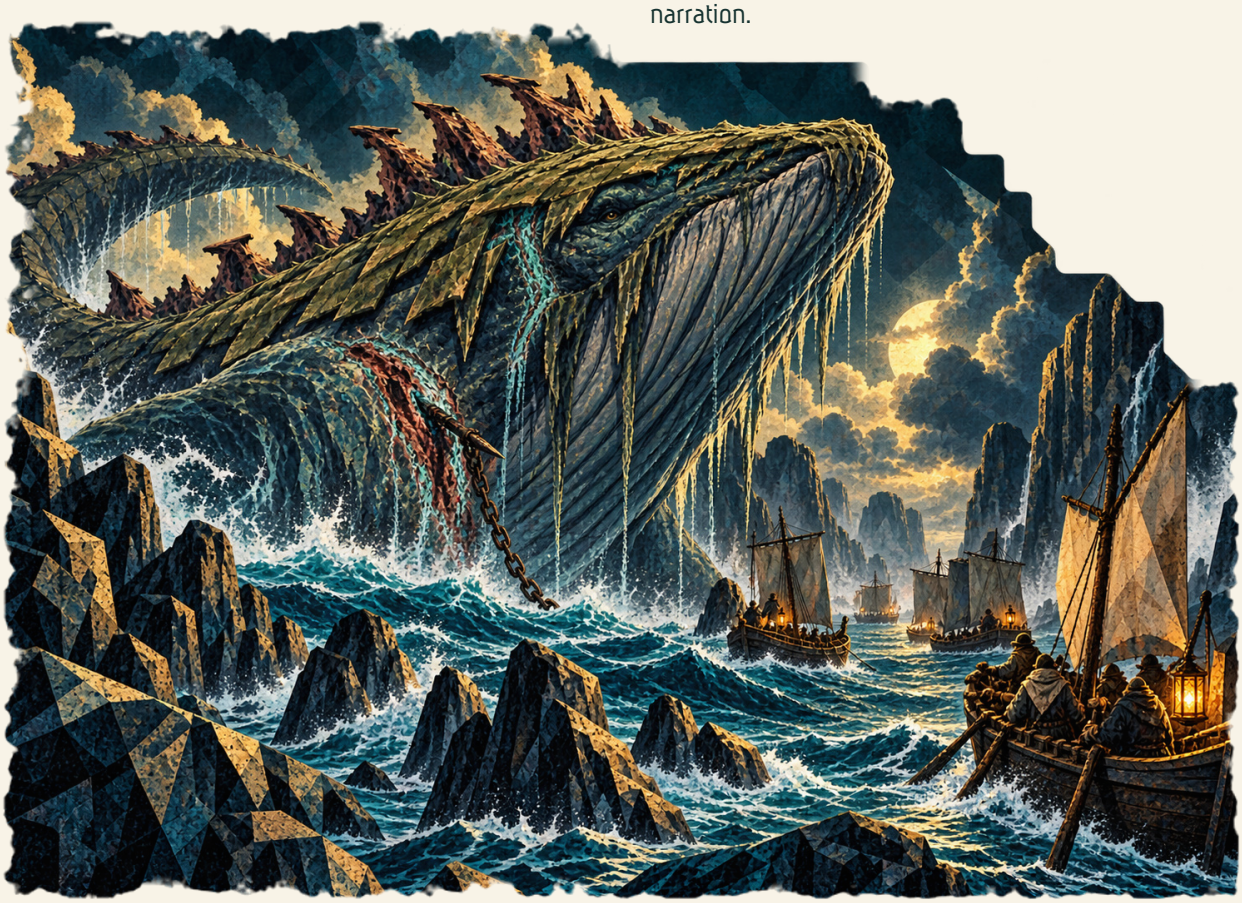
Field study / Original example · Creating a creature from a purpose

Read the situation	This field study
Concept	Pain makes one channel unusable
Construction	Chosen base BU, actual acquisitions and separate equipment
Alternative	Treat, slacken, divert or confront the source of danger

Choose the problem before the powers

A Saltwound Leviathan blocks a shipping route because its injured flank makes the deeper channel painful. Sailors call it a destroyer. The party can see an old harpoon, cautious movement and boats crowding a shallow passage. Its published concept supports treatment or diversion as meaningful approaches.

Begin your creature design with that purpose. Decide what the creature wants, what it can notice and which behavior creates the problem. Its saved Driving Blow supplies a particular attack; Cold Resistance supplies its actual defense. A sea-giant appearance does not provide every water domain, unlimited swimming, automatic drowning or a second action. Add a necessary mechanic explicitly rather than concealing it in the narration.



Choose the budget, then construct

Select the creature's base budget for the intended campaign and calculate its foundation through the existing creature procedure. Rank supplies attribute points and the other foundation references; allocate them to the actual focus you want. Then acquire the permissions, practices, expressions and structural rules that support its behavior.

Do not treat unspent budget as an invisible reserve of powers. A creature can have remaining BU without gaining an emergency ability when the party finds a weakness. If an extraordinary piece of equipment matters, price it separately as Item BU. Appraise the chosen base budget, not merely the sum currently spent on its acquisitions.

Check one attack and one alternative

Run the actual Driving Blow from its record: eligible target, delivery, check or resistance procedure, output and consequences. Then test an approach that is not an attack. Could the party remove the harpoon with ordinary tools? What position and uncertainty make that dangerous? Does the creature understand an offered diversion, or must someone establish communication?

DM: *"It turns away when the chain pulls the wound."*
Player: *"I want to slacken the chain before approaching."*
DM: *"That changes the source of pain. How are you reaching the fastening?"* Their plan has found a concrete lever. Do not answer by inventing immunity to treatment because the creature was intended as a solo fight.

Keep the creature useful after the scene

If the wound is treated, the Leviathan may leave the shipping route. If diverted without treatment, it might later occupy another passage. If defeated, the harbor has a carcass, a disputed harpoon and people claiming credit. Each outcome can generate different future material.

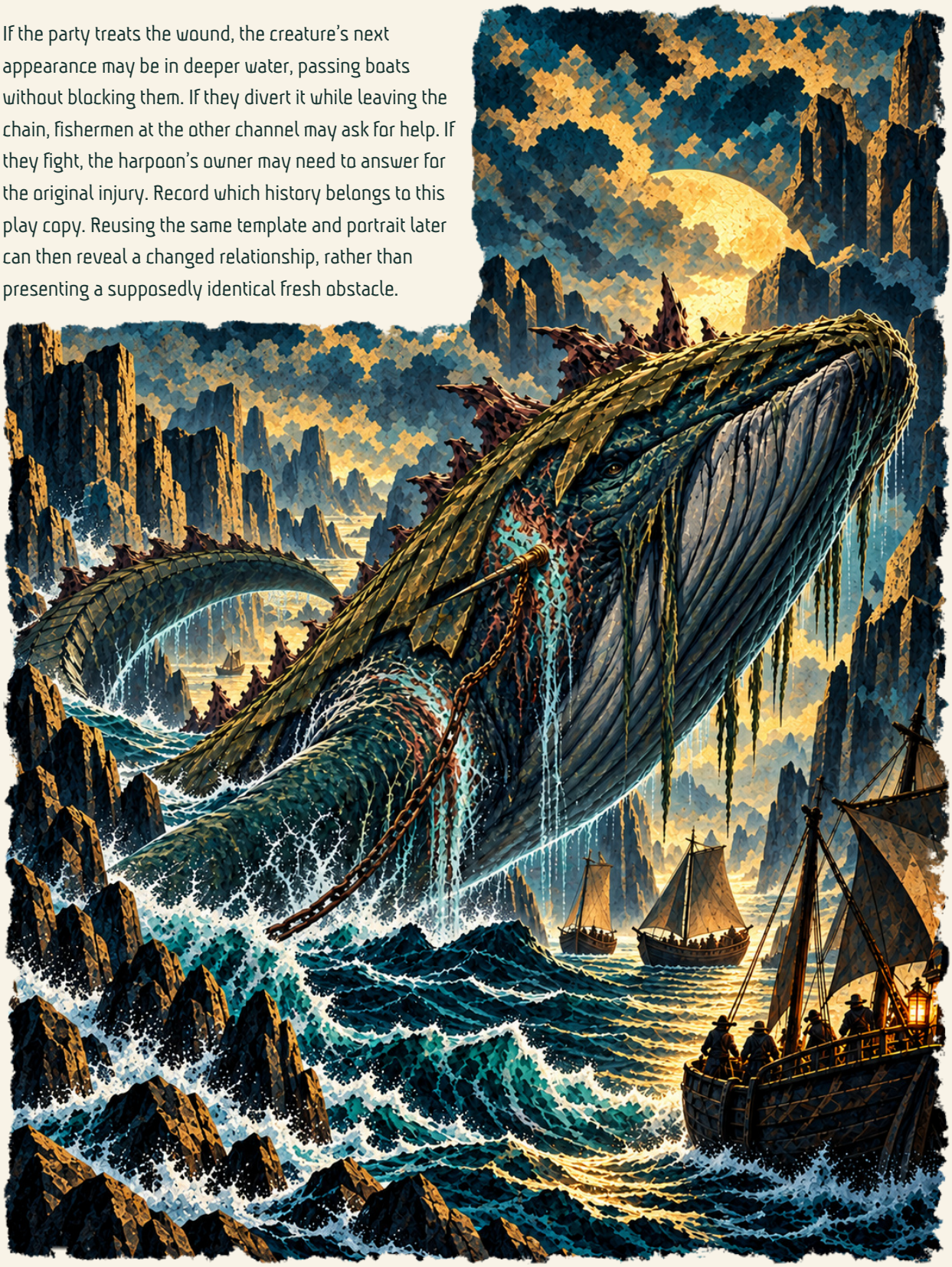
Record the actual creature changes independently from the template. A play copy can keep an injury, a relationship or a location; those do not rewrite every creature of that kind. A good monster definition supports repeatable mechanics, while this encounter's history supplies individuality. That lets one evocative portrait serve a real situation without pretending that its illustration is an exhaustive bestiary rule.

Write the next appearance from the first outcome

Before play, note the harpoon's owner, the wound's accessible fastening and the shipping channel that the Leviathan avoids. These facts can explain its present behavior. They also give the party something to change besides a Vitality total. Keep any proposed treatment within its actual subject, permissions and practical access.

Player: *"If we slacken the chain, it can move without that pull."*
DM: *"The chain stops dragging the wound when it turns. It can still feel the embedded head."*
Player: *"Then we offer a route where we can approach the fastening safely."* That first achievement does not cure the whole injury, but it can create a new opportunity. A later effort should begin from the slackened chain.

If the party treats the wound, the creature's next appearance may be in deeper water, passing boats without blocking them. If they divert it while leaving the chain, fishermen at the other channel may ask for help. If they fight, the harpoon's owner may need to answer for the original injury. Record which history belongs to this play copy. Reusing the same template and portrait later can then reveal a changed relationship, rather than presenting a supposedly identical fresh obstacle.



Rest begins with safe enough circumstances

Field study / Original example · Shelter, recovery and continuing duties

Read the situation	This field study
Eligibility	Agree recovery from actual circumstances
Short rests	Consume actual healing; carry unused allowance until a long rest
Continuity	Recovery, treatment, access and promises remain separate

Prepare the people already inside

A Rootbound Aegis guards a sanctuary occupied by injured refugees. Its actual Doorway Brace supports the threshold; it does not automatically make the whole building invulnerable or grant its inhabitants recovery. The party arrives tired, carrying a rescued worker and seeking a place to sleep. The refugees need space, quiet and help moving supplies away from the exposed door.

Prepare the occupied rooms, the usable entrance and the threat the guardian expects. Decide who can grant hospitality and what assistance they request. The Aegis can protect a threshold without controlling every decision inside. A sanctuary becomes a real place when its safety comes from people, geography and actual work, not from a label that resets all character state on entry.

Agree what the pause earns

Player: *"We stay here for half an hour and take a short rest."*
DM: *"The occupants will offer that pause if the worker is settled and the entrance remains watched. Is that what the group agrees to do?"*
Player: *"Yes; two of us help them, and I take the first watch."* Clarify whose actual circumstances support recovery. Performing a duty is not automatically the same experience as resting.



Short and long rests are table agreements about circumstances. A short pause may be fifteen or thirty minutes; overnight sleep need not be exactly eight hours. Elapsed time alone does not apply the effects. When a rest is agreed, use the character's available recovery, with all ordinary rounding upward. Keep the source of safety and any unresolved treatment need visible.

Use the actual remaining allowance

The ordinary short-rest allowance is half maximum Vitality, rounded up, available across eligible short rests until the next agreed long rest. Healing consumes only what is restored; unused allowance remains available. A character already at full Vitality does not need to spend the balance simply because everyone else pauses. A long rest's recovery is independent and refreshes that short-rest pool.

A tired character may sleep poorly because they are watching the entrance or because the shelter is disturbed. The table can agree a partial long-rest recovery that fits the circumstances. For example, the DM may propose 70% of maximum Vitality for an interrupted night. Identify that as the group's particular agreement, not a universal five-hour formula. Also clarify whether the agreed rest includes the ordinary long-rest refresh.

Do not make hospitality an invisible trap

The refugees can ask the party to keep weapons away from children, help carry water or avoid fire near the dry roof. State those conditions when they matter. If someone violates one, describe the changed access or trust and what could repair it. A host's frustration does not secretly invalidate every point of healing already resolved.

Player: *"I leave to examine the noise outside."*
DM: *"You stop resting and take that task. The others remain inside; the guardian still holds the entrance."* The outside investigation can change the actual safety of the group, but do not automatically apply one character's interruption to everyone. If an attack or another event disrupts the shelter, resolve it from positions and knowledge. The Aegis uses its actual



working; the refugees do not acquire its defense by standing nearby.

Open the next morning from the changed place

Record who completed an eligible rest, what Vitality was actually restored and which consequences remain. Lost access until treatment, a promise to return a borrowed sling and a damaged roof are different subjects; none vanishes merely because someone slept. Record whether the refugees can now move and whether the guarded entrance remains the useful route.

Refugee: "We can leave if someone carries the water." **Player:** *"We thought we were only staying the night."* **DM:** *"You are rested under the agreement. Their journey is a new choice, not a hidden rest price."* The party may help, decline or negotiate another arrangement. The morning should reveal the benefits of the night's actual work and the world's continuing needs. A rest scene can strengthen relationships while keeping recovery understandable and free of retroactive penalties.



06

Run a Living Place

Make evidence, conversation and travel actionable.



Run places, conversations and journeys with confidence

Not every useful scene needs an enemy roster. Exploration can ask where to go, what to learn and what to risk. Conversation can ask whose cooperation is possible and what changes their judgment. A journey can give the group decisions about routes, relationships and resources without becoming a mandatory ration simulation.

The methods here are **optional GM practice**. Use as much structure as your table needs. Do not turn a preparation aid into a new core subsystem unless the group deliberately wants that procedure and understands its terms.

Describe a place in the order people can act

Start with orientation: entrances, visible people, obvious danger and useful features. Then offer distinguishing details the characters would notice. In an archive, the nearest desk, the dripping roof and a keeper protecting a box are more immediately useful than a paragraph about the stone's age. You can add atmosphere while the players choose where to look.

Answer ordinary questions directly when the facts are evident. A character can tell whether a door is open, a rope is within reach or a worker can hear a loud voice. An uncertain structural weakness, hidden compartment or disputed interpretation can require an approach and perhaps a roll. Avoid making the group buy information about every object through repeated awareness checks.



When a player asks for a detail you did not prepare, choose a plausible answer and preserve it. A corridor either has a window or does not. Once a plan relies on that window, changing it to protect an intended challenge would invalidate the conversation. You can discover complications through play without rewriting established facts whenever an idea works well.

Make incomplete information useful instead of useless

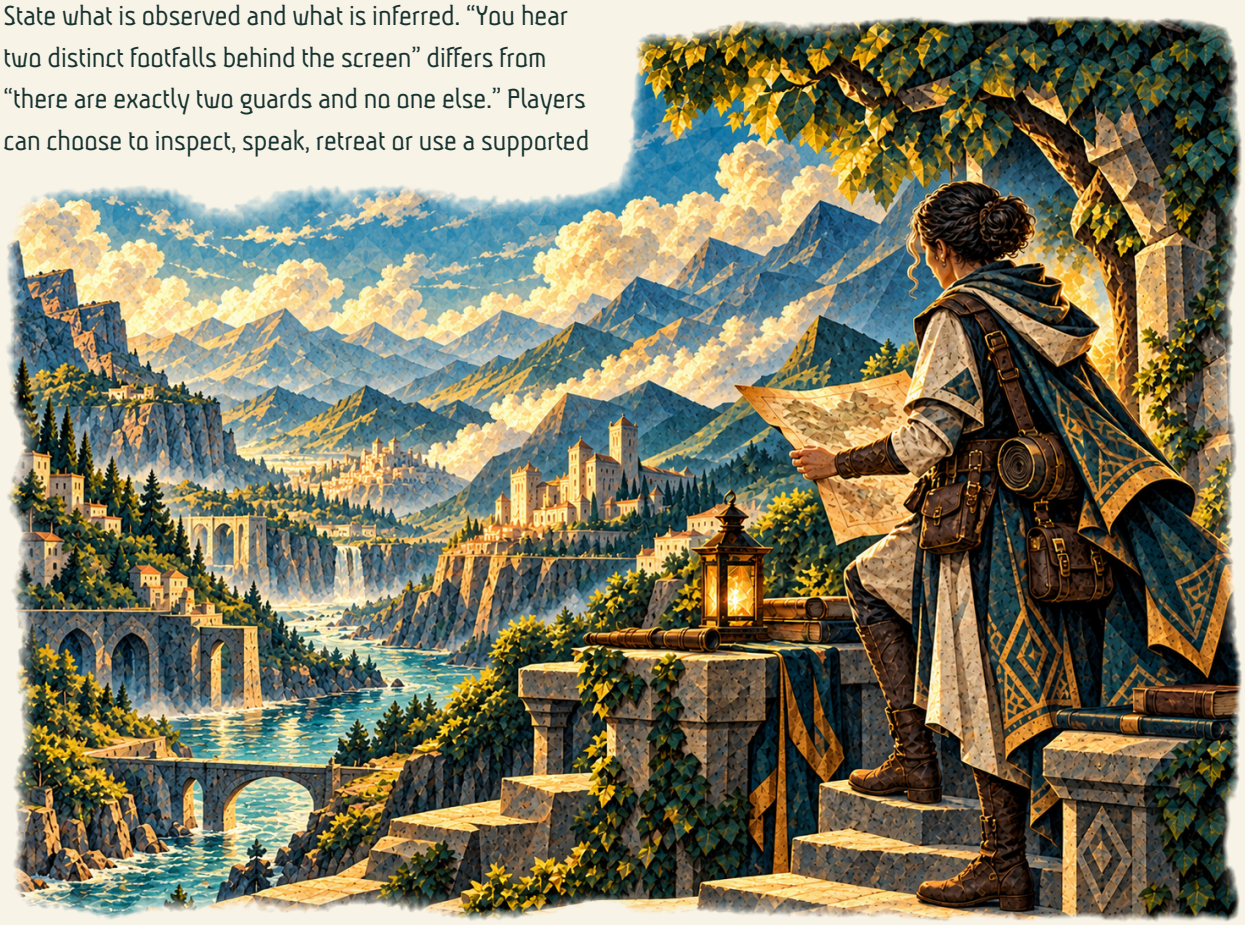
Give an actionable fragment. A witness knows where the courier went, but not why. An old map shows the route, but not its present condition. A granted sense locates vibrations through a surface but does not name their source. Each clue supports a next choice while leaving uncertainty.

State what is observed and what is inferred. “You hear two distinct footfalls behind the screen” differs from “there are exactly two guards and no one else.” Players can choose to inspect, speak, retreat or use a supported area expression. They do not need certainty to make a plan, but they need an honest account of what their characters know.

If information is essential for progress, prepare more than one route to it. If it is an optional advantage, it may reasonably remain hidden. This distinction lets failure matter without making the entire adventure dependent on one die. A failed interpretation can change time, expose a mistaken assumption or encourage another source, following the agreed stakes.

Treat a negotiation as changing proposals

Write the listener's aim, concern and available authority. A keeper can lend a key but cannot promise that an entire council will approve. A worker can describe a fault



but may not be able to command a crew. A guardian may accept a safe diversion but reject an unsupported assurance. These limits make the conversation concrete.

Let players make an actual offer. Evidence, a witness, a practical compromise or a shared risk can change the answer. Select Influence when uncertainty about that approach matters. Do not require a sequence of rolls merely to continue speaking, and do not make a high number force every requested concession regardless of motive or authority.

Example exchange. The party asks the keeper to release a lift before the records are repaired. She fears people will blame her if it fails. They propose a supervised release with a signed repair obligation and a worker on the lower landing. That addresses her actual concern. The DM can accept the secure arrangement or resolve remaining uncertainty. An unrelated threat would create a different conversation and consequence.

Keep a lie distinct from missing knowledge

If an NPC lies, know why and what evidence can expose it. If they are mistaken, know what they believe. If they simply lack information, let them say so. Treating every uncertain answer as deceit makes ordinary inquiry feel pointless and gives the GM too much freedom to revise truth afterward.

A check can address reading demeanor or comparing claims within the actual approach. It does not automatically reveal every concealed thought. A capability that reads memory or detects a specifically defined falsehood needs its actual subject, behavior,



targets, resolution and limits. Its title cannot grant universal truth detection.

Use contradictions that matter. A ledger date differs from a witness's recollection; a claimed repair uses material not present at the site. Players can investigate the cause. A tiny irrelevant inconsistency may provide atmosphere, but it should not always turn into an ambush designed to punish reasonable suspicion.

Share spotlight without rationing every sentence

Ask quiet participants a concrete question about the current situation: what does their character inspect, whom do they trust, or which approach do they support? Give them time to answer. A confident speaker can help explain a plan without deciding every other character's intent. During Council, hear each coherent intent before resolving intersections.

Use the party's varied ordinary and acquired skills. Ilex can compare records, Torren can judge a repair route and Mira can assess available water. Do not insist that each person uses their most expensive capability in every scene. A player's clever ordinary observation can be valuable even when their character has no purchased mechanic for that exact topic.

When people split up, cut between meaningful decisions rather than every footstep. Keep the others' next choices visible. Agree how much real time a solo conversation should occupy. These are table-management choices, not a mechanical action tax on exploration or a reason to deny a character an ordinary private conversation.

Give journeys decisions at a useful scale

Choose what a route decision covers: a morning, a dangerous crossing or a whole ordinary stretch. Describe what distinguishes alternatives. A ridge route has visibility but exposure; a river route has water and trade but damaged locks; a sheltered road is slower but permits rest. Those differences should matter through actual events, not secretly predetermined failure on every unchosen route.

Track only resources the group has agreed are relevant. If ordinary supplies matter, state what is consumed, who has them and how replenishment works. If the campaign abstracts routine provisioning, do not suddenly demand a detailed ration count after several sessions. Neither approach is universal SwordWeave law.

A new movement mode can change routes within its actual grant. Flight might cross a gap but not carry a wagon or navigate unknown weather without support. Burrowing might pass through eligible material but not reveal every underground destination. Greater range can affect a remote known subject but does not supply sight. Review the actual travel problem, not just the most impressive word on the sheet.

Make weather a circumstance people can plan around

Rain can obscure a route, swell a ford or make a shelter uncomfortable. Describe those facts and warning signs. Do not attach an all-purpose disadvantage stack to everyone merely because the scene says storm. A particular slippery grip or uncertain sight can affect a particular approach through the agreed circumstances.

A character can propose ordinary precautions: cover documents, anchor rope, wait for a gust or choose a sheltered path. Let those acts change the question. A

weather-working needs its actual access and regional scope; influencing a storm does not automatically clear every personal consequence or repair a damaged road.

If weather pressures a rest, explain that before the group settles. They can find better shelter, assign ordinary watch duties or accept an agreed partial recovery. The presence of rain is not an automatic denial of all rest, and a convenient shelter is not secretly unsafe solely because you prepared an interruption encounter.

Let a campaign remember people rather than only milestones

Keep a small relationship record. For each recurring person, note what happened, what they believe about it and what they want now. Ressa saw a careful repair; the keeper received a promise; one Watcher saw violence while another saw a rescue. Their different knowledge can produce different future responses without a compulsory favor score.

Record what changed in places too. A bridge is usable but still needs a brace. A service door is open. A bell sequence is restored while its charter remains disputed. Returning to a place can reveal those consequences. Do not restore every scene to its original state just so another party can face the same planned obstacle.

Choose a few active developments between sessions. A crew may gather materials, a witness may travel or a guardian may relocate a bed. Give the group signs of



changes relevant to their next choices. You do not need to simulate every faction daily or make all unattended problems immediately become disasters.

Negotiate growth before it changes the next scene

Explain the campaign's advancement agreement and review proposed acquisitions before someone relies on them. A new ingredient can be invented or selected with table approval. Spending acquisitions does not reduce progression. Equipment rewards need their own Item BU and ordinary record. Money, social standing and progression can all matter without being the same resource.

If a player wants to reorganize a heritage, preserve actual acquired occurrences and their references. Moving an ingredient from Upbringing to Manifest does not automatically charge again, remove it or increase its strength. If the new definition changes mechanics, review the change, version and accounting explicitly.

At high budgets, keep the same clarity. Bigger scenes may require more recipient, domain and dependency decisions, but a high level is not permission to skip access. Explain cumulative advancement thresholds accurately rather than inventing a simple replacement from memory. Invite the player to describe what the new purchase lets them do that they could not do before.

Adjust tone when the group's interests change

A campaign may begin with practical rescue and grow into political intrigue or strange exploration. Discuss that shift. Existing characters can remain useful through ordinary competence, changed relationships and reviewed acquisitions. Do not force a mandatory rebuild because you have become interested in a different genre.

Revisit boundaries as well as mechanics. A plot about debts and public promises can become uncomfortable if it unexpectedly turns into coercion or humiliation. Give the group a way to pause, redirect or remove material without demanding personal explanations. A safety discussion is not a character weakness and never earns or costs BU.

Ask what players want more and less of. Their answers can guide the next situation without granting them automatic success or giving away every secret. Your



enjoyment matters too. A sustainable campaign gives everyone useful choices and a reasonable preparation burden.

People who can change their minds

Prepare a person before preparing their argument

Give an important nonplayer character a present desire, something useful they can offer, a limit they will explain and one fact they do not yet know. These details let you respond when the players change the proposal. They are more useful than a predetermined persuasion DC attached to the person's name.

Do not require a creature sheet for every conversation. Ordinary people can give directions, disagree, accept an offer or tell a story without using an extraordinary capability. If a scene does require an uncertain check, use an agreed relevant value and state what the result answers. If the person enters mechanically demanding play, prepare an actual complete record rather than inventing hidden bonuses during resolution.

The following people belong to the optional Three Waters setting. Their social preparation grants no mechanical ability. Use the existing complete creature and character records only when those particular mechanics are actually part of your preparation. A person's occupation does not automatically provide a numerical modifier.

Ressa / the person responsible for the crossing

Ressa wants every worker home and a route that will survive tomorrow's traffic. She can offer tools, practical knowledge and a crew's help when the work is credible. She refuses to send someone below an unsupported beam merely to keep a merchant on schedule. She does not yet know why the upstream flow has changed.

Show her checking the same loose fastener twice while she speaks. The gesture makes her attention readable without turning it into a diagnosis. When the party offers magical help, she asks what part they can actually hold and what happens if they must stop. She is willing to learn an unfamiliar method; she needs a practical explanation rather than a prestigious title.



If the party has already saved a worker, let that history affect trust. Ressa can believe they mean well and still reject a plan whose supports are missing. A sincere relationship does not make the laws of leverage vanish. Conversely, a previous argument need not prevent her accepting a clearly safer arrangement.

Neri / a guide with a place to protect

Neri wants the reed beds to remain usable after the emergency. They can offer a firm route, introductions to households and an account of past floods. They will not take a loaded cart through the spawning area. They do not know whether the Bellhouse's old maintenance agreement names their household correctly.

Neri listens for a description of what the party will do downstream. A broad promise to "fix everything" is less convincing than a visible narrow diversion and someone agreeing to inspect it afterward. If the group offers to evacuate instead, Neri can support that choice while explaining what closure will cost the households.

Give Neri a reason to ask the party a question too: who will speak for the workers when the flow is changed? The conversation becomes reciprocal. An Influence check can address an actual remaining uncertainty about a proposal; it should not erase a limit that nobody has acknowledged.

Aven / a keeper who can admit a mistake

Aven wants the public record to be trusted because people can examine it. They can offer archive access, a witness meeting and the history of repairs they recorded. They cannot consent on behalf of every family. They do not know which parts of the oldest agreement were freely accepted.

Begin Aven's account with the replacement entry rather than an elaborate denial. Their mistake is already interesting: they signed off a hurried repair without checking the spare's marks. They fear losing the archive's credibility. The party can help preserve useful records while still asking difficult questions about authority.

If threatened, Aven may protect the original charter rather than attack. If offered a public correction with clear witnesses, they can cooperate. Neither response requires making them secretly innocent of every failure or secretly responsible for every problem. Keep what they did, what they knew and what they now propose distinct.

Esen / an investigator with an incomplete theory

Esen wants to prove that the upstream retaining wall failed. They can offer copied surveys and knowledge of the old road. They cannot order repairs or guarantee that a neglected path is safe. They believe the turned marker was sabotaged, a conclusion the physical evidence can correct.

When the party shows exposed roots and displaced soil, Esen can revise the theory. Let that change be visible: they cross out a sentence and ask who last inspected the bank. An honest person learning something is a useful campaign event. Do not turn every corrected belief into proof that the witness was lying.

Esen can remain a valuable ally after being wrong. They might help compare the new evidence with the survey notes. If a player wants to test their honesty, ask which statement or behavior they are examining and what the method can establish. A check cannot reveal a fact that Esen never knew.

Lio and Dena / people beyond the rescue objective

Lio wants the message delivered and Dena safely returned. They offer route observations, the cloth marker and a clear account of the accident. They will accept help carrying the message if responsibility is explicit. They do not yet know that the meeting's records may connect to the failed retaining wall.

Dena wants no one to blame Lio for stopping. They can explain who helped whom and assist with an ordinary carrying arrangement. They cannot safely carry Lio alone over the whole route. They are uncertain whether their own haste contributed to the accident. Give them room to express that uncertainty without forcing a confession to an invented crime.

After the rescue, these people can reappear as messengers, witnesses or neighbors. Ask what the party said to them and what they remember. A rescue becomes part of the campaign through a relationship, not just a checked objective. Their gratitude does not require them to agree with every later demand.

Worked negotiation: whose road stays open?

Original scene. Repairs will close the cart road for a day. Ressa wants a safe worksite. Neri wants the reed route protected. A merchant, Hal, needs medicine delivered before evening. Hal has two porters and can pay for ordinary labor. Nobody needs an unconditional right to drive a wagon through the marsh.

The party asks what the shipment contains and how much must arrive today. Hal explains that the medicine is packed separately from the rest of the goods. This ordinary clarification changes the practical question. The party proposes carrying those packages on the firm footpath while the wagon waits. Ressa can lend a worker who knows the route; Neri can identify where the path leaves the beds untouched.

Hal worries that the waiting goods will be stolen. The party offers a named watcher and a written receipt. If those arrangements meet the established concern, Hal can accept without an obligatory Influence roll. If the offer still depends on someone Hal has reason to distrust, agree the actual uncertainty before rolling. The



result answers acceptance of this bounded arrangement, not permanent loyalty.

Record the actual agreement: which packages go, who carries them, who watches the wagon, when the loaned worker returns and who receives the delivery. If the plan fails, those facts tell you what changed. A single "negotiation succeeded" marker would hide the obligations that make the next scene playable.

A hazard is a changing place

State a physical cause and a practical effect

A hazard can be loose masonry, rising water, bitter weather, an unattended fire or a failing support. Begin with what causes it to change. Explain what people can notice and which approaches might affect that cause. If you give the hazard an extraordinary rule, write the actual rule. Its dramatic name does not supply a damage die, a save DC or an unavoidable consequence.

Use precise distances when they become relevant. A broad regional storm description does not determine whether a particular leap is possible. Establish the gap, footing, supports and available time before asking someone to commit. Keep a diagram current as those facts change.

Worked hazard: the retaining wall

Original optional scene. An old wall holds a narrow raised path above the channel. Water has washed soil from behind three loose stones. A loaded handcart waits on the firm approach. A worker on the far side can see



the crack widening. The task is to make a safe crossing or choose another route, not to defeat the wall.

Describe the stones, the water and the waiting cart immediately. Ordinary inspection from the bank reveals that the unsupported section should not take the cart's weight. The worker can explain where a sound foundation remains. A check is useful only if a meaningful uncertainty remains, such as locating a buried support before water obscures it. Agree the stakes and the applicable approach first.

The party proposes unloading the cart, diverting existing water and placing a brace. These are three related jobs. Unloading changes the burden; water control changes the flow within the actor's actual access; the brace supplies ordinary physical support. No success automatically performs the other jobs. Several Main Intents can cooperate through their real dependencies without giving one person extra actions.

Show three different kinds of intervention



Avoid the pressure. Use the longer firm route and send a runner with the urgent package. Time and route change; the wall is still damaged. The choice can succeed at delivery while leaving a repair question for later.

Reduce the pressure. Unload the cart and guide the water away while workers prepare a brace. The party improves the circumstances. If the crossing becomes secure, it may no longer need a roll. Preparation should be able to remove an uncertainty rather than merely provide another check before the original check.

Act through the pressure. Someone crosses while the support is shifting, relying on actual movement, tools and a stated consequence. Resolve the immediate question. A valid reaction can answer a new fall or broken line if its trigger, position, scope and timing work. A spent slot alone cannot place a distant ally beside the falling person.

Change the map when the wall changes

If a stone falls, say which route narrows or opens. If diverted water exposes sound footing, mark it. If a brace takes the load, tell the players what now supports the

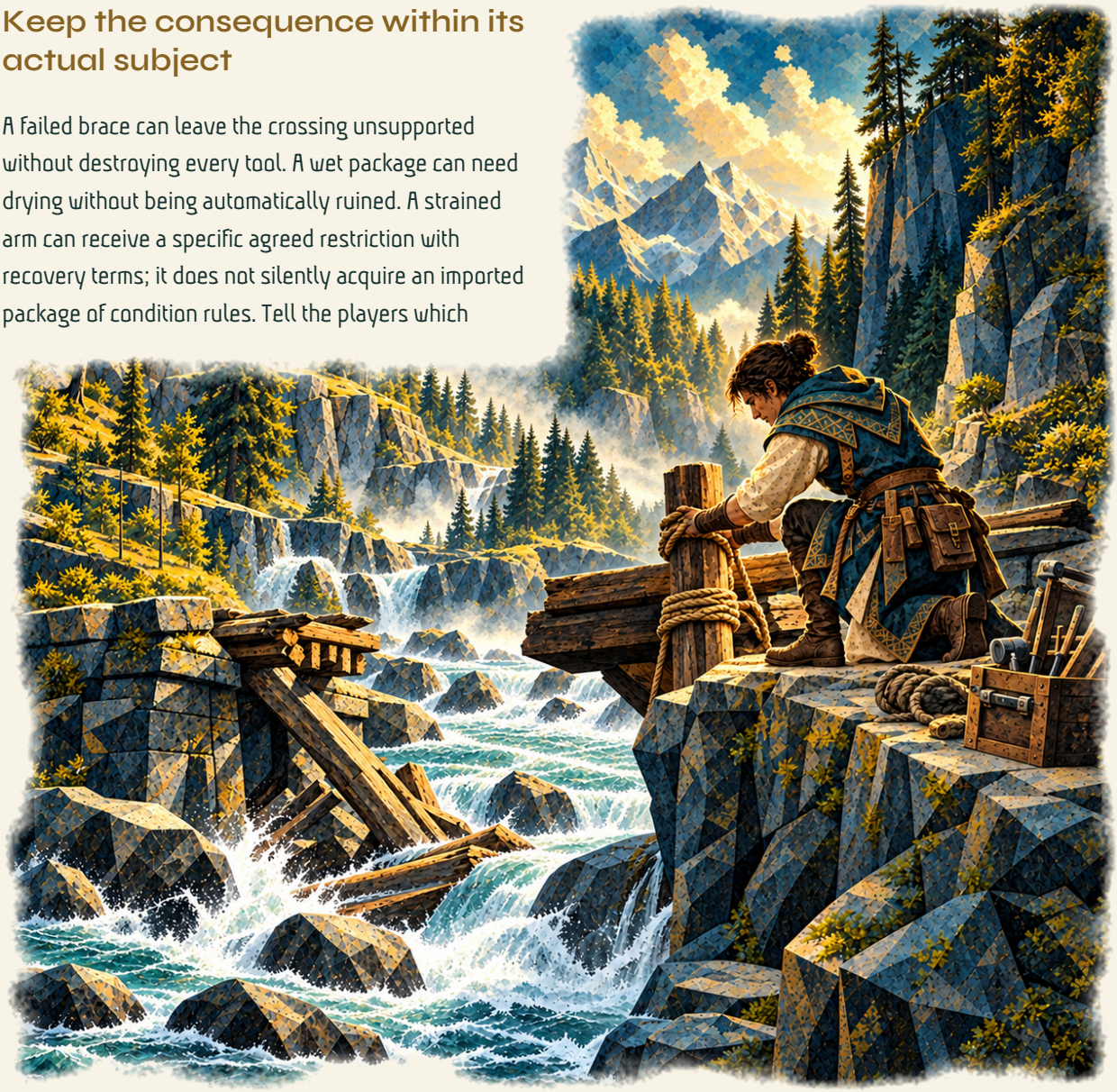
crossing. Do not continue describing the place with the old assumptions after a successful intervention.

An unattended development should have a cause. Continued flow can wash out more soil. A heavy cart can overload the weak section. A careful repair can stop that progression. Asking a rules question or taking a reasonable moment to coordinate is not itself another surge of water. Use the group's chosen urgency rather than a hidden punishment for discussion.

Keep the consequence within its actual subject

A failed brace can leave the crossing unsupported without destroying every tool. A wet package can need drying without being automatically ruined. A strained arm can receive a specific agreed restriction with recovery terms; it does not silently acquire an imported package of condition rules. Tell the players which change occurred, and keep it separate from any Cost they paid for the attempt.

If someone reaches zero Vitality, the rescue procedure becomes relevant. If no damage rule or consequence was agreed, do not invent a large damage total after the fact because the scene looked dangerous. Establish severe stakes early enough to choose around them. Environmental play uses the same clarity as a creature encounter.



The ford belongs to two lives

Field study / Original example · Negotiation under physical pressure

Read the situation	This field study
Opposed needs	Safe passage and safe refuge
Useful evidence	Young, tracks, water gauge, alternate bank
Outcome	A changed route or relationship, not necessarily a defeated monster

Give both claims weight

A caravan needs to cross before water rises. A Mossback Grazer stands over the shallow stones where its young are resting. The caravan master sees a dangerous animal blocking a road. The grazer sees a group approaching the only dry refuge. Neither interpretation is a complete description of the other's intention.

Begin with visible evidence: small tracks behind the guardian, a damaged cartwheel, rising water and a bank wide enough to wait on. Tell the players where people can retreat. The grazer's defender role suggests holding the ford, but its actual Anchored Stand and Bludgeoning Resistance determine mechanics. Its picture does not establish immunity to movement or an automatic attack against every approaching person.

Ask what the plan promises

Player: *"I wave food and try to lure it away."*
DM: *"Away from the crossing, or away from its young?"*
Player: *"Just far enough to lead the cart past."*
DM: *"It watches the cart and turns back toward the young. What makes that approach safe from its point of view?"*

The answer might involve moving the young to another refuge, waiting for them to leave, unloading the cart or finding a parallel crossing. Those are materially different proposals. A friendly gesture may open communication without settling the guardian's concern. Do not ask for one generic persuasion roll and then decide afterward whether the whole herd relocates.



Let preparation remove uncertainty

If workers lay a stable path to an equally safe bank and withdraw from the young, the guardian has new information. It may move voluntarily. If the alternative refuge is doubtful, a check can concern the credibility of the demonstration or the quality of the route. Say which question is uncertain. Do not charge the same success again as animal handling, persuasion and repair when those rolls would all resolve one unchanged fact.

If the party chooses force, preserve the prepared exits. Injuring the guardian can scatter the young into water and change the rescue problem. Establish that risk before commitment; it is not a secret punishment for declining your peaceful solution.

Carry the decision forward

A safe crossing can make the caravan willing to wait at other contested places. A rushed crossing might preserve the goods while damaging the ford. Record what actually happened rather than assigning a blanket reputation score. People who saw the event can describe different aspects of it later.

Keep the monster's creature budget separate from the caravan's loads or the goods' value. None of those numbers measures who has a stronger moral claim. This encounter can contain a serious objective, dangerous terrain and a strong creature without requiring a fight. The question for the next scene is whether the route remains usable and whom the party has agreed to protect.

Record two different successful crossings

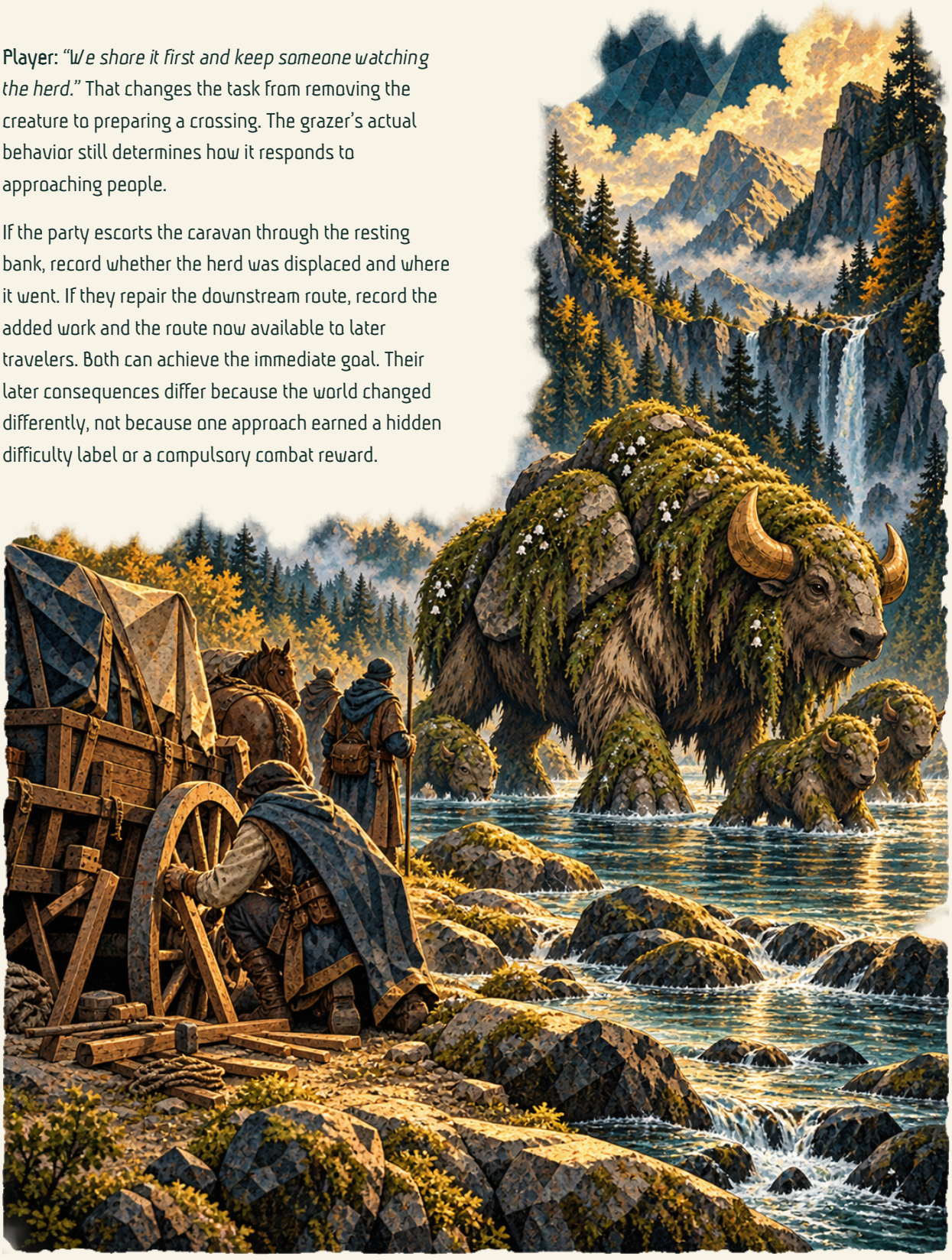
Before play, sketch the shallow crossing, the herd's resting bank and a steeper downstream approach. Note what the caravan carries that cannot easily be moved: one damaged wheel, an ill passenger or fragile food. Choose one, rather than attaching every possible inconvenience. The herd's need for shelter should be equally concrete; its young cannot use the exposed bank safely during the current weather.

Player: *"We can move the carts downstream if the grazer leaves us alone."*
DM: *"The driver knows that route, but the damaged wheel may need support on the descent."*



Player: *"We shore it first and keep someone watching the herd."* That changes the task from removing the creature to preparing a crossing. The grazer's actual behavior still determines how it responds to approaching people.

If the party escorts the caravan through the resting bank, record whether the herd was displaced and where it went. If they repair the downstream route, record the added work and the route now available to later travelers. Both can achieve the immediate goal. Their later consequences differ because the world changed differently, not because one approach earned a hidden difficulty label or a compulsory combat reward.



A scent is evidence, not a verdict

Field study / Original example · Investigation and social consequences

Read the situation	This field study
Evidence	A scent attached to a coat
Uncertainty	What happened to the courier and how the coat moved
Consequence	A particular person's changed access or trust, with an ending condition

Give the clue a provenance

A Bellwatch Hound follows the scent of a missing courier. Its handler reaches a potter wearing the courier's coat and accuses them of abduction. The party can see clay on the coat, a broken fastening and a parcel under the potter's bench. The potter says the courier traded the coat for shelter the night before.

Scent Pursuit follows its actual rule. It does not automatically identify guilt, recover every event involving the scent source or distinguish an innocent exchange from theft. The handler can sincerely trust the hound and still interpret its result badly. That disagreement gives the party an investigation with immediate human stakes.



Resolve the proposition being tested

Player: *"I ask the hound whether the potter is lying."*
DM: *"The hound's trail concerns the scent. It has not shown an ability to judge testimony. You can inspect the coat's history through available evidence or use an actual information working that supports the question."*

A suitable check might address whether the potter's account fits the observed timing, not whether every part of their life is honest. Give ordinary evidence freely when it is accessible: the shop's neighbor saw a traveler; the kiln was warm; the parcel bears a name. Preserve uncertainty where facts remain missing. Do not make one failed interview erase all these independent sources.

Give accusations an actual consequence

If the party publicly threatens the potter, their later request for help can meet distrust. State what changed: the potter refuses unsupervised entry to the workshop until the accusation is corrected. That is a concrete restriction with an ending condition, not a blanket numerical penalty to every social check in town.

If the party explains the difference between scent and guilt, the handler may agree to follow the coat's earlier route. A credible explanation can change the decision without rolling. If trust remains uncertain, select that uncertainty and its stakes. Do not turn Influence into mind control; people can accept evidence while remaining angry about how they were treated.

Keep more than one explanation alive

The courier might be hiding from a creditor, tending an injured friend or deliberately spreading false trails. Choose facts that support your situation, then let the party compare them. An unexpected theory should not force every prepared clue to become a lie; equally, it should not become true merely because it was clever.

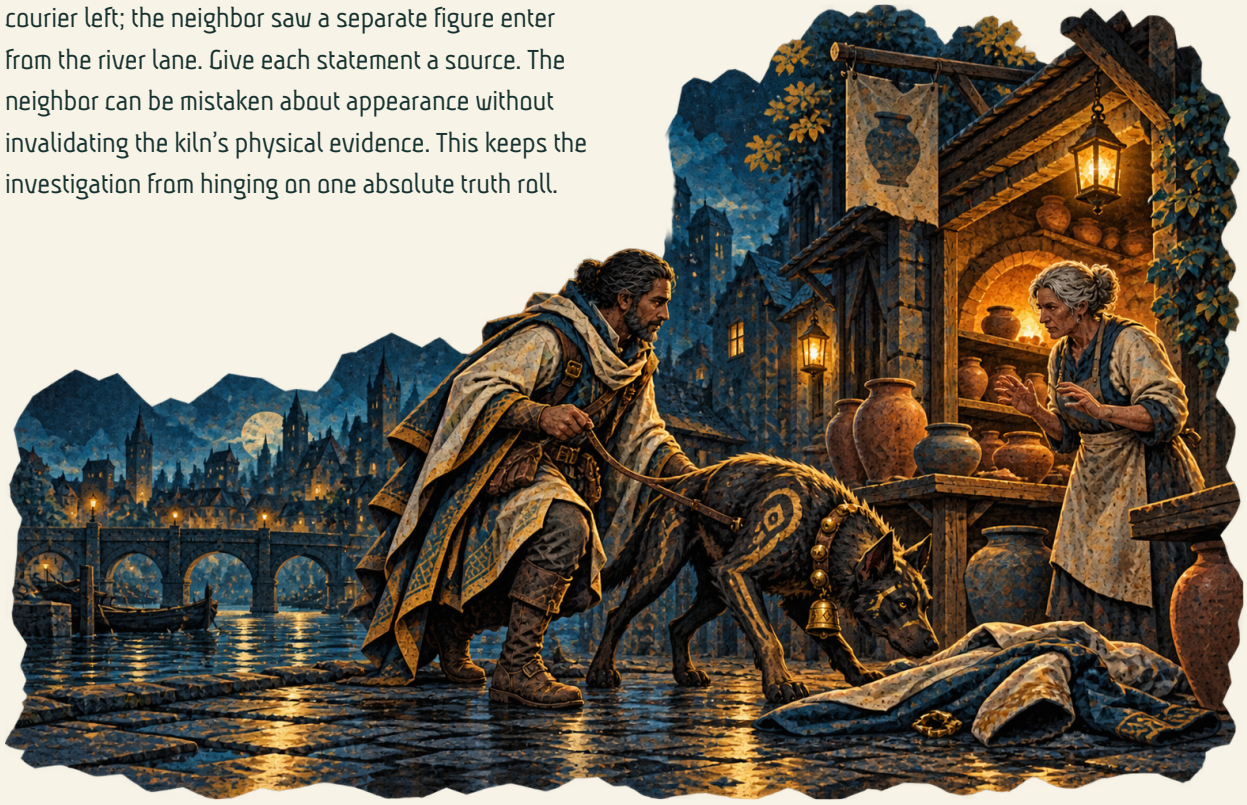
Record who saw which evidence and who heard the accusation. Later witnesses can respond to their actual knowledge. The hound remains a useful specialist even though its information is bounded. In a DIY system, that boundary helps players trust sensing and knowledge primitives: the benefit they bought is real, while interpretation remains something characters and people must do.

Prepare a correction people can witness

Write a simple timeline: the courier reached the kiln before dawn; the potter accepted the coat after the courier left; the neighbor saw a separate figure enter from the river lane. Give each statement a source. The neighbor can be mistaken about appearance without invalidating the kiln's physical evidence. This keeps the investigation from hinging on one absolute truth roll.

Player: *"We tell the handler the scent only proves the coat was here."*
DM: *"He asks why the courier would leave it."*
Player: *"We invite the potter to show the broken fastening and ask the neighbor about the visitor."* The exchange introduces evidence and a possible explanation. If the handler still doubts it, identify the particular doubt rather than rolling to erase all suspicion.

A quiet correction may release the potter but leave customers believing the original accusation. A public correction can change that wider consequence, while requiring the party to admit their part if they joined the threat. Write down which correction happened. Later help from the potter can reflect the actual relationship. This gives investigation a social aftermath without requiring a town-wide reputation score or rewarding accusation merely because it made the session move faster.



The hearing has three legitimate concerns

Field study / Original example · Factions and testimony

Read the situation	This field study
Factions	Guild: inspection; residents: safety; cargo owners: access
Evidence	Preserved testimony has a particular speaker and subject
Continuity	Named commitments and changed physical conditions

Give each group a specific concern

A repaired floodgate fails after the first heavy rain. The repair guild wants proof that the stonework was inspected. Residents want the gate made safe before another storm. Cargo owners want the blocked channel reopened. Their concerns can conflict without making one group secretly evil. Prepare who can speak for each group and which commitments that person is authorized to make.

A Waxseal Witness preserved an attendant's testimony through its actual Witness Seal. That contribution is valuable, but it is not an all-knowing verdict on the accident. Decide what the attendant saw, what they inferred and what happened beyond their view. Those distinctions give the hearing material the party can



investigate and prevent the construct from replacing every participant's judgment.

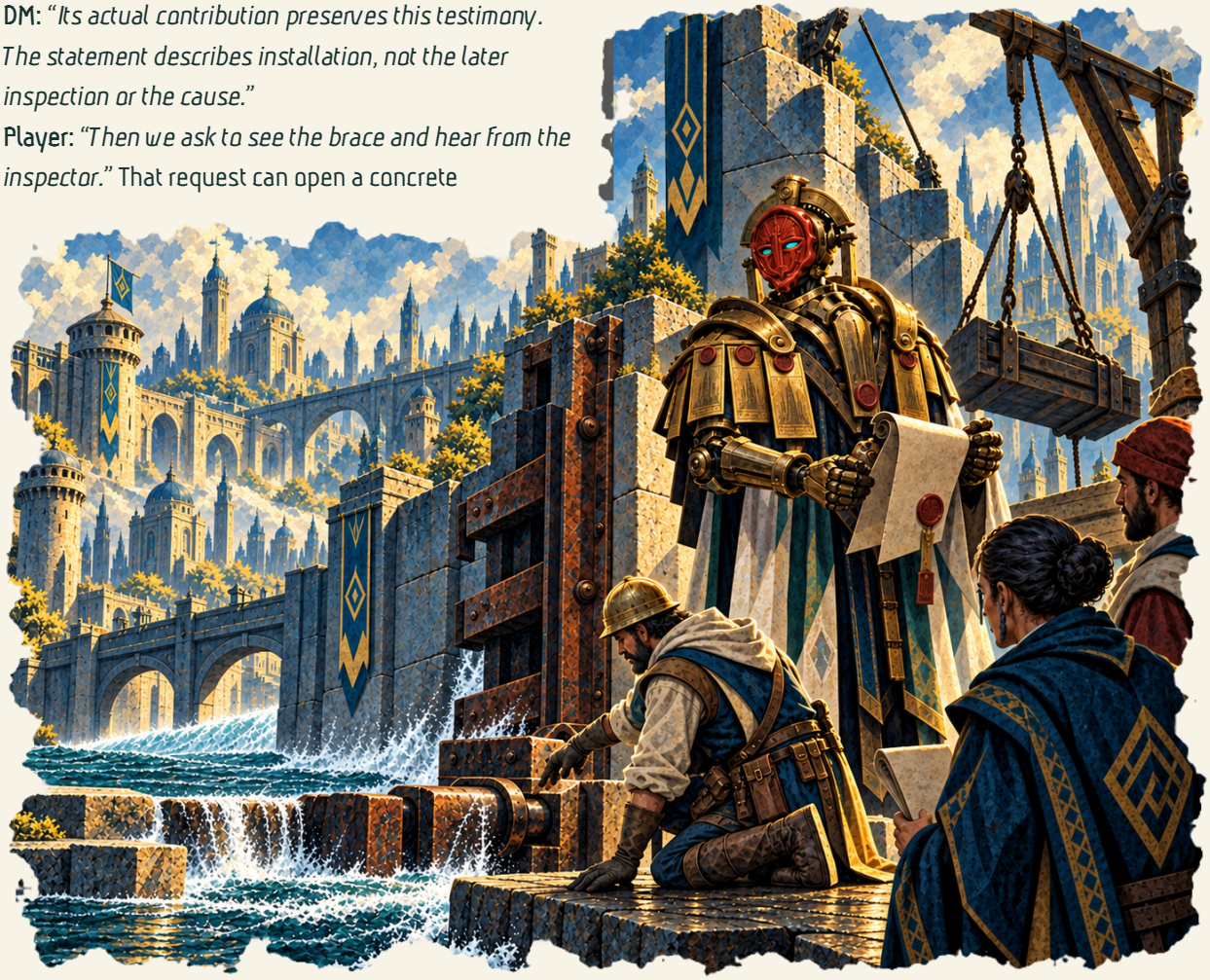
Keep the statement and its interpretation separate

The attendant says, "The western brace was installed before dusk." The guild treats that as proof of a completed repair. Residents ask whether anyone checked its lower fastening. Cargo owners ask why the channel remained closed. One preserved statement can be accurate while answering none of those later questions.

Player: *"We ask the Witness if the guild caused the failure."*
DM: *"Its actual contribution preserves this testimony. The statement describes installation, not the later inspection or the cause."*
Player: *"Then we ask to see the brace and hear from the inspector."* That request can open a concrete investigation. The construct's conditional Reason benefit applies under its actual condition; it does not automatically confer authority over everyone present or certify the entire guild's innocence.

Let a concession address a real need

Prepare one offer each representative could reasonably accept. The guild can send a named mason to inspect the fastening. The residents can allow access through their courtyard if the work is supervised. The cargo owners can lend a lifting frame for the inspection. None of those concessions answers every dispute, but together they may permit the next useful task.





Player: *"We will publish what the inspection finds, even if it clears the guild."* Resident: "And the gate stays shut until it is safe?"
Player: *"Until the inspection establishes a usable route or we agree an alternative."* The conversation names the actual undertaking and its boundary. Resolve uncertainty where distrust or conflicting interests remain. A credible shared plan may already answer a concern without requiring a roll to compel agreement.

Show the changed hearing

If inspection finds a fastening deliberately removed, the guild's installation claim can remain true while a new question appears. If it finds incomplete work, the preserved statement still establishes what the attendant witnessed. Do not turn every earlier speaker into a liar when one interpretation fails. Let the party compare the new physical evidence with the actual testimony.

A repair-first agreement can reopen the safe part of the channel while blame remains disputed. A blame-first confrontation may delay repair and change who cooperates. Record those outcomes without a universal faction score. Name the person who agreed to lend the frame, the people who heard the promise and the gate's present condition. Later scenes can follow those particular commitments rather than an invisible reputation meter.

Prepare the next relationship

After the hearing, ask each representative one useful question in your notes: what do they still need, and what did the party make possible? The mason might ask for an escort to the damaged footing. Residents might offer shelter because the party kept the inspection public. Cargo owners might dispute the cost of delays while still honoring the loan.

Player: *"We thought reopening the channel ended this."*
DM: *"The safe route is open. The frame must still be returned, and the missing fastening remains unexplained."* That distinction creates continuity without declaring a new quest by force. The party can fulfill, renegotiate or knowingly break the promise. The Witness remains useful when the content and provenance of testimony matter. Its artwork can anchor

the hearing visually while the surrounding text gives the three groups recognizable, different stakes.



Three routes to one necessary fact

Field study / Original example · Clues and practical adventure preparation

Read the situation	This field study
Necessary fact	An older entrance passes through a repair chamber
Independent routes	Masonry, maintenance record and eligible recollection
Record distinctly	Observation, interpretation and unresolved present condition

Choose the conclusion the adventure needs

The party needs to learn that a sealed archive has an older entrance through a repair chamber. That fact opens useful choices; it does not prescribe how they enter. Prepare the old chamber's actual location and why the newer door was sealed. Then build several independent ways to discover the entrance from those facts.

Visible masonry shows a patched arch. A maintenance record names the chamber's access passage. A Stone Script Reader can offer evidence through its actual Mineral Recollection. These routes should not all depend on the same unavailable witness or identical failed check. Each has a distinct provenance and a limit. The Reader's ability concerns its authored subject and scope, not every event in the building's complete history.

Make observation different from interpretation

Someone examining the outer wall can see different mortar when the conditions allow it. What that patch signifies may remain uncertain. The maintenance record can establish that a passage existed without proving its present safety. An eligible recollection can show an actual repair within its rule while leaving later changes unknown.

Player: *"The patch means the archive is behind this wall."*
DM: *"It shows a repaired arch here. The record names a chamber beyond it; you have not inspected that chamber."*
Player: *"Then I compare the arch's location with the passage diagram."* The comparison uses available



information to narrow the question. Give accessible observations clearly and choose a check only for a meaningful uncertainty, rather than charging a roll for every sentence of description.

A failed route can change the approach

If the party cannot read the maintenance script, the masonry still exists and the Reader may still be approachable. If the Reader refuses a request because the party damaged a slab, that relationship changes; it does not make the archive's old entrance vanish. Prepare what the refusal actually means and what could repair the relationship.

Failure can cost an opportunity, alert someone to the investigation or leave a narrower question unresolved when those stakes were established. It need not produce false certainty that stops the adventure. Avoid repeatedly asking for the same roll until success appears. A changed means, new evidence or a new relationship can justify a fresh inquiry because the actual situation differs, not because another player touched the same wall.

Prepare a useful answer, not a lecture

Give the Reader one piece of information that advances the investigation and one honest limit. It recalls a repair crew closing the lower passage before the flood. It does not know whether the passage was reopened later. That is enough to make the next physical inspection meaningful.

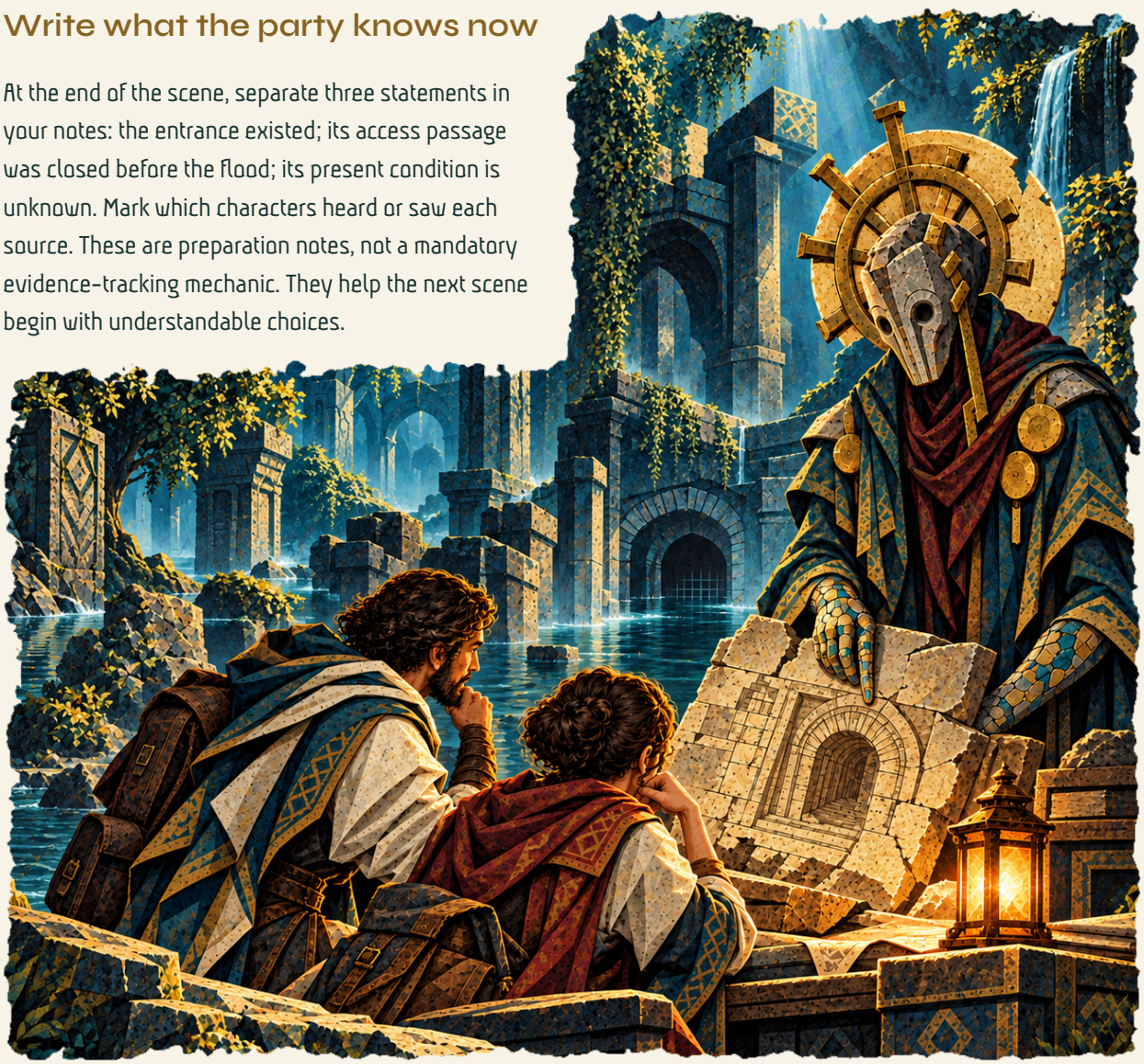


Player: *"Who ordered the repair?"*
DM: *"The recollection identifies the crew's mark, but this trace does not establish the order's author."*
Player: *"We follow the crew's records."* The distinction opens another line of inquiry without inventing a broader information power. If your selected capability genuinely answers more, honor that benefit. Do not artificially narrow a purchased rule because the prepared mystery would otherwise be solved too quickly; let an early answer change the adventure's remaining questions.

Write what the party knows now

At the end of the scene, separate three statements in your notes: the entrance existed; its access passage was closed before the flood; its present condition is unknown. Mark which characters heard or saw each source. These are preparation notes, not a mandatory evidence-tracking mechanic. They help the next scene begin with understandable choices.

The party might excavate, request permission from the archive's keeper or follow the crew's route through the cellar. Each approach uses the same established fact differently. If the chamber is flooded, their information was not worthless; it changed the route they chose and the equipment they can prepare. If the party returns to the Reader with that new observation, it can compare the finding with its actual recollection. A flooded passage and a remembered closure can both be true. Together they identify a more precise question: what changed the chamber after the crew left?



A journey can change before anyone attacks

Field study / Original example · Travel and competing attention

Read the situation	This field study
Travel pressure	Food trail, separated people and a narrowing route
Practical choices	Guard, repair or change the route
Actual creatures	Independent actions, positions and Vitality

Prepare the reason for pursuit

A caravan crosses a dry woodland with grain spilling from a torn sack. Thornpath Jackals follow the food trail and watch for separated travelers. Their actual Driving Blow and climbing benefit support their published behavior; a pack identity does not give them shared Vitality, invisible coordination or free attacks whenever someone looks away.

Draw the route, a stopping place and the root-covered ground beside it. Decide when the caravan discovers the tear and how the animals respond to people approaching. The immediate problem can be protecting food and keeping travelers together. It does not require an obligatory battle. Give the jackals a plausible reason to withdraw, such as food obtained elsewhere or losing



the opportunity to approach safely, without pretending every hungry animal understands a spoken negotiation.

Offer information that makes preparation worthwhile

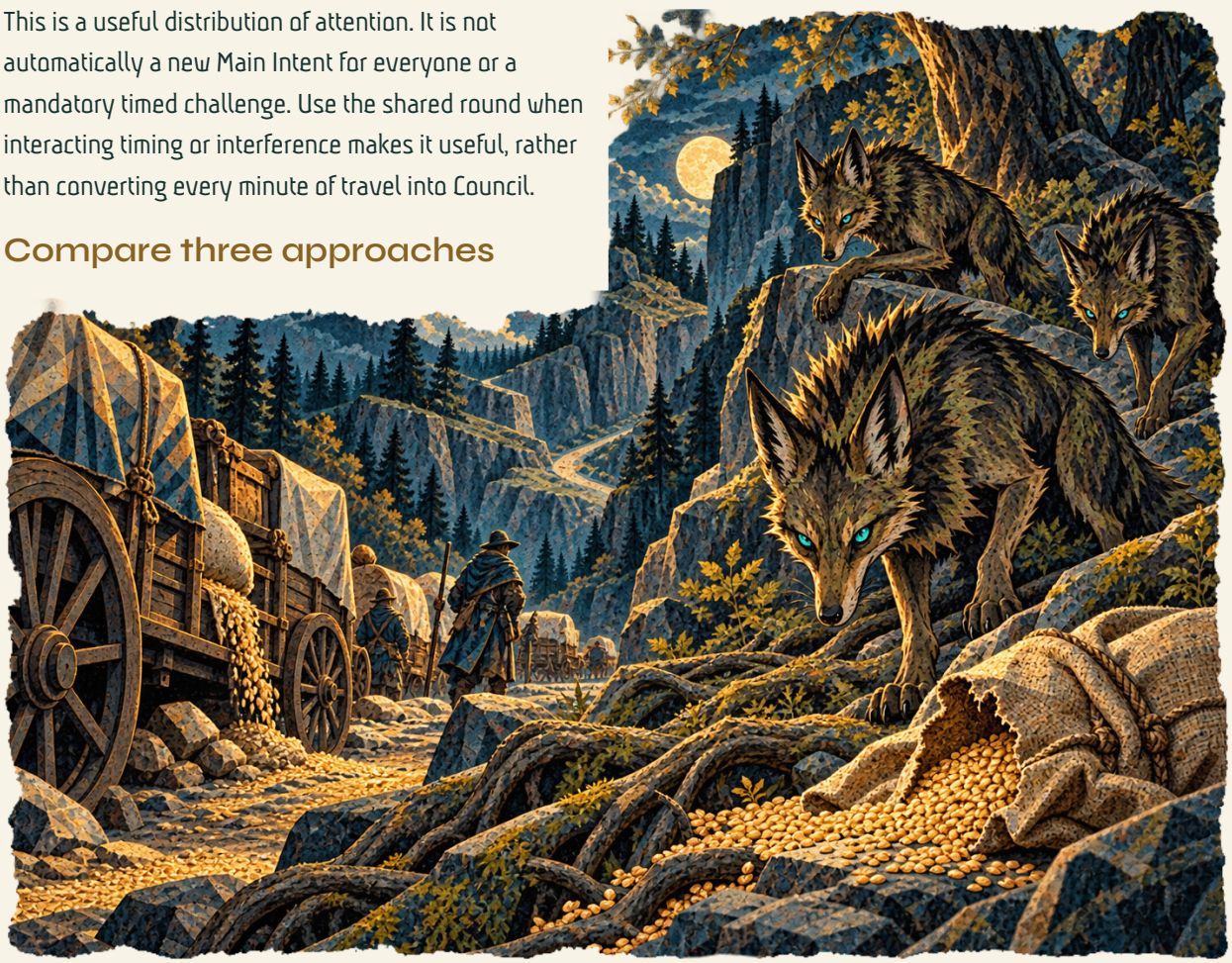
The party can see grain behind the rear cart and shapes moving along the roots. A driver knows that the next bend narrows the route. Those observations let the players choose whether to repair the sack, reorganize the caravan or keep watch from another position. Ordinary work can remove an ordinary source of risk when time, tools and access permit it.

Player: *"We stop before the bend and repack the grain."*
DM: *"Who watches the rear while the drivers unload?"*
Player: *"I stay with them; the other two check the tear."*
This is a useful distribution of attention. It is not automatically a new Main Intent for everyone or a mandatory timed challenge. Use the shared round when interacting timing or interference makes it useful, rather than converting every minute of travel into Council.

Compare three approaches

Guarding the rear may discourage an approach while the grain continues to spill. Repairing the sack removes that trail but requires a stopping place. Taking the open ridge changes the route and may leave the injured traveler with a harder climb. Establish the relevant facts, then let the party propose how to address them.

Player: *"We move onto the ridge."*
DM: *"The carts can follow the longer track. The injured traveler cannot use the steep shortcut without help."*
Player: *"Then we keep everyone on the cart route and carry the torn sack separately."* Their plan combines means grounded in the scene. Do not impose a universal travel consequence merely because they avoided combat; apply the actual work, delay or exposure their chosen approach creates.



If the pack attacks, keep creatures independent

Mark each jackal's position and actual state. A member climbing the roots can use its real movement; another attacking a traveler resolves its own eligible action. Their role suggests what they try, while their actual records determine what they can do. Several creatures do not become one creature merely because they share a portrait and tactic.

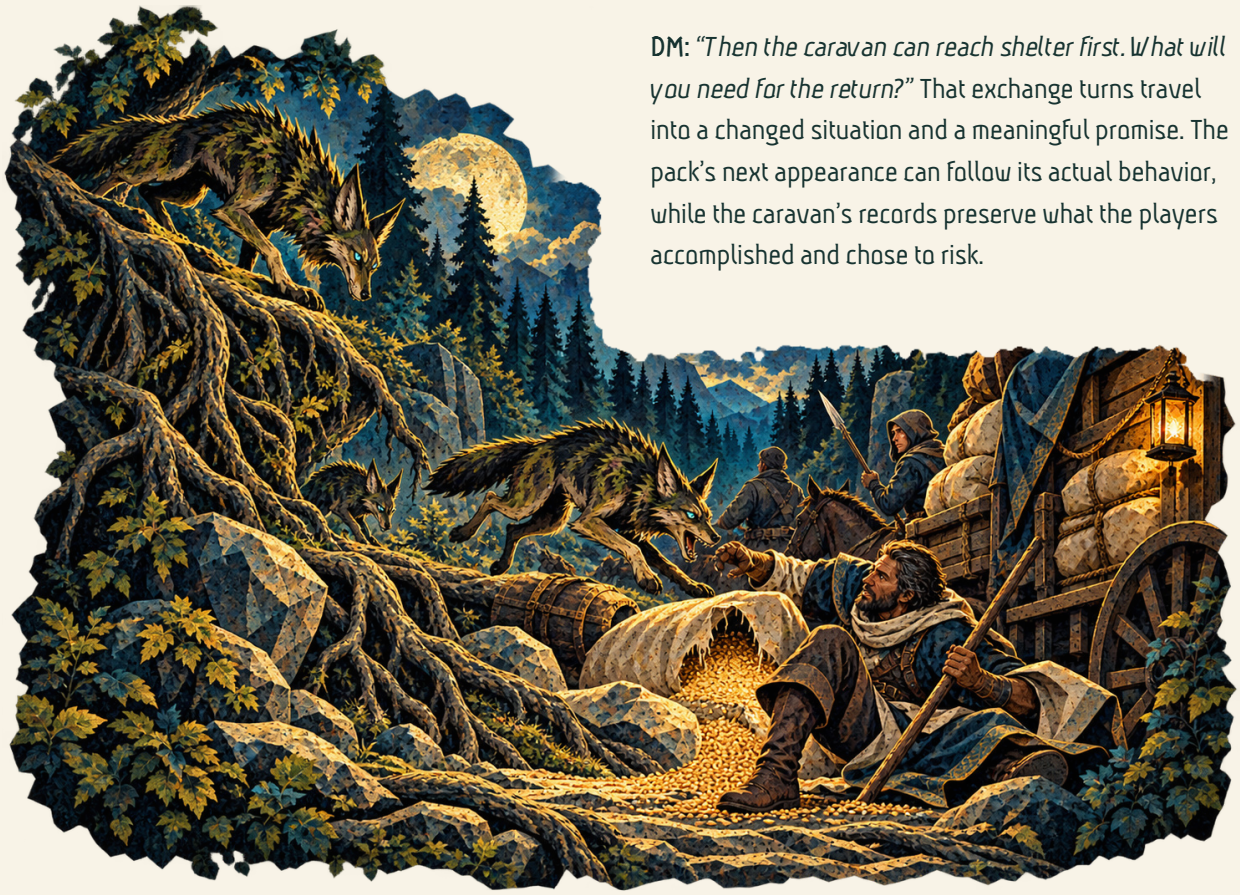
For encounter appraisal, multiply each template's chosen base BU by its quantity and keep extraordinary Item BU separate. Do not appraise only the acquisitions spent, and do not infer an automatic difficulty from the combined total. Terrain, information, exposed travelers and the party's preparation can change the practical threat substantially. A successful repair can matter even if the eventual creature count and nominal budgets remain the same.

Carry the journey's changes forward

If the party saves the grain but abandons a damaged cart, the next settlement receives food and still has a recovery problem. If they leave food to distract the pack, note what was left and who accepted that choice. If a traveler is injured, their actual recovery need continues; the scene's end does not restore Vitality or erase a consequence.

Driver: "You kept them off us. We can leave the last sack."
Player: *"We agreed to bring all the grain, so we want to come back for it."*

DM: *"Then the caravan can reach shelter first. What will you need for the return?"* That exchange turns travel into a changed situation and a meaningful promise. The pack's next appearance can follow its actual behavior, while the caravan's records preserve what the players accomplished and chose to risk.



07

Build readable creatures

Give opposition a purpose, a record and practical limits.



Build creatures that change the scene

A creature is useful when its behavior gives the party something to understand and respond to. Write what it wants, how it acts, what reveals its methods and when it stops fighting. A numerical baseline helps construct it; a purpose makes it playable.

Choose a foundation and check the arithmetic

For a positive creature budget B, divide B by 25 and take the square root to find rank r. Round up three times r for base attribute points. PB is 1 plus rank rounded up. Baseline Vitality is half B rounded up, with a minimum of 1. Allocate the available nonnegative points among Physical, Mental and Magical. Resolve explicit authored modifications after the foundation. Do not use the player's 10-point starting allocation or level Vitality formula for this creature baseline.

Creature BU	Rank	Attribute points	PB	Baseline Vitality
25	1	3	2	13
50	Approximately 1.414	5	3	25
100	2	6	3	50
225	3	9	4	113
400	4	12	5	200

Choose the proficient attribute and relevant acquired training. Check current values, practices, saves, DC, movement and senses. A high title or budget grants neither immunity nor extra actions. Give every ability its actual ingredients and readable behavior. The Canal Watcher record later in this book is complete, with definitions, totals, check bonuses and two useful workings.

Give the creature a small readable repertoire

Optional design guidance. Start with one recognizable signature behavior, one practical alternate approach and a reason to change tactics. A creature that controls a passage and retreats when its nest is safe can create more play than a long list of nearly identical damage powers.

For each ability, record what it does, the eligible targets, access, range, delivery, typical expression, chosen resolution and ending/continuation terms. Its normal

expression is a starting use, not an unconditional entitlement to any amount of scaling. If it has an additional action, reaction or special rhythm, write the grant explicitly.

Roles suggest behavior, not hidden bonuses

Role	Useful question	Give the players a response
Melee pressure	What route or person does it threaten?	A visible approach, space to retreat or a competing objective
Ranged pressure	What path and target location does it use?	Cover, interrupted sight, movement or interference
Defender	What is it protecting?	A way around it, a motive to address or a limited defense scope
Ambusher	What does it know and how does it conceal itself?	Detectable signs and a consequence of revealing its position
Controller	What options does it restrict?	Clear scope, conditions and an ending or counter-approach
Support	Who benefits and what sustains the help?	A visible dependency the party can disrupt or negotiate
Solo threat	How does it interact with several coordinated intents?	Explicit action economy, readable tells and meaningful objectives

Do not assign a role and silently add a bonus. Actual mechanics belong in actual definitions. If a resistance applies only to Magical Fire, an ordinary Physical attack is not reduced by that label. If a transformation changes appearance, it does not automatically copy a target's abilities.

Test three situations

Before publishing, test the creature's ordinary use, a situation favoring its strengths and a situation exposing its limits. Check whether the proposed actions need missing access. Check quantities, Item BU, actual defenses, upkeep and termination. Ensure privately sourced dependencies are not exposed through a public template.

In the platform, preserve the selected immutable version. A template is reusable; a play copy records one creature's current state. Two copies of the same Watcher

should not share damage or consequences. Updating the public template should not secretly rewrite an existing run's pinned content.

Creatures from a purpose to a record

A creature begins with an encounter use, not a difficulty label. Ask what it wants, how it changes the scene, what players can perceive, and what can stop the confrontation without killing it. Then build the actual permissions supporting that behavior.

The records here are original **authored examples** using the current creature foundation and reference anchors. Example custom prices require table review. They are not new compulsory catalogue entries. Unspent budget is shown honestly; it grants no hidden ability.



Choose the budget. Build the creature.

For positive base budget B. Keep the square root until the stated rounding step.

RANK

r = square root (B / 25)

Divide first, then take the square root.

ATTRIBUTE POINTS

round up (3 × r)

Allocate the nonnegative points among the three attributes.

PROFICIENCY

PB = 1 + round up (r)

The selected proficient attribute uses this baseline.

VITALITY

round up (B / 2)

Minimum 1; explicit agreed overrides remain separate.



Base BU	Rank	Points	PB	Vitality
25	1	3	2	13
50	about 1.414	5	3	25
100	2	6	3	50
225	3	9	4	113

The foundation arithmetic

Choose a positive base budget B. Rank is the square root of B divided by 25, with the division inside the square root. Base attribute points are three times rank, rounded up. PB is 1 plus rank rounded up. Baseline maximum Vitality is half B rounded up, with a minimum of 1. These are creature baselines, not the character's 10-point allocation and level-based Vitality formula.

Allocate nonnegative base attribute points and choose the proficient attribute. Read the full current parent attribute for each practice check, then its actual training and modifiers. Digital practice-allocation slices satisfy the allocation ledger; a small slice is not a second reduced check modifier.

Chosen budget	Rank	Attribute points	Baseline PB	Baseline Vitality
25	1	3	2	13
50	about 1.414	5	3	25
100	2	6	3	50
225	3	9	4	113

At B 50, rank is about 1.414; do not round it to 1 before using the other formulas. Three times that rank is about 4.243, rounded up to 5 attribute points. Round rank up to 2, then add 1 for PB 3. Round at the specified stage. If an explicit agreed Vitality override or active primitive changes the result, record it separately.

Canal Watcher: a small guardian

Use the complete 25-BU Canal Watcher record in Worked records. Its 20 spent BU supports Verb II, Water I, Near, and d8. It has five remaining, no equipment, no mirror credit, and no unlisted action economy. Physical 2, Mental 0, Magical 1; Magical proficient; PB 2; DC 8; maximum Vitality 13.

Its value in a scene comes from turning a current near a spawning bed. Telegraph that concern before it attacks. Give it a path to negotiation: a credible diversion preserving the bed. Its location near useful water supports its capabilities; a dry bank changes its opportunities.

One Watcher can warn and manipulate a small channel. Two can guard different objectives, disagree about people, or cooperate. Do not treat quantity as an automatic license to apply the same consequence to every character. Each creature has its own intent, position, state, and reaction availability.

Sluice Warden: a sturdier protector

Purpose. A constructed keeper braces damaged waterworks and prevents sudden releases. It is patient when shown a safe repair plan and forceful when someone tears a control away. Its visible tell is a rising arm pressed against the gate brace.

Base budget 100; rank 2; six base attribute points allocated Physical 3, Mental 1, Magical 2. Magical is proficient; baseline PB 3 and Vitality 50. One acquired Physical increment changes current Physical to 4. Magical-selected DC is 5 + 3 + 2 = 10.

Acquisition	Meaning	Creature BU
Verb II	Change existing eligible states	8
Water I	Bound grounded-water subject	4
Near	Reach up to 30 ft with valid targeting	4
d8	Output die permission	4
Structure II	Basic spatial/group arrangements within actual access	8
Braced Resistance	Halve Physical damage, rounded up, while both feet and one hand brace the fixed sluice	8
Physical increment	Add +1 Physical at this accepted scope	12
Physical save training	Add PB to its Physical save	4
Total acquired	No mirror credit	52
Remaining	100 − 52	48

Braced Resistance is an authored conditional defense with a proposed 8-BU price. It affects covered Physical damage, not every source, every consequence, or allies. Breaking the brace removes its qualification; merely naming it a Warden does not grant permanent armor.

Derived checks and saves. Physical practices +4; Mental practices +1; Magical practices +5. Saves Physical +7, Mental +1, Magical +5. Current Physical affects carrying capacity but does not change the base allocation ledger. Large size gives walking 40 ft, ordinary swim/climb 20 ft, six equipment slots, and capacity 80 + 5 × 4 = 100 Load.

Guiding Wall. Use Water, Verb II, Near, and Structure II to organize a located band of existing water into a temporary directed obstruction. State shape, affected route, opposition, and continuation. The normal example is a short lane beside the gate, maintained while braced. It does not automatically immobilize every creature or negate attacks; resolve actual crossings and interference.

Pressure Strike. Project existing water along a path within 30 ft. Attack +5 against the target's DC; normal hit expression 1d8 Magical Water. Cover applies to the projected path. Larger output or additional targets needs appraisal, not an automatic extra Main Intent.

Equipment. A Medium fixed-hook brace has Item BU 4, Load 2, and two final equipped slots. Its authored rule gives +2 to Prowess checks to hold a gate while the hook is firmly anchored; it affects that check, not Physical. Such qualifying Prowess is +6. Item BU stays separate from the 52 creature BU. Unequipping it removes the conditional equipment contribution and frees its slots, but its carried Load remains.

Counter-approaches. Show the brace and control route. A player can negotiate a safer flow, unanchor the hook, or draw the Warden away from the fixed sluice. A strong defense becomes an observable choice rather than a concealed statistic.

Bellhouse Custodian: an asymmetric solo

Purpose. The Custodian guards a mechanism that records binding promises. It wants the bells in their proper order and will pursue someone who removes a marked counterweight. Its tell is a slow raising of two separate hammer arms: one protects the mechanism, one threatens the route.

Base budget 225; rank 3; nine base attribute points allocated Physical 4, Mental 2, Magical 3. Magical proficient, PB 4, Vitality 113. Magical-selected DC 12. Large walking 40 ft and swim/climb 20 ft; capacity 100 Load;



six slots. Physical practices +4, Mental +2, Magical +7; saves Physical +4, Mental +2, Magical +7.

Acquisition	Bound rule	Creature BU
Verb II	Reshape/redirect eligible existing states	8
Metal I	Grounded metal subject only	4
Far	Reach up to 60 ft	8
d10	Eligible output die	8
Structure II	Basic spatial/multiple-target arrangements	8
Plated Resistance	Halve Physical Metal damage, rounded up; no other source/domain defense	8
Second Response	One additional independent Reaction Slot per round, same ordinary trigger/scope limits	12
Total acquired	Explicit authored grants; no mirror credit	56
Remaining	225 − 56	169

The conditional scope and 8/12-BU custom prices are example authoring choices. The large remaining budget is not converted into automatic damage, extra phases, or secret abilities. Its base foundation already differs greatly from a low-budget creature. You can develop the record further through real acquisitions when the campaign needs that, rather than spending numbers merely to fill a bar.

Hammer Sweep. Manipulate existing metal within 60 ft through an actual supported path. Normal single-target attack +7, 1d10 Magical Metal on a hit. A line affecting several recipients is a different declared expression supported by Structure II and appraised for scale, targeting, and consequences; the normal attack line does not silently contain it.

Hold the Counterweight. Redirect a located metal counterweight to hold the central lift. Continuing the example binds one hammer arm to that task. Releasing it changes the lift's position as agreed. It is a restrictive upkeep requirement, not a compulsory Vitality payment.

Second Response. Two slots are available at Council because the explicit acquisition says so. Each response still needs a perceived valid trigger, immediate eligible scope, and remaining movement or other actual access. A boss title, Large size, or 225 base BU would not

provide these slots without the authored grant. The Custodian retains one coherent Main Intent by default.

Practical solo design. Threaten an objective as well as Vitality. The party may split between restoring bell order, keeping the lift open, and negotiating the promise's meaning. Tell them what the arms are doing. Let interference change opportunities. A second response makes the creature more responsive, not immune to every plan.

Review before running

Read each creature's definition aloud in the voice of a new DM. Can you identify its attack bonus, damage source/domain, sense, path, reaction capacity, and ending conditions? If not, repair the record before it appears in a tense scene.

Test a favorable situation, a counter-approach, and a changed environment. The Watcher loses useful water; the Warden loses its brace; the Custodian must protect a lift while negotiating. Such tests reveal dependencies that a total BU comparison cannot.

Keep build and appraisal ledgers separate. Two Wardens are 200 enemy creature BU plus 8 Item BU, not 104 creature BU because each spends 52, and not 208 creature BU with equipment counted again. Quantities create independent creatures; they do not merge their Vitality into one shared bar unless a deliberately authored exception says so.

Read opposition as relationships

A role is a job in this place

A defender stands between someone and something. A support creature helps a particular ally through a particular relationship. A controller restricts a useful option. A ranged threat needs a located target and a viable path. These roles help you prepare behavior, but their actual abilities still come from their records. Changing the label does not add movement, resistance or actions.

Draw the relationship you intend the players to read. Put the protected door behind the defender, show the support creature tending its ally and describe the controller's visible boundary. Offer ways to affect the relationship: another route, a conversation, a break in sight or the end of an actual maintenance requirement. Counterplay becomes meaningful when it changes a rule or a circumstance the players can understand.

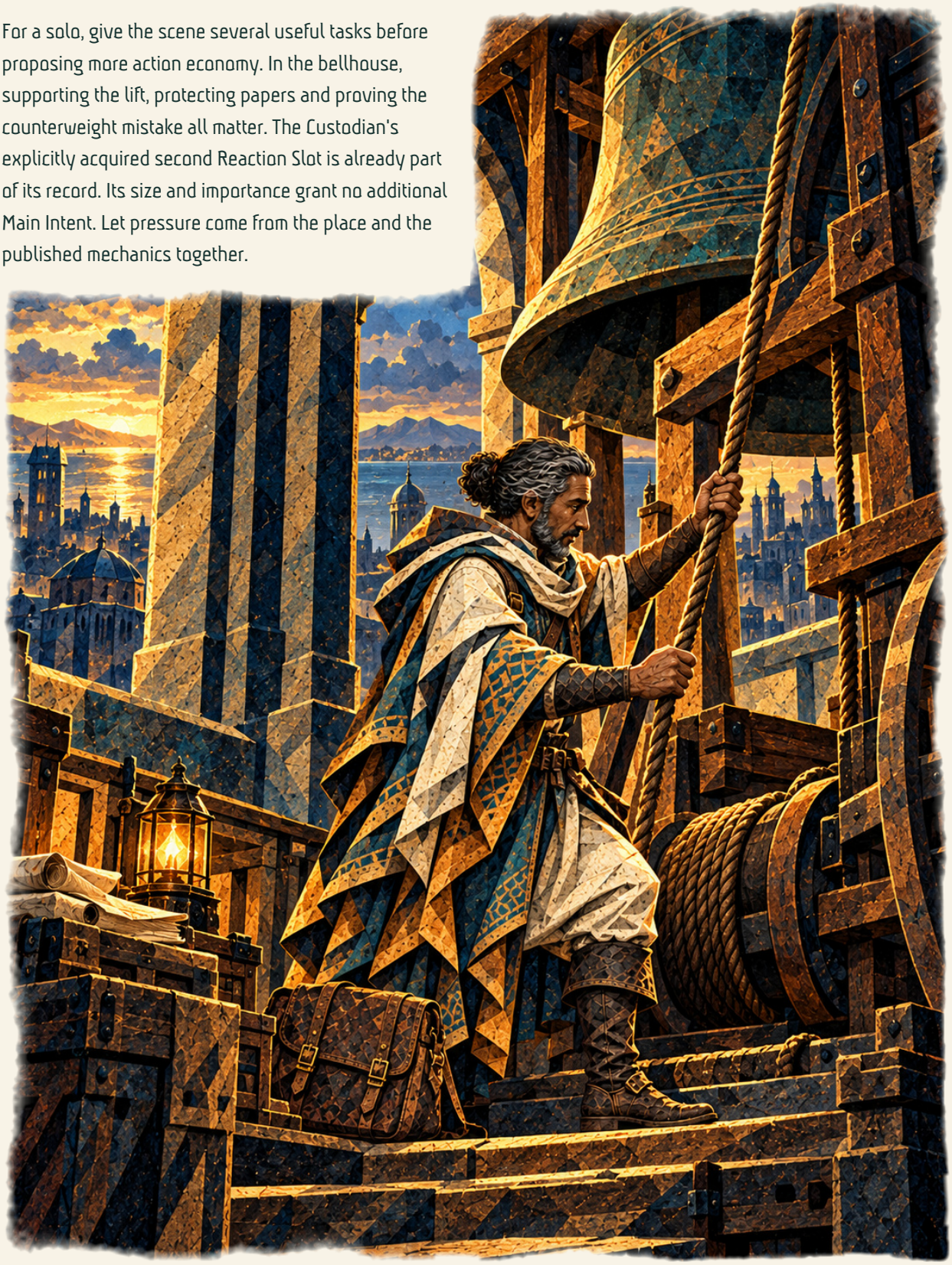
Do not make every creature fight to the last point of Vitality. Write what it wants to preserve, what would make it withdraw and what evidence could change its mind. An intelligent guard can surrender; a guardian can decide its charge is safe; a hungry animal can leave with food. Those decisions follow the creature and the situation, without adding a compulsory morale statistic.

Rehearse concentrated pressure

Before play, imagine the opponents pursuing their strongest coherent plan. Which target can they actually locate? Which paths are open? Which actions depend on another action succeeding? Which responses are granted, and how many slots can really be spent? The exercise reveals danger that a budget total alone can miss.

Then change one fact. Put the target behind a wall, separate the helper from its recipient or give the party another route. If the creature's entire purpose vanishes, that can be an intentional weakness. If no change matters because the prose silently ignores every limitation, rewrite the record. Readable opposition needs strengths with an actual subject and limits with practical consequences.

For a solo, give the scene several useful tasks before proposing more action economy. In the bellhouse, supporting the lift, protecting papers and proving the counterweight mistake all matter. The Custodian's explicitly acquired second Reaction Slot is already part of its record. Its size and importance grant no additional Main Intent. Let pressure come from the place and the published mechanics together.



A support creature needs someone to support

Field study / Original example · Role through relationships

Read the situation	This field study
Recipient	A particular injured defender
Actual support	Apply Splint and Rally as written
Alternate objective	Protect treatment or repair the threatened grove

Start with the injury

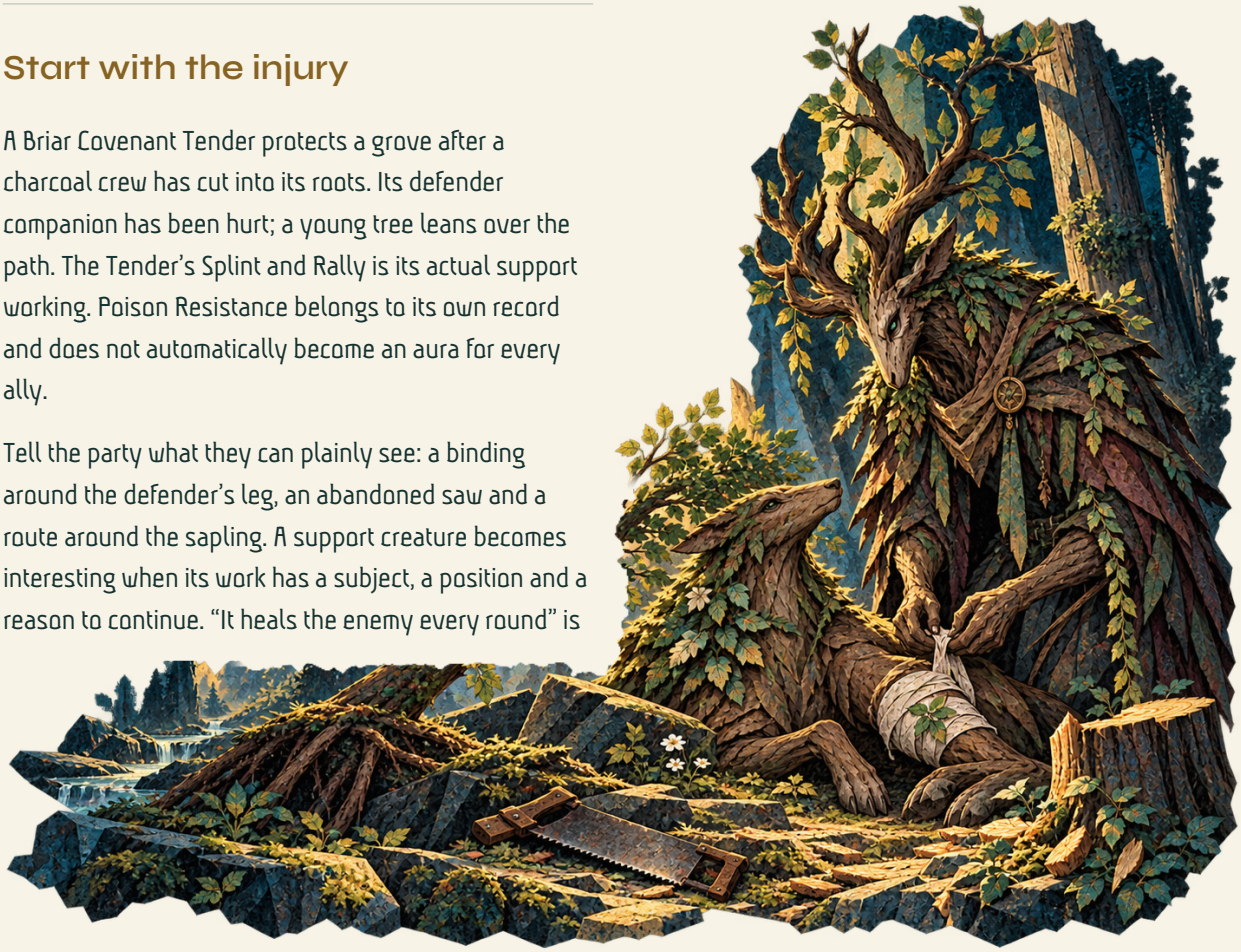
A Briar Covenant Tender protects a grove after a charcoal crew has cut into its roots. Its defender companion has been hurt; a young tree leans over the path. The Tender's Splint and Rally is its actual support working. Poison Resistance belongs to its own record and does not automatically become an aura for every ally.

Tell the party what they can plainly see: a binding around the defender's leg, an abandoned saw and a route around the sapling. A support creature becomes interesting when its work has a subject, a position and a reason to continue. "It heals the enemy every round" is too broad unless the actual construction establishes that behavior.

Read the contribution before using it

Identify what Splint and Rally changes, whom it can affect, its range, its uncertainty and its ending terms. Use only that contribution. A descriptive bandage can help the reader understand the scene, but it cannot supply extra Vitality or remove a consequence the rule does not address.

Player: *"Can I explain that we did not cut the roots?"*
DM: *"The Tender can see you put the saw down and move away from the sapling. It still fears another crew. What are you offering to do about the damage?"* A



conversation can change the support relationship by changing whom the Tender sees as a threat.

Give intervention more than one meaning

A hostile party might separate the Tender from its defender through an actual barrier or force it to retreat from an exposed position. A cooperative party can protect its treatment, repair a mundane support or retrieve supplies. Each approach affects who can reach whom. Do not reduce "interrupt the support" to compulsory damage when moving its recipient or changing its purpose can matter.

If the work has an ongoing requirement, state it at the agreed continuation point. Ordinary upkeep can be a restriction or task. Do not add the unresolved damage-triggered Vitality repayment scheme. A hit matters through its actual injury, interference and the construction's terms, not through an invented universal cancellation rule.

Let the grove remember specifics

Afterward, the Tender may know that one character carried the injured companion and another threatened the sapling. Keep those distinct observations. A later invitation to the grove can belong to the helpful person without granting the whole party a permanent friendship bonus.

The charcoal crew might also have a legitimate need for fuel. That can become a separate negotiation about a safer source. Supporting one injured defender has then opened a larger situation without requiring the Tender to become an all-knowing quest giver. Its mechanical role remains narrow; its relationships provide the broader adventure. That separation is useful whenever a creature's support identity is stronger than its attack profile.

Give support a visible opportunity cost

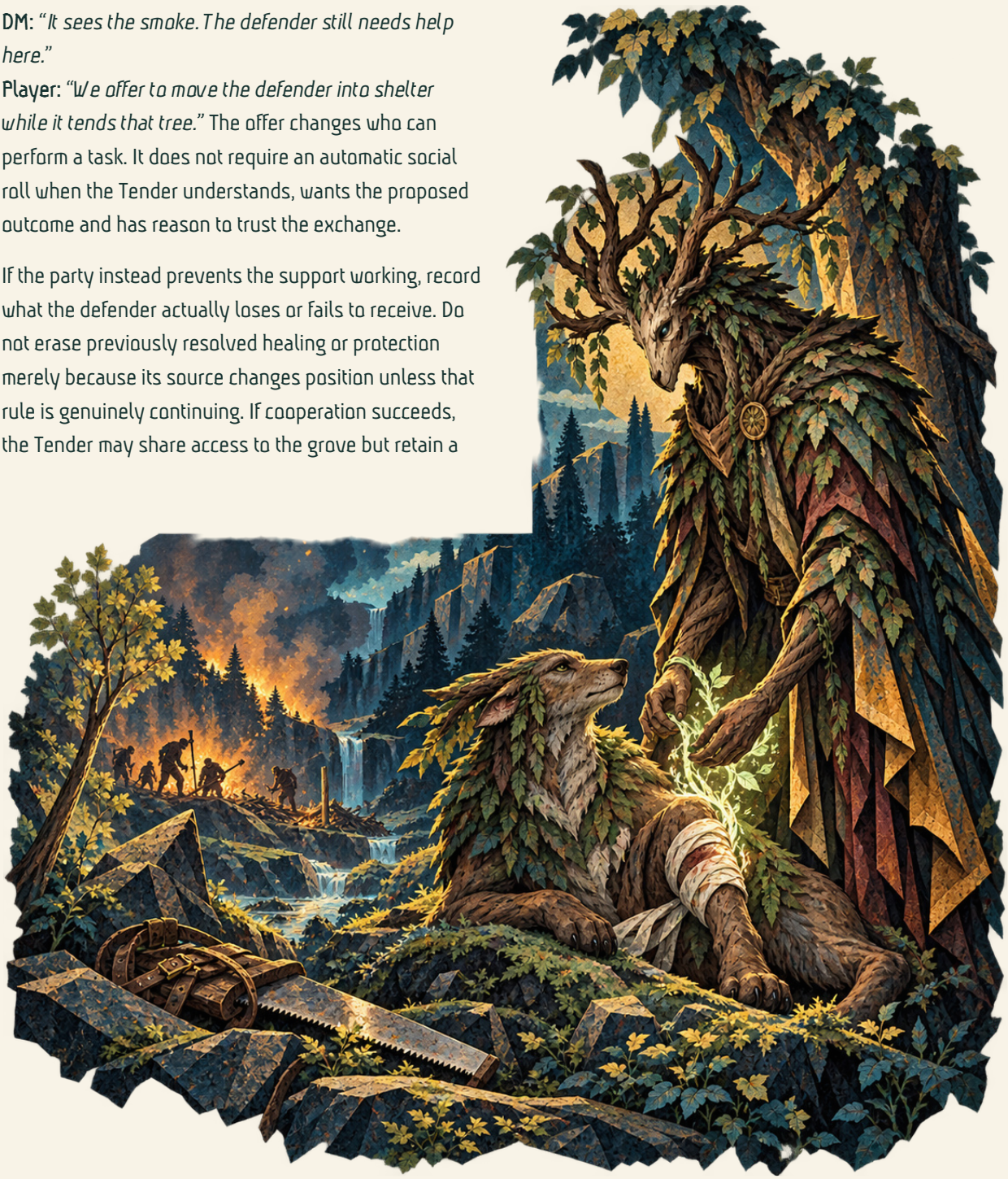
Prepare a grove diagram with the wounded defender beside one sapling and the charcoal crew working near another. The Tender cannot be assumed to support both locations without the actual reach, recipients and timing



of its capability. Its desire to protect the grove can make where it stands a meaningful choice.

Player: *"I show it that the crew's fire is moving toward the second tree."*
DM: *"It sees the smoke. The defender still needs help here."*
Player: *"We offer to move the defender into shelter while it tends that tree."* The offer changes who can perform a task. It does not require an automatic social roll when the Tender understands, wants the proposed outcome and has reason to trust the exchange.

If the party instead prevents the support working, record what the defender actually loses or fails to receive. Do not erase previously resolved healing or protection merely because its source changes position unless that rule is genuinely continuing. If cooperation succeeds, the Tender may share access to the grove but retain a condition about fire or harvesting. A support role can create relationships and responsibilities as well as combat choices. Record which support ended, which completed benefit remains and what promise was made.



A firing lane can be the objective

Field study / Original example · Ranged pressure and repositioning

Read the situation	This field study
Purpose	Restore a marker and protect a crossing
Ranged question	Where is the actual lane from the current position?
Changed outcome	Safe crossing, restored signal or a lost warning function

Explain the warning signal

A Cloudglass Harrier patrols a drifting ruin where visitors have moved a survey marker. Its Coded Eye Beam and flight let it signal or act through its actual saved behavior. Its role is ranged, but its beam's name supplies no free communication language, unlimited split targeting or knowledge of every trespasser's intent.

Begin with the marker, the open gap between towers and a sheltered crossing below. The Harrier signals before approaching; visitors can respond if they understand or investigate that signal. Choose what the guardian wants in this example: restore the marker and keep the ruin's crossing clear. A visible request can make a later attack intelligible without making it inevitable.



Put information beside danger

DM: *"The beam repeats against the displaced marker, then the open gap."*
Player: *"Is it aiming at us or asking us to move?"*
DM: *"You can see the sequence and where it points. Interpreting the code is still uncertain. How do you answer?"*

The party can return the marker, present a known signal, inspect older marks or seek shelter while studying. A suitable check can concern interpretation; failure need not erase the observed sequence. Give an incomplete answer or a changed opportunity consistent with the agreed stakes. Do not use misunderstanding as permission for an unannounced unavoidable attack.

Reposition with consequences

If the confrontation becomes timed, use the Harrier's actual movement and line. It can leave one perch, but a new perch may place the marker beyond its view or expose its approach. A party member who carries the marker into shelter changes what can be targeted or observed. The beam does not bend around every obstruction merely because the monster is aerial.

The group might cross while another character demonstrates that the marker is being restored. Their Main Intents can depend on the guardian's response. Resolve the actual timing or effort intersection. High ground and flight are circumstances to understand, not automatic additional reactions or an initiative advantage imported from another game.



End when the lane's use changes

An encounter can end when the crossing is safely occupied, the marker is restored or the guardian permits passage. Record which result occurred. If the party destroys the marker, the ruin might lose a useful warning function; describe that consequence only if it was a real established feature.

The ranged creature's picture can make the location memorable, but the crossing is the tactical subject. Keep its position legible when you speak: "It now guards the eastern gap; the lower bridge is clear." Players can then choose a route without demanding a full technical diagram every time. The same method works for archers, spotters and creatures whose attacks protect machinery rather than simply chase targets.

A signal can carry a narrow truth

Prepare the drifting ruin with two firing perches and one damaged marker. Decide what the Harrier's Coded Eye Beam actually communicates, who knows that code and which direction needs a clear lane. The party seeing a beam is not the same as the harbor receiving or understanding its message. These steps offer useful interventions.

Player: *"I copy the flash pattern with a lantern."*
DM: *"The lookout recognizes lantern signals, but you have not yet learned this code."*
Player: *"Then I study the repeated pattern while someone repairs the marker."* That can separate a knowledge task from physical work. Whether a check is needed depends on actual uncertainty, available evidence and time; the scene does not supply a universal codebreaking cost.

When the ruin rotates, compare the lanes again. A working beam may no longer reach its recipient, while a previously hidden repair panel becomes accessible. Keep the creature's position and the ruin's movement visible. Success can restore a safe crossing without defeating the Harrier. Failure to send one signal can create a delayed warning or a boat taking the wrong channel rather than automatically ending the entire adventure. Those changed circumstances give the next Council specific work to address.



A solo threat is not a second rulebook

Field study / Original example · Threatening a place as well as people

Read the situation	This field study
Solo discipline	Actual grants; no extra actions from a role label
Visible pressure	Fuel route, warning pulse and occupied streets
Possible ending	Diversion or evacuation can resolve the objective

Give the giant a destination

The Walking Foundry enters a working district seeking fuel. A coal yard lies beyond a crowded street; a disused kiln offers another source. Its actual Cataclysmic Shockwave can create severe pressure within its saved rules. Fire Resistance does not imply immunity to every industrial hazard, and a huge illustration does not grant unlimited reach.

Describe its route, the warning before its large working and the people who can still leave. The party's first task might be evacuation rather than attacking. An enormous opponent becomes easier to run when its next destination is clear. It becomes harder when the DM invents a different unlisted answer to every player intervention.

Review what the record really gives

Use its chosen creature budget in appraisal and calculate Item BU separately. A large base budget does not grant more independent Main Intents, extra reactions or automatic resistance to control. Read the actual acquisitions and work from them. If the solo needs a new mechanic, author and review that mechanic before relying on it in play.

DM: *"It is turning toward the coal yard. The warning pulse is building along the street."*
Player: *"Can we lure it to the old kiln?"*
DM: *"That addresses its fuel need. What shows it the kiln is usable, and what happens to the people along that route?"*

Let the party divide useful jobs

One actor can open a route, another can move workers and a third can interrupt an eligible part of the Foundry's working. Place their actions by dependencies. They do not need a special objective-point subsystem: "the western gate is open" and "the last cart has cleared the street" are real changed facts.

Telegraph the shockwave's actual scope before resolution. If the party moves outside an eligible area, honor that position. If a barrier changes a projected path, apply the relevant obstruction rules. Do not make damage inevitable to preserve the creature's dramatic scale. A giant threat can remain frightening while the players' correct preparation prevents a particular injury.

Make ending more than destruction

The Foundry might stop at the kiln, exhaust its available fuel, accept a maintained safe route or be defeated. Each ending leaves a different district. A surviving machine

can become a negotiated danger; broken streets can create repair obligations; a destroyed coal yard can threaten later heating.

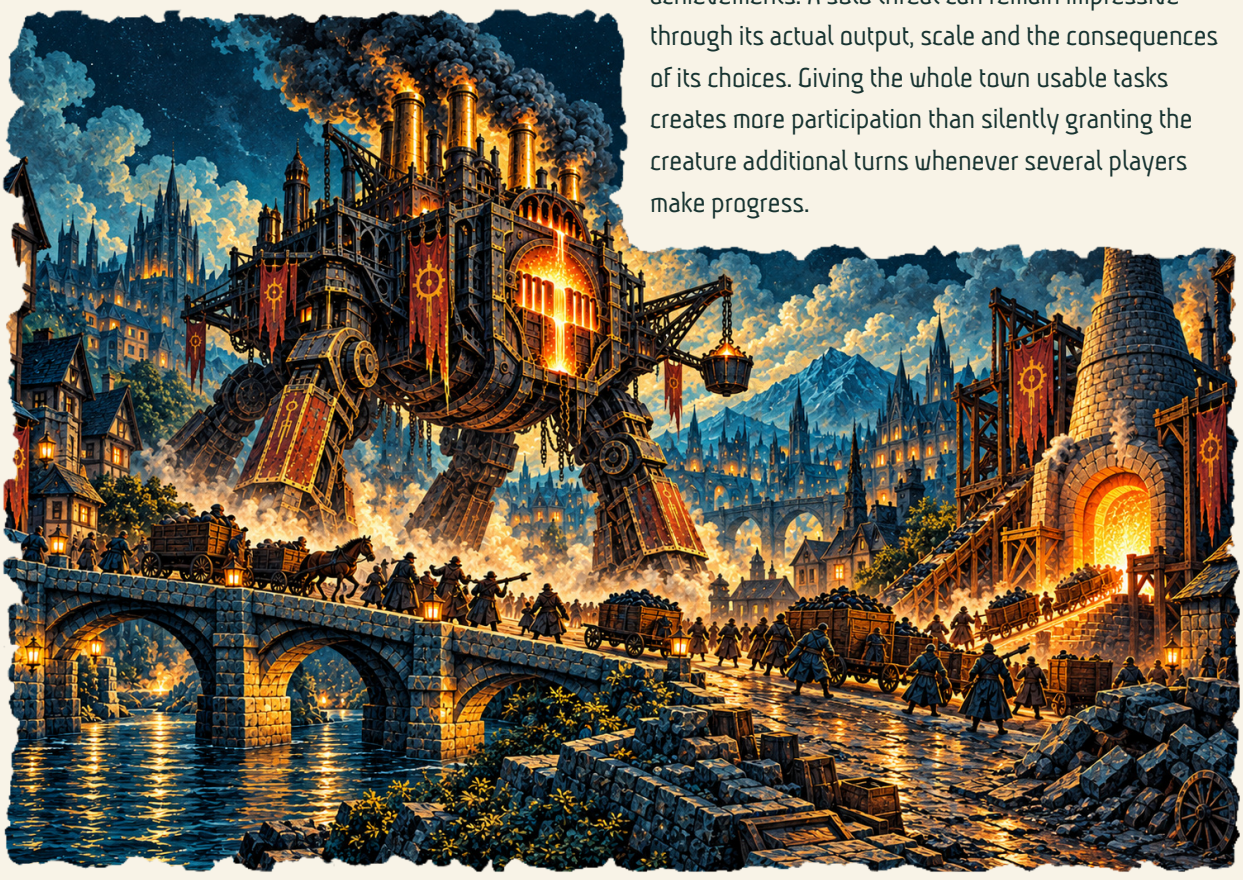
State those consequences from actual events rather than attaching a generic failure surcharge. If the party chose the old kiln, show what that choice preserved and what it endangered. Their success is not smaller because they avoided fighting the solo. The encounter has tested coordination, information, access and consequences through a single visible purpose, using the shared rules the group already knows.

Prepare a threat the town can respond to

Put three town facts beside the Foundry's actual record: the kiln road is wide enough for it, the crowded market is not evacuated and the bridge can carry carts but may not bear the creature. Choose what its next movement threatens from those facts. Do not turn every street into a lethal hazard merely because the portrait looks immense.

Player: *"We draw it toward the old kiln."*
DM: *"What can it perceive there, and why would it follow?"*
Player: *"The remaining fuel is stored beside that road. We clear the carts and expose it."* If the creature's behavior supports that attraction, the plan has a real lever. It still requires the people, route and timing to cooperate.

If the diversion succeeds, the market may be safe while the kiln needs containment or negotiation. If it fails, the evacuation effort can still save people and leave clear lanes for the next intervention. Record these partial achievements. A solo threat can remain impressive through its actual output, scale and the consequences of its choices. Giving the whole town usable tasks creates more participation than silently granting the creature additional turns whenever several players make progress.



08

Direct a shared round

Resolve the dependencies inside a changing scene.



One round, held in common.

An example to read, question and adapt at your table.

01 Council

Review continuing work, refresh ordinary reactions and say Main Intents.

02 Fast / 0–1

Resolve immediate intersections and valid responses.

03 Measured / 2–3

Use the facts established by earlier work.

04 Heavy / 4+

Resolve further dependencies; carry actual changes forward.

Movement is one allowance for the whole round. A default independent Reaction Slot needs a valid trigger and scope.



Direct a shared round

Council then Fast then Measured then Heavy is a shared rhythm, not a row of personal turns. The useful question is how the participants' intentions interact. Make the opposition legible, let the party coordinate, then resolve the dependencies that actually arise.

Council: establish the moving parts

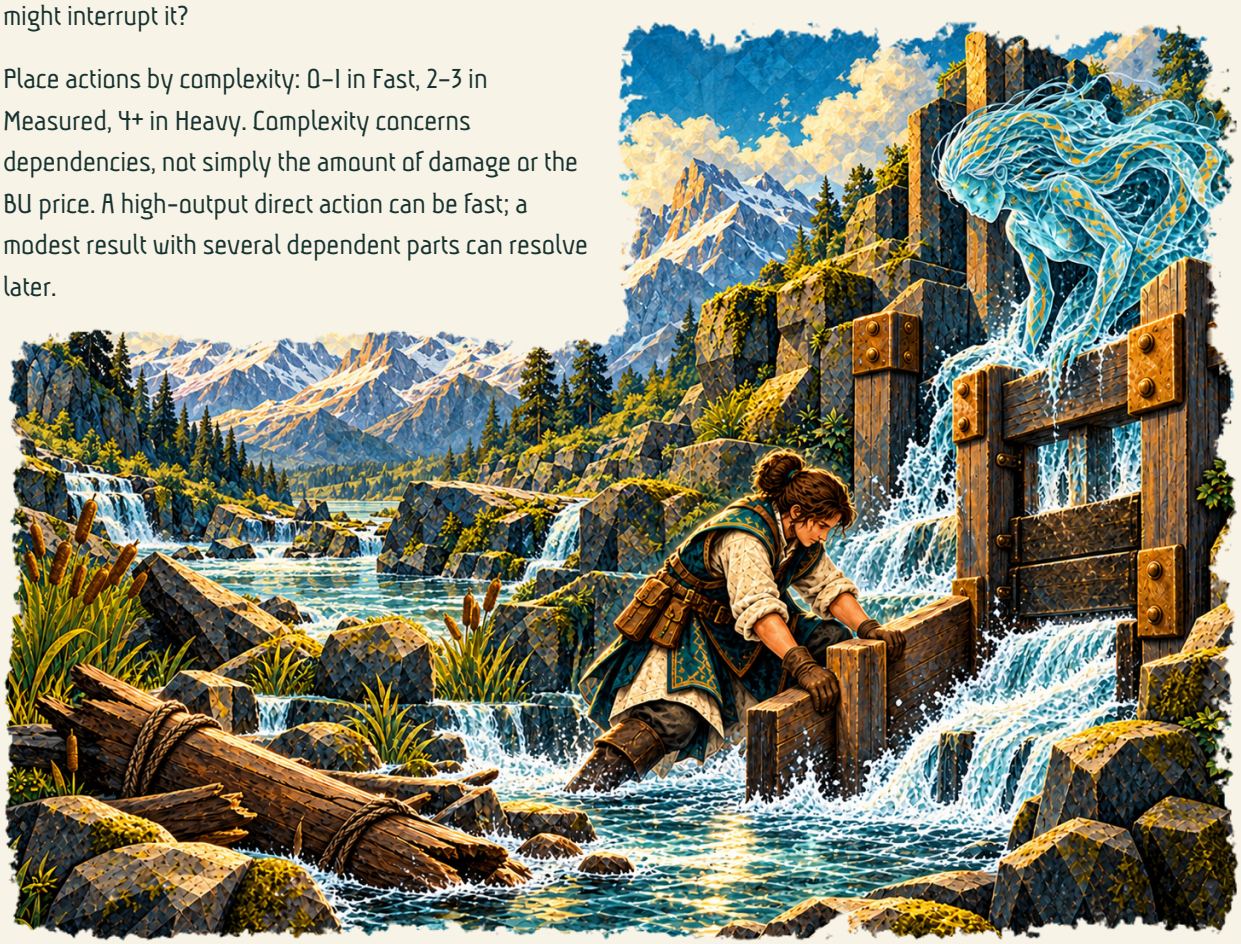
Describe visible positions, immediate pressures and the opposition's apparent intent. Confirm ongoing requirements at their agreed continuation point, reset ordinary reaction availability for the new round, and gather the party's coherent Main Intents. Ask about dependencies: who needs a path, who supplies it, who might interrupt it?

Place actions by complexity: 0–1 in Fast, 2–3 in Measured, 4+ in Heavy. Complexity concerns dependencies, not simply the amount of damage or the BU price. A high-output direct action can be fast; a modest result with several dependent parts can resolve later.

Resolve intersections, not a checklist of isolated attacks

Annotated example. At the sluice, Mira wants to divert a narrow flow; Neri wants to carry the snapped timber clear once the pressure falls; a Watcher wants to drive Neri away. The table places the immediate Watcher attack in Fast and the dependent repair in Measured. Mira's required preparation is made explicit before the repair can use it.

If Neri tries to reach the timber before the Watcher closes the route, resolve a timing clash where their opposing intents meet. Each rolls d20 with the suitable attribute, applicable PB and modifiers. Highest goes first; a tie is simultaneous or resolved from stronger fictional position as agreed. Losing timing does not



erase Neri's entire intent. They can pivot to a different reachable approach if the changed scene supports it.

If Mira and the Watcher directly oppose control of the same current, a contest can determine whose effort prevails. The question is now force/control, not merely timing. Choose suitable approaches and apply the actual permissions and stakes. Do not call every opposed roll "initiative."

Reactions interrupt the moment, not the whole round

A default independent reaction has one available slot per round, a valid perceived trigger, immediate Complexity 0–1 and self/touch or a single target scope. Pause the triggering event, resolve the response and continue from what changed. Spending the slot does not guarantee canceling the event or create unlimited reach.

Example. Neri catches a worker slipping beside them. Their proximity and available hands support the action. Catching workers on both distant banks is a different scope. A separate authored grant may change reaction capacity or permitted behavior; it must be in the creature/character record.

Movement and position stay continuous

Use each participant's whole-round movement allowance. A Medium character with 30 ft can move 10 in Fast and 20 in Measured; they do not regain 30 because a reaction occurs. Ordinary swim/climb use half walking



speed rounded up. Flight/burrowing need actual permission and speed.

Agree extra movement through an acquired rule or an appropriate Cost. Where the situation permits, movement may accompany an intent or occur independently. Positions should answer practical questions about reach, paths and interference. A grid is optional; consistent distances or zones with agreed translations can also work.

Track what will matter next

Record	Why it matters
Intent and track	Shows what is trying to happen and what depends on it
Position and movement used	Determines reach, available routes and remaining movement
Reaction availability	Prevents accidentally responding several times without a grant
Current / maximum Vitality	Distinguishes injury from the build's ceiling
Consequences	Records actual penalties, restrictions and their ending conditions
Continuing work	Records each capability's requirement and next continuation point
Objectives and environment	Shows progress, warning signs and changed options
Resolved markers	A convenience for the current round; not a permanent condition

Advancing a digital phase does not apply damage, expire effects or edit another player's sheet. Review actual endings before moving on. At the next Council, clear previous-round intent/resolved markers and establish the new situation. Keep consequences that have not ended.

Optional surprise treatment. Prepared enemies may complete a round before surprised participants respond, depending on the situation or an agreed roll. This is a suggestion, not a compulsory surprise mechanic or an automatic reward for every ambush.

Rescue is part of the scene

At zero Vitality a character collapses. A contextual rescue countdown—roughly a minute as guidance—creates urgency; it is not ten guaranteed safe rounds. Make the danger clear. Stabilization uses an action track, a suitable Fieldcraft approach or actual primitives, agreed resolution and Cost. No universal stabilization DC is prescribed.

Successful stabilization stops dying without granting healing or consciousness. Healing above zero normally ends dying and wakes the character unless another consequence prevents it. Active dying requires rescue

before assisted rest. Massive damage can be outright lethal: establish those stakes in advance and use final post-defense damage and the current value before any zero clamp.



Three intentions. One changing place.

An example to read, question and adapt at your table.

01 Mira / narrow water lane

Actual located water and access; a Watcher contests the same flow.

02 Torren / tether the timber

Reach the arm, use the stable anchor and tie the line.

03 Ilex / explain the safe plan

The visible tether makes the proposal credible.

04 The objective changes

The timber can be drawn away from the bed; the crossing still needs the remaining work.

Dependency grants no extra Main Intent. Read the complete conversation and state tables that follow.



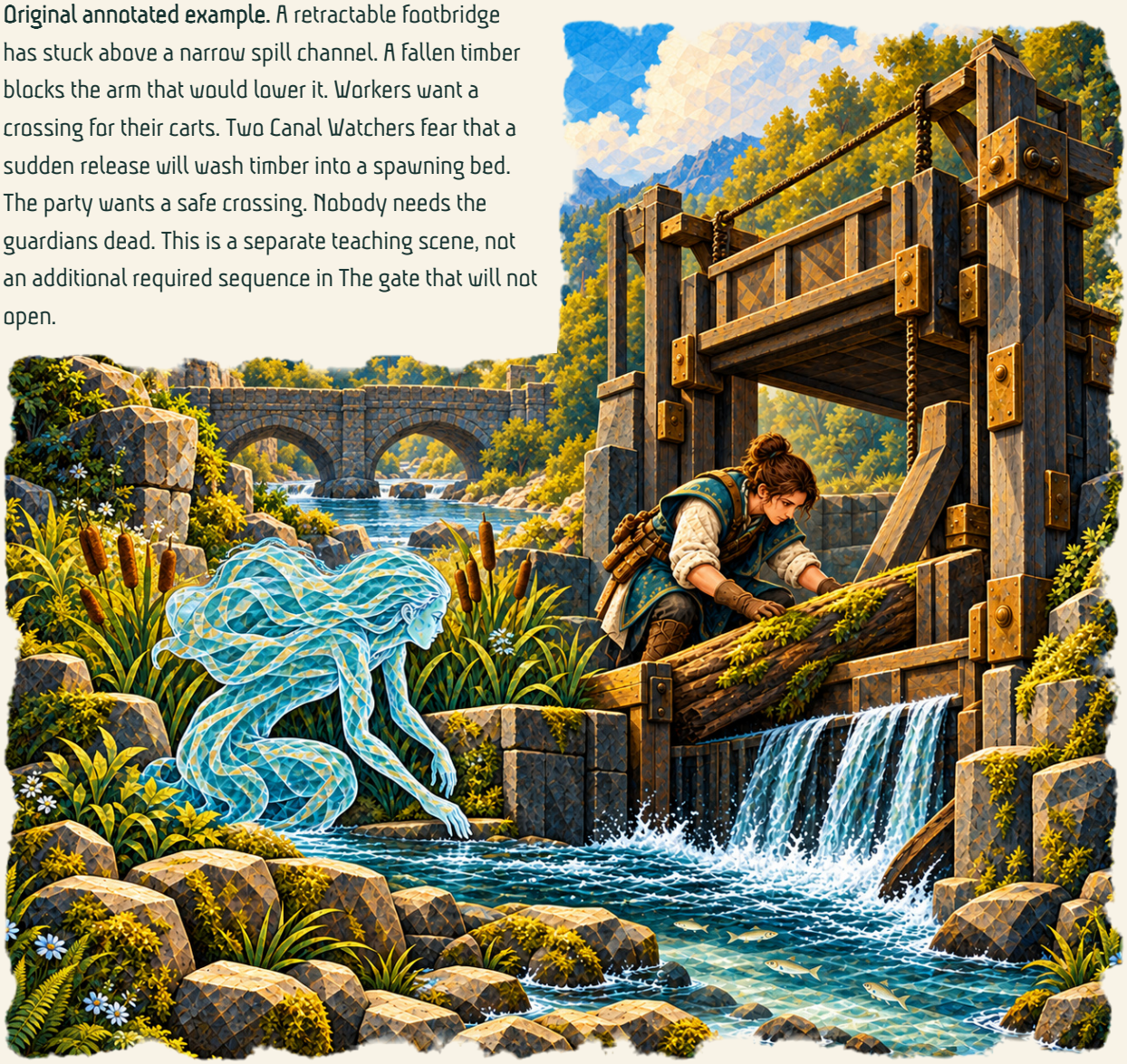
Watch the decisions inside a whole encounter

This chapter slows one encounter down so you can see the decisions behind the spoken description. It uses the published workshop records, including their limits. Read the conversation, then study the changing record. The point is to make the shared rhythm usable when several people act together, not to establish a compulsory script for a canal adventure.

Original annotated example. A retractable footbridge has stuck above a narrow spill channel. A fallen timber blocks the arm that would lower it. Workers want a crossing for their carts. Two Canal Watchers fear that a sudden release will wash timber into a spawning bed. The party wants a safe crossing. Nobody needs the guardians dead. This is a separate teaching scene, not an additional required sequence in The gate that will not open.

Carry only the records this scene will use

Mira, Torren and Ilex are the three starting characters in the player workshops. Each has a progression budget of 25 BU and 24 positive BU acquired, with no mirror credit. Party BU is therefore 75, not 72. For this example, their ordinary equipment has no extraordinary acquisition costs: Party Item BU is 0. An item with an added rule would change that column, even if nobody used it during the encounter.



Participant	Current / maximum Vitality	DC	Relevant combined checks	Movement and response
Mira	12/12	11	Magical practices +6; Knowledge +5; Physical practices +3	Medium walking 30 ft; one ordinary independent Reaction Slot
Torren	12/12	12	Physical practices +7; qualifying two-handed rope Finesse +9; Awareness +6	Medium walking 30 ft; one ordinary independent Reaction Slot
Ilex	12/12	12	Mental practices +7; Fieldcraft +4; Mysticism +5	Medium walking 30 ft; one ordinary independent Reaction Slot
Watcher A	13/13	8	Physical practices +2; Mental practices +0; Magical practices +3	Small walking 25 ft; ordinary swim/climb 13 ft; one ordinary independent Reaction Slot
Watcher B	13/13	8	Same definition as A; separate state	Same definition as A; separate state



The Watchers each use a chosen base budget of 25, with 20 acquired and 5 remaining. Their ingredients are Verb II, Water I, Near and d8. Water Impact is a single-target projected attack +3 against DC, dealing 1d8 Magical Water on a hit under the example's normal expression. Turn the Current redirects existing located water within 30 ft. Their unused budget adds no invisible sense, new action, healing or water creation.

The enemy appraisal is 50 creature BU plus 0 Item BU. Enemy minus party is −25 and the ratio is 50/75, approximately 0.67. There are two enemies and three party members. Each enemy holds half the enemy creature budget. These are facts about the roster. They do not say the crossing is safe, that the Watchers must lose, or that a flooded route cannot cause a severe consequence.

Establish space before introducing timing

Use these stated distances, or draw them on a small sketch. The party begins on a broad western landing. The timber and lowering arm are 20 ft along a walkway.

The walkway has a solid post at its start and a smaller brace beside the arm. Both Watchers stand in shallow water beside the walkway, each within 30 ft of the timber and the central portion of the channel. The spawning bed is farther downstream, outside the immediate work area.

A person at the timber can see both Watchers. Mira can locate the narrow channel she wants to redirect from the landing. Ilex can speak to the guardians without shouting over an impossible distance. The walkway offers no cover against the first projected attack. If someone later moves behind the solid landing wall, that path changes. Do not announce a permanent battlefield-wide accuracy penalty just because water is present.



Describe two warnings. Loose boards knock against the bridge arm. A Watcher repeatedly points downstream, then at the timber. These are useful observations, not hidden prizes for a successful check. The workers tell the party that lowering the bridge with the timber still in place could break the arm. Their account is ordinary information from people who know the machinery.

Before Council

DM: *"You can reach the timber along the walkway. Both guardians can see that route. One is gathering water beside its hands. The other points from the timber toward the reeds downstream."*

Ilex: *"I want to understand what they are warning us about."*

DM: *"You can plainly see the direction. Ressa says that the reeds hold the spawning bed. You do not need a roll to learn what she knows."*

Torren: *"Then I want a line on the timber before anyone moves it."*

This exchange gives the group enough information to coordinate. It has not given them a free successful repair, and it has not forced them into combat. The threats and resources now have recognizable relationships.

First Council: say what depends on what

Mira intends to redirect a narrow portion of the existing channel so the timber can be worked without washing loose downstream. This is supported by Water I, Verb II and Near. She does not claim control of every stream or permanent protection for all living things. The table agrees that directing this particular lane requires her to keep attending to it; while she does so, this working cannot be redirected to a separate water task. That is a scene-specific restrictive upkeep agreement.





Torren intends to secure the timber with rope. He will move 10 ft early, then the remaining 10 ft as the channel settles. He has 30 ft for the whole round. Both hands will be free for threading and tying after he sets his ordinary hook aside as part of the declared task. The table accepts that mundane handling within this intent. It does not establish a universal rule that every equipment change is an unlimited free action.

Ilex intends to explain the safe plan to the Watchers. They name the spawning bed and offer to keep the timber tied until it reaches the landing. This addresses the actual objection. Ilex is not rewriting the guardians' agency. The DM decides Watcher B is willing to consider a demonstrated plan; Watcher A remains distrustful and intends to strike Torren before the timber moves.

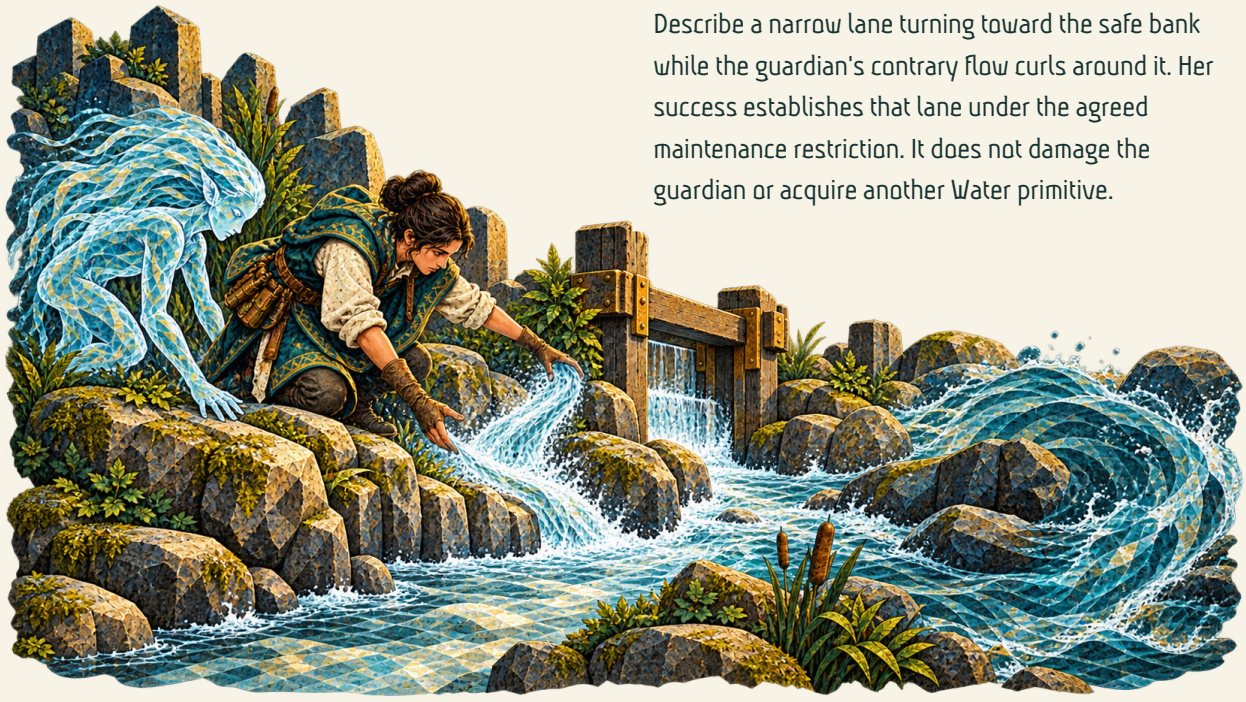
Watcher B intends to keep the current away from the bed, opposing Mira's channel because it mistakes the proposed flow for a release. Its immediate control and Mira's immediate control meet in Fast. The question is whose opposed effort shapes that water, so the table selects a contest. It does not add a separate setup DC check to resolve the same opposed question a second time.

First-round intent	Placement in this example	Relevant dependency
Mira directs the narrow lane	Fast, Complexity 1	Located existing water; Watcher B opposes the same flow
Watcher B turns that flow back	Fast, Complexity 1	Same water and actual control contest
Watcher A strikes Torren	Fast, Complexity 1	Visible target within 30 ft and clear projected path
Torren secures the timber	Measured, Complexity 2	Reach the arm; channel settles; anchor and tie the line
Ilex explains the plan and points out the tether	Measured, Complexity 2	Visible demonstration supports the explanation

These complexity choices belong to the described dependencies. A different approach can change them. They are not prices attached to water magic, persuasion or rope. No participant receives another Main Intent because they are in a later track.

First Fast: resolve one question at a time

Mira rolls 13 and adds her combined Magical bonus +6 for 19. Watcher B rolls 11 and adds its combined Magical bonus +3 for 14. Mira wins the actual control contest. Describe a narrow lane turning toward the safe bank while the guardian's contrary flow curls around it. Her success establishes that lane under the agreed maintenance restriction. It does not damage the guardian or acquire another Water primitive.



Watcher A attacks Torren through the clear path. Its d20 result is 14; 14 + 3 = 17 against Torren's DC 12. The attack hits. Its d8 result is 5. Torren has no applicable Water resistance in the example record, so he loses 5 Vitality, going from 12 to 7. His ordinary coat does not secretly supply armor. He has not also failed a saving throw: this expression uses an attack, not both procedures by default.

Torren could propose a valid response if his actual position and permissions support one. Spending a slot alone would not make the attack miss, halve its damage or provide a distant counterattack. His player chooses to continue the repair and preserve the slot. A reaction is an opportunity for an eligible action, not a mandatory defense calculation on every hit.

The hit does not automatically end Mira's lane. It struck Torren, but even a hit on Mira would require the actual interference rule or a relevant consequence. The alpha has no settled additional damage-triggered Vitality-upkeep repayment scheme. Do not introduce one here because the scene contains injury.

First Measured: the setup makes another choice secure

Torren has moved 10 ft in Fast. He moves another 10 in Measured, reaches the timber and has 10 ft of the round's walking allowance unused. He secures the rope with both hands. Steady Hands qualifies for this precise threading and tying work, so his Finesse is +9. It is not added to every Physical check or to his DC.

The table had agreed DC 14 for making the tether secure before the timber shifts. Torren rolls 9: 9 + 9 = 18. The tether holds. On a failure, the agreed outcome was an insecure line and a changed opportunity, not an unexplained disappearance of all rope. On this success, the workers can see the timber is secured. It has not yet been pulled out.

Ilex explains the tether and points to Mira's safe lane. Watcher B can observe the proof that answers its concern. The DM does not require Influence merely to insist that every social action has a die. Watcher B agrees to inspect the downstream route next round. Watcher A sees the same facts but has a different judgment: it will not consent until the timber is moving away from the bed.



If Watcher B were frightened of a hidden obligation or distrusted Ilex specifically, an Influence check might resolve that uncertainty. The check would need a stated question and outcome. The record's +7 does not automatically overwrite every motive. Here the proposed arrangement is credible enough for B to accept without that uncertainty.

Read the first-round state aloud

No Heavy action remains, so the group reviews the actual changes before the next Council. A digital phase control can organize that review; it does not apply it for you.

Record after round one	Actual state
Torren	7/12 Vitality; beside the timber; 20 ft movement used; reaction unspent; tether secured
Mira	12/12; safe landing; narrow lane active; directing requirement continues
Ilex	12/12; plan explained; no reaction spent
Watcher A	13/13; distrustful; Water Impact resolved; no persistent effect from that attack
Watcher B	13/13; failed to reverse Mira's flow; now willing to inspect the safe route
Objective	Timber tethered; lowering arm still blocked; bridge not yet safe
Environment	Narrow safe lane visible; loose board remains beside the arm

This summary takes less time than retelling the conversation. It makes the next decision possible. A single “party winning” marker would hide the injury, the differing guardians and the unfinished objective.

Second Council: change intentions when the world changes

The new Council refreshes the ordinary independent Reaction Slot for each participant. It does not refresh current Vitality, short-rest allowance or the whole list of consequences. The group replaces the previous round's intent markers with these new declarations.

Mira accepts the continuation requirement and intends to keep the lane directed. Nothing has changed its scale or opposition enough to demand another identical roll. The table can simply continue the established working while its terms hold. This is her meaningful contribution this round; she does not also announce another complete water attack without reviewing compatibility and a coherent intent. Her choice here does not establish that every upkeep requirement consumes a Main Intent; other actual requirements can permit other compatible work.

Torren intends to pull the timber toward the landing using the secured rope. The table agrees a Prowess check, DC 14, because the timber is caught under uneven pressure. His +7 applies. Steady Hands does not apply: pulling a load is not threading or tying a rope. The announced failure is that the timber stays caught and loosens the small brace, creating an immediate risk of the loose rope end dropping into the channel.

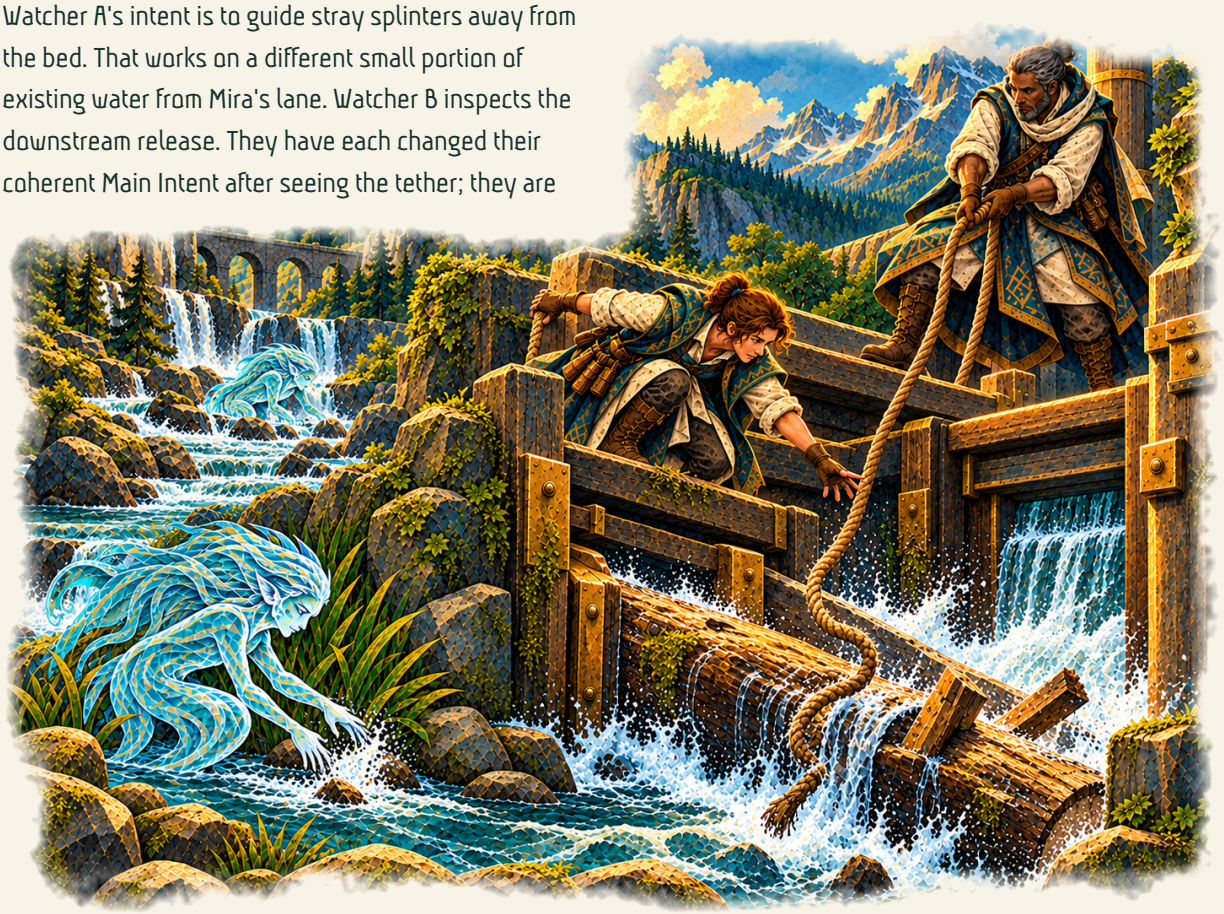
Ilex intends to carry and guide that end beside Torren. They move 20 ft along the walkway early in the round. Their help makes the chosen approach physically possible and puts them near the loose end. The table has not granted a numerical help bonus, an extra roll or a success entitlement merely because they said "I help." If a bonus were proposed, its actual rule or agreed exception would need to be stated.

Watcher A's intent is to guide stray splinters away from the bed. That works on a different small portion of existing water from Mira's lane. Watcher B inspects the downstream release. They have each changed their coherent Main Intent after seeing the tether; they are not secretly attacking as well because their roster role says enemy.

Second Measured: a failure creates a response

Torren rolls 5: 5 + 7 = 12 against DC 14. The pull does not free the timber. The small brace shifts as announced, and the loose end of the line begins dropping. The scene changes at the point of failure. Nobody needs to retroactively reveal a second hidden penalty.

Ilex is beside the line, conscious, able to perceive it and has a free hand. They propose catching the falling end. The table agrees that this is an immediate Complexity I response affecting one reachable object. It uses their available independent Reaction Slot. They have the opportunity; the wet rope still makes success uncertain.



The table selects Fieldcraft, DC 12. Ilex's combined bonus is +4. They roll 8, totaling 12, and catch it. The reaction is now spent for this round. It pauses the triggering fall, resolves the catch, and continues the scene from the new fact. The timber has not been removed. Catching this line does not catch every loose object elsewhere on the bridge.

Torren does not get another full pull immediately because the reaction succeeded. His attempted intent has resolved. The party can prepare another approach at the next Council, or pivot within any actual unresolved part of the scene as agreed; this particular failed pull is not silently rerolled until it works.

Second-round review: keep a consequence separate from failure

Torren remains at 7/12. The failed pull did not inflict damage because the pre-agreed outcome was environmental. Ilex's reaction is spent. Mira's lane continues with the same restriction. The damaged brace changes how the next pull can be made. Watcher A has redirected stray splinters; Watcher B confirms a safe downstream route.

The DM says, "The tether is still sound. The smaller brace is loose. A worker can place a board under the rope, but you need to draw the timber along the landing side rather than straight upward." This is new actionable information produced by the failure. It does not establish that a failed roll always awards a clue. It follows from this mechanical problem becoming visible.

Ask whether the group still wants the same objective. They can stop and wait for a repair crew, secure the bridge in its raised position, or make the supported pull. Continuing is a choice. The shared rhythm should not make a player feel that the only permitted next decision is another attack.

Third Council and resolution: the objective decides the ending

At the third Council, Ilex's ordinary reaction is available again because a new round has begun, not because the catch was erased. The secured line remains a changed fact. The workers place the board while everyone can see the route. Mira continues directing the lane. Ilex guides the tether from the landing side. Torren proposes the revised pull. Watcher A moves a small flow away from the board; Watcher B signals when the downstream path is clear. Ordinary preparation and their actual Water access support those acts. Neither guardian gains Life control or a free healing effect because it has become cooperative.



The table agrees that removing the caught timber remains uncertain but the announced failure is now simply that it stays lodged and the group must use a slower repair. Torren rolls 8 and adds +7 for 15 against DC 14. The timber comes free. It is pulled toward the landing rather than released downstream. The lowering arm can move.

Do not demand a new check for every secure subsequent step. Workers familiar with the mechanism lower the bridge carefully once the obstruction is gone and the line is safe. If a separate unresolved problem existed, it would need attention; the DM has not prepared one merely to lengthen the encounter. Mira releases her lane once it is unnecessary, ending its directing restriction. The Watchers leave the route open.

End when the crossing is practically safe, not when the two healthy guardians lose all Vitality. A three-round scene has involved injury, opposition, setup, reaction, negotiation, a failed action and a changed plan. It used no initiative roll, extra boss action, compulsory damage tariff or secret concentration rule.

After the bridge: a recovery ledger that tells the truth

Torren is at 7/12, with all 6 of his short-rest allowance unused. The group takes a protected pause and agrees that it qualifies as a short rest. He restores 5, reaches 12/12 and retains 1 allowance. He does not lose the sixth point merely because this pause ended, and he does not refresh to 6 by taking another short pause immediately.

Later, a separate event deals 3 actual damage, leaving Torren at 9/12. At a second agreed short rest he can use the remaining 1, reaching 10/12. The other 2 missing Vitality is not paid by an empty allowance. An agreed long rest can restore him to 12 and refresh the allowance to 6; its healing does not spend that pool. These are ordinary examples without a DM-adjusted recovery amount.

The bridge's loose brace still needs replacement. Ressa's promised introduction still matters. Neither is healed by Torren's recovery. The final record distinguishes personal state, environmental repairs and



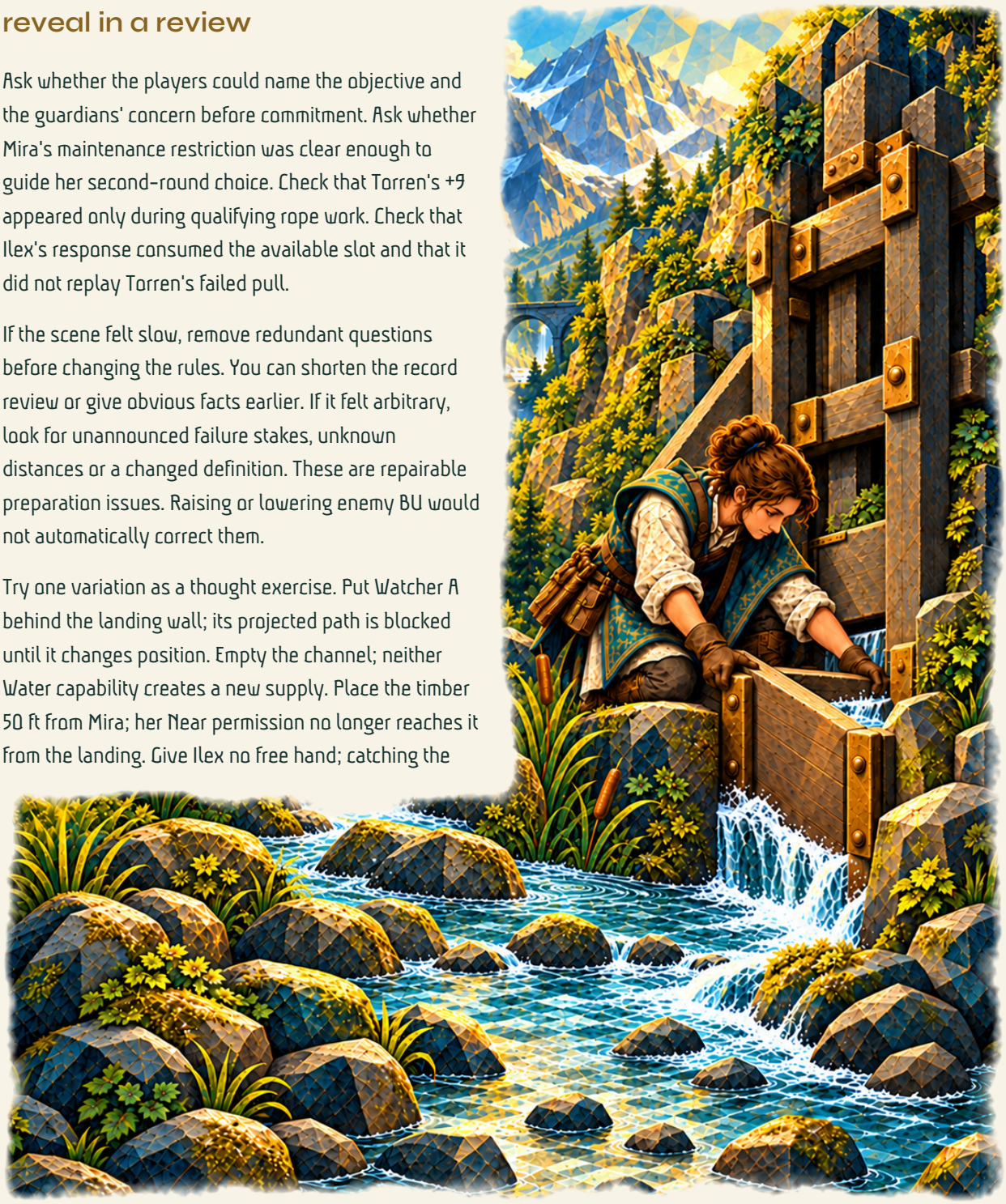
relationships. That distinction gives the next session something understandable to begin with.

What this encounter would reveal in a review

Ask whether the players could name the objective and the guardians' concern before commitment. Ask whether Mira's maintenance restriction was clear enough to guide her second-round choice. Check that Torren's +9 appeared only during qualifying rope work. Check that Ilex's response consumed the available slot and that it did not replay Torren's failed pull.

If the scene felt slow, remove redundant questions before changing the rules. You can shorten the record review or give obvious facts earlier. If it felt arbitrary, look for unannounced failure stakes, unknown distances or a changed definition. These are repairable preparation issues. Raising or lowering enemy BU would not automatically correct them.

Try one variation as a thought exercise. Put Watcher A behind the landing wall; its projected path is blocked until it changes position. Empty the channel; neither Water capability creates a new supply. Place the timber 50 ft from Mira; her Near permission no longer reaches it from the landing. Give Ilex no free hand; catching the line needs a changed setup. Each alteration changes a specific part of the plan, not the entire construction language.



One rescue, several dependent parts

Field study / Original example · Main Intent and complexity

Read the situation	This field study
Intent	Reach, release and evacuate as one coherent rescue
Dependencies	Support, tether, access and actual load
Record	Preserve completed setup separately from unfinished rescue

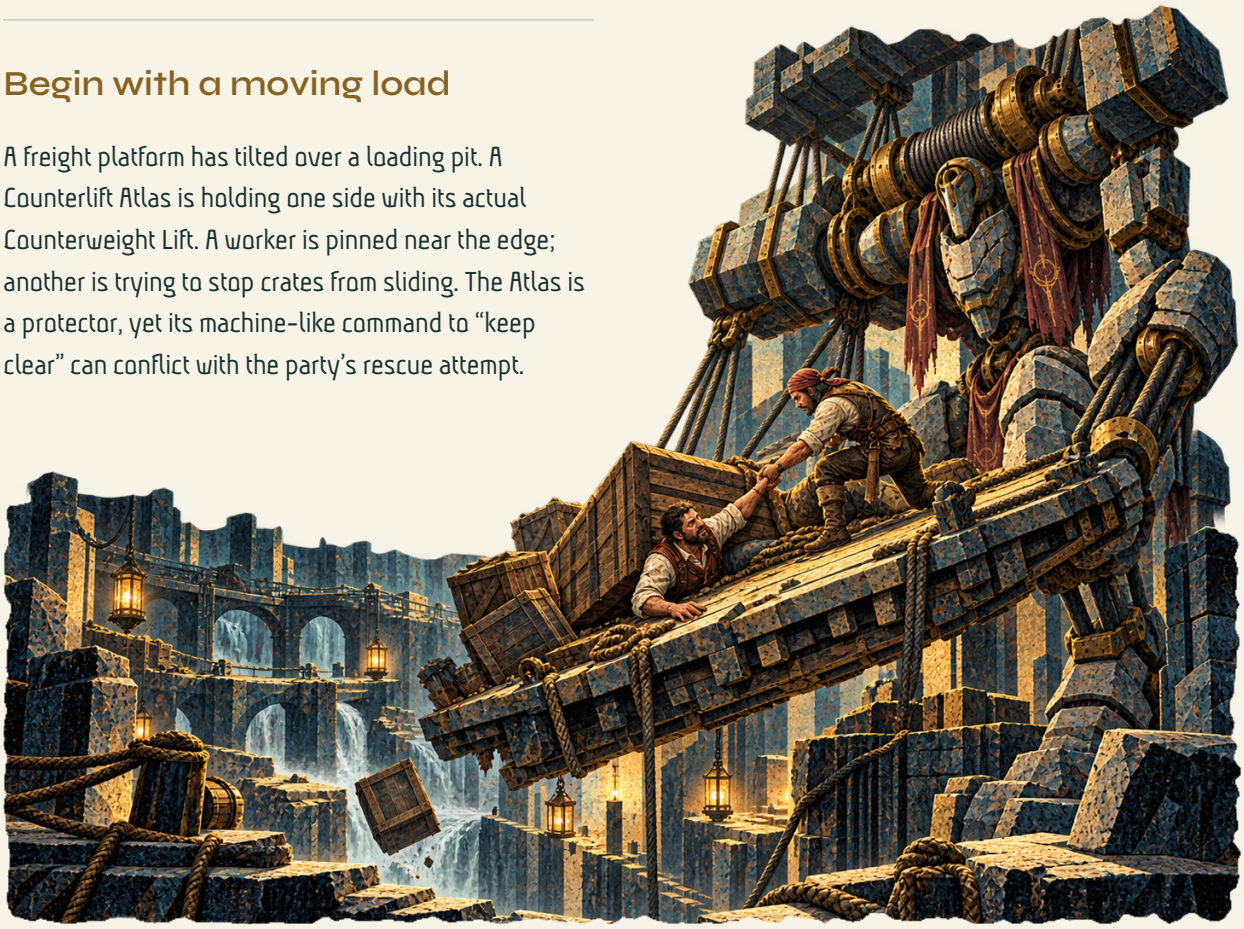
Begin with a moving load

A freight platform has tilted over a loading pit. A Counterlift Atlas is holding one side with its actual Counterweight Lift. A worker is pinned near the edge; another is trying to stop crates from sliding. The Atlas is a protector, yet its machine-like command to "keep clear" can conflict with the party's rescue attempt.

Give usable distances and surfaces before timing matters. Mark a sound anchor, an exposed walkway and the crate that blocks access. State that the platform is presently held, not permanently safe. The Atlas's large shape and Vitality augment do not establish infinite lifting, invulnerability or an automatic rescue reaction. Read what its actual construction supports.

Name the dependencies together

Player: *"I climb onto the platform, free the worker and pull them back."*
DM: *"That is one rescue intent. Reaching the worker, releasing the trapped leg and moving them safely depend on one another. What keeps the platform steady while you do it?"*



A companion might secure a line while the Atlas maintains its support. The group can place the dependent rescue in the appropriate track after reviewing its complexity. Do not assign a separate Main Intent in every track. Do not make the modest damage of a tool determine timing: the task's dependencies, not its apparent power, explain where it belongs in the shared round.

Resolve the intersection that matters

Suppose the Atlas fears that climbing aboard will overload its support and tries to bar the walkway. The party can explain the tether, change the load or oppose its blocking action. A clash concerns whose timing reaches the critical point first. A contest concerns directly opposed effort. Choose the actual question; rolling both without distinct uncertainties only adds noise.

If the tether is secured but the worker remains trapped, record those as separate changed facts. The first success does not automatically finish the whole rescue. Conversely, failure to free the leg need not erase the line already established. Keep established support available unless an actual event or ending condition removes it.

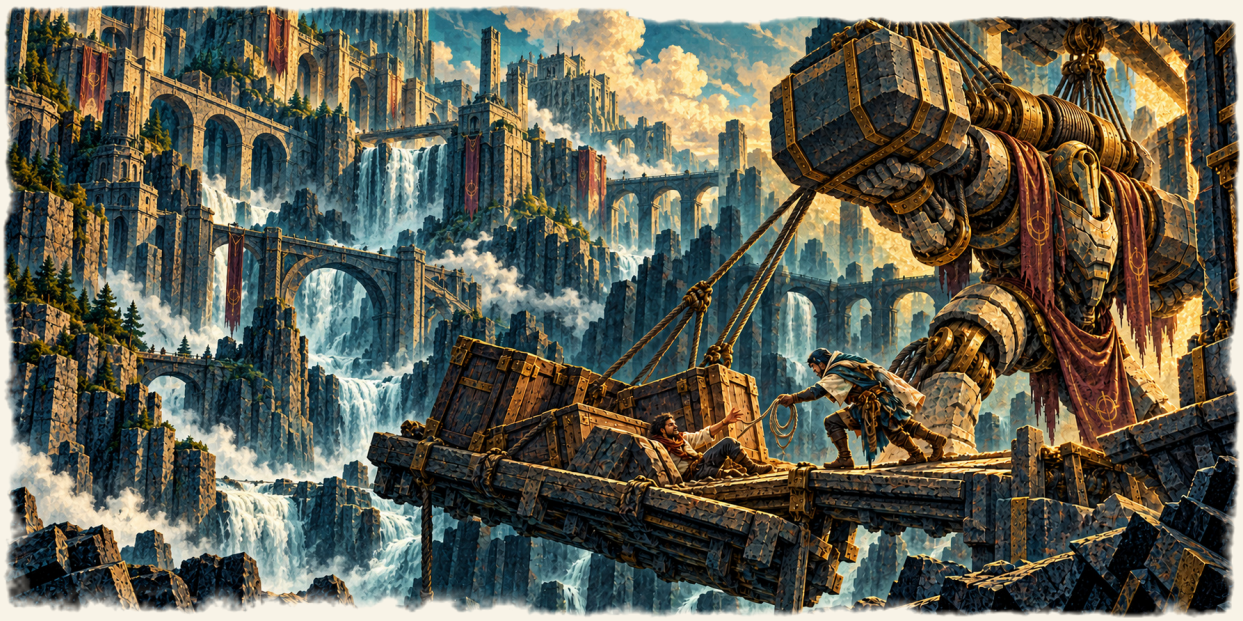
Teach a partial success honestly

DM: *"The worker is attached to the line, but the crate still pins their leg. The platform is holding. The Atlas says it can let one end settle if everyone moves to the safe side."* This gives the next Council a changed problem with a new option. It is clearer than "the rescue failed."

When the worker reaches safety, decide what remains unstable. Repairing the loader, recovering goods and thanking the Atlas can become later tasks. The creature's role changes with its purpose; it need not turn hostile to provide a climax. The useful record is who is safe, what supports the platform and what action could change that support.

Make the unfinished rescue visible

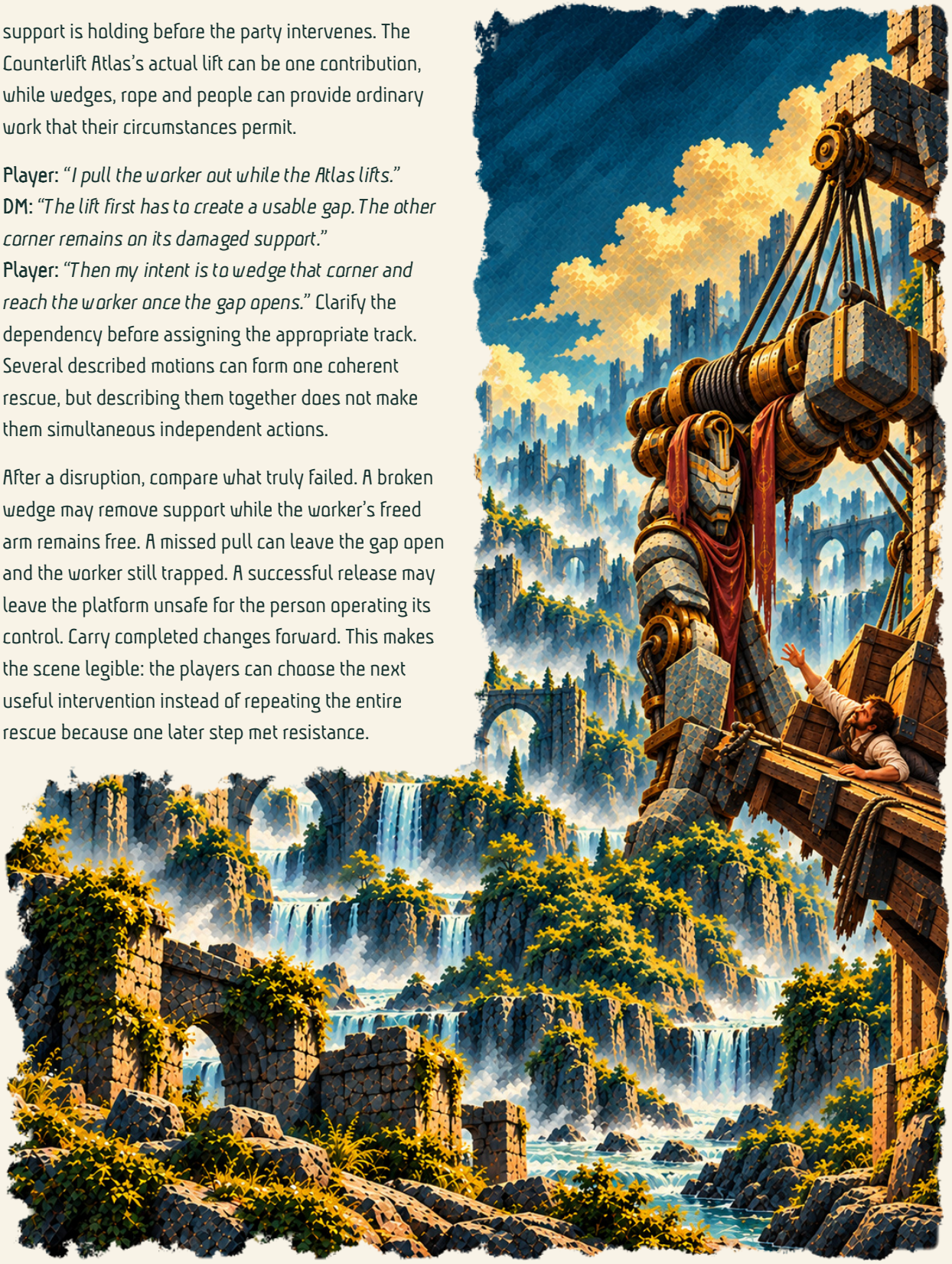
Prepare the platform's drawing with three named points: the braced corner, the trapped worker's access gap and the control that lowers the opposite side. Decide which



support is holding before the party intervenes. The Counterlift Atlas's actual lift can be one contribution, while wedges, rope and people can provide ordinary work that their circumstances permit.

Player: *"I pull the worker out while the Atlas lifts."*
DM: *"The lift first has to create a usable gap. The other corner remains on its damaged support."*
Player: *"Then my intent is to wedge that corner and reach the worker once the gap opens."* Clarify the dependency before assigning the appropriate track. Several described motions can form one coherent rescue, but describing them together does not make them simultaneous independent actions.

After a disruption, compare what truly failed. A broken wedge may remove support while the worker's freed arm remains free. A missed pull can leave the gap open and the worker still trapped. A successful release may leave the platform unsafe for the person operating its control. Carry completed changes forward. This makes the scene legible: the players can choose the next useful intervention instead of repeating the entire rescue because one later step met resistance.



The last ten feet matter

Field study / Original example · Whole-round movement

Read the situation	This field study
Example allowance	30 ft walking across the whole round
Example split	10 ft in Fast + 20 ft in Measured
Objective	Who holds the dispatch and controls a usable exit

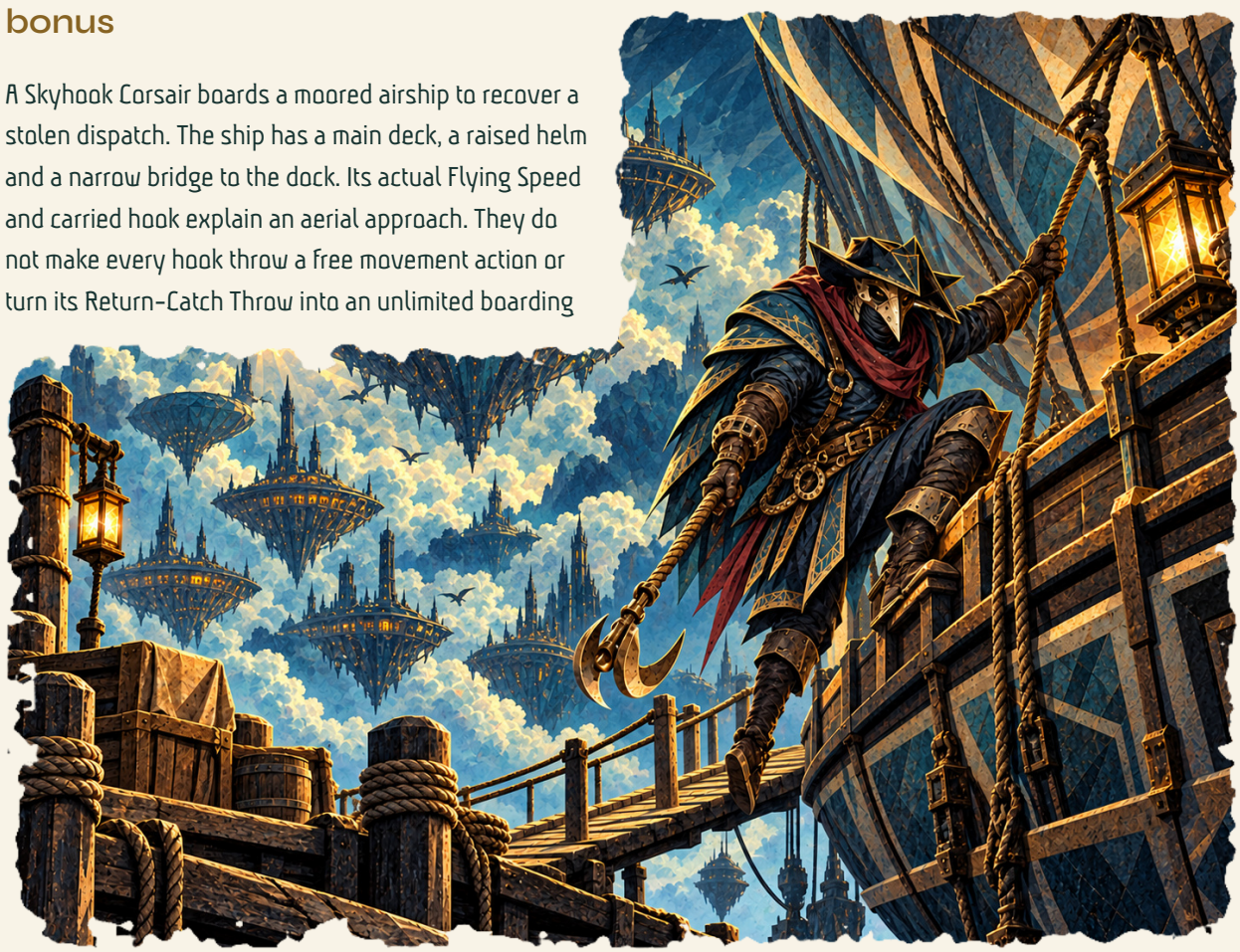
Start with a route, not a range bonus

A Skyhook Corsair boards a moored airship to recover a stolen dispatch. The ship has a main deck, a raised helm and a narrow bridge to the dock. Its actual Flying Speed and carried hook explain an aerial approach. They do not make every hook throw a free movement action or turn its Return-Catch Throw into an unlimited boarding device. Read that capability before applying its title to a new result.

Place the people who matter: the pilot at the helm, a courier beside the bridge and a guard near the hatch. Give distances for the approaches the party can currently use. Height, reach and a safe place to land remain distinct facts.

Spend one allowance across the round

A Medium party member has 30 ft walking Speed. They move 10 ft in Fast to take hold of the bridge rail, then 20 ft in Measured to reach the courier. Their ordinary walking allowance is spent. They do not receive another 30 in Heavy or when a reaction becomes available.



DM: *"You can reach the courier with the remaining twenty. If you go there, ordinary walking movement is used for this round."*
Player: *"Then I will stay ten feet short and pass the dispatch instead."* That is a useful choice. State the remaining amount before a player relies on a route you know would exceed it.

A response still has a route

If the Corsair cuts the dock line, a character may propose a valid independent reaction to catch a nearby person or interfere with the cut. The reaction needs its perceived trigger, immediate scope and any movement it actually uses. A spent movement allowance is not replenished by spending a reaction slot. An acquired movement rule or an agreed consequence can support an additional move; establish it openly.

Do not reduce every heroic idea to "no movement left." Ask whether reaching is really required. A nearby rope, an already held line or an appropriate capability might change the approach. Ordinary handling still belongs to the actual task; it is not a secret catalogue of unlimited free actions.

Keep the dispatch in the encounter

The Corsair wants a document, not necessarily the pilot's death. Moving the dispatch to the dock can shift the pursuit. Showing that it is an empty decoy can change the negotiation. A party member who stays by the hatch may prevent a retreat even without attacking.

End the round by naming who holds the dispatch, where everyone stands, which line remains attached and whose movement and reactions were used. You can then describe the next Council without reconstructing



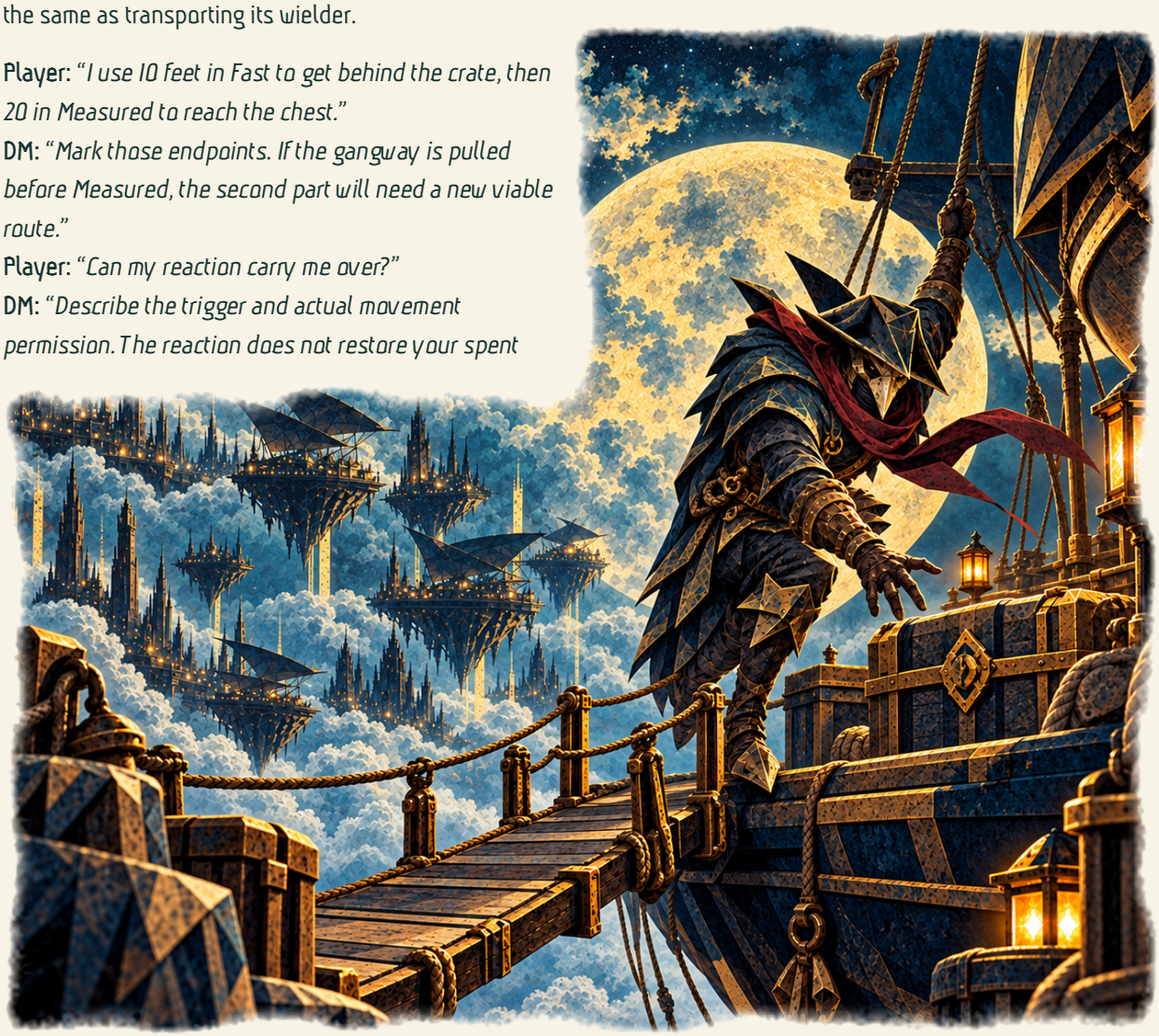
an entire chase. Aerial imagery creates excitement; the small remaining-distance record keeps that excitement coherent when three people reach for the same rail.

Draw a destination for every expenditure

Sketch the airship's gangway, the dispatch chest and the Corsair's nearest secure perch. Distances should explain whether ordinary movement reaches a useful place, not merely decorate a tactical map. A flying creature's own actual speed does not enlarge a player character's walking allowance, and a hook's return behavior is not the same as transporting its wielder.

Player: *"I use 10 feet in Fast to get behind the crate, then 20 in Measured to reach the chest."*
DM: *"Mark those endpoints. If the gangway is pulled before Measured, the second part will need a new viable route."*
Player: *"Can my reaction carry me over?"*
DM: *"Describe the trigger and actual movement permission. The reaction does not restore your spent movement."* This keeps an interruption understandable without pretending the earlier movement never occurred.

If the gangway stays, the party's intervention might be retrieving the dispatch. If it moves, their next choice could be keeping the ship alongside, establishing another route or abandoning the chest to save a passenger. Record the chest's location and who holds it separately from who boarded. A chase becomes more engaging when each expenditure reaches a meaningful position and each changed route creates a decision, rather than another unpriced movement allowance.



A reaction is an opportunity

Field study / Original example · Perceived triggers and rescue scope

Read the situation	This field study
Trigger	A fall the responder actually perceives
Default response	One slot; immediate Complexity 0–1; eligible scope
After rescue	Bridge damage and agreed consequences remain

Let the warning be readable

A hanging bridge tears near its far anchorage. The Wingstitch Chirurgeon circles beneath the span; a merchant slips where the rope has frayed. Its actual Wing-Catch Descent supplies the relevant rescue behavior within its saved limits. Its support role does not allow every fall in the valley to be caught automatically.

Describe the first snapped strand and the merchant's grip. People can act before the final fall if their intentions and timing permit it. Do not hide the entire failure behind a narration that ends with the victim already gone, then ask whether anyone wanted a reaction. The perceived triggering moment must be available to the people who can actually perceive it.

Ask for an actual response

Player: *"I use my reaction."*
DM: *"What do you do at the moment the rope slips?"*
Player: *"I catch the merchant beside me."*
DM: *"You are within reach and have a free hand. That is the response we will resolve."*

A default independent reaction uses an available slot, a valid perceived trigger and immediate Complexity 0–1 with self/touch or a single target scope. The slot is not a purchased success. Catching can still meet uncertainty or interference. An authored grant can change response scope or capacity, but the group must identify it. The Chirurgeon's actual capability should be read with the same care as the player's proposed action.





Resume from what changed

Suppose the merchant is caught but the bridge continues tearing. Resume the triggering event from that changed fact. The rescue has not repaired the anchorage or transported the entire caravan to safety. A companion's Main Intent can now secure the merchant while the Chirurgeon handles an eligible descent.

If two people respond to the same fall, decide which actions intersect. One might attach a tether while another takes the weight. They do not automatically earn two Main Intents because a shared event has several participants. Nor must both responses be discarded as redundant: their actual results can complement each other if the scope and timing are coherent.

Make future risk different

After rescue, the damaged bridge remains damaged. Mark the torn rope, the merchant's current position and any agreed injury or restriction. The next person crossing should not face an identical invisible surprise. Workers can install another line, unload a wagon or seek another route.

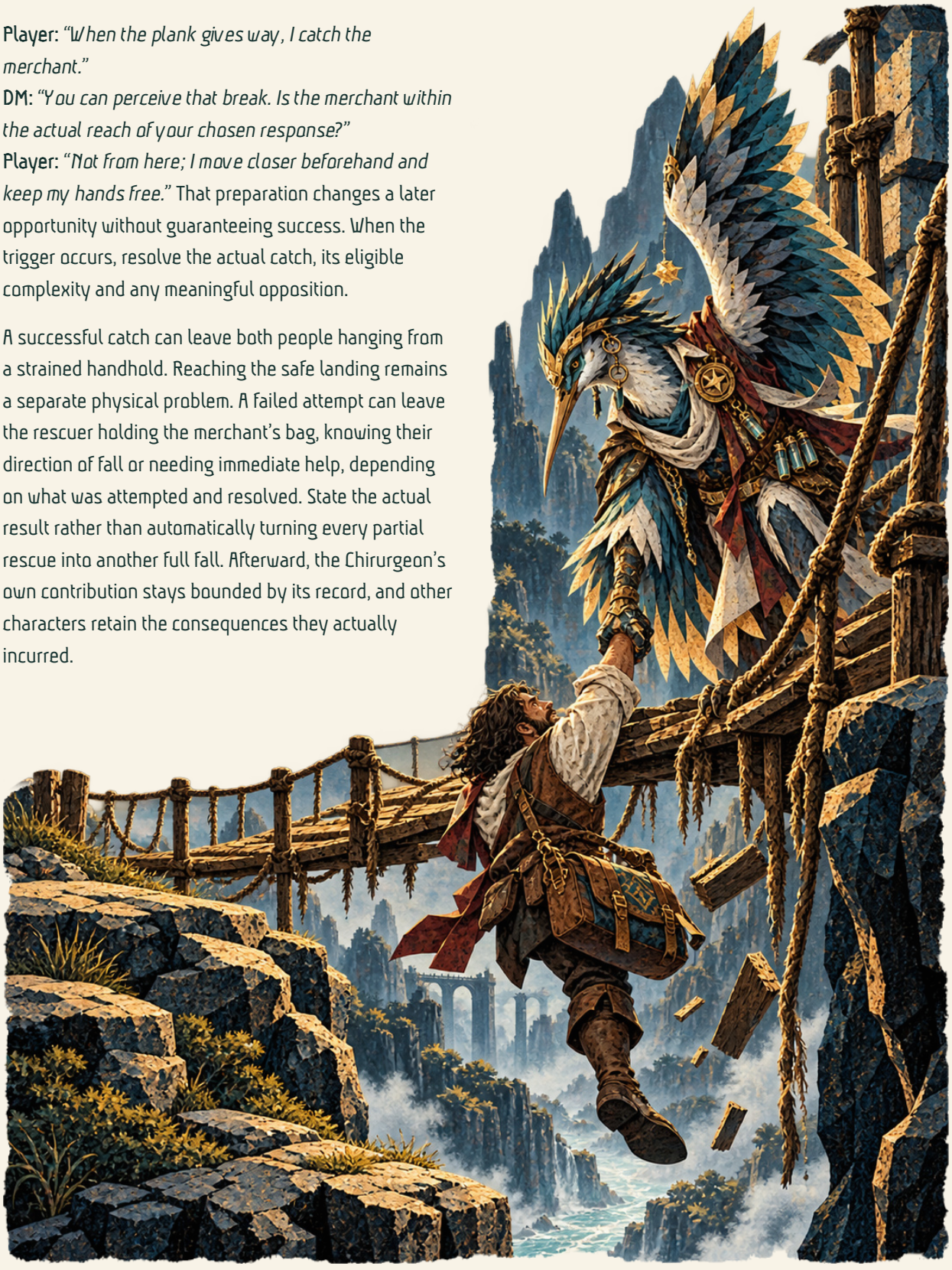
At the next Council ordinary reaction availability refreshes, but consequences do not silently disappear. If the merchant's shoulder was injured, state its actual effect and recovery condition. Rescue scenes become satisfying when success creates a safer or more intelligible situation. Repeatedly dropping the same person to consume another reaction makes the ability feel like a tax rather than a meaningful intervention.

Prepare the moment before the fall

Put the rescuer, the merchant and the nearest stable landing place on the bridge sketch. Decide what can be perceived before the line snaps: fraying rope, the merchant's stumble or the sudden loss of the plank. Those observations establish why a character can respond. Do not retroactively announce an invisible trigger after the event has fully resolved.

Player: *"When the plank gives way, I catch the merchant."*
DM: *"You can perceive that break. Is the merchant within the actual reach of your chosen response?"*
Player: *"Not from here; I move closer beforehand and keep my hands free."* That preparation changes a later opportunity without guaranteeing success. When the trigger occurs, resolve the actual catch, its eligible complexity and any meaningful opposition.

A successful catch can leave both people hanging from a strained handhold. Reaching the safe landing remains a separate physical problem. A failed attempt can leave the rescuer holding the merchant's bag, knowing their direction of fall or needing immediate help, depending on what was attempted and resolved. State the actual result rather than automatically turning every partial rescue into another full fall. Afterward, the Chirurgeon's own contribution stays bounded by its record, and other characters retain the consequences they actually incurred.



09

Prepare encounters

Offer pressure, routes and more than one useful goal.



Read the roster; then read the place.

An example to read, question and adapt at your table.

50 + 8 = 58

Party / 50 Party BU + 8 Party Item BU

2 × 25 = 50

Opposition / two Watchers, 50 creature BU, 0 Item BU

The comparison

Difference: 50 − 58 = −8. Ratio: 50 / 58, about 0.86.
This example has two characters and two opponents.

The situation

Routes, control, output, support and objectives can change the threat. These figures grant no easy rating.



The whole-encounter walkthrough uses a different roster: three 25-BU characters against two Watchers. Keep the example's actual party distinct.

Prepare encounters around choices

An encounter is a situation with participants and competing aims. It can be social, exploratory, combative or several of those at once. Prepare what is happening and what will change; give the party more than one possible useful decision.

Write a one-screen preparation

Record a name, a short opening description, the objective/pressure, useful environmental facts and the participants' motivations. Add the chosen templates, pinned versions and quantities. Record Party BU and Party Item BU separately; party size is optional. Linked characters are a convenience, not a requirement.

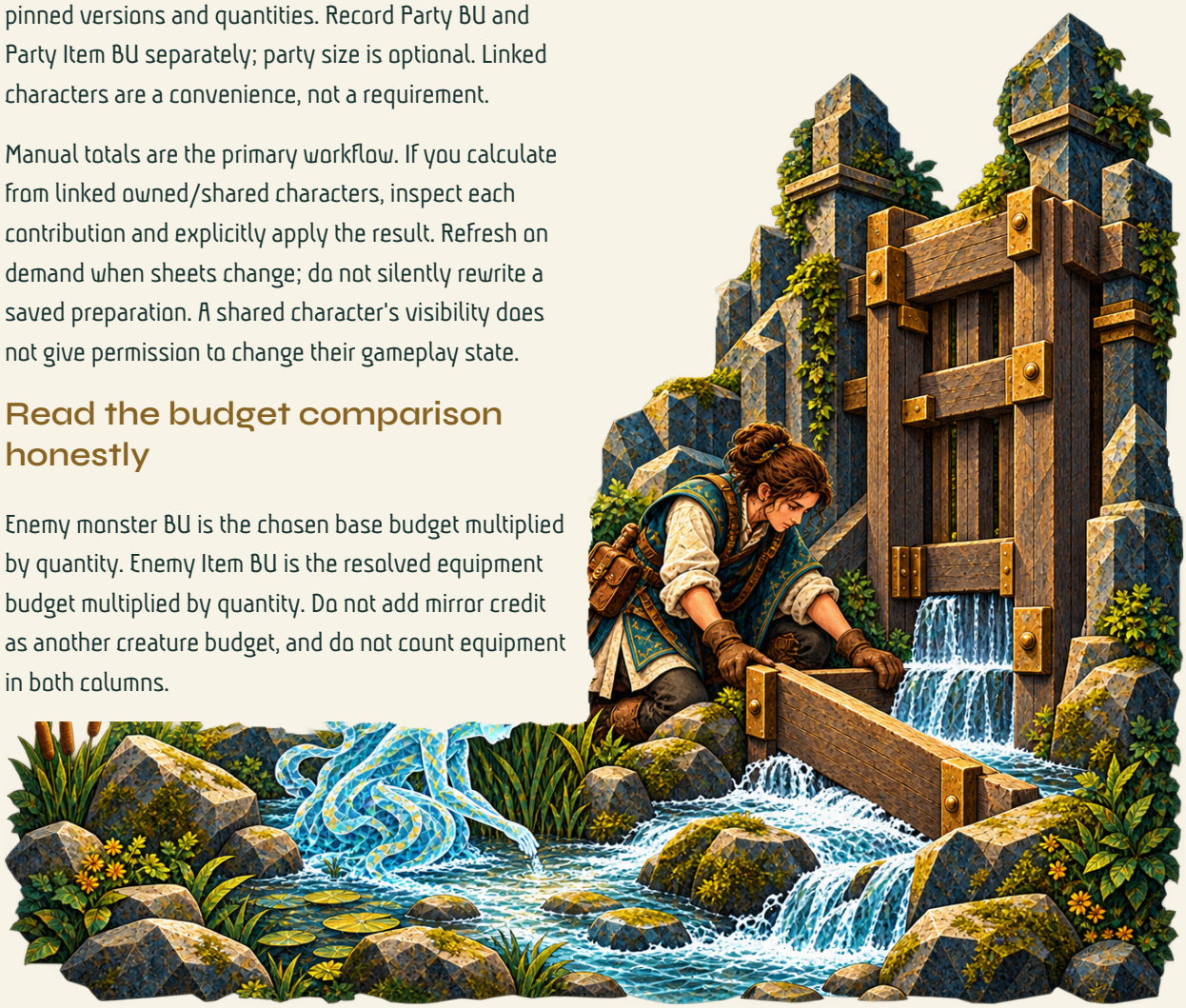
Manual totals are the primary workflow. If you calculate from linked owned/shared characters, inspect each contribution and explicitly apply the result. Refresh on demand when sheets change; do not silently rewrite a saved preparation. A shared character's visibility does not give permission to change their gameplay state.

Read the budget comparison honestly

Enemy monster BU is the chosen base budget multiplied by quantity. Enemy Item BU is the resolved equipment budget multiplied by quantity. Do not add mirror credit as another creature budget, and do not count equipment in both columns.

Worked comparison. Two 25-BU Watchers with no equipment yield 50 creature BU and 0 Item BU. A party with 50 Party BU and 8 Party Item BU totals 58. Enemy combined total is 50: enemy minus party −8; ratio 50/58, about 0.86. With two party members, creature counts match. Each Watcher holds half the enemy creature budget.

These facts are not an "easy" rating. Water control in a narrow sluice, an exposed approach, an evacuation task or a successful negotiation can matter more than that difference. Look for concentrated output, control, area effects, support and burst opportunities. Comparable BU totals do not guarantee comparable difficulty.



Choose a group or shuffle one

Choose creatures for the scene's purpose, or use a suggested group as a starting point. If shuffling, specify whether a BU limit applies per creature or to the whole group. An optional separate boss maximum and Item BU limit answer different questions. Review the resulting group before accepting it; a random roster is not automatically a coherent encounter.

If the budget is missing, you can still save and run the scene. Omit comparisons you cannot calculate. If party size is unknown, do not pretend to know whether the enemies outnumber them. If a ratio has zero or absent party denominator, show the totals rather than a fabricated ratio.

Offer pressure that can be seen

Optional preparation tool. Track a visible problem through a few named stages, such as rising, spilling and breaking. Describe what advances it and what can reverse it. This is a scene-specific clock, not an imported universal round timer. Tell the players about warnings before a consequential boundary arrives.

The sluice can rise while participants argue, spill after a support breaks and change routes when the walkway floods. A successful diversion can stop that pressure. Avoid advancing it merely because someone asked a rules question out of character.

Start, resume and conclude

Starting a digital encounter creates one independent private play copy per creature at the pinned preparation version. Repeated creatures get readable names. Resume continues an existing run; starting another run creates fresh copies and preserves the earlier one. Do not confuse opening a template preview with starting a run.

Conclude when the scene's practical question has changed or been answered, not only when all enemies reach zero. End the run while preserving the records. Deleting a preparation does not delete its playable copies. The template remains reusable; a new run need not inherit the previous creatures' damage.



Run an encounter through its whole life

Preparation, active play, and aftermath need different records. A compact preparation can become a useful run sheet without carrying every paragraph into every round. Keep definitions accessible, but track only the state that is changing now.

Prepare the choices

Write the objective, opening situation, visible pressure, and plausible alternatives. Put distances, barriers, resources, and sensory conditions where you can find them. A roster alone is not an encounter: it does not say why people are present or what a good outcome might be.

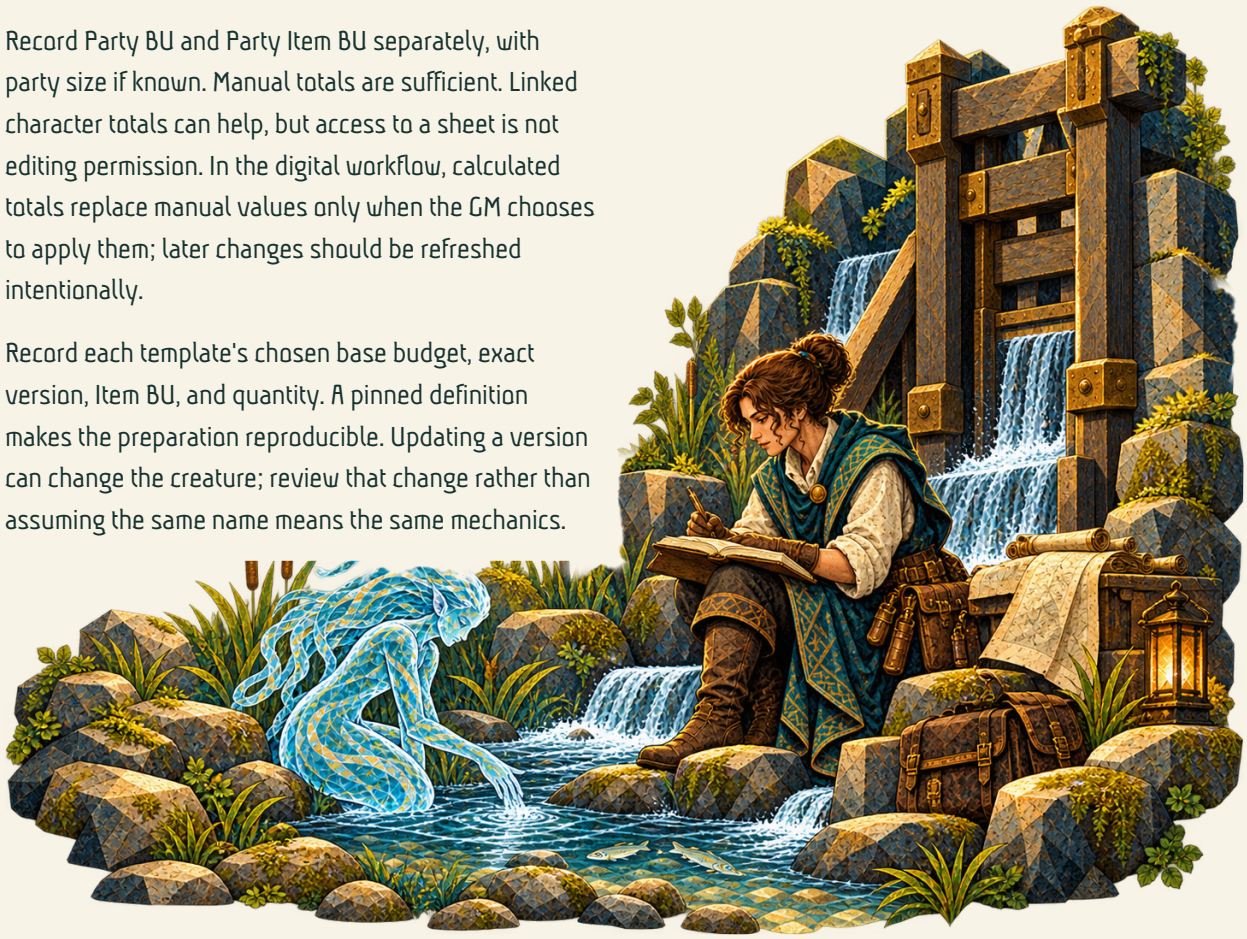
Record Party BU and Party Item BU separately, with party size if known. Manual totals are sufficient. Linked character totals can help, but access to a sheet is not editing permission. In the digital workflow, calculated totals replace manual values only when the GM chooses to apply them; later changes should be refreshed intentionally.

Record each template's chosen base budget, exact version, Item BU, and quantity. A pinned definition makes the preparation reproducible. Updating a version can change the creature; review that change rather than assuming the same name means the same mechanics.

Use comparisons as facts

Enemy count compared with party size tells you how many independent positions and responses may matter. A budget concentrated in one creature tells you that one loss or control effect can change the scene sharply. Several support creatures can create different pressures from a single opponent with the same total.

For a party of three default starting characters, Party BU is 75 before equipment. Two Watchers contribute 50 creature BU and zero Item BU. If party equipment is 8 Item BU, combined party is 83 and enemy is 50. Difference is −33; ratio is 50/83. This arithmetic says nothing automatic about safety. A flood, rescue duty, surprise treatment, or difficult targeting can dominate the actual scene.



Do not label this “easy” solely from the ratio. Describe control, area effects, support, burst, terrain, information, and alternative objectives. Comparable totals are not a promise of comparable difficulty.

Start with independent state

Each creature needs its own current Vitality, position, consequences, reaction availability, and maintained work. Name repetitions clearly. Watcher I may negotiate while Watcher 2 remains angry; sharing a definition does not make their decisions or injuries identical.

In the platform, starting a run creates independent private play copies from the prepared pins. Starting another run creates fresh copies and preserves the earlier run. Previewing or adding a template does not create a creature immediately. Paper play can achieve the same separation with one short state line per creature.

Council is a coordination point

Present the changed battlefield. Resolve agreed continuing requirements, reset ordinary independent reactions, and ask for coherent Main Intents. Record track placement and dependencies. Avoid carrying last round's resolved marker as a permanent status.

You can speak for several enemies without hiding their observable plans. “The Warden braces the gate while the Watcher turns toward the eastern channel” provides usable information. What the characters cannot perceive can remain uncertain, but all opposition should not become a private sequence of surprises.



Resolve the changed scene

When intents intersect, decide whether the question is timing, directly opposed effort, hitting, or resisting. Use the matching procedure. Do not add a clash and a contest and an attack and a save to the same moment merely because all four exist.

A failed timing roll changes who acts first; it does not universally delete the loser's intent. A disrupted route can require a pivot. A reaction pauses its triggering event, resolves a valid response, then resumes from the new facts. Positions and movement used stay continuous across tracks.

Advancing the phase is an organizational action. It does not automatically damage creatures, expire consequences, heal characters, or resolve an upkeep requirement. Apply actual rules and endings deliberately. Digital state controls should support that work rather than invent it.

End without erasing history

Mark the immediate result: objective achieved, retreat, negotiated agreement, changed control, or unresolved danger. Ending the encounter does not delete playable copies or erase consequences. A creature can remain injured; a promise can remain binding; a damaged place can matter next session.

Record who witnessed the result and which relationships changed. Ask players what they want to follow. Archive the run when useful. A future replay or new run starts its own state, not a retroactive rewrite of this encounter.

Design pressure that offers useful choices

Encounter design begins with what the participants can decide. A difficult number can make a roll uncertain, but it cannot supply a meaningful reason to roll. Terrain, competing aims, information and actual creature permissions produce the decisions that make a scene memorable.

Optional design method. Write a sentence naming the decision before choosing a roster: “Do we hold the crossing while the last cart passes, or abandon the cart



to protect the spawning bed?" Then list the facts that make both answers plausible. A good dilemma permits ingenuity to change its terms. It is not a rule that a player must always sacrifice one objective.

Sketch a field of opportunities rather than a decorative arena

Draw the routes people can use and the things that interrupt them. Put ordinary resources on the sketch: a cart that can block a path, a wall that offers actual cover, a stair, a rope anchor, a water supply, a bell that can be heard from another location. Include locations where someone can withdraw or change the angle. A map becomes useful when its marks answer a practical question.

For a compact outdoor scene, three connected places may be enough: an exposed crossing, a protected bank and an elevated observation point. Give their distances. Explain whether the elevation changes sight, cover or ordinary climbing. Do not label every raised platform as a numerical advantage unless the actual circumstance or an explicit rule supplies it.

Consider senses separately from reach. A creature with a long-range working may not locate targets behind reeds. An observer on a tower may locate them but still lack the required reach or path. A tremorsense grant may help locate someone through one surface but say nothing about a flying target. Let the actual definition create useful distinctions rather than treating every sense as a universal radar.

Mark which barriers block projected delivery and which merely obstruct it. The published projected-path defaults are −2 for minor obstruction, −4 for standard half cover and a blocked trajectory for total cover. Direct manifestation requires its actual support and targeting even when those intervening projected penalties do not apply. A wall is not rendered irrelevant by a broad ability name.

Put the controller's limitation where people can see it

The Sluice Warden is a useful control example. Its Guiding Wall organizes a located band of existing water within 30 ft through Verb II, Water I, Near and Structure II. The temporary obstruction has a stated shape,



crossing question and continuation requirement. It does not become an unconditional immobilization label on everyone in the area.

Give the Warden a visible brace. Its Braced Resistance halves covered Physical damage, rounded up, while both feet and one hand brace the fixed sluice. A character who wants to move it away, loosen the hook or negotiate a different flow has a recognizable counter-approach. Present the brace before the party spends several attempts against a defense it could not know existed.

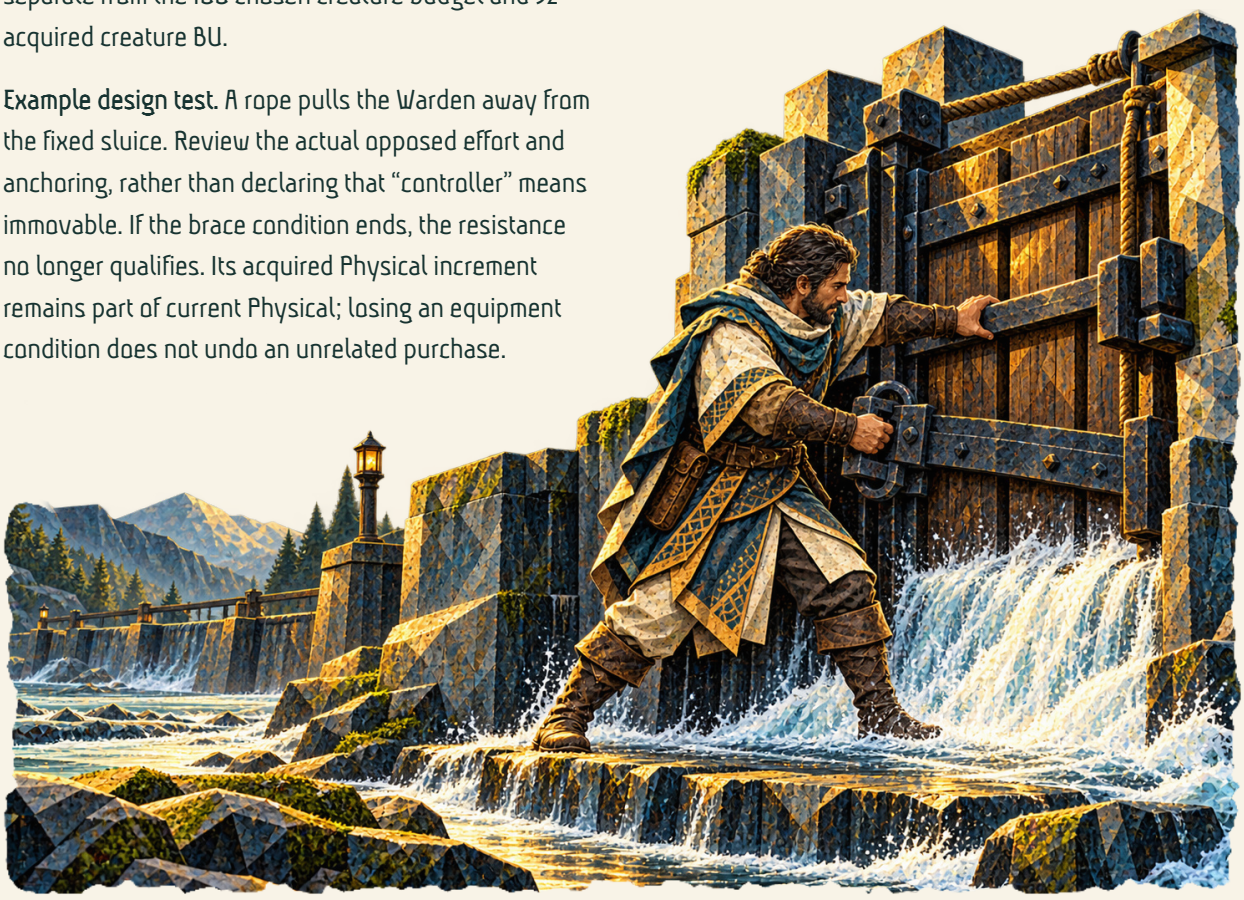
The fixed-hook brace also gives +2 to Prowess checks to hold the gate when anchored. Warden Prowess is normally +4, becoming +6 for that condition. It does not become Physical 6, raise every Physical practice or add to a water attack. The equipment contributes 4 Item BU, separate from the 100 chosen creature budget and 52 acquired creature BU.

Example design test. A rope pulls the Warden away from the fixed sluice. Review the actual opposed effort and anchoring, rather than declaring that "controller" means immovable. If the brace condition ends, the resistance no longer qualifies. Its acquired Physical increment remains part of current Physical; losing an equipment condition does not undo an unrelated purchase.

Make support change an understandable relationship

A support role needs a recipient, an actual benefit and a dependency. "The bell keeper makes allies stronger" is not a playable record. It could mean training, a static bonus, extra output, healing, information or an additional reaction. Choose what the support actually does before deciding whether the group contains too much of it.

Ordinary support can be concrete without numerical automation. A creature can warn an ally that a route is closing, hold a rope, move a shielded cart or negotiate for a pause. That activity occupies its actual intent and opportunity. It does not secretly grant +2 to every friendly roll, and a whispered warning cannot locate something the supporter itself cannot perceive.



Authored review example. An author proposes a primitive: "While you audibly count the gate's turning rhythm and an ally can hear you, add +2 to that ally's Prowess check to steady this gate." The table must decide recipients, distance of ordinary hearing, whether multiple qualifying sources stack and its proposed acquisition price. This is not a new free primitive issued by the book. Once accepted, its condition gives both teams meaningful options: break hearing, change the gate or make the steadying task unnecessary.

If two support creatures maintain two separately accepted capabilities, their requirements accumulate on each actual maintainer. If several effects are contained in one maintained capability, that capability has one upkeep track, with the full scope still appraised. Nesting ten effects is not a technique for concealing the demand they create.

Review burst before the first damaging expression

Burst matters when an actor concentrates an unusually strong expression in one moment. Identify who can be affected, actual dice type and count, defense scope, timing and Cost. A d10 output permission does not automatically supply ten d10 or a second Main Intent. A high chosen creature budget does not decide how many dice the normal expression contains.

The Bellhouse Custodian's normal Hammer Sweep is one target, attack +7, 1d10 Magical Metal on a hit. Structure II can support a reviewed multiple-recipient arrangement, but that is a different declared expression. Locate the recipients, describe the line and path, review the output and consequences, and choose the actual resolution before committing. Do not announce the normal single-target line, then apply it to everyone after a favorable roll.

Warn the party through observable preparation: hammer arms rising together, marked metal turning toward a route, the Custodian leaving its lift task. These tells do not necessarily reveal an exact damage number. They reveal that a choice is arriving. Players can take cover, move, interfere, secure the objective or accept the danger for a reason.

Avoid adding burst merely to compensate for a solo being outnumbered. A powerful opening that removes a new player before they understand the scene can





reduce decisions sharply. Review with the actual party record. An objective threat, an explicit extra response or a position that can change may produce more useful play than an unexplained damage increase.

Keep area effects connected to target information

An area is not automatic knowledge of its contents. A character who cannot locate a hidden target can propose affecting a known spot with actual area support. Establish the spot, dimensions, delivery and who might be there. Friendly participants and bystanders matter if the definition affects them. “Enemies only” is a recipient filter that needs its own understandable basis, not an assumption on every hostile working.

If a wall hides the room, a projected path into it may still be blocked. If a supported direct arrangement can affect a known area, the uncertainty about contents remains. A granted method such as a specifically authored scrying or “any qualifying recipient within range” can change targeting. Read the grant rather than making every high tier equivalent to omniscience.

Example. A party hears footsteps on the far side of a wooden screen. They can put a marked cone of a reviewed working across the doorway if they know its position and have the appropriate access. They cannot assume that the footsteps belong to all of the desired targets, or that a friend is absent. Give the players the information their senses support and let them choose whether to act on that uncertainty.

Design an ambush without assigning a universal surprise package

Prepare what the ambushers know, what hides them and what signs remain. Broken reeds, a quiet path, an oddly placed light or a watch animal's behavior can support discovery. Do not decide that noticing any one sign prevents every danger. Nor should a failed awareness check force every character into a fixed imported condition called surprised.

There is no universal surprise mechanic in this edition. A table may choose the suggested treatment in which prepared enemies complete a round before surprised participants respond; circumstances or an agreed d20

check can change it. If you use that optional treatment, explain what made preparation meaningful and who was actually caught unaware. It is not a permanent entitlement for the side that says “we ambush.”

Consider whether the first event can be an environmental change instead of a lethal attack. A dropped barrier, a stolen key or a severed towrope can create an urgent encounter with choices. Use real permissions and opportunities. A creature cannot teleport into a concealed position merely because an ambush would be dramatic.

Give a solo more than one practical question

The Custodian has 225 chosen BU, 56 acquired and 169 remaining. Its foundation provides maximum Vitality 113, PB 4, Physical 4, Mental 2 and Magical 3, with Magical proficient. It has two independent Reaction Slots because Second Response explicitly grants the second. It still has one coherent Main Intent by default. Neither the budget nor the word solo supplies an invisible exception.

Its Plated Resistance covers Physical Metal only. An Iron Knock from Torren deals that source/domain and is halved, rounded up; a normal roll of 5 would become 3. Mira's Canal Impact is Magical Water and is not covered by that resistance. Other declared defenses can apply only if actually present. Explain visible deflections so the party can reason about the distinction.

Design competing jobs around the creature's purpose. One actor can protect passengers, another restore a bell sequence, another talk to the guardian. Hold the Counterweight binds one arm to a continuing task. Disrupting that task can threaten passengers; making it unnecessary can free the arm without turning a rescue into a punishment. These relationships let players change what the solo needs to do.

Test the scene when the party wins an important contest early. If the guardian's task becomes unnecessary, can the encounter conclude? If you would introduce immunity to preserve three more attack rounds, revise the preparation instead. The purpose of an asymmetric creature is to create a situation, not guarantee a fixed fight duration.



Build groups whose members have different reasons to act

Two Watchers can share mechanics without sharing judgment. One distrusts machinery; the other wants the river and settlement to cooperate. A Warden protects the gate because that is its installed purpose. Those motives can divide a group naturally. You do not need a private mind-control effect to let one enemy refuse another's plan.

With larger groups, give repetitions names or positions and choose a few readable intent patterns. Three creatures may hold a route while two move toward a cart. Each remains an independent creature. Apply its own damage, position, reactions and conditions. Do not merge Vitality into a group pool unless you deliberately author and review that exception.

Enemy count is useful because independent intents and responses add work. It does not mean the GM must play a dozen nearly identical animations. Use concise declarations and shared definitions, then resolve the actual intersections. If the record overwhelms you, reduce the number of independent participants or split the scene into connected pressures rather than hiding state in a single anonymous bar.

Rehearse a scene by changing one important fact

Before play, test a favorable case, a counter-approach and an unexpected choice. Move the opponent away from its useful domain supply. Have the party negotiate immediately. Remove the most obvious route. Put an untrained but determined character in the key position. Can you still explain the question and the actual records?

Check whether each essential clue has another sensible route and whether a failed attempt changes the next choice. Count the distinct goals, not merely the creatures. A scene with one narrow exit and only unavoidable damage may need another opportunity. A scene with no pressure may be a useful conversation rather than a combat encounter; do not force it into rounds to justify the roster.

Write down the one flaw this rehearsal finds. “The guardian's weakness is invisible” suggests adding a tell. “The lift has no safe outcome once held” suggests a



support or release route. “Every failed search stops the adventure” suggests multiple information sources. This kind of revision makes the preparation more usable without pretending a numerical simulation can predict table enjoyment.



A warning must help someone choose

Field study / Original example · Preparing a discoverable hazard

Read the situation	This field study
Prepared record	Working, source, boundary, stake and nearby feature
Useful warning	An observation that can change route or preparation
After intervention	Preserve completed rescue and unresolved containment separately

Begin with a dangerous fact

A laboratory's sealed chamber contains a Stillpoint Orb. Its actual Gravity Anchor Trap holds a prepared area. Before the party approaches, decide where that area is, what establishes its source and which visible evidence suggests the boundary. Loose fragments, a strained tether and a workbench outside the affected space are useful physical facts. The creature's appearance does not settle the exact dimensions or operation; use the saved capability.

Put the laboratory's missing attendant beyond a doorway adjoining the chamber. The party wants to reach them, not necessarily destroy the orb. Give the attendant a reason to remain: their trapped tool bag, a locked exit or fear of crossing the boundary. Pick the fact that makes this particular problem interesting, and show it when the party has a way to observe it.

Make the warning actionable

A warning that only says "this place is dangerous" gives little help. Describe evidence that lets someone choose a route, prepare an approach or ask a useful question. The particles stop at a clear edge. The attendant's tether bends toward the same place. A discarded inspection pole lies outside it. None of those observations requires a compulsory check when plainly visible.





Player: *"I stay outside the fragments' edge and use the pole to examine it."*
DM: *"What part are you touching, and what do you want to learn?"*
Player: *"Whether the tether is caught on something physical."* Resolve that actual inquiry. An ordinary probe can reveal an ordinary fastening without granting knowledge of every magical mechanism. Extraordinary information still needs the relevant permissions and scope.

Commit after the useful facts are available

If someone deliberately crosses the known boundary, state the relevant risk before resolving its trigger. They may accept it to reach the attendant. Do not add an unrelated explosion because the party ignored your preferred route. The trap does what its actual rule provides, and its source remains where you prepared it.

Player: *"I can see the attendant, so I try to move them from here."*
DM: *"You know their location. Read the working's subject, verb, reach and other permissions; knowing where they are does not by itself supply that movement."* The party can then choose an eligible working, an ordinary rescue through the area or a different route. This preserves the value of observation without allowing observation alone to solve the physical problem.

Change only what the intervention changes

The party might move the source, alter an ordinary fastening, provide a new support or approach through the neighboring room. Resolve how each change interacts with the authored trap. Breaking a visible ring is not automatically a universal dispel. If you intend the ring to be essential, establish that dependency through the actual definition or the prepared physical situation.

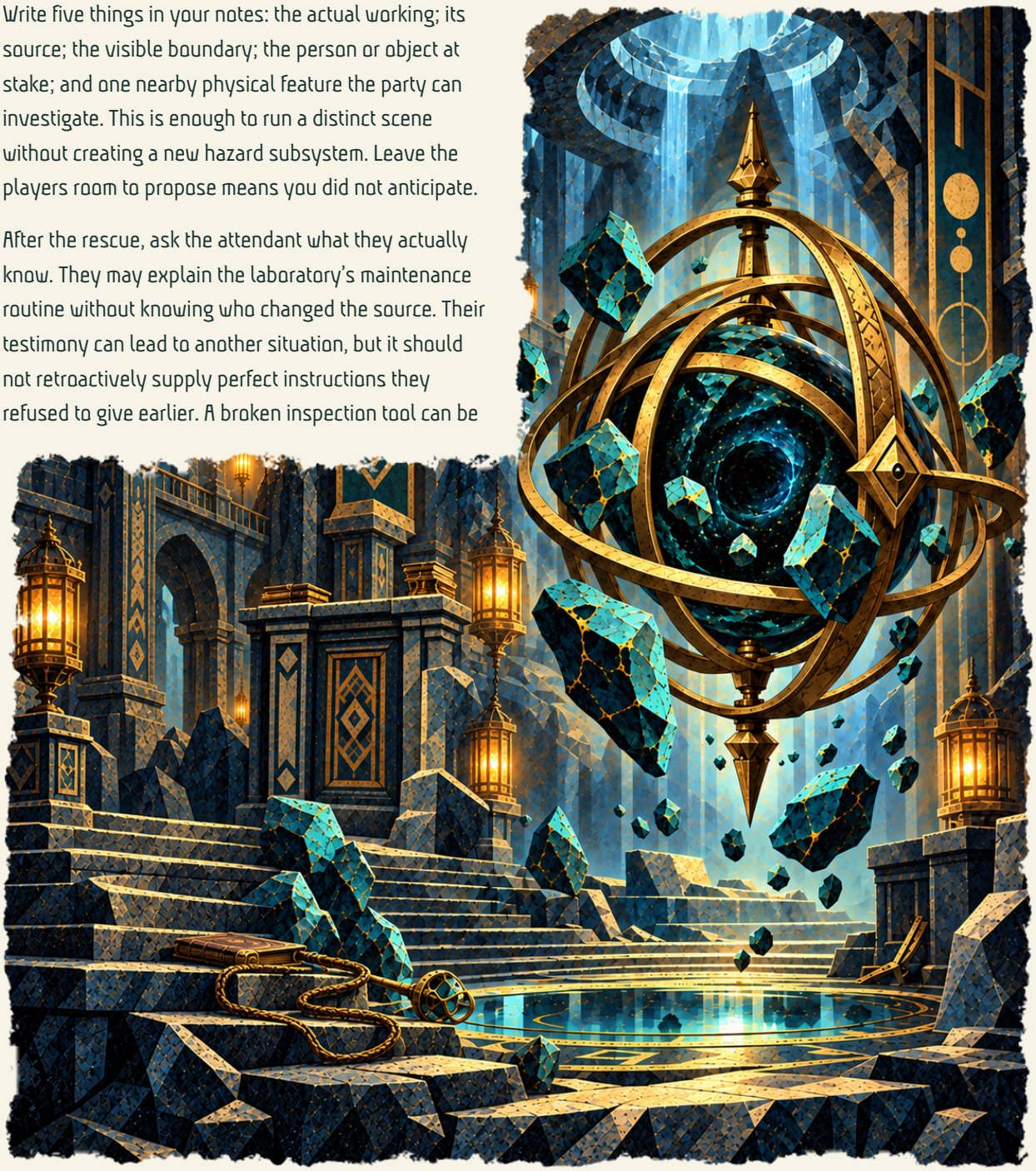
Compare two outcomes. A successful rescue through the chamber can leave the containment active and the laboratory unsafe. Securing the source can make the route usable while the attendant remains trapped by a separate fastening. Mark both facts. If a probe fails, preserve its useful observation rather than making the entire chamber mysterious again. Future declarations

should respond to the changed space and the information already obtained.

Prepare a compact hazard record

Write five things in your notes: the actual working; its source; the visible boundary; the person or object at stake; and one nearby physical feature the party can investigate. This is enough to run a distinct scene without creating a new hazard subsystem. Leave the players room to propose means you did not anticipate.

After the rescue, ask the attendant what they actually know. They may explain the laboratory's maintenance routine without knowing who changed the source. Their testimony can lead to another situation, but it should not retroactively supply perfect instructions they refused to give earlier. A broken inspection tool can be evidence of an earlier attempt without supplying a complete solution. The rescued attendant may know who used it or where a replacement is stored. That gives the party another practical inquiry grounded in the laboratory they have changed.



Prepare facts that survive a failed approach

Field study / Original example · An adventure from premise to aftermath

Read the situation	This field study
Premise	A missing repair promise blocks a needed crossing
Preparation	Stable facts, useful places and particular motives
Aftermath	Bridge, agreement, contract and party promises

Start with a problem people care about

A district's repair contract has disappeared. Without proof of who promised materials, the residents and workshop disagree about finishing a damaged bridge. A Ledger-Eater Imp has taken records into a hiding place. Its actual The Quiet Compartment supplies a particular concealment trick; the name alone does not erase contracts, devour all written evidence or create unlimited magical storage.

Write the situation's stable facts: what the bridge needs, who made the promise, where a copy or witness could exist and what the Imp wants. Give the residents and workshop different immediate concerns. One needs a crossing; the other fears paying twice. The adventure begins when the party sees the damaged crossing and hears a disputed promise, not when an outline orders them to enter a particular cellar.

Connect places by useful information

Prepare three reachable places: the workshop with its delivery record, the clerk's room with evidence of the missing contract and the Imp's hiding place. Connect them through facts characters can observe or obtain. A torn receipt can identify the workshop. A clerk can explain the last known location. A physical trail can lead toward the hiding place when the actual circumstances support it.

Player: *"We talk to the workshop before chasing the thief."*
DM: *"The foreswoman has a delivery record but no signed agreement. She asks what the residents can show."* That approach can establish part of the promise without finding the original. Each location should



change the party's understanding or options. A place that supplies only another compulsory check to reach the next compulsory check is not yet a useful scene.

Prepare the opponent's present choices

Give the Imp a reason to keep records: leverage, fascination or a mistaken belief that the promises inside will protect it. Choose one that fits the creature and your situation. Determine what it can perceive outside its actual compartment and how it could bargain. Its existing concealment gives a practical obstacle, while physical access and ordinary conversation remain possible where the scene permits them.

Player: *"We offer a blank ledger for the contract."*
DM: *"It wants a record of a promise, not empty pages."*
Player: *"Then we record our promise to repair its torn satchel."* That offer can change the negotiation. If the Imp rejects it, the rejection should follow its motive or evidence. It need not automatically accept every clever phrase, and it should not gain a new immunity whenever a bargain threatens your planned chase.

Let a failed approach leave another route

The party might fail to recover the original yet obtain a witness to its terms, locate a copy or negotiate a new agreement. Prepare those possibilities from the situation's actual people and records. They need not produce an identical outcome. A new agreement can reopen the bridge while changing who bears the cost. A witness may settle one disputed delivery but leave another uncertain.

Compare that with a confrontation that retrieves the contract intact. The original obligation can be established, while the Imp's reason for stealing remains a future issue. Failure to persuade the forewoman may close her cooperation for now but does not make the residents or clerk disappear. Carry consequences that were established; preserve the information the party earned. The story continues through changed means, rather than a hidden instruction that all roads must return to the cellar fight.



Write an aftermath with actual owners

At the end, record the bridge's condition, who accepted the repair agreement, where the contract is and what the party promised. These four facts give the next session useful material. If the party repaired the satchel but left the bridge unresolved, both facts remain true. If they restored the contract and refused further involvement, the residents can act with the evidence now available.

Player: *"We solved the theft. Why is the workshop still angry?"*
DM: *"You proved the promise, but you publicly accused the foreswoman before checking her record."* The anger concerns the actual exchange; it is not punishment for finishing the adventure too quickly. A later apology, delivery or new cooperation can change it. Prepare people who can respond to the players' real history, and the adventure will remain usable after an approach succeeds earlier, fails differently or is never attempted.



10

Keep a campaign moving

Let places and promises remember what happened.





Build a campaign that can respond

A campaign needs continuity more than a complete encyclopedia. Keep a small record of places, people, pressures, and promises that have already mattered. Let player choices create the next preparation.

Make factions useful at the table

For each group, write a desire, a resource, a constraint, and a visible next step. Canal workers want safe routes and possess tools, but cannot replace a major gate overnight. Guardians want protected habitats and can change water, but disagree about human cooperation. A records office has documents and authority, but depends on people accepting its legitimacy.

These facts let you respond to negotiations, delays, and discoveries. They do not need a compulsory numerical influence score. Add a campaign tracker only if it helps your group, and label it as an optional tool.

Avoid deciding that one faction is secretly correct about everything. Give people partial information and understandable conflicts. Players can learn, choose allies, and revise their own assumptions.

Let time change something visible

Between sessions, ask what each active pressure does if nobody changes it. A damaged gate stays closed. A keeper seeks a witness. A guardian moves a spawning bed. Show signs of those developments when the characters return.

Do not make every pause cause disaster. Safe downtime can be valuable. The pace of change should follow the world and the agreed campaign tone. A recurring clock is optional guidance, not a core mandate to punish rests.

Award growth transparently

Discuss whether progress follows major objectives, regular review, smaller awards, or another agreed rhythm. No compulsory XP schedule applies. Explain

when an award changes cumulative progression and which purchases it supports.

Keep ordinary treasure value, Item BU, Load, and acquisition BU distinct. A valuable heirloom can be mechanically ordinary. A useful item can have low setting value. An equipment reward needs its actual rule and availability, not just an impressive price tag.

Review proposed new ingredients with the player. If a reward would force their character into a role they do not want, offer alternatives. Growth should support the next choices rather than turn the construction game into a fixed class ladder.

Repair a rule without rewriting trust

When an authored rule causes problems, name the observable issue. It may be unclear targeting, duplicated acquisition references, unbounded duration, or an automatic action the author did not intend. Discuss revisions between scenes when possible.

Keep a brief change note and the version used in play. Agree replacements and state adjustments. Changing a maximum does not automatically heal current Vitality; changing access does not silently erase consequences. Do not use a rules correction to invalidate an earlier choice made under the old agreement.

Preserve useful session records

At the end, record current goals, important positions, ongoing requirements, consequences and their endings, rescue/recovery state, and acquired changes. A concise record beats a transcript that nobody can search.

Shared sheets have actual permissions. A DM preference shows controls but does not grant private access. A character being linked to an encounter does not authorize the GM to edit it. Decide who can make changes and preserve independent creature state across runs.

Prepare what you will actually use

Before the next session, choose a likely opening, two or three pressures, and a few adaptable resources. Reuse a creature definition when it fits, but change its motives or location openly. If you change its mechanics, record a new definition rather than relying on an old name.



Keep one unanswered question for each player if useful. Those questions can guide scenes without determining their answers. A campaign remains a shared story because the preparation creates choices and the players' responses change it.



The Reach of Three Waters

Five places; several ways through. Travel estimates belong to the route and circumstances.

1

Lockside

Repair crews and the sluice.

2

Reedbank

Reed households above the marsh.

3

Bellhouse

Agreements and the hill lift.

4

Willow Crossing

A meeting place on the old road.

5

Survey Station

An abandoned station upstream.



The Reach of Three Waters

A region small enough to change

Original optional campaign setting. Three Waters is a working canal district where an upland stream, a managed channel and a reed marsh meet. The sluice adventure, the bellhouse and the reed-road investigation can all occur here. You can also use each independently. No setting name is a required part of SwordWeave's framework.

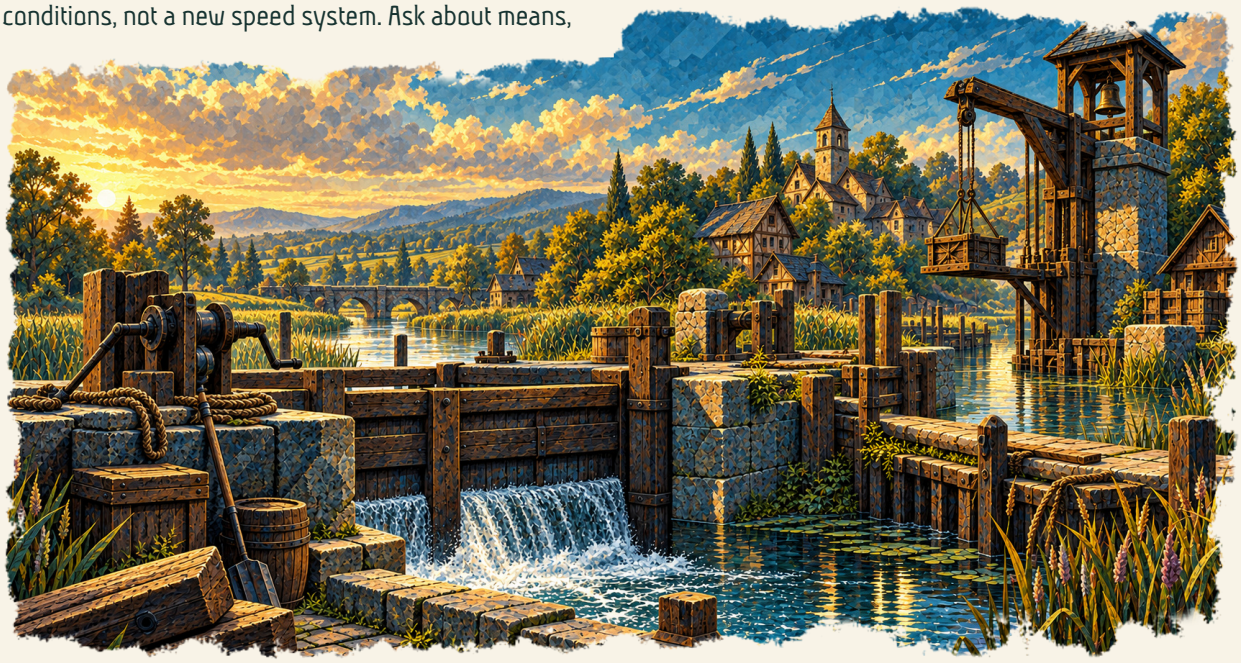
Begin with five places. Lockside is the workers' settlement beside the damaged sluice. Reedbank is a cluster of homes above the spawning marsh. The Bellhouse keeps agreements and operates the hill lift. Willow Crossing is the meeting place on the old road. The abandoned Survey Station overlooks the route upstream. You need their relationships before you need the history of a kingdom.

Use the regional route diagram as an overview. Its travel descriptions are preparation estimates for ordinary conditions, not a new speed system. Ask about means, weather, load, rest and the level of detail the group wants. When a journey becomes a scene with immediate positioning, use actual distances and the characters' movement rules rather than treating a regional line as a battle grid.

The repair crews

Ressa speaks for a group of canal workers, not every worker in the district. They want safe crossings and enough uninterrupted time to repair them. Their resources are tools, local knowledge and people who can organize labor. Their constraint is exhaustion and a shortage of sound replacement timber. Their visible next step is to close an unsafe cart route unless someone finds a safer support.

They can offer transport, skilled help and testimony about repairs they performed. They cannot make a disputed promise disappear or guarantee safe flow through a damaged marsh. If the party previously helped them, Ressa remembers the actual act. If the party harmed the gate, a useful offer can still reopen conversation without erasing the damage.



The reed households and Watchers

The households want clean water and a viable spawning bed. They know channels that do not appear on the workers' plans. Their constraint is that a sudden release can destroy this season's livelihood. Some trust the Watchers; others fear that the guardians cannot distinguish a repair from a threat. Give those disagreements individual voices.

Neri, a reed cutter, will guide a careful party along the shallow route if they explain their purpose. They refuse to lead a heavy cart through fragile beds. A Watcher may help redirect existing water when its own record and motive permit. Neither a friendship with Neri nor the region's name grants the party free Water access.

The keepers of the bell

Keeper Aven wants the public record to remain useful after the replacement error. The keepers have a charter archive, witnesses and a working lift. Their constraint is legitimacy: people can refuse an agreement they no longer trust. Aven's next step is to invite the affected families to compare records in public, provided the route is safe enough to attend.

The Custodian enforces its stated purpose through actual sensory information, metal marks and its defined capabilities. It is not an omniscient judge. The keepers can ask for help, offer access to records and admit mistakes. They cannot manufacture universal consent by ringing a bell. Keep a repair, a finding of fact and a new agreement as separate possible outcomes.

The upstream surveyors

An old survey party left durable route markers and incomplete notes. Their former apprentice, Esen, wants to recover evidence that the stream shifted after a neglected retaining wall failed. Esen has copied sketches and practical field knowledge. They lack authority to close the road or demand repairs. Their immediate offer is to guide the party to the station and share the record.

Esen is mistaken about one detail: they think a missing marker was deliberately removed. In fact, floodwater undercut it. The mistake creates a question, not a compulsory betrayal. Evidence can change their view. If





the party treats every uncertain account as a lie, let the next conversation reveal the difference between honest belief and complete knowledge.

Advance a pressure by naming the cause

Keep three current pressures: unsafe passage, contested obligations and the changing upstream flow. For each, write the present sign, a plausible next change and what could prevent it. A broken gate may divert trade toward a crowded road. A public hearing may be delayed because witnesses cannot reach the lift. A blocked channel may expose the survey foundation.

Advance a pressure when time and events support it. Do not move all three merely because the group took a reasonable rest. A successful repair can hold one pressure steady while the party investigates another. Tell the players enough to decide which problem to address. The region is responsive because causes persist, not because every abandoned hook becomes a catastrophe.

Follow one choice through three sessions

In the first session, the party evacuates Lockside rather than opening the gate. Record the people saved, the closed passage and the materials left behind. Ressa is grateful and still needs a route. The next opening can be the discovery that the old road is passable on foot, inviting the reed-road investigation.

In the second session, the party finds the missing marker and proves that the upstream retaining wall failed. They secure a temporary foot crossing and invite Neri to inspect the proposed repair. The Watchers now have evidence of the flow's cause. The next opening can concern whose old obligation includes maintaining that wall.

In the third session, the Bellhouse records connect the maintenance obligation to the wrong family. The party can repair the evidence, negotiate a new agreement or reject the old arrangement. A campaign thread has emerged from saved people, a changed route and a discovered fact. No session required restoring the first crisis so a planned battle could occur.

Reward what the campaign now needs

Ask what the group accomplished and which growth agreement applies. A new contact, reliable shelter, ordinary tools and permission to use an archive can be rewards in the world without becoming character BU. An extraordinary item needs its item record. A BU award changes cumulative progression under the agreed procedure; spending it is a separate review.

Offer choices that reflect different interests. A player seeking craft may want workshop access. Another may want the chance to author a new capability after studying the current. A third may care about a promise made to Neri. Record who owns an item and who can use a shared resource. A useful reward should create an opportunity without dictating the character's next identity.

Keep high-powered play understandable



More access changes the available situation

As characters grow, their actual creations can make old obstacles easy. Let a granted flight mode bypass a climb when its rules and circumstances permit. Let a sufficient location method find a target. Let a reviewed capability solve the kind of problem it was built to solve. Do not secretly strengthen every wall or remove every witness so the original obstacle survives unchanged.

Ask what the new access leaves undecided. Reaching an island does not decide what to do with the people there. Reading a physical trace does not supply universal moral certainty. A powerful diversion can still require choosing where water goes. Prepare a larger field of choices rather than demanding that the characters forget their acquisitions.

A budget comparison at a different scale

Appraisal example, not a complete encounter. Two level-25 characters each have cumulative progression 350 BU, giving Party BU 700. Suppose this example's

Party Item BU is 0. A creature with chosen base budget 625 and no equipment contributes 625 creature BU and 0 Item BU. Enemy minus party is −75; the ratio is 625/700, about 0.89.

These totals cannot tell you whether either character can locate the creature, withstand its actual output or solve the scene's objective. They do not even describe the characters' purchased capabilities. The comparison is a prompt to inspect the actual records and place. Keep the complete definitions beside the preparation before running such a scene.

The unmodified 625-BU creature foundation has rank 5, 15 attribute points, PB 6 and maximum Vitality 313. Its acquired modifiers, defenses, senses and actions still require their own records. Do not add reaction slots or a second Main Intent because a large creature faces two characters. Budget, concentration of capabilities and practical opposition are separate observations.

Widen the objective before widening the numbers

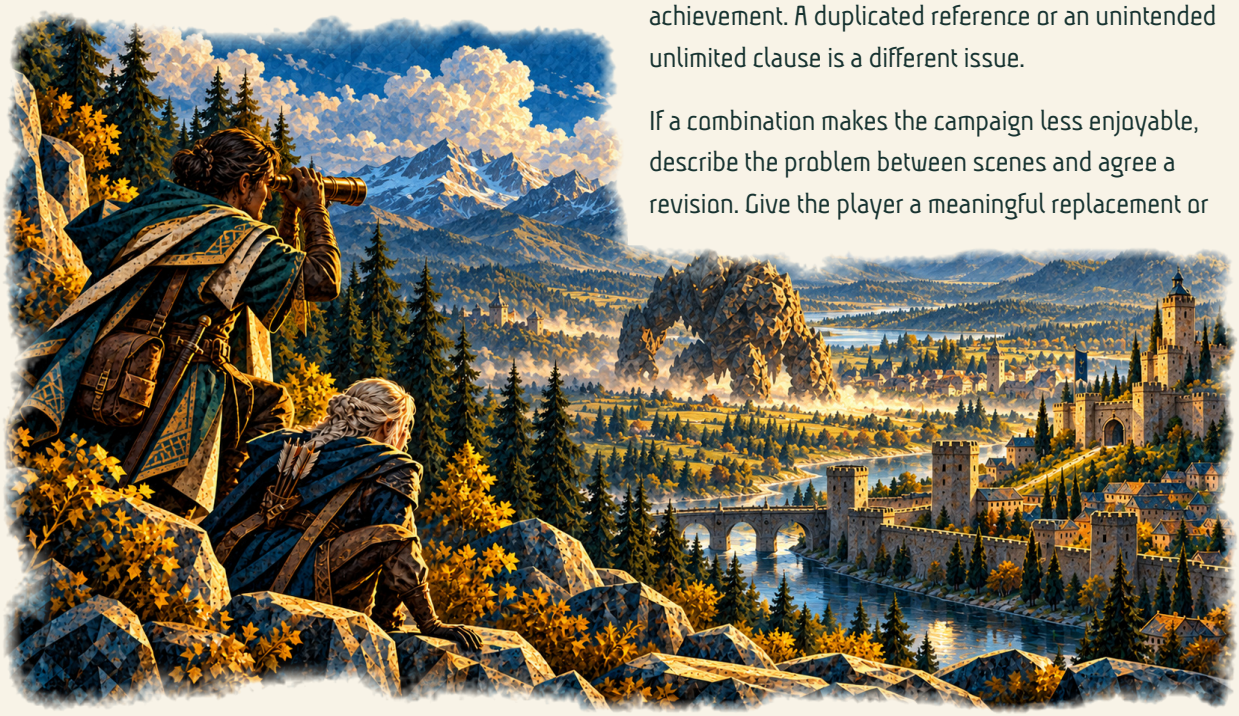
A large threat approaching a settlement can raise several simultaneous questions: which route it takes, who needs evacuation, what it wants and which existing structure it may damage. Give visible signs for those relationships. The party can coordinate a response, negotiate, divert it or decide what to sacrifice. A higher Vitality total alone does not create those choices.

Keep information legible at the larger scale. Say which district can be seen, which line of travel is known and which signals reach the other group. Extending a range permission does not add a sense. A map marker is the GM's preparation until characters have a reason to know the corresponding location.

Review combinations rather than punishing specialization

When several acquisitions interact, follow their actual scope and stacking language. Check which source owns each rule and whether a displayed bonus already includes the underlying attribute and training. A strong combination may be the character's intended achievement. A duplicated reference or an unintended unlimited clause is a different issue.

If a combination makes the campaign less enjoyable, describe the problem between scenes and agree a revision. Give the player a meaningful replacement or

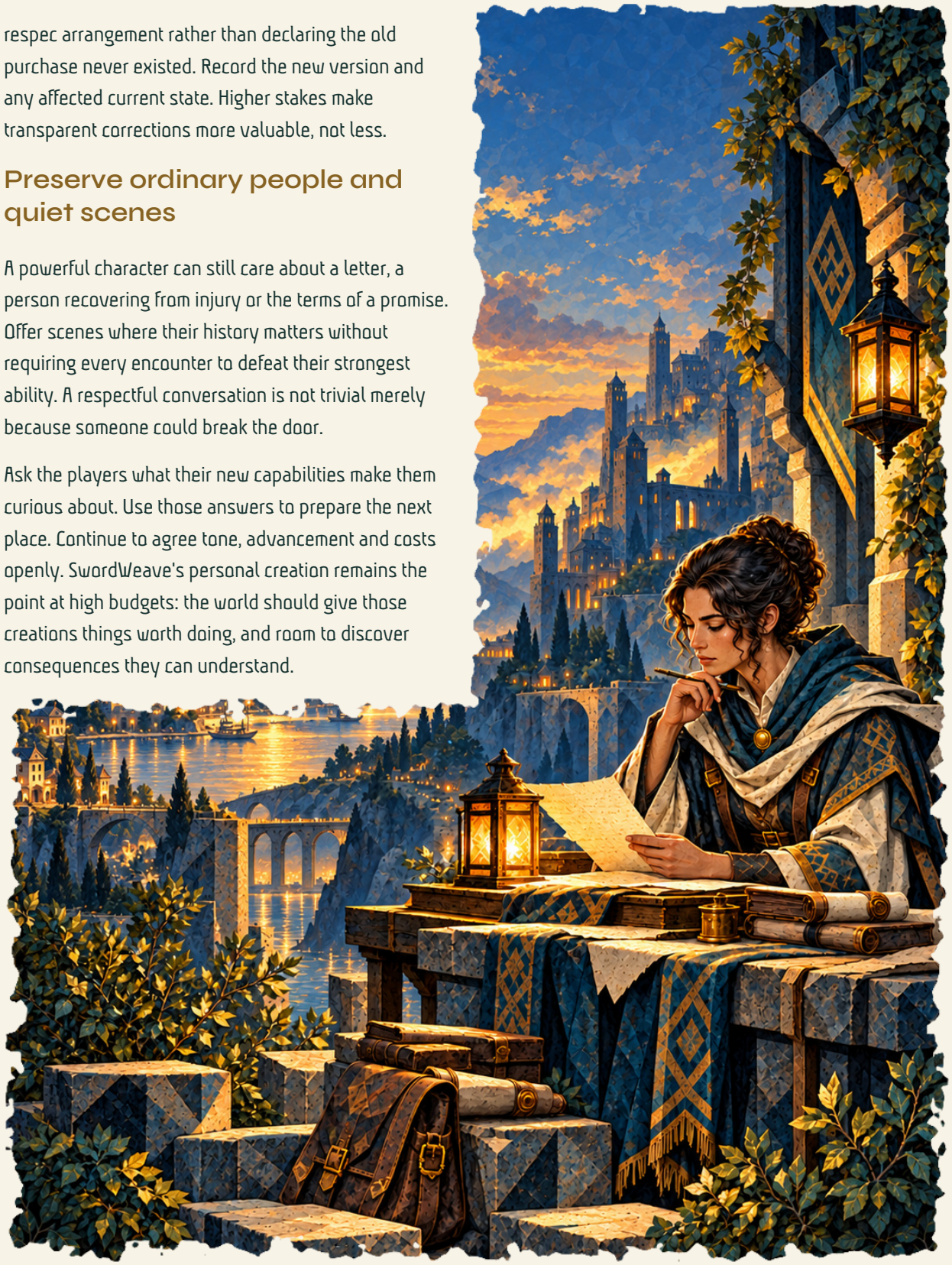


respec arrangement rather than declaring the old purchase never existed. Record the new version and any affected current state. Higher stakes make transparent corrections more valuable, not less.

Preserve ordinary people and quiet scenes

A powerful character can still care about a letter, a person recovering from injury or the terms of a promise. Offer scenes where their history matters without requiring every encounter to defeat their strongest ability. A respectful conversation is not trivial merely because someone could break the door.

Ask the players what their new capabilities make them curious about. Use those answers to prepare the next place. Continue to agree tone, advancement and costs openly. SwordWeave's personal creation remains the point at high budgets: the world should give those creations things worth doing, and room to discover consequences they can understand.

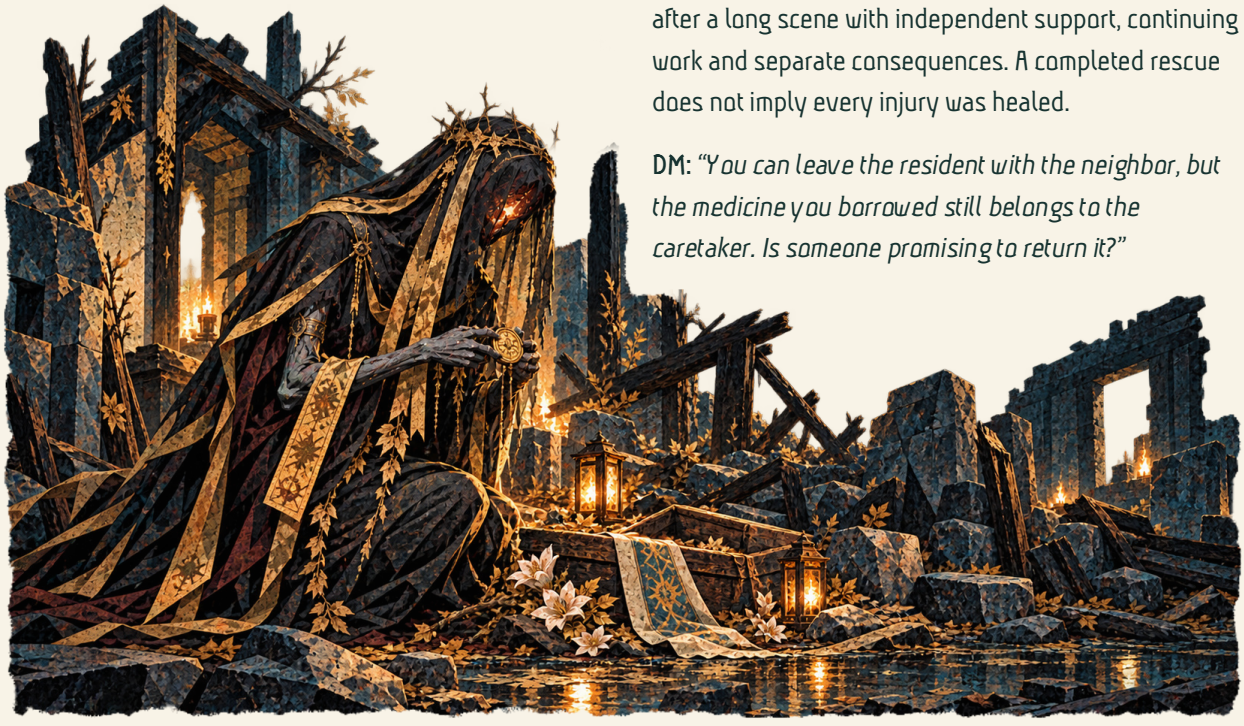


End with a place the players changed

Field study / Original example · Session closing and campaign continuity

Read the situation	This field study
Closing account	Completed changes, actual recovery and unresolved obligations
Reward	Use agreed progression; no fixed rescue or combat tariff
Next opening	A recognizable consequence of the preceding session

Prepare an ending that can belong to several outcomes



An Ashwake Mourner remains near the burned home of its former companions. Its actual Splint and Rally makes support meaningful; undead flavor adds no unlisted immunities, healing or knowledge. The party's session involved rescuing a resident, recovering a family token and deciding whether the damaged roof could shelter anyone. Any of those efforts can change the Mourner's reason to stay.

Prepare a few people who can react to those changes: the rescued resident, a neighbor with a spare room and the caretaker who remembers the former household. Do not decide in advance that the session must end with the creature defeated or appeased. The closing scene can acknowledge what happened while leaving the next practical choice open.

Ask for a concrete account

In the last few minutes, summarize physical changes and unresolved obligations. The resident is conscious; the token is recovered; the roof remains unsafe. Ask the players to correct missing facts. This is especially useful after a long scene with independent support, continuing work and separate consequences. A completed rescue does not imply every injury was healed.

DM: *"You can leave the resident with the neighbor, but the medicine you borrowed still belongs to the caretaker. Is someone promising to return it?"*



Player: *"I am. We take it to the next settlement and bring back what remains."* Record that accepted promise in recognizable terms. If another player declines, preserve that distinction rather than converting the whole party into a compulsory debt. The Mourner's response follows what it can perceive and its actual motive.

Reward the change the campaign values

The table can agree rewards that fit the campaign: access to shelter, a useful contact, payment, extraordinary content or progression through the established procedure. Do not import a fixed experience tariff for rescuing someone or defeating a creature. Distinguish an ordinary reward from a new acquired rule and keep extraordinary item acquisitions separate from character BU.

Player: *"Does the token grant us a new heritage?"*
DM: *"It is the family's recovered possession. If you want a mechanical gift connected to it, we should define and approve that acquisition rather than assume the token contains one."* This keeps an evocative reward meaningful without making every narrative object a hidden magic item. A promise of future training can become a later scene; it need not instantly supply an unreviewed capability.

Make one unresolved question clear

Choose an unresolved question already created by play. Who started the fire? Where can the resident safely recover? Why did the caretaker keep an identical token? The question should arise from a fact or relationship, not a surprise threat inserted only to prevent the group from resting. Give the players the evidence they actually have and let them decide what matters next.

Player: *"We want to ask the caretaker about the second token."*
DM: *"Then the next session can begin at the borrowed room when they visit."* Another group may pursue the fire's source or leave town. Record that intended direction as a starting point, not an obligation. The Mourner can remain an ally, a stranger or an unresolved danger depending on the actual encounter history.

Leave a restartable situation

If someone will miss the next session, agree how their character's presence and current obligations are handled. Do not silently spend their recovery or change their sheet to fit a new opening. Note the party's location, current Vitality where relevant, remaining short-rest allowance, equipment held, ongoing work and consequences that matter next. This is a practical continuity record, not another campaign subsystem.

Open the following session with a changed fact the players recognize: the neighbor has cleared a bed; the caretaker arrives for the borrowed medicine; the Mourner now stands near the recovered token. Ask what the characters do from there. The last scene's choices should still exist in the first scene's world. A campaign gains coherence when shelter, injury, trust and completed work persist, even when the next adventure changes scale or the group revisits an old place months later.



11

write an adventure

Prepare facts another GM can confidently use.



Build adventures from what people do

An adventure can be a short situation, a chain of related encounters or a region of unresolved pressures. Prepare the relationships that let choices matter. You can sell or share adventures while the mechanical framework and official playable options stay openly available.

A compact adventure record

Optional preparation format. Write the premise, three people/groups with aims, a few useful locations, an opening pressure, clues to the actual situation and possible changes if nobody acts. List any necessary component definitions or platform collection links. Include the definitions needed offline rather than forcing a reader to purchase another book to use a mechanical option.

For the canal adventure, a merchant wants the route reopened, a river community wants the spawning beds safe and a repair crew wants reliable support. Their aims can align or conflict. The old channel, damaged sluice and settlement storehouse connect those aims. An adventure grows from which relationship the party changes first.

Reveal information through several approaches

If understanding the cause is important, make it discoverable through more than one sensible route: inspection, a witness, physical evidence or an appropriate working. A clue should provide something actionable, not merely announce that another clue exists. A missed check can change the route or stakes without making the entire story unreachable.

Do not promise that every method gives identical detail. Tremorsense, a witness and a document can provide different useful facts. Extraordinary knowledge still needs its actual permission. A high roll does not invent access that the approach never supplied.

Let outcomes leave different worlds

If the party repairs the sluice with the Watchers' help, the settlement gains allies. If they evacuate and abandon it, the route may remain closed. If they destroy



the Watchers and release the pressure, the spawning beds may be harmed. These possibilities are not prewritten ending gates; they explain how the world responds to actual choices.

Optional guidance. Prepare the next scene from the unresolved consequences, not by restoring the original situation so that your planned fight still occurs. Ask players which thread interests them. A campaign can follow their growing creations and relationships as much as a published plot.

Rewards and long campaigns

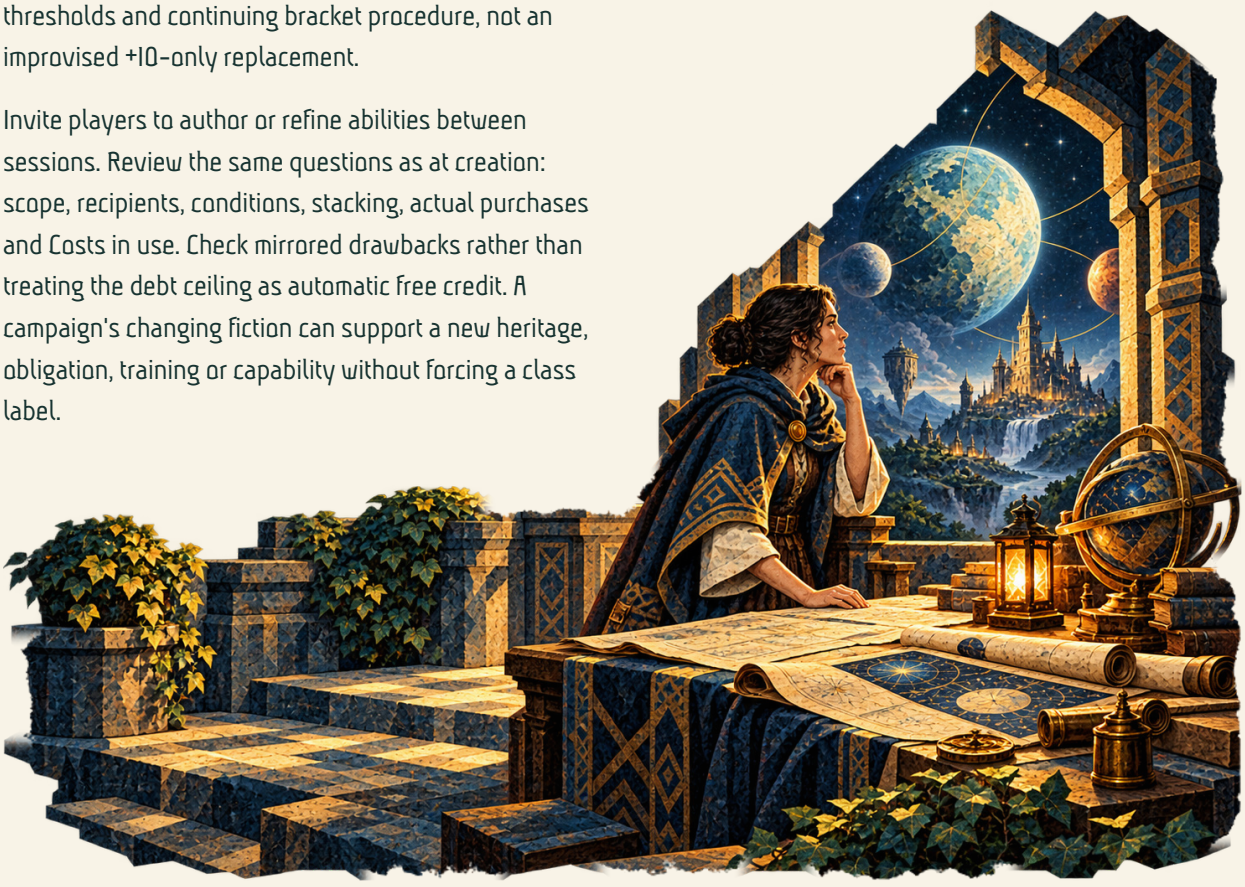
Agree advancement pacing and BU awards. No compulsory class table, spell list or encounter XP formula is required. Spending BU buys acquisitions without undoing level progression. Keep equipment BU separate. At higher levels use the literal cumulative thresholds and continuing bracket procedure, not an improvised +10-only replacement.

Invite players to author or refine abilities between sessions. Review the same questions as at creation: scope, recipients, conditions, stacking, actual purchases and Costs in use. Check mirrored drawbacks rather than treating the debt ceiling as automatic free credit. A campaign's changing fiction can support a new heritage, obligation, training or capability without forcing a class label.

Publish reusable material clearly

Distinguish an original definition from a reused ingredient and keep provenance/version references. Public creations need publicly accessible dependencies; a private source should not leak through a published record. Public, followers-only and private visibility describe access to content, not new ownership or gameplay editing rights.

For compatible publications based on SwordWeave's openly licensed text, credit the system, link the license and identify changes. You may sell your own compatible work under the applicable licenses without paying a SwordWeave royalty. Clearly separate your original protected adventure text/art from openly designated mechanical material. Do not imply official endorsement or use another creator's assets without permission.



From an idea to an adventure someone else can run

Writing an adventure for another GM asks more of your notes than preparing for yourself. You know which facts you intended to improvise. A reader does not. Give them enough cause, location, motivation and consequence to respond to a plan you never imagined. You can remain concise without hiding the answers they need.

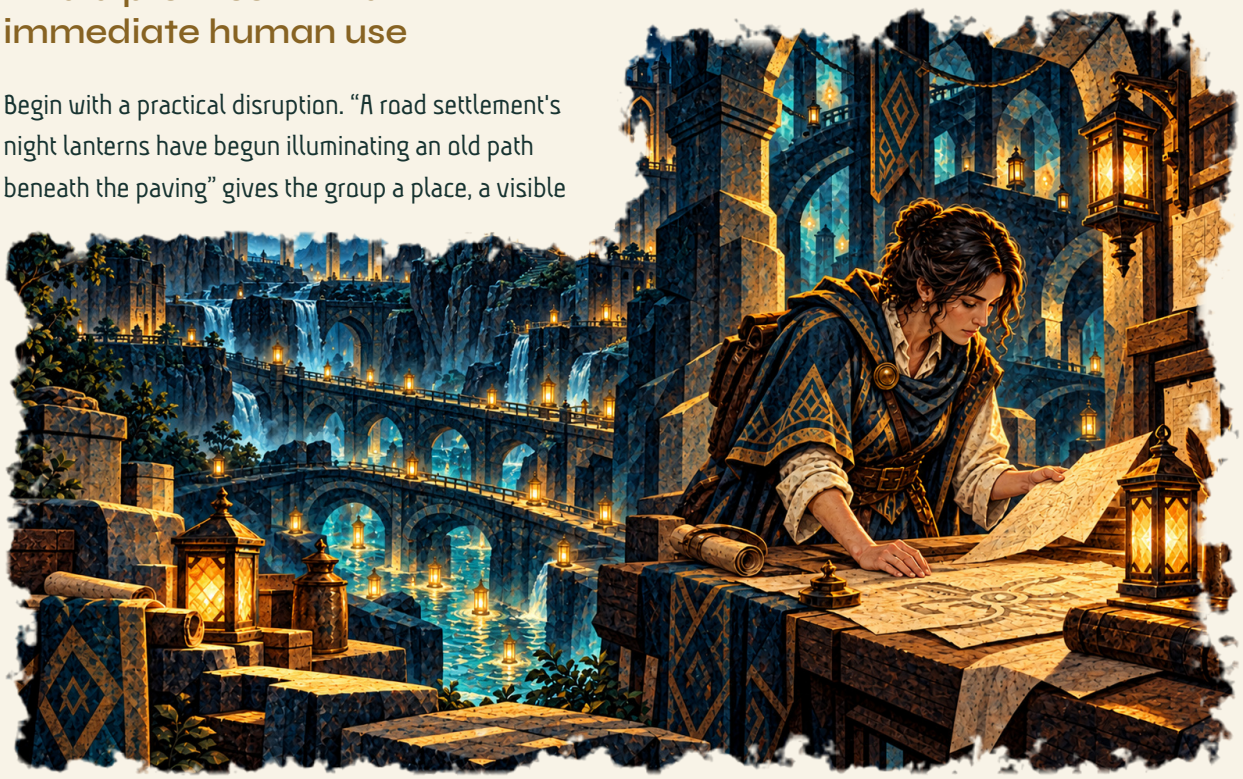
Original design workshop. This chapter develops The Lanterns Beneath the Road as an adventure outline. It is a worked writing method, not a third fully statted compulsory adventure. Use the two complete adventures elsewhere in the guide for ready-to-run examples. Any new supernatural mechanics in a finished version would need their own definitions and audit.

Find a premise with an immediate human use

Begin with a practical disruption. "A road settlement's night lanterns have begun illuminating an old path beneath the paving" gives the group a place, a visible change and a question. Add a reason to care: a missing courier followed the light, and the regular supply wagon cannot travel safely. You do not need to decide the entire buried civilization first.

Write the premise in a sentence the players can understand without lore. Then write the cause in a different sentence for the GM: a recent repair exposed an older signaling route; its keeper is trying to summon people to a neglected inspection point. The players' first description need not reveal the cause. Your preparation should know it, so the clues do not contradict each other when discovered in a different order.

Choose what remains genuinely open. Is the keeper trustworthy? Who will maintain the older route? What should happen to the regular road? These questions can be answered through play. The cause of the lights need not change whenever a player makes a convincing guess. Responsive storytelling uses their choices without making evidence meaningless.

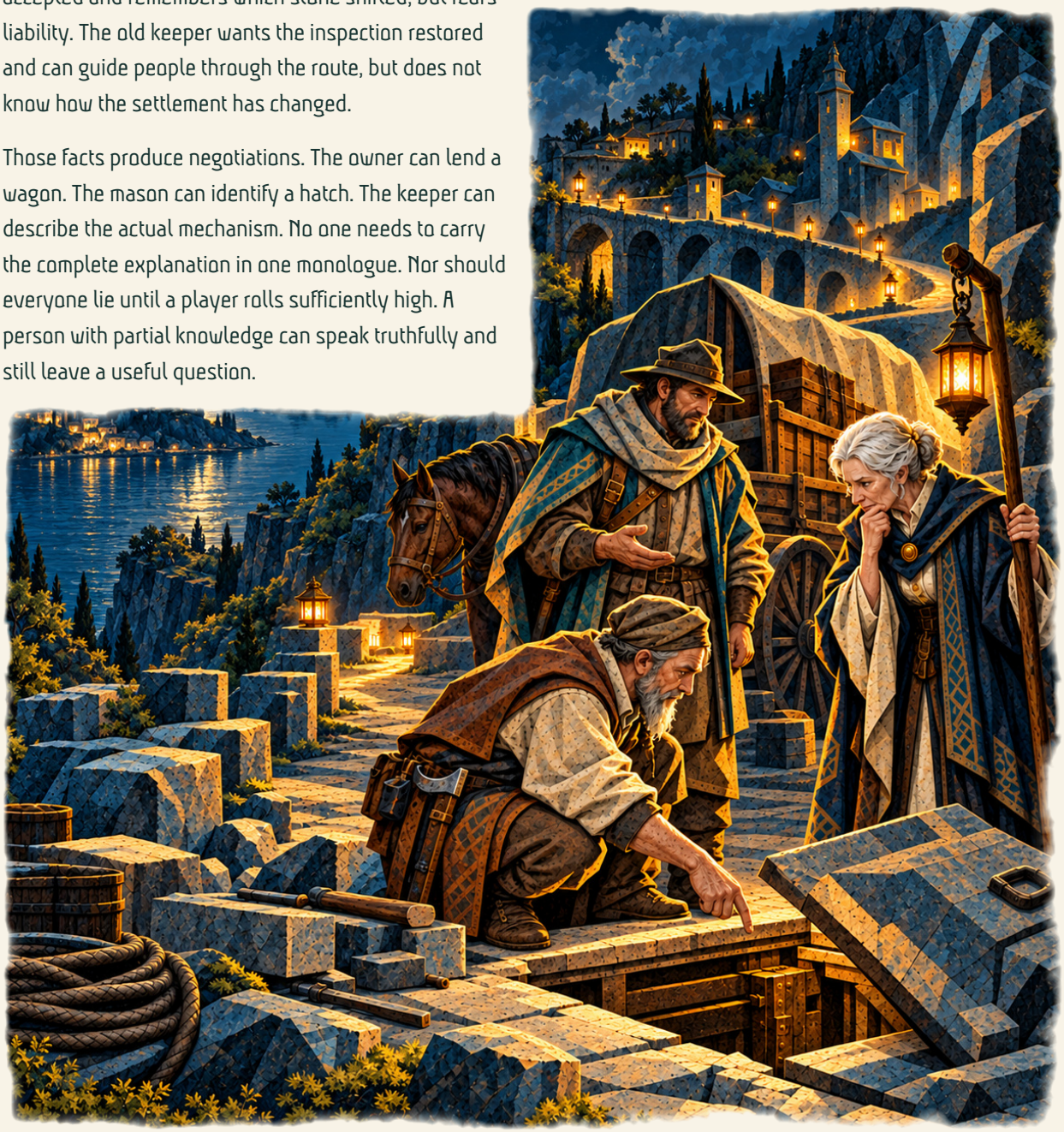


Turn the premise into people and pressures

Give each important participant a desire, information, resources and a limit. The wagon owner wants a safe route and knows where the lights begin, but cannot excavate alone. The road mason wants the repair accepted and remembers which stone shifted, but fears liability. The old keeper wants the inspection restored and can guide people through the route, but does not know how the settlement has changed.

Those facts produce negotiations. The owner can lend a wagon. The mason can identify a hatch. The keeper can describe the actual mechanism. No one needs to carry the complete explanation in one monologue. Nor should everyone lie until a player rolls sufficiently high. A person with partial knowledge can speak truthfully and still leave a useful question.

Pressure comes from what happens if nobody acts: another wagon reaches the unsafe paving, the courier remains unaccounted for, and a damaged lantern housing loses its signal. Describe a warning before each irreversible change when circumstances allow. These are authored scene developments, not compulsory countdown stages or a universal cost for waiting.



One conclusion. Several ways to learn.

Bellhouse evidence has a subject; it does not settle every motive or obligation.

Source	What it supports	What it does not settle
Maintenance ledger	A spare weight was installed during a recorded repair.	Every motive or the fairness of the old agreement.
Keeper's account	Which spare was brought from storage and what the keeper observed.	Events the keeper did not see or know.
Metal marks and charter	The spare's marks differ from the original parties in the charter.	Whether those parties should still accept the old terms.

The useful conclusion

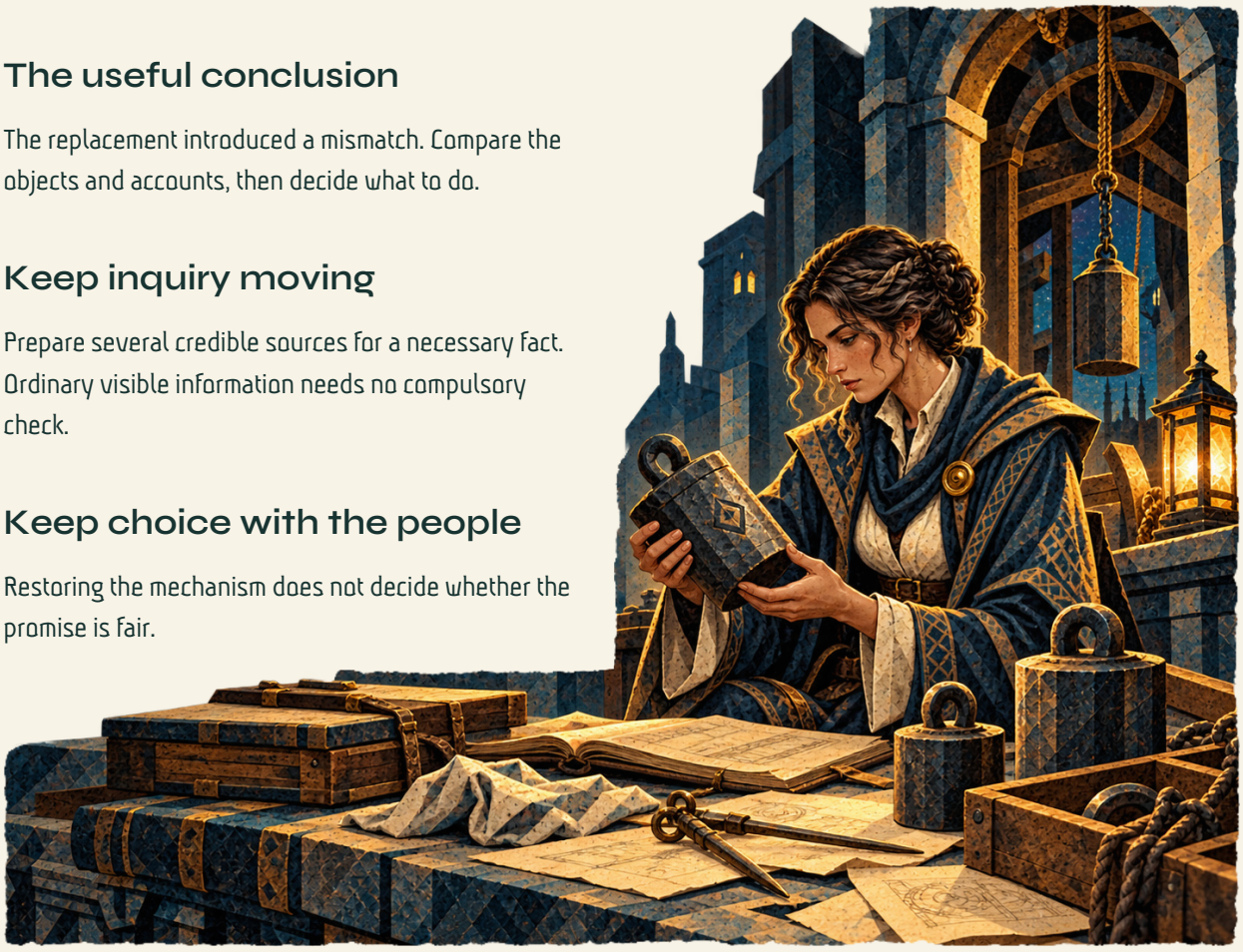
The replacement introduced a mismatch. Compare the objects and accounts, then decide what to do.

Keep inquiry moving

Prepare several credible sources for a necessary fact. Ordinary visible information needs no compulsory check.

Keep choice with the people

Restoring the mechanism does not decide whether the promise is fair.



Write conclusions the players need, then their evidence

Decide which conclusions are necessary for the immediate problem. The lights follow a route; the route begins at a repair hatch; the courier reached an inspection chamber; closing the hatch without checking the mechanism could trap them. Each conclusion needs concrete evidence. “There is a mystery here” is not enough to make the next decision.

Necessary conclusion	Evidence through observation	Evidence through people or records
The light follows a path	Marks appear in an ordered line under loose paving	An old route sketch uses matching marks
The new repair exposed its start	Fresh mortar stops beside a shifted stone	The mason remembers lifting that stone
The courier followed it	A broken lantern handle and identifiable footprints enter the hatch	A witness saw the courier crouch there
The inspection chamber has a second access	Air and distant sound reach a side opening	The keeper's maintenance record shows a service route

The alternative sources need not provide identical detail. Footprints suggest a route; a witness gives a time; a sketch identifies a second access. A player can combine them. If one source is destroyed, the situation remains understandable through another sensible approach. Optional secrets can still require effort and may remain undiscovered.

Checks can address risk, incomplete material or an uncertain interpretation. They should not suppress facts someone can plainly observe. A soaked diagram can be preserved through Ilex's actual Paper working at Touch, but that working does not restore nonexistent words or verify the keeper's honesty. Distinguish the physical clue from the conclusion drawn from it.

Connect places through routes the players can choose

The outline needs only four working locations: the road's lantern line, the repair hatch, the inspection chamber and the side service opening. Connect them through known or discoverable routes. The hatch is direct but narrow. The side opening is longer but offers a route for bulky equipment. A surface detour reaches the settlement without using either underground path.

Give useful distances and barriers. Is the chamber 30 ft below the hatch or 300? Can a person at the top locate someone below by hearing? Does a bend block a projected path? Can a rope reach? Which sections are stable enough for a cart? You need these answers before a mobility or sensing primitive becomes relevant.

A map should be legible to a person who has not read every paragraph. Label scale, access, level changes, barriers, objective locations and important resources. Put the encounter's main question beside the map rather than relying on a decorative compass rose. If the map omits a passage mentioned in the prose, the omission is a usability fault, not a mysterious feature.

Make the first description actionable in several directions

Write an opening that shows the situation and invites a decision. “Three lanterns shine through cracks in the road. A wagon has stopped beside fresh mortar. The mason holds a broken brass cover, and someone calls that a courier is missing.” Readers can paraphrase this without performing a page of narration.

Immediate options are to inspect, ask, protect traffic, follow the route or search for the courier. Do not put the adventure's only starting clue in a successful private check. Give the GM what each obvious approach can reveal. They can then respond confidently when a player asks an unexpected ordinary question about the mortar, lantern or wagon.

Avoid using an unavoidable lethal hazard to force participation. A visible road problem can be compelling without killing a named ally if the group hesitates. If the tone includes harsh time pressure, agree that tone and describe the actual signs. The players should know enough to choose intervention, delegation or withdrawal.

Prepare outcomes as changes rather than ending labels

Write what a few broad results would change. Restoring the inspection route makes traffic safer but creates a maintenance obligation. Closing it after rescuing the courier leaves the old keeper without a route. Moving



regular traffic creates a dispute about land and trade. Leaving changes who responds and what they can accomplish. These are consequences of choices, not four mandatory endings selected from a menu.

Include the cost of a seemingly successful plan when it is predictable. Excavation can damage the surface road; a temporary closure can delay supplies; a public accusation can affect the mason's standing. Establish those stakes before a player commits when their character could understand them. Do not reward ingenuity with an unrelated concealed punishment.

If a player finds a credible way to preserve several aims, let the situation support it. The workshop is not built around a required moral sacrifice. A good dilemma invites thought; it does not need to protect your favorite tragic ending from a better plan.

Write encounters as reusable situation records

Each location can have a short encounter record: visible situation, pressure, goals, people, routes, facts, ordinary resources and any actual creature definitions. If combat is plausible, give the opponents' motives and conditions for stopping. If no creature is needed, do not insert one simply to use a budget table.

For a mechanical guardian, you may adapt a published complete record only where its mechanics make sense. Reusing a Canal Watcher in a dry lantern chamber would require a useful supply of existing water or different reviewed definitions. A story reskin does not convert Water I into Light I. If you create a new mechanic, reproduce it offline with actual pins and rights for digital use.

Party budgets can be reference values while writing. Label them as editable examples, never balanced guarantees. Identify what makes the scene demanding: a narrow approach, limited information, incompatible objectives or concentrated output. A reader can adjust those facts along with the roster, rather than assuming that changing a 100 to a 75 corrects every problem.

Prepare a handout that a player can actually use

A handout should answer a question or support a choice. A rough route sketch can show a service opening and missing section. A maintenance receipt can identify



a replaced plate. A witness note can name the time the courier entered. Include enough plain text for accessibility and for a GM who cannot print color artwork.

Distinguish what is known from interpretation. A stamped date is evidence of that stamp, not proof nobody altered the object. If the document is intentionally misleading, explain its cause and the discoverable mismatch in the GM notes. Do not make every written clue unreliable; players need a reason to investigate rather than abandon all inference.

Keep the handout physically usable. Short readable lines, sufficient contrast, labels and blank margins are often more helpful than simulated staining across every word. An atmospheric fragment can accompany a clean transcription. The art should increase comprehension, not make a simple route impossible to read at the table.

Review the adventure in the order a reader might use it

Read the opening without looking ahead. Can you explain what the characters perceive? Pick the least expected obvious option and follow its information. Check that the reader can find the relevant person, location or creature without a long search. Then imagine the group learning the cause early. Does the situation still contain choices?

Check an unsuccessful approach. If they fail to interpret the sketch, can they ask the mason, inspect the hatch or find another route? Check departure. Does the world have an understandable response that does not punish the group for failing to follow your plot? Check a direct extraordinary approach against actual permission and targeting.





This is an editorial rehearsal, not a human playtest. You still need people to run the adventure to discover unclear instructions, pacing and unexpected assumptions. Record what the rehearsal covered and what it did not. A polished layout or a valid budget does not prove that the scene teaches itself to a new table.

Package the work so its mechanics remain open and usable

Put the adventure's required rules and definitions where a reader can use them. Link a platform collection as a convenience, but include the offline record needed for play. Identify which version belongs to the adventure. A later public template change should not silently alter the edition in someone's printed book.

Separate compatible mechanical material from any protected setting text, map, artwork or plot under the publication's explicit rights notices. SwordWeave's open mechanical framework can support someone else's commercial work with attribution under the applicable license. Access to an official image or a purchase of a PDF does not by itself define every reuse right. A clear notice helps both the creator and the reader.

Keep download and print preparation distinct. An attractive digital edition is not automatically ready for every printer. A physical product requires the chosen trim, bleed, binding gutter, image resolution, color handling and a reviewed manufactured proof. Do not write press-ready on a file solely because it exported without an error.

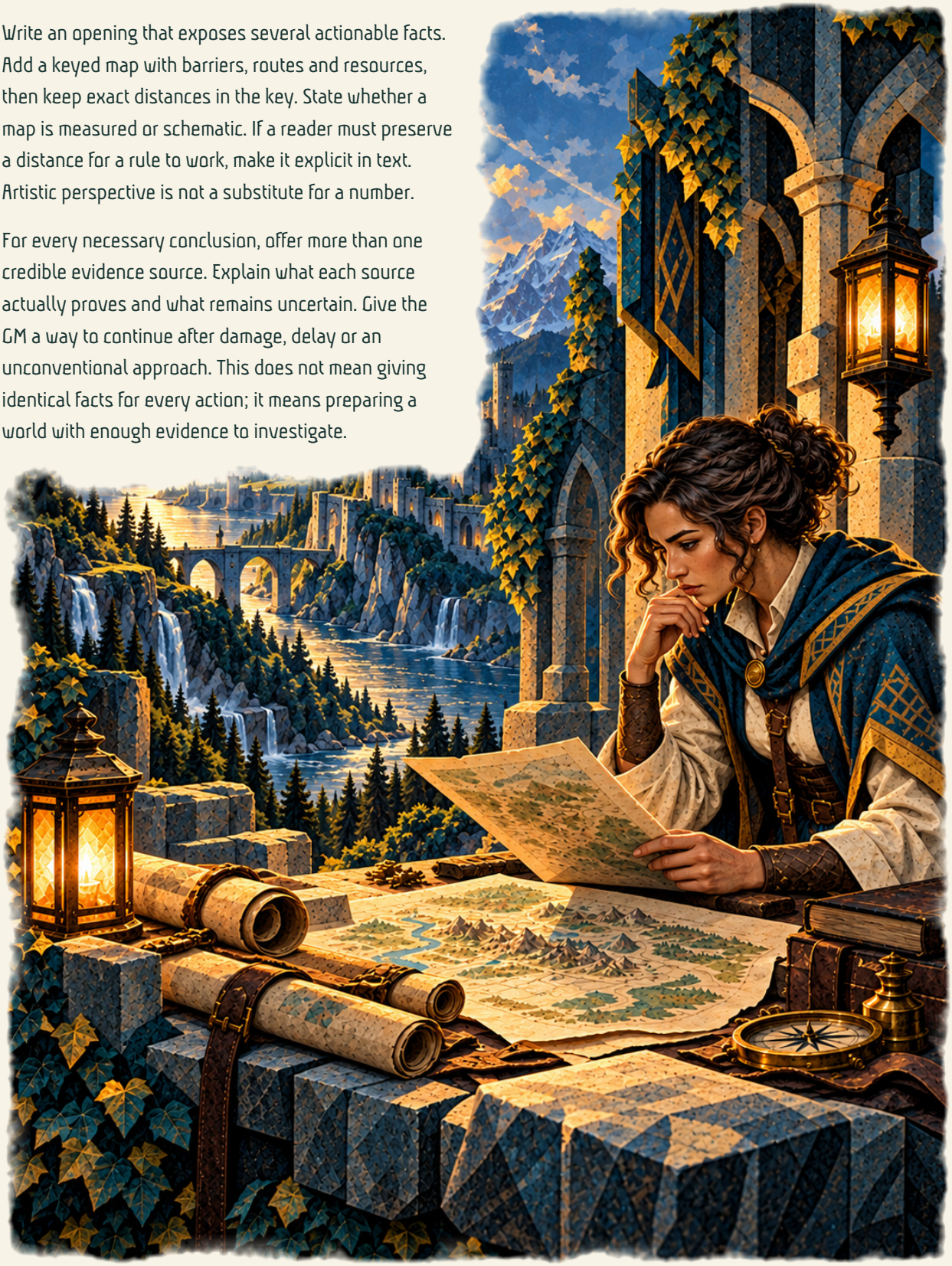
Prepare an adventure for another GM

Separate what is true from what someone thinks

Put the actual cause near the beginning of your private adventure notes. List each important person's belief separately. A GM can improvise a witness who is uncertain if they know the underlying event; they struggle when the author hides that event behind the same suspense intended for players.

Write an opening that exposes several actionable facts. Add a keyed map with barriers, routes and resources, then keep exact distances in the key. State whether a map is measured or schematic. If a reader must preserve a distance for a rule to work, make it explicit in text. Artistic perspective is not a substitute for a number.

For every necessary conclusion, offer more than one credible evidence source. Explain what each source actually proves and what remains uncertain. Give the GM a way to continue after damage, delay or an unconventional approach. This does not mean giving identical facts for every action; it means preparing a world with enough evidence to investigate.



12

The Gate that Will Not Open

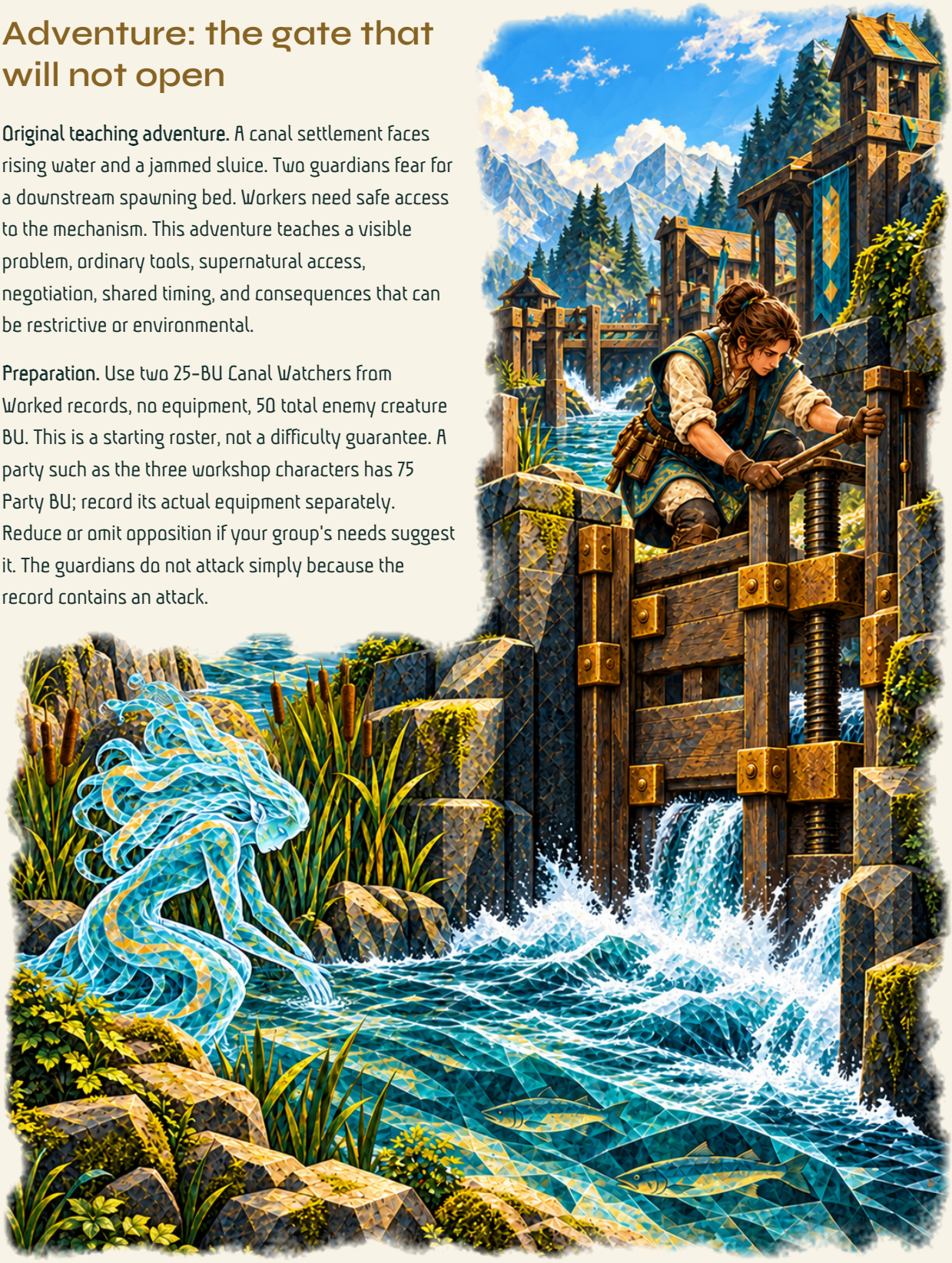
A working sluice, a spawning bed and several kinds of success.



Adventure: the gate that will not open

Original teaching adventure. A canal settlement faces rising water and a jammed sluice. Two guardians fear for a downstream spawning bed. Workers need safe access to the mechanism. This adventure teaches a visible problem, ordinary tools, supernatural access, negotiation, shared timing, and consequences that can be restrictive or environmental.

Preparation. Use two 25-BU Canal Watchers from Worked records, no equipment, 50 total enemy creature BU. This is a starting roster, not a difficulty guarantee. A party such as the three workshop characters has 75 Party BU; record its actual equipment separately. Reduce or omit opposition if your group's needs suggest it. The guardians do not attack simply because the record contains an attack.



The jammed sluice

Read the tools, water and possible approaches together. This oblique view is schematic.

A

Western landing

Stable anchor, boards and tools. A to B: 30 ft.

B

Wheel platform

Snapped timber jams the works. East bank: 30 ft onward.

C

Lower passage

Wet maintenance access. A to C: 40 ft by the lower route.

D

Spawning bed

Downstream reeds. No distance is prescribed.



Opening and immediate facts

Read or paraphrase: “Brown water climbs the gauge beside the sluice. Workers lean against a rope that shudders with each surge. Across the channel, a small river spirit points urgently toward reeds below the gate. Someone calls from a maintenance door: the upper wheel is jammed.”

Give visible distances from the map. The central gate is 30 ft from the western landing. The east bank is another 30 ft beyond it. A lower maintenance route runs 40 ft beneath the western wall. The spawning bed lies downstream, outside the immediate gate platform. The schematic labels measured routes; room footprints and line lengths are not to scale. There is no imported diagonal-movement rule.

The water is rising because a snapped timber blocks the wheel, not because someone casts a hidden spell. The guardians are protecting eggs and young river life. Workers want to prevent a release into the houses. All three concerns can coexist in a successful plan.

People with understandable motives

Ressa, repair worker. Wants workers safe and the gate under control. Knows the passage and how the manual wheel should move. Offers tools and directions freely to people helping. Fears an uncontrolled release because her family lives downstream. She is not a quest dispenser waiting for an Influence roll to reveal obvious facts.

Senn, boat runner. Wants a boat unloaded before the quay floods. Has strong rope and a small flat-bottomed boat. Can help ferry people or haul material, but needs someone to secure the mooring. A fair plan can recruit that help without a supernatural compulsion.



The two Watchers. One points toward the bed; the other watches the gate. They can communicate through gesture and ordinary conversation at this table. Their Water capabilities do not grant mind reading. They believe people will open the gate without considering the downstream life. Showing a credible protected flow addresses their actual objection.

Area A: the western landing

A solid lower post can anchor rope. Spare boards, a hook, and a marked maintenance arrow are available. Give these facts immediately when inspected. The post can support a rescue line; it is not infinitely strong. Agree demanding loads or sudden pressure with the actual circumstances.

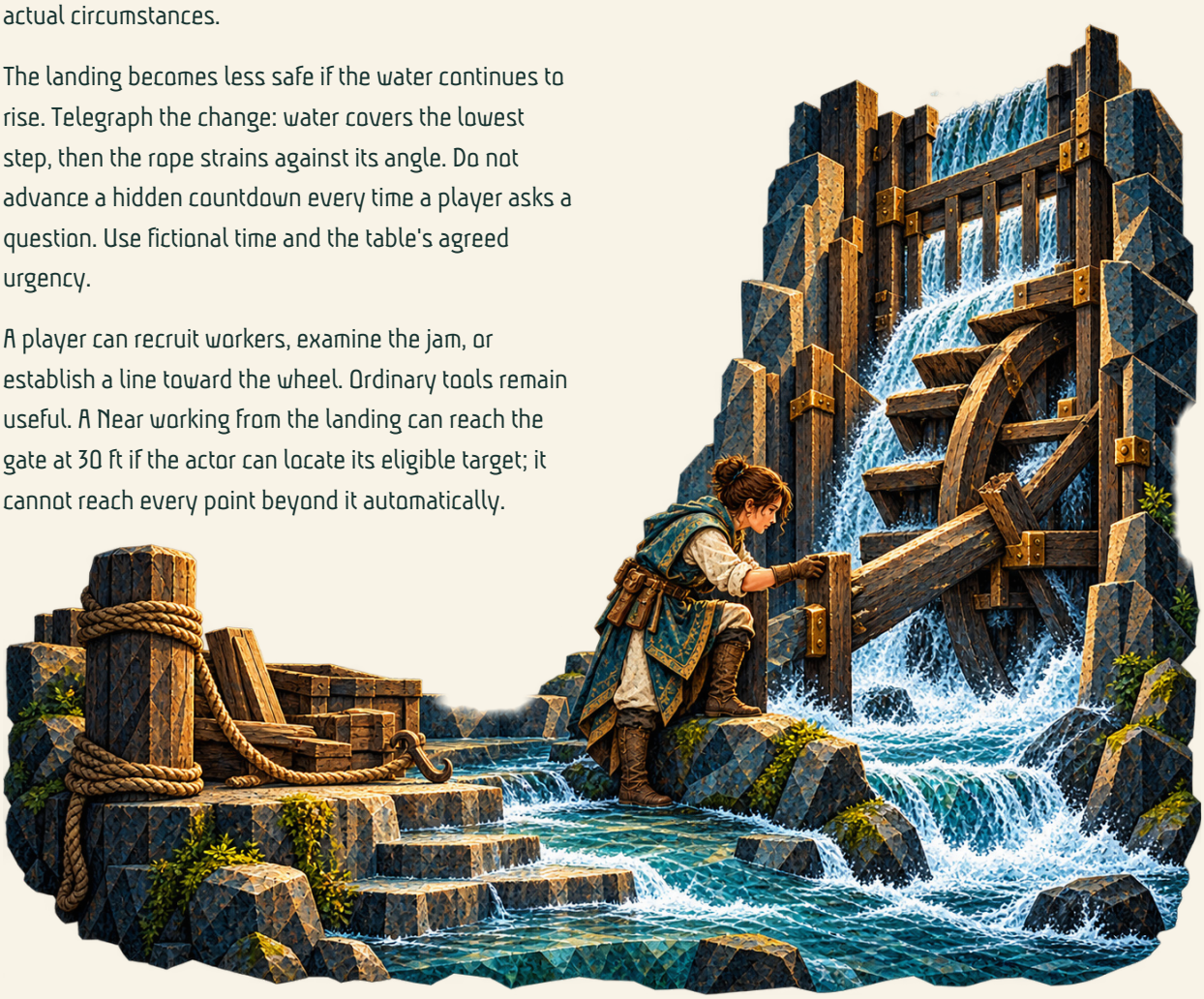
The landing becomes less safe if the water continues to rise. Telegraph the change: water covers the lowest step, then the rope strains against its angle. Do not advance a hidden countdown every time a player asks a question. Use fictional time and the table's agreed urgency.

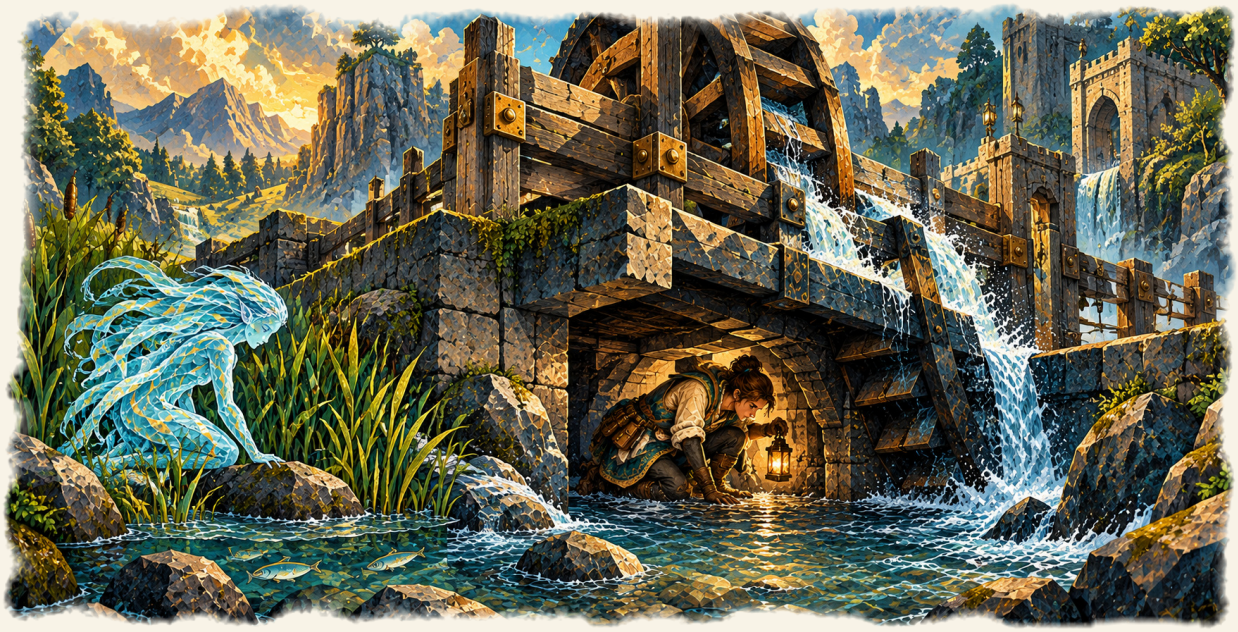
A player can recruit workers, examine the jam, or establish a line toward the wheel. Ordinary tools remain useful. A Near working from the landing can reach the gate at 30 ft if the actor can locate its eligible target; it cannot reach every point beyond it automatically.

Area B: the wheel platform

A snapped beam is caught between wheel and brace. It is visible from a close safe angle. A Reason or Knowledge check can resolve diagnosis under pressure if uncertainty matters. If someone has secure access and enough time, simply explain the jam.

Removing the beam without controlling the release risks a sudden flow. Establish that before commitment. Torren might hold the wheel with tools; Mira might redirect a narrow portion of water; Ilex might coordinate workers. Their chosen sequence affects complexity and track placement. The DM does not require one fixed "repair capability."





A Watcher can move toward the platform to prevent an uncontrolled opening. Telegraph its intent. If timing matters, resolve the actual clash. If two actors struggle over the wheel, resolve the contest. Use the question that exists, rather than forcing both procedures onto every interaction.

Area C: the maintenance passage

The lower passage is wet, narrow, and partly blocked by debris. An arrow and Ressa's information reveal it. A printed map on the workshop wall provides a third source. No single failed search prevents discovering every alternative.

The route reaches the underside of the wheel. It can support a careful removal while someone controls the upper mechanism. Water level and tools matter. The party may prefer this route because it avoids direct confrontation on the platform; it introduces a different exposure and rescue problem.

If someone slips, locate them and explain the actual danger. A nearby catch can use an eligible reaction. A remote rescue requires relevant access and reach. Stabilization, healing, and escape remain separate questions if a character collapses.

Area D: the spawning bed

The reeds visibly shelter small river life. A Watcher points to them before using violence. Characters who investigate learn why the guardians resist. A credible protected flow can turn opposition into cooperation.

The bed is not a mandatory sacrifice. Players can use boards, a temporary diversion, a slower gate opening, or another plan. An extraordinary attempt must still have its eligible subject and behavior. Water shaping supports a flow plan; it does not automatically heal the eggs, rewrite the guardians' agency, or repair every structure.

Pressure and possible escalation

Choose changes from the visible situation. The lower step floods. The wheel tilts. A mooring loosens. A worker calls that a storehouse is taking water. Give warning and a usable response before a route disappears when the fiction allows it.

Do not attach a fixed number of rounds to the whole adventure unless your table intentionally agrees a timed treatment. Negotiation might resolve before a combat round begins. A secure repair can take minutes. A sudden slip can require the shared rhythm immediately.

If the group refuses the problem, portray a plausible aftermath. Workers evacuate, the guardians protect what they can, and the canal route may close. Their later adventures begin from that result. The world changes without punishing players simply for choosing another goal.

Three plausible resolutions

Cooperative diversion. The party explains a safe downstream route, recruits workers, and controls the release. The Watchers help instead of attacking. Costs can be sustained attention, damaged boards, or a repair obligation. Celebrate the actual plan rather than requiring a fight for completion.

Forced opening. The party drives off the Watchers and removes the beam. If they do not protect downstream life or houses, apply those established consequences. Defeating the guardians does not automatically solve the hydraulic problem. Their independent states and choices continue until the threat ends or they retreat.



Evacuation and delayed repair. The party secures people and accepts temporary closure. The immediate threat to life ends, but boats and supplies cannot pass. The group may need materials or specialist help next session. This is a different success, not a failed version of your preferred solution.

Aftermath and rewards

Record saved people, damaged places, guardians' attitudes, equipment use, current Vitality, and remaining consequences. Agree recovery from the actual shelter and time available. A night spent repairing in the rain is not automatically a full long rest.

If this completes a significant campaign objective, discuss advancement according to your campaign agreement. No universal BU award is attached to two defeated Watchers. Ressa's gratitude, a new route, and a promise of passage are fictional results whether or not the ledger changes.

Possible next questions: Who installed the brittle beam? Why has the upstream flow changed? What old channel became visible? Use a question the players cared about. The adventure has taught how to respond to a situation, not how to follow one mandatory plot.

The sluice as a working place

A usable key beside the map

The new plan retains the published distances: western landing A to wheel platform B is 30 ft; B to the east bank is another 30 ft; A to the maintenance passage C is a 40-ft lower route. Room footprints and drawn line



lengths are schematic. The spawning bed D lies downstream; do not infer an unstated spell distance from its position in the drawing.

On A, place an anchored post, loose boards, repair tools and enough dry space to speak. On B, place the wheel, the snapped timber and the moving line of force that the workers can identify. On C, mark the low opening and an obstructing deposit of wet debris. At D, show the reeds the Watchers indicate. These are useful facts, not four compulsory encounters.

Handout: Ressa's repair note

"The timber is caught under the arm. Turning the wheel harder may break the arm before it moves the timber. The lower passage reaches the support, but we have not cleared it since the last flood. If you need someone to keep people back, ask me. If you want the water sent elsewhere, first tell the people downstream."

This is Ressa's practical account, not an omniscient list of solutions. Give it to the players or read it aloud. They can ask what equipment is available, inspect another route or propose a different repair. A handout helps the conversation continue without replacing observation or negotiation with a puzzle password.

When the route changes

If water crosses the walkway, explain which portions are covered and what supports remain. If workers lash boards into a temporary passage, describe where it begins and ends. If the party protects the spawning bed, say what the Watchers can observe. Update the map with changed facts instead of continuing to use a pristine diagram as though nothing happened.

Keep rescue, repair and water control separate. Pulling a worker to the landing may succeed while the gate remains jammed. A repaired wheel may still need a controlled release. A negotiated diversion can avoid the fight completely. The distinct objectives give everyone something useful to contribute without inventing more actions per person.



13

The Bellhouse of Borrowed Names

Repair a mechanism; decide what its promise should mean.





Adventure: the bellhouse of borrowed names

Original teaching adventure. A hilltop bellhouse stores public promises in metal counterweights. An old agreement now appears to bind the wrong families. The Custodian refuses to release the central lift while its records conflict. The party must establish what changed, protect people using the lift, and choose what to do with the agreement.

This is a situation about evidence, obligation, and an asymmetric guardian. It can end through restoration, negotiation, changed terms, or force. The adventure does not presume the promise is just because an ancient mechanism preserves it.

Preparation. Use the 225-BU Bellhouse Custodian from Creatures from a purpose to a record. Optional two Canal Watchers, reflavored only in story as rain-fed caretakers, add 50 creature BU without changing their Water mechanics. Total with both is 275, no Item BU. This can be a severe threat to low-budget characters. Compare your actual party, telegraph danger, and offer meaningful noncombat routes; do not claim the example is balanced by its page count.

Inside the Bellhouse

A place for investigation, rescue and repair. Traveled routes differ from vertical separation.

E

Lower landing

The lift hangs 30 ft above this landing.

F

Archive

Charter, ledger and keeper's account. A door joins the gallery.

G

Bell gallery

Three bells. From E: 50 ft by the traveled stair.

H

Counterweights

Spare, original and tools. G to H: 40-ft service corridor.



Opening and what is wrong

Read or paraphrase: "A bell sounds once, then stops halfway through its answering note. The lift hangs above the lower landing. On the hill, bronze arms brace two different counterweights. A keeper holds a cracked metal plate: the names stamped on it do not match the charter."

The record was not maliciously altered by a hidden mastermind. Years of repair replaced one counterweight with an old spare whose binding marks belonged to another agreement. A hurried keeper failed to check the replacement. You can choose a different cause for your campaign, but establish it before clues depend on it.

The central question is not "win the boss fight." It is what the party will do with conflicting evidence and a mechanism that acts on the marked metal. People below need a safe route; the keeper needs an understandable resolution; the Custodian needs a credible account of the bells' order.

Area E: the lower landing

The landing gives sight of the lift, 30 ft above. A stair ascends 50 ft along the outer wall to a gallery. A service path leads around the hill, longer but sheltered. The schematic identifies these alternatives and labels measured route distances. Read those labels instead of measuring the drawing.

Ordinary ladders, ropes, and workers can support a rescue. Flight or mobility grants change the route only within their actual rules. A single character reaching the lift does not automatically transport everyone. Locate passengers and explain who needs help before resolving a rescue.

The lift remains held while the Custodian maintains Hold the Counterweight. A loss of that requirement changes its state at the agreed instant. Give characters visible information about the braced arm and actual supports; do not hide a falling-lift consequence behind an innocent control button.



Area F: the archive room

There are three useful sources: the paper charter, a maintenance ledger, and the keeper's account. The charter lists the original parties. The ledger records the replacement. The keeper saw the old spare taken from storage. Each offers a route toward the mistake.

Inspection can reveal obvious differences. A Knowledge or Reason check can resolve reading a damaged entry under pressure. Ilex's Paper access can stabilize the physical sheet at Touch; it does not create missing words or prove truth automatically. Ordinary careful copying can also preserve the record.

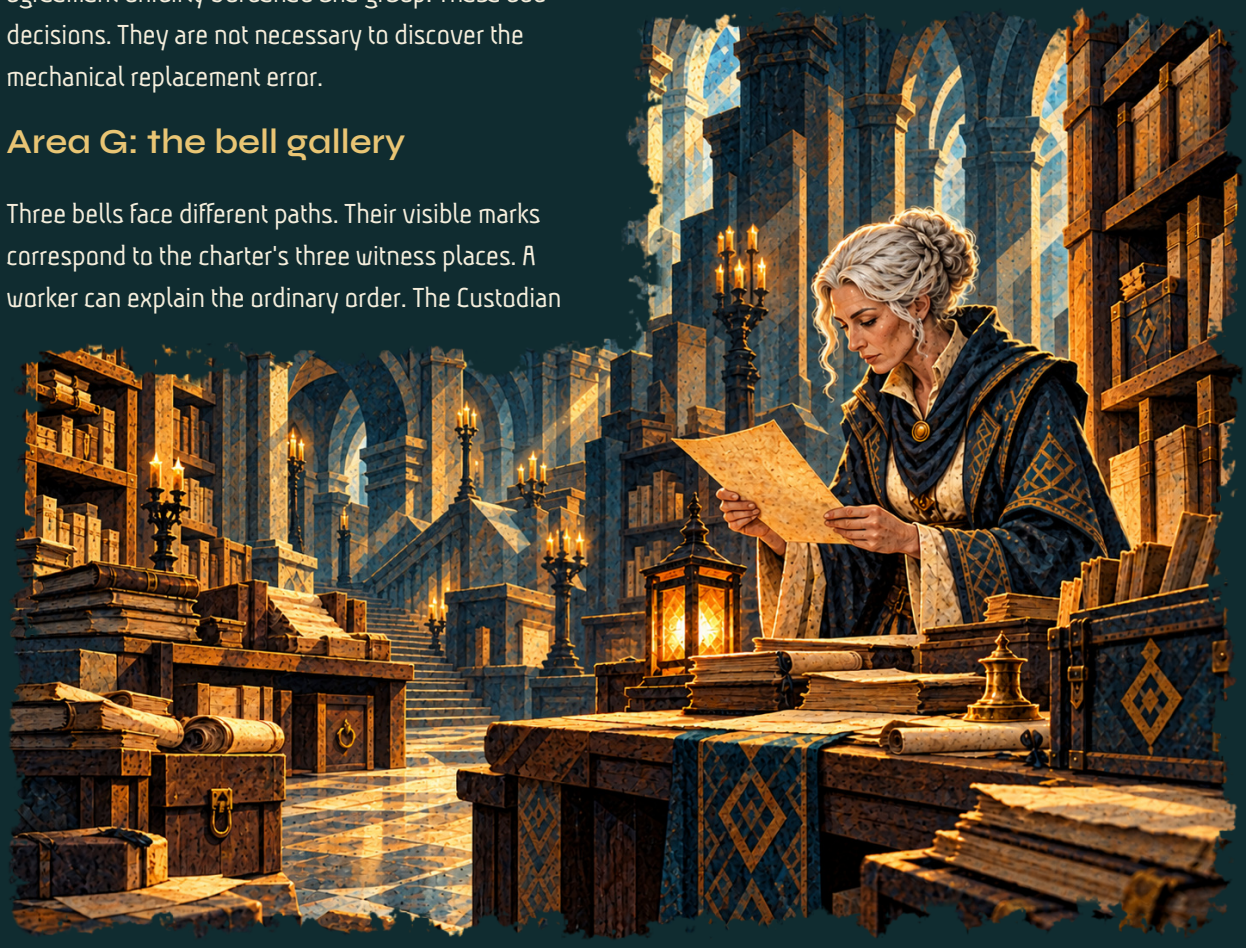
Optional discoveries include an earlier dispute, an unfulfilled repair promise, or evidence that the original agreement unfairly burdened one group. These add decisions. They are not necessary to discover the mechanical replacement error.

Area G: the bell gallery

Three bells face different paths. Their visible marks correspond to the charter's three witness places. A worker can explain the ordinary order. The Custodian compares actual ringing and metal marks; it does not read every person's thoughts.

Players can show the mismatch, restore the old counterweight, propose a temporary suspension with an accepted obligation, or ask whose authority can change the agreement. Decide the Custodian's response from its purpose and the evidence. An Influence check may resolve uncertainty about a credible proposal, but it does not rewrite the mechanism's metal by itself.

If someone removes a counterweight without support, the Custodian responds. Telegraph which arm moves and whether the lift is threatened. Its two Reaction Slots are explicitly authored; they are not an automatic privilege of every solo creature. It has one coherent Main Intent by default.



Area H: the counterweight chamber

The chamber contains the substituted weight, the old damaged original, and tools. Existing Metal I and Verb II can support reshaping or redirecting eligible metal, but deleting a social obligation or changing a person's identity is not simply more metal manipulation.

A physical repair can restore the original mechanism while leaving the moral question unresolved. A table might agree a bounded exceptional working to transfer a mark with consequences; state its actual scope. Do not secretly grant foundational law rewriting because a character rolls high against a mechanical task.

The chamber is 40 ft from the gallery through an open service corridor. A closed maintenance door can block a projected path. Valid direct manifestation still requires a target location and supported behavior. Map lines and walls have practical meaning, not merely decorative shapes.

A confrontation with several useful jobs

If the party chooses force or the scene escalates, give them several purposes: hold the lift, keep the archive safe, distract the Custodian, or restore the bell sequence. Killing it is not the only useful Main Intent. Different positions and dependencies keep the shared round coherent.

The Custodian's normal Hammer Sweep is one target, attack +7, 1d10 Magical Metal on a hit. A larger declared expression requires the actual access and appraisal described in its record. Its Plated Resistance covers



Physical Metal damage only. Other eligible sources and domains are not secretly resisted. Announce visible deflections so players can understand their options.

Hold the Counterweight commits an arm. A player who makes that maintenance unnecessary may change the creature's choices; one who disrupts it may endanger the lift. Show these trade-offs before resolution. A solo threat is more interesting when the scene offers decisions than when it simply attacks until its Vitality reaches zero.

Resolutions and what they leave behind

Restore the original record. The replacement mistake is corrected. The lift operates. The original agreement remains, including any unfair terms the party discovered. People may thank them and still ask for further change.

Negotiate a temporary release. The keeper and relevant people accept clear terms: who will witness the correction, when the bells will be checked, and what protection applies meanwhile. Record the obligation. The Custodian can accept it if the established purpose supports that response; an unexplained good roll is not a universal override.

Replace the agreement openly. The party helps the affected people choose new terms. This can require time, witnesses, ordinary records, and a reviewed extraordinary working if the mechanism needs one. Do not assume destroying a counterweight is identical to lawful agreement, or that ancient machinery determines the table's moral answer.

Destroy or abandon the mechanism. The immediate guardian threat may end, but the lift, records, and community face new problems. Apply the visible consequences. Give the players a world that can respond without declaring every unconventional choice a failure.

Debrief the adventure

Ask which evidence mattered and which assumptions the characters changed. Check rescue outcomes, equipment, Vitality, obligations, and any maintained working left active. Agree rests through the actual shelter and circumstances.





For future sessions, choose a thread the players pursued: repaired trade, disputed authority, a promised witness, or an unexplored service route. Record new acquisitions only through the campaign's agreed advancement. The adventure demonstrates flexible preparation with a complete creature record, not a compulsory setting for all SwordWeave tables.

Read the bellhouse vertically

Two drawings answer two questions

Use the plan to follow routes between the archive, gallery and chamber. Use the section to understand the lift, the braced counterweight and the people below. The lift hangs 30 ft above E. The stair route from E to G is 50 ft. The service corridor from G to H is 40 ft. The archive door connects F and G; no exact distance was prescribed for that doorway.

Do not add those route lengths to invent the building's total height. The stair's traveled distance and the lift's vertical separation are different measurements. A door blocks a projected path when closed even if a room is close on the page. Direct manifestation still needs its own supported access and a located target.

Evidence that can be handled

Paper charter. The names are those of the original parties. It proves what the recorded agreement says, not that every party freely consented. **Maintenance ledger.** A dated entry records the spare counterweight installed during repair. It supports the replacement history. **Keeper's testimony.** The keeper saw the spare brought from storage and can identify its former place. Their account can be questioned and compared with the objects.

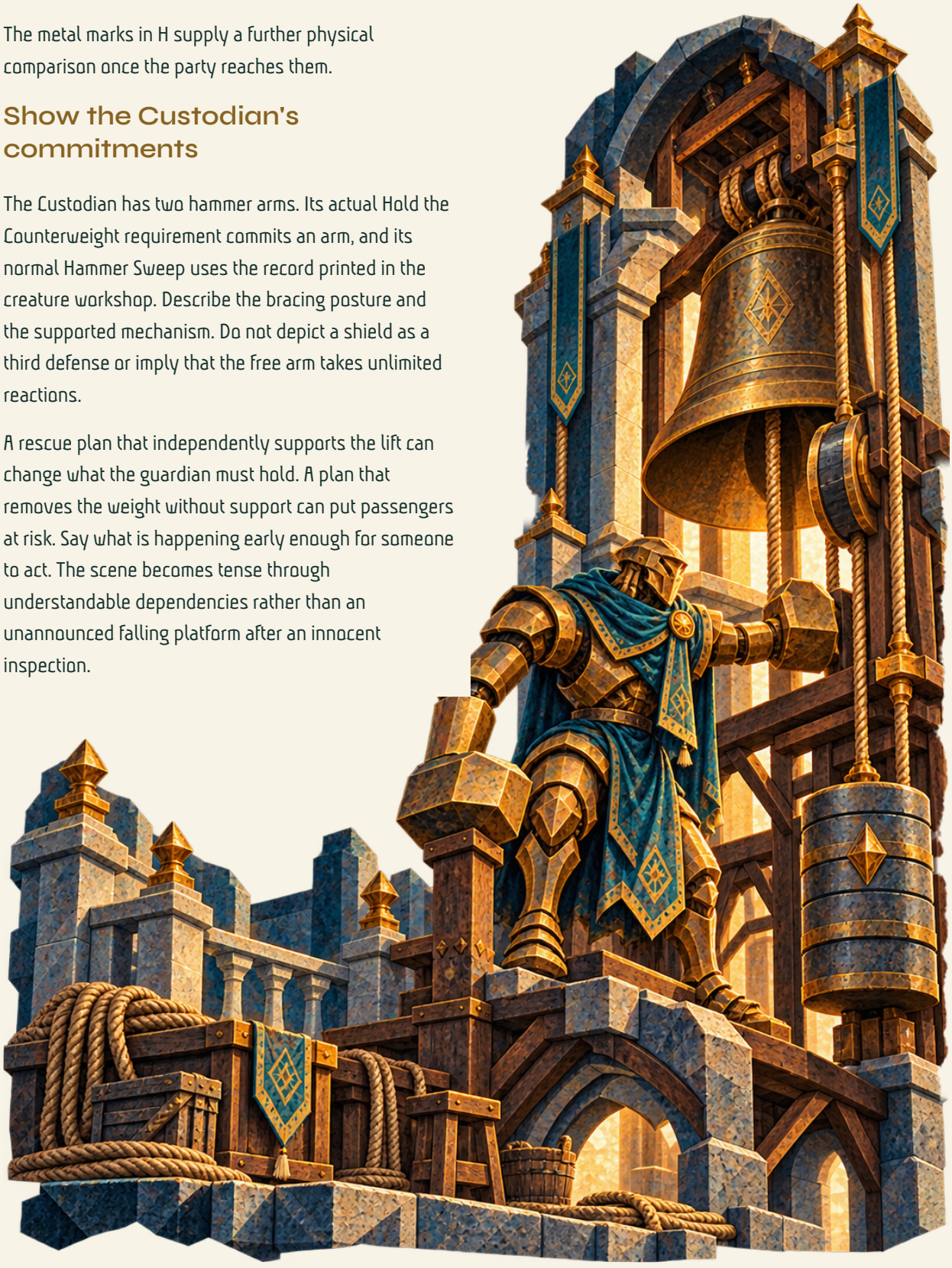
Let players copy these facts without forcing a roll to transcribe an ordinary legible line. A damaged page under immediate danger can justify uncertainty. Failure should change the effort, exposure or evidence available; it need not make all three sources disappear.

The metal marks in H supply a further physical comparison once the party reaches them.

Show the Custodian's commitments

The Custodian has two hammer arms. Its actual Hold the Counterweight requirement commits an arm, and its normal Hammer Sweep uses the record printed in the creature workshop. Describe the bracing posture and the supported mechanism. Do not depict a shield as a third defense or imply that the free arm takes unlimited reactions.

A rescue plan that independently supports the lift can change what the guardian must hold. A plan that removes the weight without support can put passengers at risk. Say what is happening early enough for someone to act. The scene becomes tense through understandable dependencies rather than an unannounced falling platform after an innocent inspection.



14

The road that forgot its marker

Follow evidence, find the missing messenger and make a safe return.



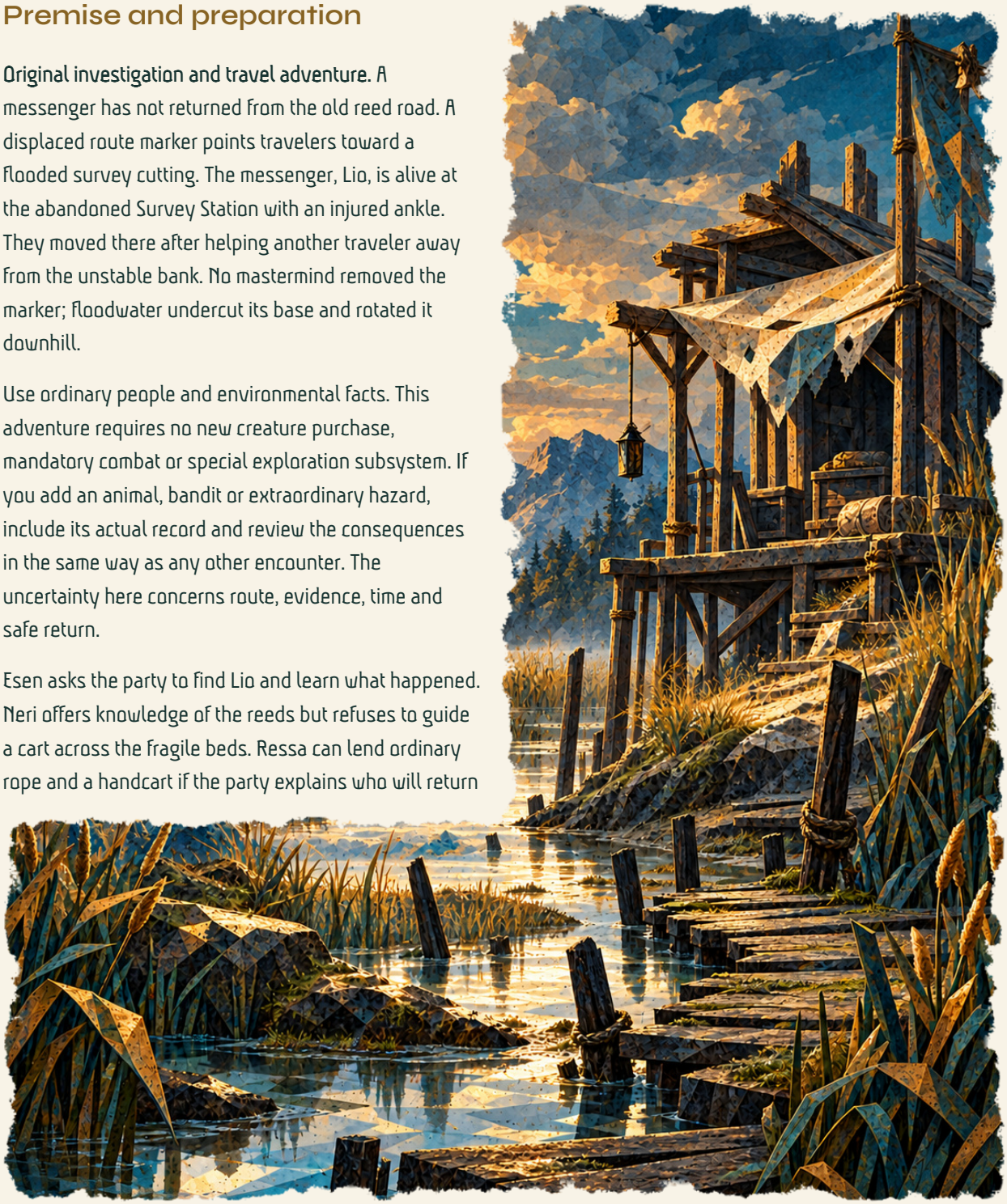
Adventure: the road that forgot its marker

Premise and preparation

Original investigation and travel adventure. A messenger has not returned from the old reed road. A displaced route marker points travelers toward a flooded survey cutting. The messenger, Lio, is alive at the abandoned Survey Station with an injured ankle. They moved there after helping another traveler away from the unstable bank. No mastermind removed the marker; floodwater undercut its base and rotated it downhill.

Use ordinary people and environmental facts. This adventure requires no new creature purchase, mandatory combat or special exploration subsystem. If you add an animal, bandit or extraordinary hazard, include its actual record and review the consequences in the same way as any other encounter. The uncertainty here concerns route, evidence, time and safe return.

Esen asks the party to find Lio and learn what happened. Neri offers knowledge of the reeds but refuses to guide a cart across the fragile beds. Ressa can lend ordinary rope and a handcart if the party explains who will return them. Agree any equipment's Load and equipped requirements from its actual record; a loan is not a free new capability.



The road that forgot its marker

Follow physical evidence. Establish local gaps and actual reach when an action needs them.

J

Turned marker

Exposed roots and disturbed pale soil.

K

Survey cutting

Flooded low route; unstable banks.

L

Reed ridge

A cloth tied to a stake marks the firmer route.

M

Survey Station

Dry doorway, injured messenger and companion.



Opening: Willow Crossing

Read or paraphrase: “The road divides beside a leaning willow. A route marker points into a low cutting where brown water covers the wheel ruts. Higher on the bank, a line of pale stakes disappears among reeds. A folded cloth is tied to the nearest stake. Esen says the station should be upstream, not down in the water.”

Give the group the visible routes and the disagreement immediately. They can inspect the marker, follow the higher stakes, ask the reed households or explore the cutting. They do not need a successful check to discover that a plainly flooded road is wet. Ask what they hope to learn before selecting a check for a meaningful uncertainty.

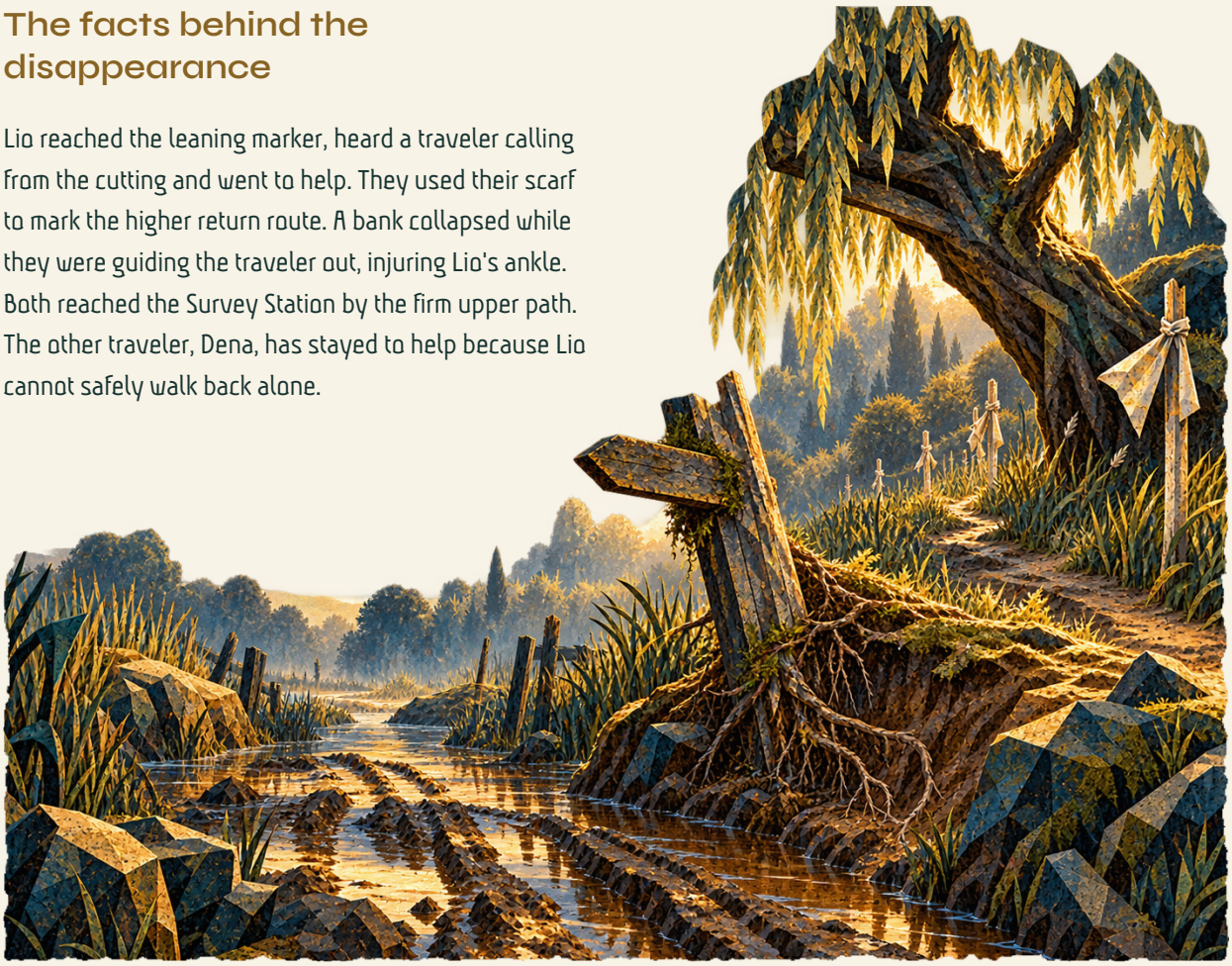
The facts behind the disappearance

Lio reached the leaning marker, heard a traveler calling from the cutting and went to help. They used their scarf to mark the higher return route. A bank collapsed while they were guiding the traveler out, injuring Lio's ankle. Both reached the Survey Station by the firm upper path. The other traveler, Dena, has stayed to help because Lio cannot safely walk back alone.

At the station, old survey notes record a retaining wall that once kept the stream in its channel. The wall has failed. These notes support the campaign's upstream question, but rescuing Lio does not require deciphering every page. The party can leave with the people safe and return for a slower investigation later.

Three necessary conclusions, several sources

The marker moved. Freshly exposed roots and a crescent of pale soil show where its base shifted. Neri remembers its old direction. A survey sketch at the station shows the route before the flood. Any of these can make rechecking the arrow sensible; none alone proves sabotage.



Lio took the high path. The tied cloth belongs to their messenger clothing. Footprints leave the cutting toward the firm bank where the ground preserves them. Dena can be heard calling from the station if someone approaches within ordinary audible circumstances. Ask what a proposed extraordinary sense actually detects; no new sense comes from wanting to find a person.

The return needs support. Lio explains the ankle injury. The station has a sound door that could serve as an improvised carrying surface if removed with ordinary tools. Ressa's handcart is useful on the high road but cannot simply roll across the flooded cutting. The route and transport are related choices, not one universal rescue roll.

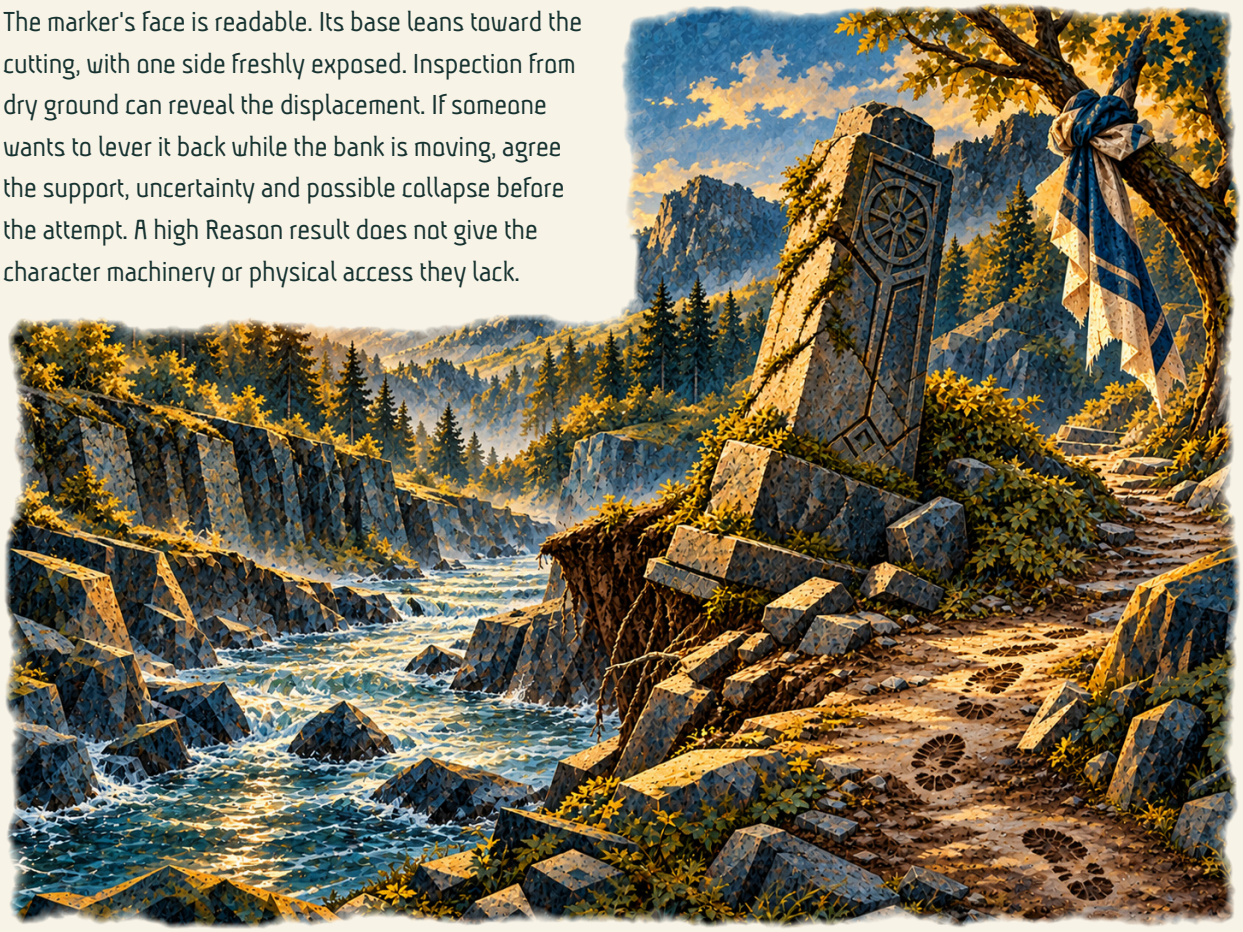
Location J: the turned marker

The marker's face is readable. Its base leans toward the cutting, with one side freshly exposed. Inspection from dry ground can reveal the displacement. If someone wants to lever it back while the bank is moving, agree the support, uncertainty and possible collapse before the attempt. A high Reason result does not give the character machinery or physical access they lack.

There is no need to restore the marker before continuing. The party can set a temporary visible warning, tell the households or return with workers. Record what the warning actually says. An arrow tied to a branch can direct later travelers without making the road itself safe.

Location K: the survey cutting

The low route is waterlogged. A firm stone lip remains along one side; the center contains obscured footing and a collapsed section. Describe the water's movement and the visible edge before asking whether the group enters. The route diagram gives relationships rather than a measured combat grid. If immediate reach matters, establish the actual gap in the scene before someone commits.





A careful party can probe with poles, use the higher route, ask Neri for local knowledge or create a supported extraordinary solution. Ordinary water shaping may reveal footing within its actual scope, but it does not automatically repair soil, create breathable air or locate a hidden person. If someone falls, separate stopping the fall, reaching them, moving them and recovery from the injury.

Location L: the reed ridge

The ridge offers firmer travel and a view toward the station. The tied cloth is here. A shallow side channel interrupts the easiest line. Neri knows a detour around it, adding travel but avoiding the unstable edge. A group in a hurry may propose a shorter crossing; establish the local distances and supports before appraising that attempt.

If rain begins, announce the first signs and how they change sight, footing or shelter. Do not impose a permanent universal disadvantage for weather. A relevant circumstance can affect an actual uncertain check under the table's agreed procedure. Safe travel can remain unrolled when nobody is pressed and the chosen route supports it.

Location M: the Survey Station

The stone station has a dry main room, a damaged outer stair and an open rear path to the ridge. Lio and Dena have water and a small shelter. Lio wants to return with the message, but will accept help that preserves the other traveler. Dena wants no one to blame Lio for stopping to rescue them. Neither needs to be persuaded into wanting safety.

Give Lio a current injury with clear fictional meaning: the ankle cannot bear ordinary walking without support. If the group needs mechanical consequences, agree and record them before a relevant attempt. This is not a new universal ankle condition or an automatic numerical penalty. Healing Vitality alone need not repair a separately defined injury; use the actual recovery terms the table establishes.

The message and the choice

The message invites households to compare their maintenance records at the Bellhouse. It does not secretly command the party to visit that adventure. Delivering it can preserve a planned hearing; delaying it can require a new meeting. Lio will let a companion carry it if the group agrees how they will identify the delivery. A signed receipt can be ordinary proof without an enchantment.

At the station the party may choose immediate rescue, a sheltered pause, recovering the survey notes or sending someone ahead. Ask how they divide people and resources. If they split, keep each group's location and contact method clear. A sound shouted message across a short visible gap and a message beyond hearing range are different circumstances.

Pressure with room to respond

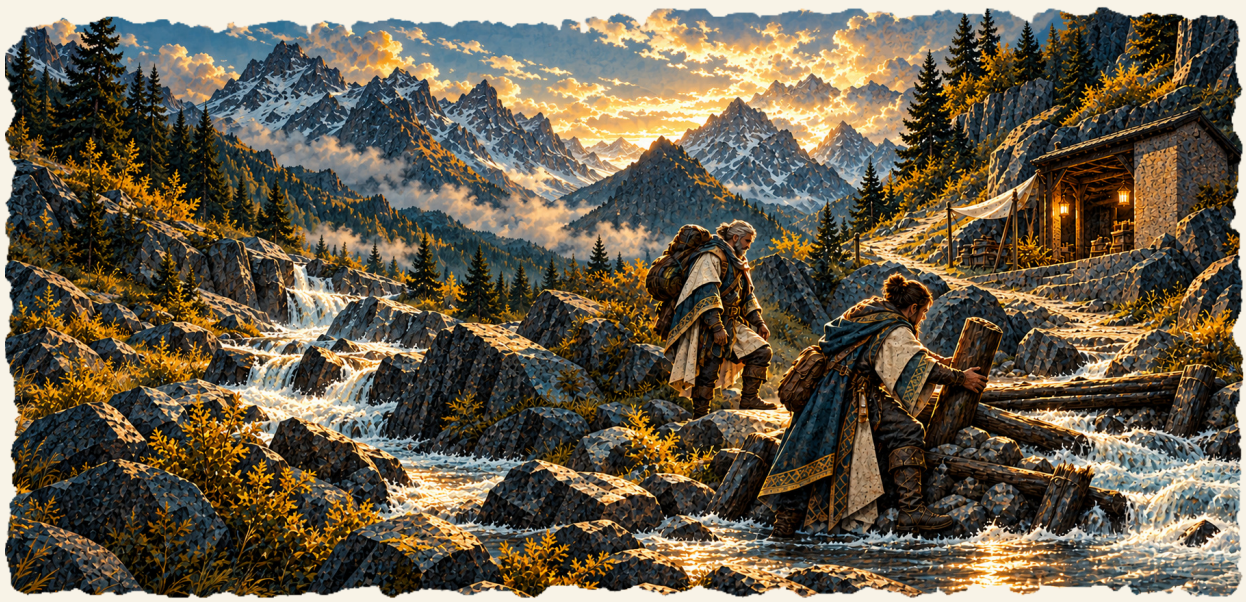
Use three described developments only if the chosen pace calls for them: water clouds the low ruts; the bank loosens beside the marker; the cutting becomes unsuitable for a loaded return. Give warning as each becomes plausible. These are changes to this place, not stages that advance once per roll or every time a player asks a question.

The high route remains a credible alternative. If the party spends time securing it, let that work matter. If they stay safely at the station overnight, agree the quality of shelter and recovery honestly. A delayed hearing can be a meaningful consequence without killing the rescued messenger to punish the pause.

Worked resolution: support before speed

The party follows the cloth to the station. One character asks Lio about the injury while another inspects the door and rear path. The GM gives the ordinary visible facts. The group decides to use a carrying surface along the ridge and send a runner with the message. They agree who carries, what equipment is committed and how the runner will identify the delivery.

At the side channel, a character proposes steadying the existing water while the carriers cross. The table reads the actual capability, establishes target location and reach, and agrees whether the shallow flow creates meaningful uncertainty. A narrow maintained lane does



not carry the patient by itself. The carriers still support Lio and negotiate the footing.

If that crossing is secure after preparation, resolve it without an obligatory roll. If the wet edge is giving way under immediate pressure, state what success and failure change and choose the relevant resolution. A failed foothold can call for a valid reaction from someone actually positioned to help. It grants no automatic catch to a person too far away or with no applicable opportunity.

End with a safer road or a known danger

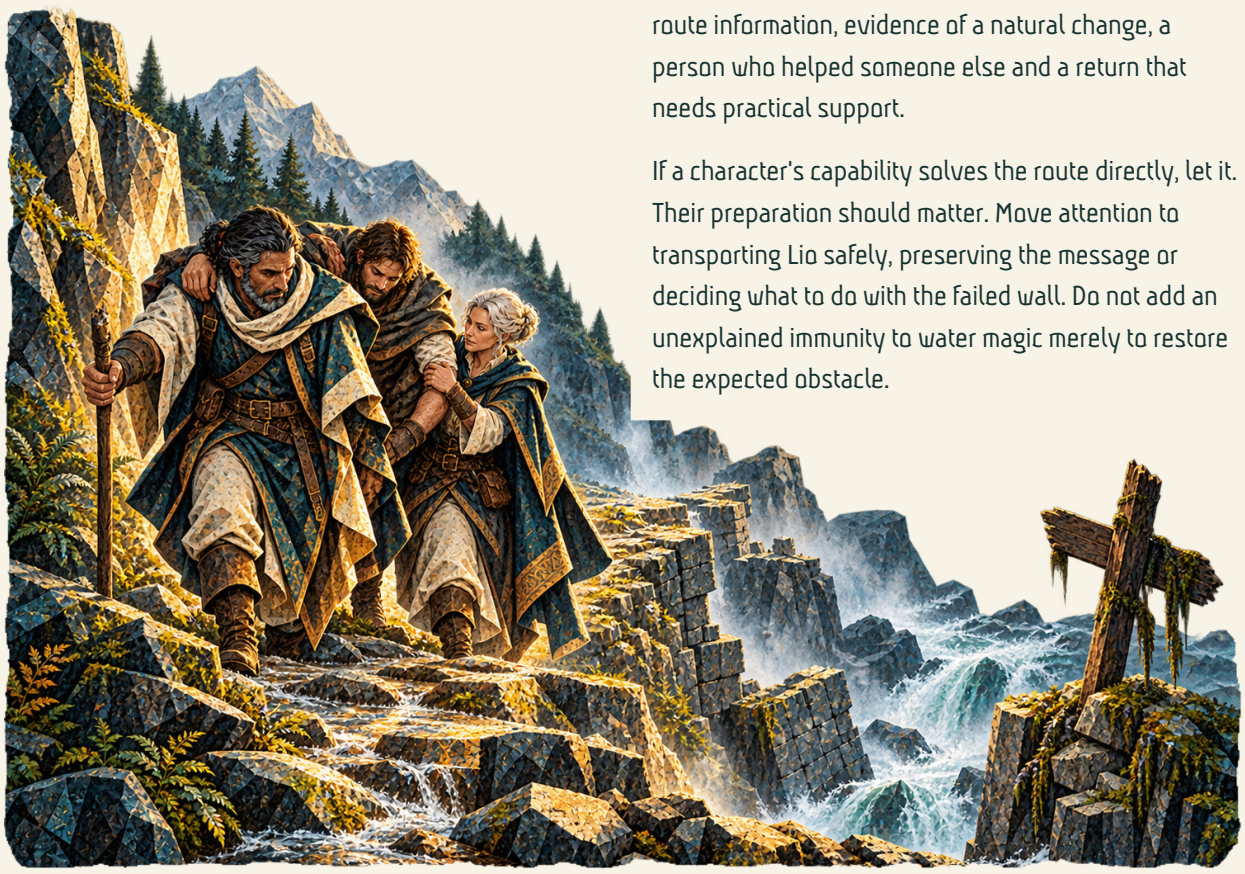
Possible endings include Lio safely returned, the message delivered, a temporary warning at the marker and evidence of the failed retaining wall. The group may accomplish some before others. Record the remaining injury, recovery allowance, equipment loans and promises. Ask which unresolved fact interests the players.

If they leave the marker untouched, travelers can still be warned by people who know. If they repair it, the low route remains flooded until something changes the water. If they keep the survey notes, someone at the Bellhouse may identify the old maintenance agreement. The next adventure grows from what they found and whom they helped.

Adapt the situation without losing its subject

For a coastal campaign, use a displaced beacon marker and a stranded courier in a tide shelter. For mountains, use a fallen trail sign and a survey hut above a broken scree path. Keep the central facts readable: mistaken route information, evidence of a natural change, a person who helped someone else and a return that needs practical support.

If a character's capability solves the route directly, let it. Their preparation should matter. Move attention to transporting Lio safely, preserving the message or deciding what to do with the failed wall. Do not add an unexplained immunity to water magic merely to restore the expected obstacle.



15

Records for your table

Carry the current truth into the next decision.



Keep a small, reliable record at the table

You do not need to write a transcript to preserve an encounter. You need the few facts that affect the next decision. Separate a stable definition from changing state, and separate a player-facing warning from information the characters do not yet have. Paper cards, a notebook or the platform can all support that work.

The tools below are **optional recording formats**. Complete the fields that serve your group. None creates an extra action economy, fixed damage timer, compulsory condition package or hidden difficulty calculation.

A stance can summarize behavior without granting a bonus

When many participants act, a short behavioral phrase can help: guarding the bed, withdrawing toward cover, bracing the gate, bargaining for a witness. Call it a stance in your notes if useful. It summarizes an intention and visible posture. It is not a universal mechanic with an automatic modifier, defense or action.

Distinguish that summary from an actual authored conditional rule. The Warden's bracing is relevant because Braced Resistance has a precise qualification and because its brace item supports a bounded check. A different creature saying “defensive stance” receives neither benefit by default. A player can understand the posture and propose an approach without needing to memorize invented stance packages.

When the stance changes, explain the observation. The guardian leaves the gate; the keeper lowers a weapon; the ambusher backs toward the side door. That can change sight, paths, conditions and intent. Apply the actual facts, not an assumed all-purpose advantage from a posture label.



Keep a declaration line for each active participant

Record field	A usable entry
Desired result	Draw the timber to the landing without releasing it downstream
Approach	Secure tether, guide the lane, then pull along the board
Opportunity and access	At the timber; ordinary rope; Mira's located Water working within 30 ft
Placement	Measured because the pull depends on setup and route
Chosen uncertainty	Prowess DC 14 for the actual caught load
Stated failure	Timber remains caught; revised route needed
Cost and timing	Only the separately agreed requirements; no hidden damage bill
Completion	Mark resolved when the declared pull has been answered

You can speak the line instead of writing every field. Use more detail where ambiguity or stakes justify it. A secure ordinary door opening may need only a description. A desperate rescue over a closing gap benefits from clearer opportunity, timing and consequence.

Record objective advancement as changed facts

"Timber tethered," "safe downstream route verified," and "bridge arm freed" are useful changes. They show what later tasks can use. A progress counter can be an optional summary if the table wants one, but it should correspond to actual established facts. Do not require filling three boxes if a coherent plan has already solved the situation.

Distinguish progress from an irreversible outcome. A tether enables a pull; it does not guarantee the bridge will lower. Negotiating with one guardian changes that guardian's behavior; it does not mind-control the other. A repaired mechanism can resolve the practical problem while leaving a political disagreement. Keeping those facts separate makes outcomes richer without requiring more rolls.

If progress stalls, identify the actual uncertainty or missing ingredient. The group may need a tool, information, support or a different approach. If there is no meaningful uncertainty left, resolve the secure work. Do not keep a scene open merely because everyone has not used their preferred attack.

Use a current-state line that fits on one card

For a repeated creature, write name, pinned definition, current/maximum Vitality, location, movement used, reaction slots remaining, current intent and any ongoing requirement. Add a consequence with its ending only when it exists. The Watchers share a definition but keep separate lines. Watcher A at 13/13 guarding the bed is not interchangeable with Watcher B at 7/13 negotiating on the bank.

When the record changes, say why. Damage from a resolved hit changes current Vitality. A moved creature changes location and used movement. A spent response changes availability. Advancing a phase merely changes the organizing marker. It does not heal, damage, end a consequence or apply another person's sheet edit.

Keep maximum and current values visibly separate. A new maximum from a reviewed build change is not automatic healing. A carried item being unequipped frees its slots but not its Load. These distinctions prevent a compact record from becoming inaccurate simply because only one number is shown.

Prepare a pause summary for interrupted sessions

End mid-scene with a concise snapshot: round and phase, unresolved intents, locations, movement used, reaction availability, current Vitality, consequences, maintained requirements and immediate pressure. State whether a triggering event is paused for a response. That lets the next session continue without replaying a completed attack or granting another reaction because real-world time passed.

Tell the players what their characters can still perceive. Keep private preparation private, but do not hide the state they already knew. Ask each participant to confirm their own changing record. A character linked to an encounter is a budget reference and quick link, not automatic authorization for the GM to edit it.

The platform's synchronization and independent play copies can preserve this state across devices. Use its actual permissions and conflict handling. Offline cached gameplay does not make a newly started run possible without connectivity. Paper play can use the same snapshot without the service; the procedure remains understandable without an account.



Close with a review that produces the next preparation

Ask four concrete questions: what changed, what remains, which decision mattered and what the group wants to pursue next. Record the answers alongside actual recovery and acquisitions. A short discussion can reveal that the most memorable moment was a negotiated repair, not the largest damage roll.

If a rule was hard to use, preserve the exact question. "We did not know whether the wall blocked this delivery" is useful for a definition review. "The encounter was bad" is an experience worth hearing but needs a follow-up about the decision, information or pace that caused it. Do not assume every complaint can be corrected by changing BU.

For the next session, prepare a changed opening and a few unresolved pressures. Bring forward obligations, injuries and relationships through their actual ending terms. Leave completed difficulties completed. SwordWeave's construction tools support a world that responds to the table; a reliable record makes that responsiveness possible.

Public sample encounters

The platform includes **30 original System encounter preparations**, three for each of ten bestiary environments. Their creatures are pinned to public definitions; their party budgets are editable references, never difficulty ratings. The books' offline sluice example remains usable without these links.

Explore the public sample encounter collection or the public encounter catalogue.

- Caravan at the Rooted Ford: a first-session crossing, 100 creature BU and 0 Item BU.

- Voices Over the Sinkhole: rescue and unstable terrain, 400 creature BU and 0 Item BU.

- A Debt Before the Last Gate: negotiation under pressure, 1,150 creature BU and 10 Item BU.

Read the opening, objectives, terrain, tactics, alternative approaches and consequences before using a roster. Adopt or clone a preparation into your account when



useful; it does not grant editing permission to someone else's live sheets.

Printable preparation tools

These compact forms are optional aids. Complete only the fields useful for your scene. They describe your decisions; they do not create new mandatory mechanics.

Encounter worksheet

Field	Your preparation
Situation and opening image	What can the participants immediately perceive?
Objective and pressure	What do people want, and what changes if nobody acts?
Party reference	Party BU; Party Item BU; optional size; linked sheets if useful
Opposition	Names; chosen base BU; Item BU; quantities; pinned versions
Budget appraisal	Separate totals; combined difference/ratio if calculable; count and concentration
Environment	Distances; paths; cover; available resources; visible warnings
Tactical notes	Control, area effects, support, burst, dependencies and counter-approaches
Alternatives	Negotiation, escape, repair, diversion or another plausible objective
Aftermath	What relationships, consequences and places change?



Keep the lane. Know its ending.

An example to read, question and adapt at your table.

01 Subject

Mira's narrow lane uses existing located water within her actual access.

02 Continuation

Keep directing while the worker crosses: an agreed scene-specific restriction.

03 Ending

The crossing is complete. Review water and supports before releasing the lane.

04 Separate records

Another person's injury, an equipment loan and remaining recovery still have their own endings.

An authored narrow-lane example; additional damage-triggered Vitality repayment remains unresolved.



Consequence worksheet

Field	Record
Cause	The attempt, event or agreement that created it
Actual change	Numerical effect, restriction, loss of access or narrative result
Recipient and scope	Exactly who/what is affected and what remains possible
Timing	When it applies, recurs or can be triggered
Ending or recovery	A duration, task, condition or agreed procedure
Owner of the record	Who keeps it visible and updates authorized state?

Between-session review

Ask what the group accomplished, what remains unresolved, which costs or continuing effects still apply, and what each player wants to pursue. Check acquisitions, mirrored drawbacks, Item BU and pending rules changes together. Save the records and their versions so the next session begins from the world you actually created.

You have enough to run a game when the participants understand their characters, the situation offers useful choices, and the table can agree and record an attempt. The purpose of the tools is to support that conversation and the story that follows it.

Worked records and table references

The following constructions reproduce their ingredients so they can be used without a live catalogue. They are examples, not additional mandatory character choices. Acquisition costs use the reference anchors; execution stakes remain contextual.

Mira: a complete starting character

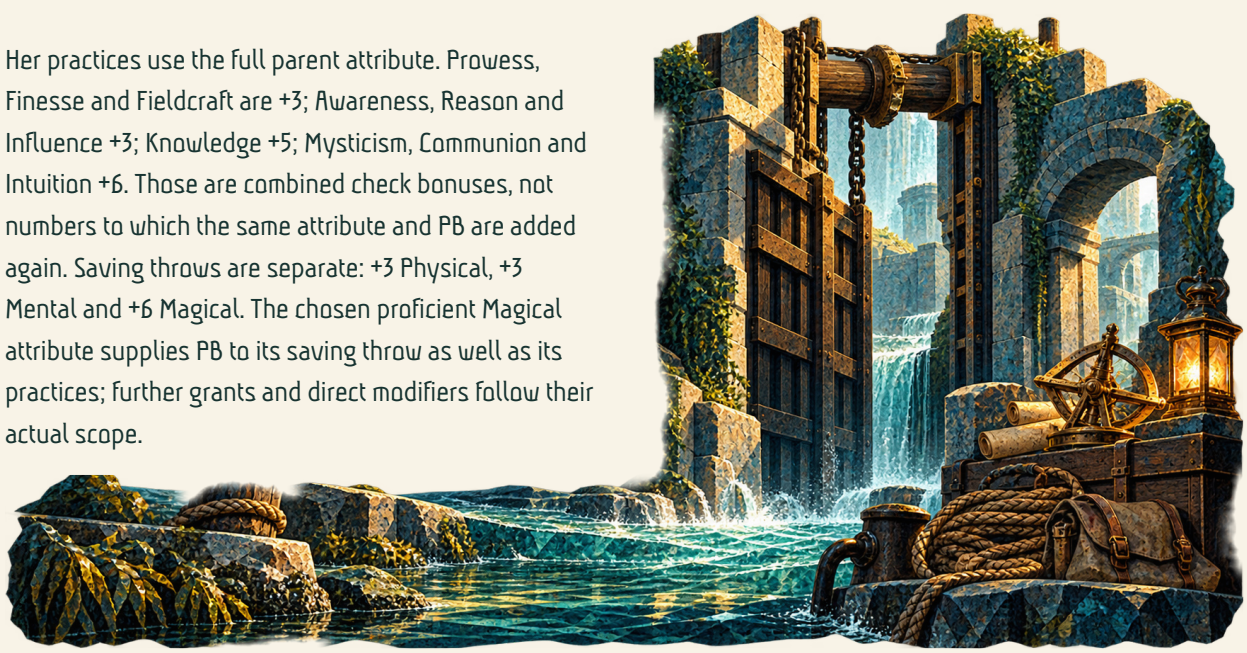
Concept. Mira grew up repairing canal boats. She wants to reopen the abandoned trade route and discover why the river no longer follows its old course. She knows the



work of water better than court etiquette and needs companions who can help her reach the old locks.

Field	Starting record
Foundation	Level 1; 25 character BU; Medium size
Base attributes	Physical 3, Mental 3, Magical 4: total 10
Proficient attribute	Magical; baseline PB 2
Extra training	Knowledge proficiency
Vitality	Maximum 12; current 12
Short-rest allowance	6 remaining until a completed long rest refreshes it
DC	5 + 2 + 4 = 11, using Magical
Movement	Walking 30 ft per round; ordinary swim/climb 15 ft
Equipment	Six equipped slots; capacity 40 + 5 × 3 = 55 Load
Acquisition	24 spent; 1 unspent; no mirrored credit

Her practices use the full parent attribute. Prowess, Finesse and Fieldcraft are +3; Awareness, Reason and Influence +3; Knowledge +5; Mysticism, Communion and Intuition +6. Those are combined check bonuses, not numbers to which the same attribute and PB are added again. Saving throws are separate: +3 Physical, +3 Mental and +6 Magical. The chosen proficient Magical attribute supplies PB to its saving throw as well as its practices; further grants and direct modifiers follow their actual scope.



Acquired primitive	Bound definition	BU
Verb Access II	Permission to change existing states/properties within owned domain access: reshape, redirect, combine, separate, transfer or stabilize	8
Water Domain I	Grounded water is an eligible subject; no permission to control every grounded domain or abstract meaning of water	4
Near Range	Permit eligible workings up to 30 ft; use actual target location and path	4
d8 Output	Permit d8 output in an appropriate damage/healing construction; no automatic number of dice or new behavior	4
Knowledge Proficiency	Add PB to applicable Knowledge checks where that training is not already supplied	4

River Caravan Upbringing organizes Verb II, Water I and Knowledge proficiency: 16 BU of the existing ledger. It describes canal work, communal repairs and the habit of asking where a current will go. It does not add a second charge for those acquisitions.

Guided Water, an effect. References Verb II, Water I and Near Range. It permits guiding or reshaping existing grounded water that Mira can locate within 30 ft. Define the actual volume, route and opposition for the attempted use. It supplies neither an invisible-target lock nor unconditional control of every flow.

River Hand, a capability. Uses Guided Water to redirect streams or transfer water between vessels. Ordinary small tasks can need no roll or meaningful Cost. A surging canal may require resolution, more time, help or agreed consequences. Duration and upkeep are agreed for the actual working. The d8 acquisition can support a separately defined water impact; River Hand's description alone is not a healing power.

Sample use. Mira diverts a narrow stream from a worker's legs. The table agrees that reshaping the existing water is within access; the worker is visible and 20 ft away. They choose a Magical check under current conditions, DC 12, before commitment. With Magical proficiency her combined bonus is +6. A roll of 7 gives 13. The diversion succeeds with the pre-agreed restriction: she keeps directing this channel until the worker crosses. There is no second purchase of Water I and no automatic d8 damage.

A complete ordinary item

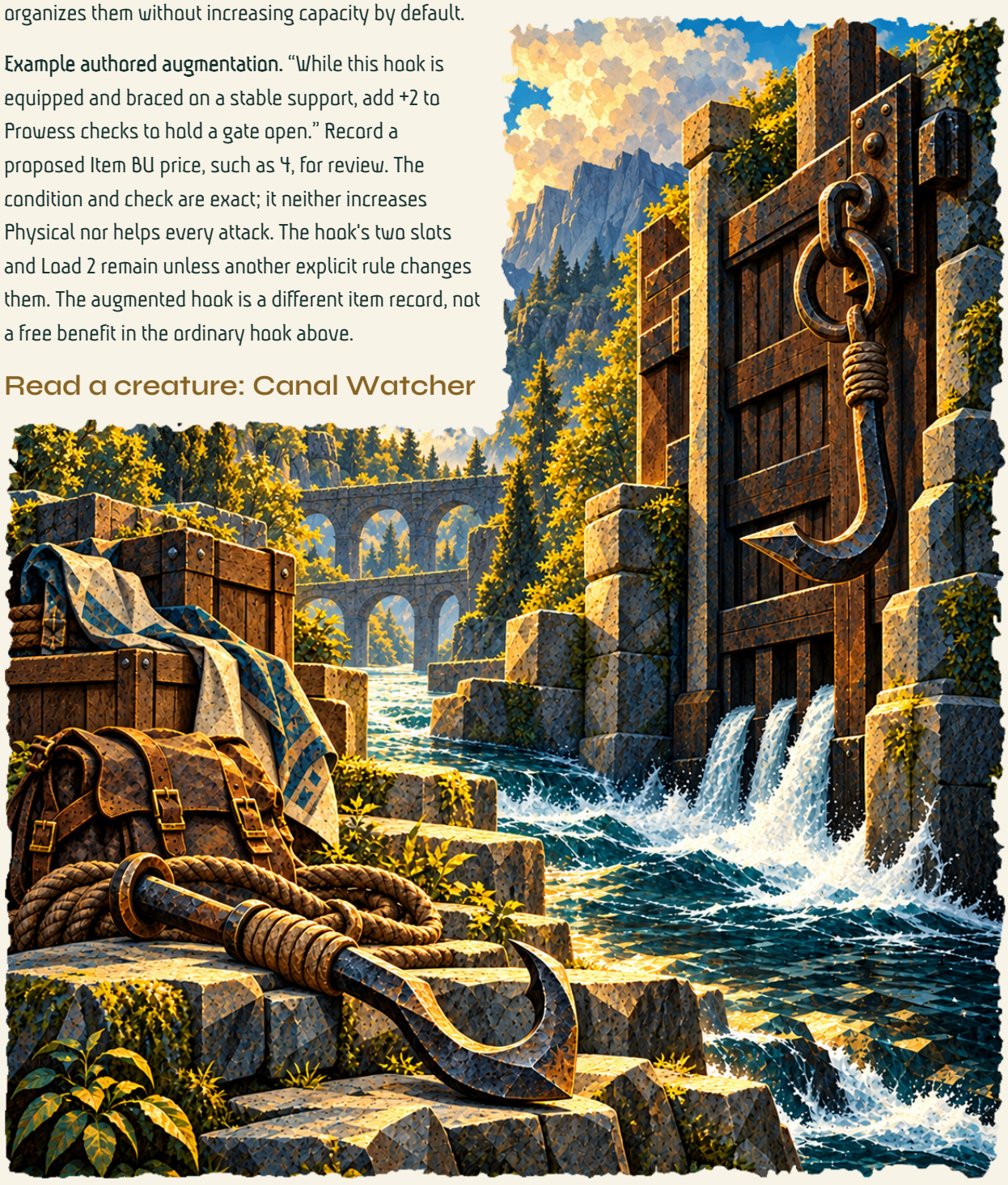
Canal hook. A Medium two-handed pole with a hook used to draw a rope closer or brace a light object. It has no extraordinary ingredient: Item BU 0, Load 2, final equipped requirement 2 slots. A carried spare still adds Load but uses no equipped slot. Its length gives no automatic Near Range permission for extraordinary workings.

Mira can carry and equip one hook: 2 of 55 Load and 2 of 6 equipped slots. Two hooks contribute 4 Load; equipping both requires 4 slots. Ordinary price and availability are setting decisions, not BU. A backpack organizes them without increasing capacity by default.

Example authored augmentation. "While this hook is equipped and braced on a stable support, add +2 to Prowess checks to hold a gate open." Record a proposed Item BU price, such as 4, for review. The condition and check are exact; it neither increases Physical nor helps every attack. The hook's two slots and Load 2 remain unless another explicit rule changes them. The augmented hook is a different item record, not a free benefit in the ordinary hook above.

Read a creature: Canal Watcher

Purpose. A river spirit guards a spawning bed beside a damaged sluice. It wants a safe flow, not slaughter. It warns anyone disturbing the gate and can negotiate if someone demonstrates a workable diversion.



Field	Complete example record
Chosen creature budget	25 BU; 20 acquired/spent; 5 remaining; no mirror credit
Foundation	Rank 1; attribute points 3; Physical 2, Mental 0, Magical 1
Training	Proficient Magical; PB 2
Practices	Prowess/Finesse/Fieldcraft +2; Awareness/Reason/Knowledge/Influence +0; Mysticism/Communion/Intuition +3
Save bonuses	Physical +2; Mental +0; Magical +3 from the proficient attribute; no extra save-training grant
DC	5 + PB 2 + chosen Magical 1 = 8
Vitality	Maximum/current 13/13; unused short-rest allowance 7 if agreed rests apply
Size and mobility	Small; walking 25 ft; ordinary swim/climb 13 ft
Senses	Ordinary sight and hearing; no granted sense through walls



Field	Complete example record
Items	None: Item BU 0; six equipment slots; carrying capacity 20 + 5 × 2 = 30

The baseline starts with 25 divided by 25, whose square root is rank 1. Three times rank gives 3 attribute points. One plus rank rounded up gives PB 2. Half the budget is 12.5, rounded up to Vitality 13. It uses the same fully stated Verb II, Water I, Near Range and d8 definitions as Mira, totaling 20 BU. It has no Knowledge proficiency purchase.

Turn the Current. A capability referencing Guided Water's Verb II, Water I and Near Range ingredients. Redirect or reshape existing located water within 30 ft. State the actual path, volume, recipients and opposition before resolving. This does not automatically move a creature against its will; contest or another agreed resolution can be needed.

Water Impact. Uses those ingredients and d8 output to drive existing water into one located target within 30 ft. **Example normal expression:** Id8 Magical Water damage, projected through the actual path. At this table it uses an attack check with Magical training, +3, against the target's DC; it does not also demand a save by default. Appraise changed volume, recipients, timing or effort separately. This sample expression grants no healing, resistance or extra actions.

Behavior and tells. The Watcher points toward the spawning bed before attacking. It prefers turning the current to injuring people. It retreats or talks when the threat to the bed ends. A dry bank deprives it of useful existing water; its unused BU does not grant water creation, armor or teleportation.

In the digital creature editor, practice-allocation slices may be recorded as Physical Prowess 2/Finesse 0/Fieldcraft 0; Magical Mysticism 1/Communion 0/Intuition 0; Mental all 0. Those allocations satisfy its base ledger; the displayed checks still use the relevant



full current attribute and applicable training, as listed above.

Progress beyond level 21

Progression does not stop at level 20. Retain the published cumulative threshold at level 21, 286 BU. After that, add 10 each level and the subsequent four-level bracket spikes: +24 at level 25, +28 at 29, +32 at 33, continuing in that pattern. These are additions to the ordinary +10 at those levels. PB is still 2 plus the number of completed four-level groups after level 1.

Level	Cumulative BU	Baseline PB	Baseline maximum Vitality
22	296	7	374
23	306	7	391
24	316	7	408
25	350	8	450
26	360	8	468
29	418	9	551

Do not add a spike again to an already cumulative table value. Active PB and Vitality modifiers can change the resolved sheet.

Mirror credit without erasing the drawback

Example, not a mandatory build. A level 1 character has 25 BU and spends 27 on positive acquisitions. An accepted eligible personal drawback supplies 2 credit, giving 25 net spent and 2 actual used debt. The level 1 debt ceiling is 4. The positive build is also below the next-level creation ceiling of 35. Review the drawback's actual rule and obtain the DM's agreement to exceed the ordinary allowance.

Having a ceiling of 4 does not mean the character automatically receives 4 credit. A character spending 23 has 2 ordinary BU remaining, even if the sheet also shows potential mirror headroom. A character proposing 31 positive BU with only 2 valid credit remains 29 net spent: another 4 is not covered merely because a ceiling exists. Overflow still needs explicit agreement and must respect both applicable limits.

Compatible pairs are Add/Subtract, Multiply/Divide, Minimum/Maximum and Grant/Revoke. Set To has no automatic opposite. A personal drawback that revokes flight remains on that person; separately proposing flight for an ally does not repay or suppress it. A narrow condition or non-mirrorable rule must be respected.

At the table: a quick reference

1. State an intent. Confirm ordinary circumstances and extraordinary access.

2. Locate the target or establish an authored alternative. Declare actual reach, recipients, output and duration.

3. Agree uncertainty, stakes, Cost and its timing. Revise the attempt if needed.

4. Resolve the chosen check, contest, clash, attack or save; apply bias and modifiers once.

5. Record changed positions, current Vitality, movement used, reactions, consequences and ongoing requirements.

Remember	Default or procedure
A check	d20 + current attribute + applicable training + modifiers
Trained / expert	PB / twice PB where actually granted
Bias	Cancel opposing stacks; N net stacks means N + 1 dice, keep appropriate extreme
Shared round	Council then Fast (0–1) then Measured (2–3) then Heavy (4+)
Reaction	One independent slot per round; valid trigger, immediate Complexity 0–1, self/touch or one target
Movement	One round allowance; split among tracks/reactions as the situation permits
Continuing work	One upkeep track per maintained capability; requirements of several capabilities accumulate
Damage defenses	Matching resistance half rounded up; vulnerability double; immunity zero
Collapse	Rescue promptly; stabilization stops dying but does not heal or wake
Short rest	Finite allowance: half maximum Vitality, rounded up; consume actual healing, carry unused recovery
Long rest	Agreed overnight recovery; normally full healing, refresh short-rest allowance
Purchases	Count acquisitions once; character BU, Item BU and execution Cost remain separate

Glossary

Acquisition: an owned occurrence of a primitive, recorded in its ledger. References to it in several compositions are not extra purchases.

Attribute: Physical, Mental or Magical; use its current numerical value directly.

BU, Build Units: the acquisition measure. It is not automatically money, a spell resource or an encounter difficulty rating.

Capability: a working or talent organized from actual primitives, effects and readable rules.

Clash: a timing resolution when opposing intents meet; distinct from a contest of effort.

Complexity: the dependencies of an action, used in placing it in the shared rhythm; distinct from power or Strain.

Consequence: an actual change with a cause, applicable timing and ending/recovery terms.

Cost: the agreed pressure or consequence of an attempted execution; may be mechanical, restrictive, environmental or narrative.

Council: the coordination/continuation point at the beginning of a shared round.

DC: a difficulty target; a character's selected-attribute DC is distinct from their three saving throws.

Domain: the subject that an extraordinary permission can affect.

Effect: a reusable grouping of ingredients or outcomes; it is not an automatic new purchase.

Heritage: Lineage, Upbringing or Manifest: a narrative organization of actual acquired content.

Intent: the outcome an actor wants, stated before the resolution procedure is chosen.

Item BU: the separate acquisition accounting for equipment mechanics.

Load: carried burden; distinct from equipped slots, Item BU and ordinary value.



Mirror: an eligible reversed rule with actual scope and an accepted drawback; not an unrestricted cancellation trick.

PB: proficiency bonus. Apply applicable training once; expertise uses twice PB when granted.

Practice: an approach to a check associated with an attribute; ordinary attempts do not require training.

Primitive: a reusable permission or rule, with its own recipients, conditions and accounting.

Reaction: an immediate eligible response through an available independent slot and actual trigger.

Strain: contextual appraisal of how an attempt pushes the actor and situation, graded 0–6 as guidance.

Structure: the permitted arrangement of a working; it supplies no unrelated domain or verb access.

Template / play copy: a reusable creature definition / one independent creature's state in play.

Track: Fast, Measured or Heavy resolution timing in a shared round.

Upkeep: an agreed ongoing requirement of a maintained working; not necessarily damage.

Verb: the kind of change an extraordinary permission allows.

Vitality: current capacity to remain in action; its maximum and current value are separate.

Working instruments and paper play



Take only the instruments your session needs

The following forms record decisions already made by the table. None adds a compulsory tracker, price, difficulty band or action. Copy them by hand, print the pages or use your own equivalent. A paper game needs the actual definitions and current state, not an account or a link to a private library.

For first play, take the situation sheet, the round ledger and any active consequence records. For creation review, add the acquisition and capability records. For a campaign, keep a small place-and-promise ledger. Leave unused fields blank rather than inventing numbers because a form provides a box.

A reference is useful only when it resolves

Write the name and version of a definition beside its reference. If it belongs to another person, confirm that the people using the record can actually read it. Include the essential text in a printed adventure. A broken private link is not an adequate explanation of what a creature can do.

In the platform, templates and live copies have different jobs. Preserve the pinned definition and record each participant's current state separately. On paper, make the same distinction with one master creature record and separate state lines for Watcher A and Watcher B. Neither method lets damage to one copy silently injure another.

End the session with a restartable scene

Read the last changed fact aloud. Ask players to confirm their current Vitality, remaining recovery, important gear, consequences and maintained work. Write the

people present, the place, the immediate question and the next likely decision. If play stopped during a round, include the current track, unresolved intents, movement already used and spent reactions.

At the next meeting, read that record before adding new developments. Let players correct a missing fact they remember together. A reliable restart gives the campaign continuity without demanding that everyone reread a transcript. Keep the world's unfinished promises visible, then return to the simple invitation that started the book: what do you do?



Make the agreement understandable

Optional copyable instrument. Record the agreement your table actually made.

Wanted result

Ordinary circumstances / extraordinary access

Actual scope

Targets / sense / reach / output / persistence

Uncertainty

Secure result / check / attack / save / timing / contest

Stakes

Success / failure / Cost / timing / options to revise

Record

Changed scene / consequence terms / exception scope



Write a working people can use

Optional copyable instrument. Record the agreement your table actually made.

Intent and permission

Result / verb / domain / range / actual ingredients

Recipients and delivery

Location method / paths / shape / conditions

Expression

Output / source and domain / resolution / timing

Persistence

Duration / continuation / interruption / ending

Review

Normal use / stretched use / outside-scope use

Ledger

Acquisitions versus references / price proposal / version



Acquisitions and references

Optional copyable instrument. Record the agreement your table actually made.

Actual acquisition

Name / version / bound subject / BU / occurrence identity

Other acquisitions

Record each purchase once; references do not repurchase

Organizations

Lineage / Upbringing / Manifest / effects / capabilities

Accounting

Positive acquired BU / credit available / debt used / unspent

Equipment

Separate Item BU / quantity / Load / final equipped slots



Consequences and continuing work

Optional copyable instrument. Record the agreement your table actually made.

Cause and subject

What happened? Who or what is affected?

Actual change

Number / restriction / resource / environment / obligation



Timing and maintenance

When does it apply or recur? What is required?

Ending and recovery

Duration / task / treatment / explicit ending event

Other records

What remains when this one ends? Who tracks it?

Build an opponent

Optional copyable instrument. Record the agreement your table actually made.

Purpose

Want / behavior / tell / nonviolent ending

Foundation

Base B / rank / points / allocation / PB / Vitality

Acquisitions

Actual permissions / modifiers / price / remaining BU

Rules

Senses / movement / attacks / saves / source and domain

Persistence and gear

Continuation / endings / reactions / separate Item BU

Test

Favorable scene / counter-approach / changed environment



Prepare an encounter

Optional copyable instrument. Record the agreement your table actually made.

Situation

Opening / objective / visible pressure / alternatives

Party

Manual Party BU / Party Item BU / size / optional references

Opposition

Base BU / Item BU / quantity / version / roles / tactics

Place

Routes / distances / cover / senses / resources / warnings

Appraisal

Separate totals / ratio / count / concentration; no difficulty label

Aftermath

Retreat / resolution / rescue / changed relationships



One shared round

Optional copyable instrument. Record the agreement your table actually made.

Council

Scene / continuation / reactions / Main Intents

Fast: Complexity 0–1

Intent / position / clashes / reactions / result

Measured: Complexity 2–3

Dependencies / changed route / result

Heavy: Complexity 4+

Further dependencies / pivots / result

Carry forward

Movement used / Vitality / consequences / ongoing work



Prepare a situation, not a script

Optional copyable instrument. Record the agreement your table actually made.

Premise

People / place / pressure / useful player choices

Facts

What exists? What is wrong? What changes unattended?

People

Desire / resource / constraint / credible offers

Information

Essential facts / several sources / optional discoveries

Locations

Routes / barriers / distances / resources / threats

Outcomes

Several resolutions / consequences / next questions



Return to the shared story

Optional copyable instrument. Record the agreement your table actually made.

Last result

What changed? What remains unresolved?

Current record

Vitality / recovery allowance / gear / acquisitions

Continuing requirements

Consequences / maintenance / obligations / endings

Next purpose

What do you want to pursue? What do others need?

Agreement

Rewards / rule revisions / permissions / absent players



Places and promises

Optional copyable instrument. Record the agreement your table actually made.

Current place

Who is here / what is visibly different?

People and groups

Want / resource / constraint / next step

Evidence

Conclusion / sources / what remains uncertain

Promises

Who owes what / to whom / when it ends

Unattended change

Present sign / cause / next development / prevention

Next opening

Player interest / unresolved question / immediate choice



Topic and example index

Alphabetical headings / linked folios. The contents give the main reading route.

A firing lane can be the objective 132

A hazard is a changing place 100

A heritage is a person's history, not an invoice twice 44

A hidden creature is not a known target 32

A journey can change before anyone attacks 115

A reaction is an opportunity 162

A reference is not another purchase 61

A scent is evidence, not a verdict 106

A sense has a physical subject 29

A solo threat is not a second rulebook 135

A support creature needs someone to support 129

A warning must help someone choose 179

A workshop in understandable rulings 25

Adventure: the bellhouse of borrowed names 221

Adventure: the gate that will not open 212

Adventure: the road that forgot its marker 230

Area A: the western landing 215

Area B: the wheel platform 215

Area C: the maintenance passage 216

Area D: the spawning bed 216

Area E: the lower landing 223

Area F: the archive room 224

Area G: the bell gallery 224

Area H: the counterweight chamber 225

At the table: a quick reference 251

Author a creation with its owner 43

Begin with a delivery, not a battle 17

Begin with a playable situation 10

Bellhouse Custodian: an asymmetric solo 125

Breathing, rescue and recovery are different 81

Build a campaign that can respond 186

Build adventures from what people do 200

Build creatures that change the scene 119

Build the injury, not a species stereotype 84

Canal Watcher: a small guardian 123

Consequences, recovery and continued play 68

Control should change a choice 78

Creatures from a purpose to a record 121



Topic and example index

Alphabetical headings / linked folios. The contents give the main reading route.

Design pressure that offers useful choices 171

Direct a shared round 139

Draw the path before rolling 35

End with a place the players changed 196

From an idea to an adventure someone else can run 202

Give consequences a shape people can live with 73

Glossary 252

Keep a small, reliable record at the table 238

Keep high-powered play understandable 193

Keep the work and its price separate 56

Location J: the turned marker 233

Location K: the survey cutting 233

Location L: the reed ridge 234

Location M: the Survey Station 234

Make rulings people can understand 21

Mira: a complete starting character 244

Mirror credit without erasing the drawback 250

One rescue, several dependent parts 156

People who can change their minds 97

Prepare a first session people can enter 13

Prepare an adventure for another GM 209

Prepare encounters around choices 167

Prepare facts that survive a failed approach 182

Price an idea by reading what it changes 50

Price the promise you actually wrote 58

Printable preparation tools 242

Progress beyond level 21 250

Public sample encounters 241

Read opposition as relationships 127

Read the bellhouse vertically 227

Rest begins with safe enough circumstances 87

Review creations and choose consequences 40

Run an encounter through its whole life 169

Run places, conversations and journeys with confidence 91

Say the promise before accepting it 64

Sluice Warden: a sturdier protector 123

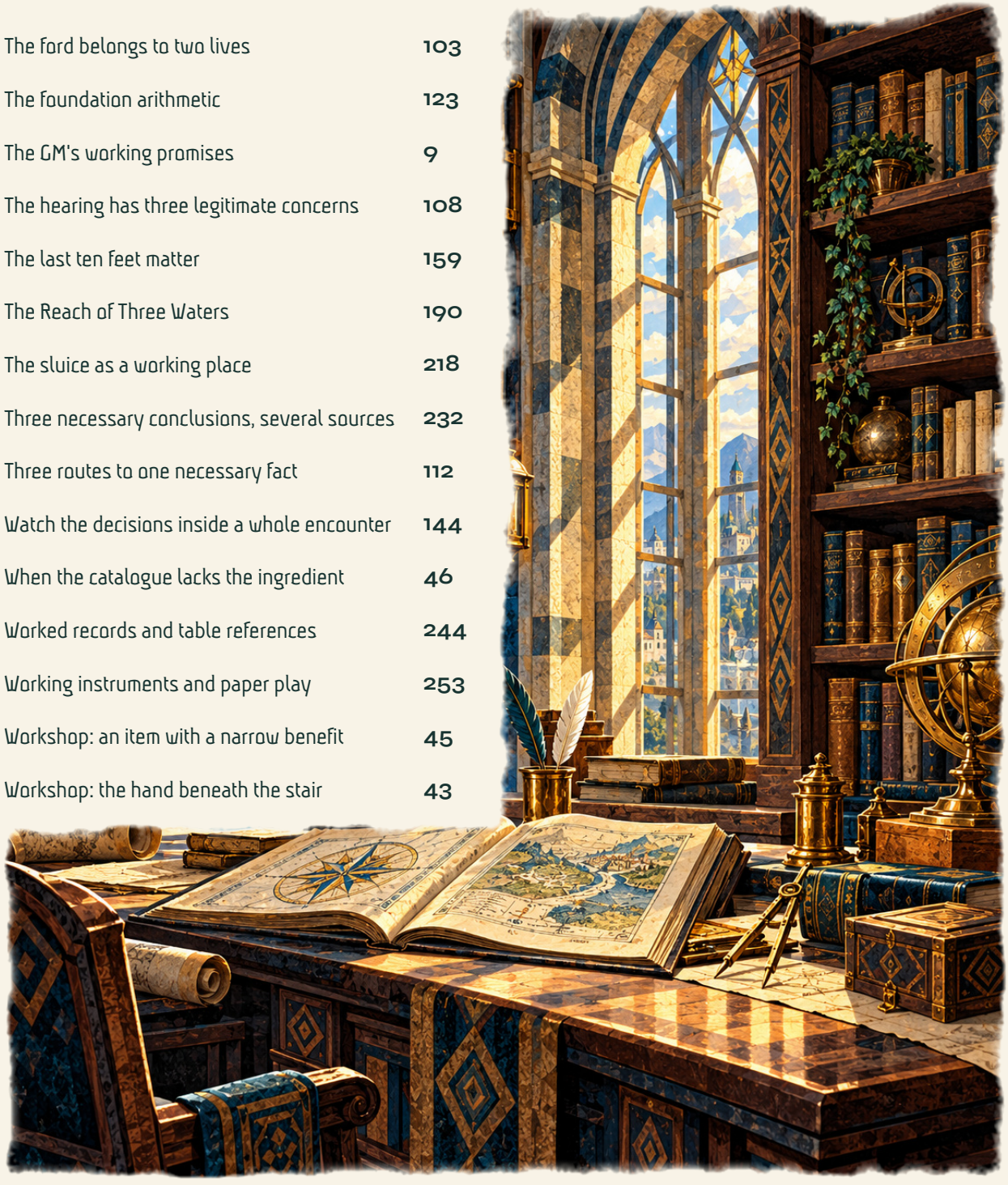
The facts behind the disappearance 232



Topic and example index

Alphabetical headings / linked folios. The contents give the main reading route.

The ford belongs to two lives	103
The foundation arithmetic	123
The GM's working promises	9
The hearing has three legitimate concerns	108
The last ten feet matter	159
The Reach of Three Waters	190
The sluice as a working place	218
Three necessary conclusions, several sources	232
Three routes to one necessary fact	112
Watch the decisions inside a whole encounter	144
When the catalogue lacks the ingredient	46
Worked records and table references	244
Working instruments and paper play	253
Workshop: an item with a narrow benefit	45
Workshop: the hand beneath the stair	43



Keep the changed world

The gate opens, or the people find another route. A promise is repaired, or its terms are challenged. Someone returns with a messenger, a warning and a question about the water upstream.

Your next preparation begins with what your players changed. Keep their actual choices, the people who remember them and the rules you agreed together. Then offer the next understandable decision.

WHAT DO YOU DO?

