

Chapter 2

Characters

Most likely, your first act as a player in a *Fantasy Infinity* campaign will be to create your character. Though this set contains nine pre-made characters you can use if you're pressed for time or just really like one of them, it's usually more fun to play a hero you created from scratch.

This chapter explains how to do this. It also explains some important features of *Fantasy Infinity* characters, namely class and heroic traits. There is also a detailed "guided tour" of every piece of information on the character sheet (the form where you keep track of your character's abilities and gear), an example of character creation, and finally, what to do when your character gains a level, becoming more powerful.

Character Creation

It's possible for an experienced player who knows the rules well to create a character in 15–20 minutes. However, expect creating your *first* character to take a minimum of an hour, especially if you're learning the rules as you go.

Some groups will want to work together on this, perhaps devoting their entire first session to character creation. This can add a whole dimension to the process, with players bouncing ideas off each other and often ending up with more interesting results than any would have come up with on their own. It is also more time consuming, but there's a good chance you'll end up feeling it was time well spent.

It helps to have a concept in mind from the beginning. This can be as simple as "my character wants to be a knight", but you can get as creative as you want here. Maybe you and another player want to be a wizard and her familiar (a pet such as the witch's proverbial black cat), only the "wizard" is a charlatan and the "familiar" is the real brains – and conscience – of the operation.

Discuss your character idea with your GM and fellow players and make sure it fits with the kind of game they all have in mind. Group character creation can really shine here; it helps keep everyone on the same page about the style of game they're going to be playing.

Creating a starting character has the following steps:

1. Choose your **class**
2. Spend your starting **Destiny**
3. Spend your starting **skill points**
4. Establish your **Heroic Traits**
5. **Gear up**
6. (Optional) Come up with a **Quirk**
7. Fill out your **character sheet**

You should also give some thought to your character's background, personality and goals, and how your abilities relate to these. There are no formal rules for this (though it can play a role in step 6), but it's good to have an idea of how

your character will act and what motivates him or her.

Step 1 — Class

Fantasy Infinity characters each have a class, an archetype they exemplify. Class determines many of a character's capabilities and influences their approach to problems. Classes can be thought of as describing a character's "job" within a group of adventurers.

The following classes are available in the *Origins Set*:

Warrior	Mystic
Tough, hard-hitting melee specialist	Wizard with healing and support magic
Scoundrel	Warlock
Quick, sneaky melee or ranged fighter	Wizard with elemental attack spells
Dan	Polymath
Martial artist with a spiritual side	Warrior-mages; learn a bit of everything
Alchemist	Animist
Good with potions, bombs, machines	Learns strange magic by experiencing it

Brief descriptions of each class can be found in the **Classes** section of this chapter (page 25). These descriptions also include some starting stats; namely, the number of dice you start with in Attack, Defence, Magic, and Ward, as well as your initial hit points (hp) and mana pool (mp).

You'll notice that, other than these few stats, there aren't any rules in the class descriptions. Most of the features and abilities that define a class are found on that class's *Destiny Wheel* and *Defense Web*, which you'll find in the *Handouts* folder. You'll begin exploring these in step 2. Each ability is individually described in the **Character Reference**.

You must make one decision at this step besides choosing a class – add one die to either your Attack, Defence, Magic, or Ward. You can't give yourself more than four dice in any of these stats in this way. In other words, you can raise one of these numbers from 2 to 3 or from 3 to 4, but not from 4 to 5. These four stats are briefly explained in chapter 1, starting on page 10.

Pay attention to the weapons and magic types your chosen class is best in, as these can strongly influence your decisions in steps 2, 4, and 5.

Step 2 — Destiny

Now you get to choose some abilities from your class's *Destiny Wheel* and/or *Defense Web*. This is the fun part, for two reasons: this is where most of the cool things your character can do will come from, and plotting a course through these charts is almost a game in itself.

Each *Destiny Wheel* and *Defense Web* has a green **Start node** in its exact center. To gain the ability written on a given node, you must **capture** that node. You are allowed to capture any node that is adjacent (directly connected) to the **Start node** and/or any node you've previously captured. You can't capture the same node more than once, but there's no objection to capturing two nodes with the same name.

To capture a node, you must spend a resource called **destiny**. The amount of Destiny you must spend to capture a node is the number printed on the path you used to reach that node. (Sometimes you'll have more than one available path to a given node – always use the least expensive path when this happens.)

You can find more details on this process, as well as descriptions of all the abilities you can gain this way (over 200 in all!) in the **Character Reference**. While choosing these abilities, you will refer to that book frequently, especially the first few times you make a character. To briefly summarize one important topic from that book, besides the Start node, there are three other types of nodes on these charts:

- ▶ **Core nodes**, or just “cores” (*lozenges of various colours*) grant **core masteries** – increasing levels of skill with a weapon, type of magic, or method of defending yourself. The first nodes you capture on both the Destiny Wheel and Defence Web will be cores.
- ▶ **Command nodes** (*purple or red ovals*) teach abilities you have to actively use; in other words, they let you take actions you otherwise couldn't.
- ▶ **Support nodes** (*everything else, mostly blue plus signs*) grant you abilities you don't have to actively do anything to benefit from. At their simplest, these just improve a number on your character sheet; at their most complicated, they might be abilities that trigger when specific things happen, allowing you to interrupt enemy actions.

An important point that is easy to overlook if you're new to the game – multiple abilities with the same name are usually *not* redundant. This is especially true of cores. For example, someone who has captured two Sword nodes is, all else being equal, a better swordsman than someone who has captured only one. If you already have one Sword node, that doesn't mean you don't want any more. On the contrary, if that's a weapon you plan to use a lot, getting more of its cores should be one of your highest priorities.

As a starting, first-level character:

- ▶ First, you may capture **one node each from the Destiny Wheel and Defence Web** for your class, without regard to their usual costs.
- ▶ Then, you get **9 Destiny** to spend however you want.

The 9 points can be spent on abilities from your Destiny Wheel and your Defense Web in any combination you want. Note that you get 9 points to spend on *both charts combined*, not 9 on each. You may use one node you capture this way to open a path to another, so after you get your two freebies you won't be restricted to nodes adjacent to the Start nodes, but you *are* restricted to nodes you can find a sufficiently short route to from there.

You don't have to spend all nine Destiny, though it will often be a good idea to do so. You can save up to four of them to use at a future level-up; this is referred to as **banking points**. Generally, if you think your character is mostly going to be taking the least expensive available options anyway, it is advisable to spend all of them (three nodes at three points each).

Some of the nodes you capture at this stage – namely Magic cores and Spell Learning support nodes – allow you to learn spells. Select these from the lists

starting on page ____ of the **Character Reference**, making sure you meet the prerequisites for each spell you choose this way. If you find that you don't want all the spells you're entitled to – perhaps there are better ones you'd like to hold out for – make a note of how many spells you could have learned but didn't. You'll add this number to your spell capacity in step 7.

It's also possible for a support node to raise some of your Heroic Traits (for example, a Courage node would raise your Courage and one other Heroic Trait). You'll apply the effects of these nodes at the end of Step 4 below.

Step 3 — Skill Points

Next, you choose **skills**. Skills cover most of the things your character can do that aren't related to combat or magic but are still important adventuring skills, like stealth, piloting, or lockpicking. There are nine skills, each divided into three **specialties** (27 specialties in all). Chapter 5 is entirely devoted to skills, and explains them in much more detail.

Skills (and their associated specialties) are chosen from the **Skill Tree** in much the same way other abilities are chosen from the Destiny Wheel and Defence Web. These cost **skill points**, which are completely separate from Destiny. While each class has its own Destiny Wheel and Defence Web, there is one Skill Tree that all classes have in common. (One consequence of this is that any character can learn any skill.)

Every character starts with 1 die in each of the nine skills and 11 Skill Points to further improve upon this.

The Skill Tree also includes some support abilities, which work the same way as abilities of the same name found on the Destiny Wheel and Defence Web. As was the case in step 2, some of these might raise your Heroic Traits; you'll handle their effects at the end of step 4.

You can bank at most 3 skill points, saving them for later use; spend *at least* the other 8 at this time.

Step 4 — Heroic Traits

All player characters have six **Heroic Traits** – aspects of their personalities that can contribute to performing heroic deeds. The six Traits are:

Courage

Passion

Perseverance

Ingenuity

Insight

Presence

For more detailed descriptions of what each trait does, in both role-playing and game-mechanical terms, see **Heroic Traits** starting on page 30.

You get 15 points to divide among the six traits – in other words, your traits must add up to 15. Each trait must be at least 1 and at most 6.

To help you make informed decisions in this step, the character card and

your class' Destiny Wheel and Defence Web use the above icons to indicate what is affected by each trait. For example, if you see a silver gear icon next to an ability, that means that ability will be more effective the higher your ingenuity is. Pay particular attention to the icons next to the cores for weapons and spell types you are interested in; you'll want high scores in the traits indicated there.

Example: Suppose you have cores in Unarmed and Cosmic (a type of magic) so far. Looking at your class' Destiny Wheel, you notice the blue and purple icons above next to your Unarmed core. This means courage and insight are the traits that make you better at unarmed combat. You also notice the grey and purple ones next to your Cosmic cores, for ingenuity and insight. Since insight affects both, you decide to put 6 of your 15 starting points – the maximum – in insight.

You may also have captured one or more trait nodes (support nodes that have the same name as one of the six traits) in step 2 and/or 3. If you did, handle them at the end of this step, *after* divvying up your initial 15 points. Each of these will add 1 each to two of your Traits – the one it's named after, and one other. This is more fully explained under **Trait Nodes** on page 38 of the **Character Reference**. (It's okay if this raises a Trait to 7 or more.)

Traits vs Attributes

Heroic Traits are the closest thing to the "attributes" or "ability scores" found in other RPGs, but they measure personality traits rather than capabilities.

Traits are rarely referred to when actually playing the game. They're used extensively in step 7, though, where you determine most of the numbers you *will* use.

Step 5—Gear Up

Next, you get 200 gil (by default) to purchase adventuring equipment. ("Gil" are a standard currency used in Aperion and other worlds where your *Fantasy Infinity* campaign might take place). Any of this money that you don't spend on gear is cash on hand that your character starts with. It's almost always a good idea to get weapons and armour that correspond to the nodes you captured in Step 2, insofar as you can afford them, and you might also be able to afford a backup weapon (e.g. a throwing weapon for a character that mainly uses a melee weapon), a couple of healing potions, or another useful item or two.

It is assumed that most starting characters are, for one reason or another, itinerant wanderers, with few possessions other than this gear with which they hope to make their fortune. Besides the items you explicitly purchase at this stage, you probably have a couple changes of clothes and some mundane camping gear, but you won't generally start out owning a home, a mount, or other highly valuable property.

Your equipment has probably been pieced together rather haphazardly over your character's recent past. It's unlikely that you just walked up to a blacksmith with your life savings and outright bought this gear. Regardless, adventurers normally start out with gear that would cost them about 200 gil to purchase, whether or not that's how they actually acquired it.

Be sure to ask your GM about this – depending on the campaign, things

might be quite different. For example, if the GM wants to run a campaign where court intrigue is a major element, characters might start out as minor nobles with considerably more material wealth than normal. As long as everyone starts on a more or less even footing, and the GM understands that changing this can significantly affect how powerful your characters are early in the campaign, this is one of the easiest things to customize.

Step 6 — Quirk (optional)

A quirk is a feature you create that's unique to your character, or at least very unusual. A character should have at most one quirk, but as you'll see from the examples below, that doesn't mean that a quirk can do only one thing.

A quirk should have both benefits and drawbacks. You might actually *want* the drawbacks of your quirk to be substantial, because *whenever your character is significantly inconvenienced by his or her quirk, you gain one Focus*. So it isn't so bad when the drawback of a quirk comes into play, and not just because it makes the story more interesting.

Quirks can add a lot of character to your game, but can also be difficult for some players and GMs to handle. For this reason, quirks are optional, in two ways:

- ▶ First, it's up to your GM whether your campaign uses quirks at all.
- ▶ Second, even if quirks are being used, not every character needs to have one.

(Put another way: Ask your GM whether she uses quirks before doing this step. Even if she does, you can skip this if it sounds more like work than fun.)

A quirk can be nearly anything, but should follow these guidelines:

1. You should be able to describe a quirk in one short sentence.

Quirks are best kept simple, at least conceptually. You can write an explanation of your quirk if you want, and that can be as long as you like. But you still need to be able to convey the basic idea behind it in just a few words.

For example, one character used in playtesting had the quirk "I'm a lake's spirit, composed of living water". That basic idea is very easy to understand, even though a GM and player could write page after page about its in-game implications if so minded.

2. A quirk should have flavour.

Quirks shouldn't just be bonuses to some number on your character sheet. A quirk should tell the group something about your character's background or personality. For example, "I'm a really awesome swordsman so I get +1 on the base damage of sword strikes" isn't a very good quirk. "I was trained in sword-play by the legendary outlaw Juri the Blue-Lipped" is much better, even if its net benefit is +1 on the base damage of most (see below) of your sword strikes.

3. A quirk should be a mixed blessing.

As mentioned above, a quirk should have both benefits and drawbacks.

Consider the two quirks given as examples above. There's some obvious benefits to being a water spirit. That character could flow through openings that would stymie other characters and store things by absorbing them into

herself. But there are also problems inherent in this quirk. The player who came up with it suggested that she suffer penalties in dry environments and that her equipment should frequently rust. The author also ruled that if she touched a scroll, it would become waterlogged and useless unless she used it right away.

Juri's protégé might get a straightforward benefit, like the damage bonus with swords mentioned above. As a somewhat more interesting alternative, perhaps Juri's techniques are especially effective against one type of creature, say giants, giving a bonus to Attack or Defence against them. Instead or in addition, you could have a more story-based benefit. Maybe people in some region view Juri and his associates as heroes, and so tend to be helpful to you.

Juri the Blue-Lipped

In case it's not clear, we have no idea who Juri is or why he has blue lips. We made him up just for the examples in this section. Do whatever you want with the name and idea; there is no "canonical" Juri.

It's not too hard to come up with drawbacks to go with this quirk. Perhaps you inherited not only Juri's admirers, but also his enemies. Perhaps Juri's idiosyncratic sword style isn't very effective against certain creatures; for example, if it gives bonuses against giants, maybe it also gives penalties against small enemies like goblins. Perhaps the legal authorities distrust and harass you because of your association with the famous outlaw.

4. The positive side of a quirk should be, at best, about as good as a typical support ability found in the *Origins Set*.

Consider Juri's protégé again. A +1 bonus to the base damage of sword strikes, for example, is about as good as the Melee Bonus support ability. (It may look inferior, because it only applies to swords. But in practise, it'll probably work out about the same. Most characters only use one type of weapon, or at most one melee and one ranged weapon.) Extra dice against giants? Sounds a lot like the Hunter ability. Either of these would be about the right power level (while both together would be clearly too good).

With more exotic quirks, this is very much. How good is the ability to flow through cracks, like our example water spirit? What about seeing what's in one mirror by looking in a different nearby mirror? Getting prophetic visions? Talking to bats? These are probably all fine, but it must be admitted that they resist quantitative comparison and their usefulness could vary a lot from one campaign to the next.

5. The drawback should matter (as more than just a fountain of Focus points), without being something you can call on whenever you want.

Try to have a drawback that hurts you about as much as the benefit helps you (or would if not for the Focus points). It's not the end of the world if the benefits and drawbacks don't "balance out", but it's nice when it happens.

One good rule of thumb is to avoid pairing a mechanical benefit with a role-playing based drawback. This combination *can* work, but it's easy to abuse. Too often, you end up with a situation where the advantage of your quirk comes up all the time, but the drawback is never even mentioned unless you really need a Focus point. (This guideline isn't a panacea against such

abuse, it just closes one door to it.)

For example, Juri's protégé should avoid pairing an advantage like "+1 to the base damage of sword strikes" with a drawback like "mistrusted by law enforcement". It's relatively easy to avoid dealing with law enforcement, while the damage bonus will apply in nearly every battle. A better drawback for this quirk would be a penalty to something like Defence or Armour when using swords (perhaps Juri's style is very reckless).

6. The GM has to explicitly agree with your choice of quirk and how it works.

That's true of everything, of course, but it's *especially* true of quirks because of the amount of subjectivity they can involve. If your quirk seems too powerful or doesn't fit the setting the GM envisions or is too ill-defined even for a quirk, the GM is free to ask you to tone it down or, as a last resort, disallow it.

Step 7—Fill Out the Character Sheet

To finish getting your character ready for play, print a blank character sheet and fill it out.

You'll need to figure out a few numbers along the way, such as your Armour rating. You don't need to make any further decisions, just simple calculations. The **Character Creation Cheat Sheet**, included in the Handouts folder along with the character sheet itself, explains how to do all of these calculations.

The section **A Guided Tour of the Character Sheet**, starting on page 32, explains every entry on the character sheet in more detail. You'll want to refer to this section while doing step 7, especially the first few times you create a character. If the Cheat Sheet doesn't answer your questions about step 7, the Guided Tour probably will.

Automating Step 7

Step 7 isn't all that difficult or time-consuming, and some people will find it quite fun. But we understand that it won't be everyone's cup of tea. Some players will prefer to have all the numbers calculated for them.

If you find yourself in this category, you'll be pleased to know that we want the first stretch goal in the *Fantasy Infinity* Kickstarter campaign to be a character sheet app that does this for you. We'd like to make this available for all major tablets, and ideally phones and Windows PCs as well if feasible.

If that sounds appealing to you, contribute to the Kickstarter when it launches, and you can help make it happen!

Even once this app is available, every player really should do step 7 by hand at least once. You'll understand the game far better that way than if you always rely on software. You can always use the app to check your work afterward.

Classes

Every player character has a class. Your class is a general style or archetype, and will strongly influence how your character approaches problems. You can think of a class as your “job” within a team of adventurers.

For each class, this section gives a brief, general description of the class and the starting stats needed to make characters. Besides these starting stats, the only rules for a class are its Destiny Wheel and Defence Web, and the abilities they contain. There are over 200 abilities, some unique to one class, some shared by several; two characters of the same class might not have a single ability in common. Every ability is described in the **Character Reference**.

Classes are described in the following format:

Name of class

Brief description of the class's theme, strengths, and weaknesses.

<i>Attack</i>	<i>Defence</i>	<i>Magic</i>	<i>Ward</i>	<i>hp</i>	<i>mp</i>
A	D	M	W	Start with X + [per] Y per level after 1st	Start with Z + [pre] U per level after 1st

► Comments on the weapons, spells and defences this class normally uses

The various one-letter abbreviations are numbers in the actual class descriptions; for example, A, D, M, and W are the number of dice a character of that class starts with in Attack, Defence, Magic and Ward respectively.

“Middle” Armour Types

A word of advice about choosing your initial core masteries. Light and Heavy armour are generally more useful at low levels than Mage armour. Against most low-level enemies, you'd rather have Armour than Resistance.

This can make it worthwhile for some classes, especially the Warlock and Mystic, to invest in their “middle” defence choices (those that cost 4 Destiny per core) at low levels. This is especially true of the “free” nodes they get at first level. That said, they'll probably want to switch to Mage armour later.

Warrior

From noble knights to resourceful barbarians, the warrior class covers many fantasy archetypes. Pick a random fantasy novel, and chances are the main protagonist is a warrior. These characters can dish out tremendous damage at close range and tend to be the hardest to take out of a fight. Some warriors will just want to focus on damage dealing, while others will prefer a mixed role, choosing abilities that help support and protect their allies.

<i>Attack</i>	<i>Defence</i>	<i>Magic</i>	<i>Ward</i>	<i>hp</i>	<i>mp</i>
4	3	2	3	Start with 25 + [per] 5 per level after 1 st	Start with 6 + [pre] 2 per level after 1 st

- ▶ Most warriors will focus on either the sword or the axe, though spear, mace, staff, and unarmed can also work. Notice that all of these are mainly melee weapons. Warriors can gain some ability in the boom-stick, bow, dagger, and shuriken; these can make good backup weapons, giving the warrior some ranged options.
- ▶ It is possible for a warrior to learn a little magic in two of the five categories, elemental and sun. Many warriors don't bother to learn magic at all.
- ▶ Of the defence styles, Warriors take the most easily to heavy armour and shields, with dodge and mage armour being the hardest defences for them to learn.

Scoundrel

Wily and quick, scoundrels specialize in the use of lighter and/or ranged weapons as well as deceiving and misdirecting their foes. They can bring nearly as much offence to the table as warriors, though sometimes only situationally. Compared to warriors, scoundrels have a somewhat easier time learning magic, but are usually not as durable.

<i>Attack</i>	<i>Defence</i>	<i>Magic</i>	<i>Ward</i>	<i>hp</i>	<i>mp</i>
3	4	2	3	Start with 20 + [per] 4 per level after 1 st	Start with 12 + [pre] 3 per level after 1 st

- ▶ Scoundrels can most easily specialize in the dagger and bow. Sword, staff, unarmed, and shuriken are other likely choices, with spear, mace and boom-stick being marginal possibilities.
- ▶ Scoundrels can, if they choose, develop a moderate level of ability with moon and cosmic magic, and can also learn a little elemental magic.
- ▶ Light armour and dodge are the scoundrel's easiest choices of defence. These don't work together, so unlike some classes, scoundrels will want to focus on at most one of their two main defences. Heavy armour and mage armour are the hardest for scoundrels to learn properly.

Dan

The dan is a disciplined fighter with a mystical side. Dans seek to achieve totally mastery over their own body, mind, and spirit, and as a means to that end, often put great effort into learning unarmed combat. The dan's Destiny Wheel is replete with Ki Techniques, semi-magical abilities by which they may heal themselves and others, perform superhuman athletic feats, perceive things others can't, and more.

<i>Attack</i>	<i>Defence</i>	<i>Magic</i>	<i>Ward</i>	<i>hp</i>	<i>mp</i>
4	4	2	2	Start with 25 + [per] 5 per level after 1 st	Start with 6 + [pre] 2 per level after 1 st

- ▶ Dans favour unarmed and shuriken over the other weapon choices, with staff, sword, spear and bow also being viable options. Mace, axe, boom-stick, and wand are available to dabble in.
- ▶ Dans can learn a little bit of cosmic and anima magic. Note that they're the only class besides the animist that gets access to anima.
- ▶ Of the six defences, dans take most easily to dodge and bracers. Heavy armour and mage armour are much more tricky for them. Don't overlook shields; sais work well for dans and are considered shields, not weapons.

Alchemist

Alchemists, sometimes also called Machinists depending on their main focus, are enthusiastic creators, or at least chronic early adopters, of new alchemical and mechanical technology. They are moderately adept with magic and great at using alchemical bombs and potions. Word to the wise: Blow Sky High, unique to this class, is probably the most powerful offensive Overdrive in the *Origins Set*.

<i>Attack</i>	<i>Defence</i>	<i>Magic</i>	<i>Ward</i>	<i>hp</i>	<i>mp</i>
3	2	3	4	Start with 20 + [per] 4 per level after 1 st	Start with 12 + [pre] 3 per level after 1 st

- ▶ Alchemists most commonly use the boom-stick (an example of the new technologies they love) and the mace (often in the form of a hammer or wrench) as weapons. Sword, dagger, and staff are also decent choices, with the option of gaining limited proficiency in orb, unarmed or shuriken.
- ▶ Alchemists can become fairly strong in Cosmic magic if they choose to be, with some potential in Sun and Elemental magic and a little in Moon magic.
- ▶ Light Armour and Mage Armour are equally easy for these characters to learn. As with the Scoundrel, these can't be used together, so you need pursue at most one of them. Heavy Armour and Dodge are their weakest defensive choices.

Warlock

Warlocks specialize in using magic to attack or debilitate their foes. This is one of the two classes collectively referred to as “wizards,” which tend to be physically unimposing, but more than capable of making up for it with spells, which are their main focus.

<i>Attack</i>	<i>Defence</i>	<i>Magic</i>	<i>Ward</i>	<i>hp</i>	<i>mp</i>
2	2	4	4	Start with 15 + [per] 3 per level after 1 st	Start with 18 + [pre] 4 per level after 1 st

- ▶ A warlock’s most common weapon choice is the orb. Orbs are small spheres or crystals that can fire magical bursts a short distance, and therefore count as weapons, but they are first and foremost a means of storing mana (magical energy). Warlocks can get some mileage out of wands as well. Among more traditional weapons, they are most proficient with daggers, with the staff, sword, unarmed, mace and bow sometimes being used as well.
- ▶ Elemental magic is the warlock’s trademark. They learn this area more easily and in greater depth than any other class, while also being reasonably proficient with both moon and cosmic magic. It is possible for a warlock to learn a little sun magic, but they’re not much better at it than a warrior.
- ▶ Mage armour and bracers are the easiest defenses for warlocks to learn, heavy armour and shield the most difficult.

Mystic

The second of the two “wizard” classes, mystics use their powers chiefly for healing, knowledge, and defence, seldom for attack. They are better at non-magical combat than warlocks, but this still cannot be described as their strong suit, partly because they share the warlock’s fragility.

<i>Attack</i>	<i>Defence</i>	<i>Magic</i>	<i>Ward</i>	<i>hp</i>	<i>mp</i>
2	2	4	4	Start with 15 + [per] 3 per level after 1 st	Start with 18 + [pre] 4 per level after 1 st

- ▶ Many mystics adopt the mace as a signature weapon, sometimes offering the preposterous justification that maces don’t shed blood. Whatever the reasoning, this gives them a decent melee weapon option that doesn’t hurt their spellcasting. The bow and staff are their next-best weapon choices. Some also use wand, sword, unarmed, boom-stick, or orb.
- ▶ Mystics are as strong in sun magic as warlocks are with elemental magic, and they usually pursue this area aggressively. They often become fairly proficient in moon and cosmic magic and can dabble in elemental magic.
- ▶ As with the warlock, mage armour and bracer are the easiest defences for this class to learn. The weakest areas for mystics are dodge and light armour.

Polymath

Also sometimes called Spellwords, polymaths combine aspects of the warrior, one or both wizard classes, and sometimes the scoundrel. They also have their own signature ability – using their weapons to deliver magical effects. The Polymath is a “second-best at everything” class that can do nearly anything except learn Anima magic, but never as well as a true specialist.

Attack	Defence	Magic	Ward	hp	mp
3	3	3	3	Start with 20 + [per] 4 per level after 1 st	Start with 12 + [pre] 3 per level after 1 st

- ▶ Polymaths favour the sword, but can't master it to the degree a warrior can. What they *can* do is become pretty good at swordplay *and* magic in a way neither a warrior nor a wizard can easily achieve. The mace and staff are nearly as promising; the dagger, bow, orb, wand, and unarmed, less so but still viable.
- ▶ Polymaths are decent at sun, elemental, moon and cosmic magic.
- ▶ Uniquely, all six defence styles are equally accessible to polymaths – all of them are equivalent to other class's intermediate choices.

Animist

Animists practise a strange, jujitsu-inspired form of magic dedicated to turning the enemy's techniques against them. Their equally unorthodox means of learning spells often involve experiencing their effects firsthand. This tends to make Animists physically tougher than the true wizards, with a balance of physical and magical skills closer to the Polymath's than, say, the Warlock's.

Attack	Defence	Magic	Ward	hp	mp
3	3	3	3	Start with 20 + [per] 4 per level after 1 st	Start with 12 + [pre] 3 per level after 1 st

- ▶ Animists take more easily to the staff than to other weapons. They can pursue the bow, wand, axe, and mace to reasonable proficiency. It's possible for them to gain some ability in spear, orb, and unarmed.
- ▶ Anima magic is the defining feature of this class and the easiest form of magic for them to learn. They can back this up with a little moon, sun and elemental magic, but these aren't generally their strong points.
- ▶ Light armour and bracer are the easiest defences for the Animist to learn, heavy armour and shield the hardest.

Signature Abilities

Some classes have one support ability that partially defines that class. You don't *need* to take these abilities, but it's assumed most characters of these classes will. These abilities are The Hard Way for Animists, Sneaky Bastard for melee-oriented Scoundrels, and to some extent Spellblade for Polymaths.

Heroic Traits

All player characters have six Heroic Traits – aspects of their personalities that contribute to the willingness and ability to perform heroic deeds. Other creatures may have some, all, or none of the six traits. The Heroic Traits are:

Courage

The ability to press on despite your fears. At their best, characters with high Courage are selfless and valiant, doing what must be done despite the real possibility of giving their lives. At their worst, they risk everything on plans they shouldn't have pursued.

In game-mechanical terms, Courage helps your Armour rating and your damage with swords, spears, maces, and unarmed strikes. Most non-intelligent enemies' damage is also considered Courage-dependant (and therefore reduced by the Terror status ailment).

Passion

Intense emotional engagement with your undertakings. At their best, characters with high Passion are creative, engaged with the world around them, and selflessly devoted to a cause. At their worst, they are dangerous loose cannons, taking mortal offence at imagined slights or otherwise being just plain loopy.

In game-mechanical terms, Passion helps your Quickness and Resistance ratings and your damage with axes, spears, and shuriken. Most intelligent enemies' damage is also considered to be Passion-dependant (and therefore reduced by the Pathos status ailment).

Perseverance

The determination to overcome whatever stands in the way of your goals. At their best, characters with high Perseverance are never-say-die types who find ways to snatch victory from the jaws of defeat. At their worst, they are stubborn jackasses who stick to their guns long after they should have realized they were making a mistake.

In game-mechanical terms, Perseverance helps your hit points (hp), Armour rating, and damage with axes, bows, boom-sticks, and staffs, and also makes Anima spells more effective.

Ingenuity

The ability to think on your feet and adapt to change. At their best, characters with high Ingenuity are brilliant and flexible, always ready with whatever the situation requires, whether it's a new plan or a clever quip. At their worst, they are obnoxious know-it-alls who choose needlessly complex plans when they would be better off going with their first instinct.

In game-mechanical terms, Ingenuity helps your Quickness rating, your spell capacity, and your damage with swords, daggers, boom-sticks, and wands, and also makes Elemental, Moon and Cosmic spells more effective and illusions more convincing.

Insight

The ability to grasp the non-obvious without conscious effort, whether it's someone's motives in a social situation or the presence of a sneaky combatant. At their best, characters with high Insight are extremely observant, laying enemies' weaknesses bare while making friends and allies feel trusted and understood. At their worst, they are deceitful and manipulative, abusing the trust they so easily earn for their own ends.

In game-mechanical terms, Insight helps your spell capacity and your damage with daggers, bows, shuriken, orbs, and unarmed strikes, and also makes Sun, Moon, Cosmic, and Anima spells more effective. In addition, characters with high Insight tend to be less likely to be fooled by illusions.

Presence

That intangible something that makes people pay attention to you, sometimes against their better judgment. (Looks might have something to do with it, but are at most a small part of what Presence represents.) At their best, characters with high Presence make everyone around them more effective and focused on what's important. At their worst, they lead others down destructive blind alleys, whether they're intentionally malicious or merely misguided.

In game-mechanical terms, Presence helps your mana pool (mp), your Resistance rating, and your damage with maces, staves, wands, and orbs, and also makes Elemental and Sun spells more effective.

The Philosophy Behind Heroic Traits

As an earlier sidebar mentioned, Heroic Traits play the same role in Fantasy Infinity as “ability scores,” “attributes,” or “base stats” do in many other RPGs. However, while in most RPGs, the attributes are physical and mental capabilities, Fantasy Infinity instead uses personality traits that make for good heroes. There is some overlap with traditional RPG stats — if your second-favourite system has a Charisma stat, Presence covers much the same ground — but you won't find, for example, a Strength score here.

This emphasis better reflects the fiction that these games are based on. Very rarely do the heroes win out because they were stronger or faster — if anything, they typically succeed despite comparing poorly to their enemies in these respects. The traits used in these rules are instead ones that actually seem to matter in heroic fiction.

Players are encouraged to make decisions that emphasize the Heroic Traits in which they have high scores. However, there are no rules that force anyone to do this. For example, there is nothing in these rules that makes it harder for a character with a high Courage to run away from a battle. For many players, being able to have your character make *any* choice is a big part of the appeal of tabletop RPGs. In some RPGs, there are rules that do nothing but remove this feature. *Fantasy Infinity* isn't one of them.

A Guided Tour of the Character Sheet

The character sheet has two parts. You're meant to cut it along the dotted line in the middle. When you do this, the top part becomes your **character card** and the bottom part becomes a **combat card**.

The character card should contain what might be called your “naked” stats – your character's stats without taking any equipment into account.

A combat card contains your stats with a particular set of equipment. List the relevant equipment in the top left area of the card.

You'll only need one character card. Some characters require more than one combat card, but not usually starting characters.

Using the Character Sheet in Play

Usually, you'll only need one of these cards at a time. So, during play, you can keep them in a little stack in front of you, with the one currently in use on top. Outside combat, this will typically be the character card. In combat, it will nearly always be a combat card. Sometimes you need your skills in combat; in that case, you can always leave the bottom part of the character card peeking out from under the combat card.

Similarly, if switching equipment during combat can significantly affect your stats, you might want more than one combat card, one for each relevant set of equipment. When you switch from one set to the other, just switch out the top card of the stack.

Besides saving table space, this system means you only see one set of stats at a time – the one that's relevant to you at the moment – and thus won't accidentally use the wrong ones.

Why Two Cards?

The two-card system might seem unnecessarily complicated. And in all fairness, *for starting characters*, this is sometimes true.

However, for more advanced characters, changing equipment can dramatically alter many stats. It ends up being much easier to use the character card to record the baseline stats that don't depend on your gear and then have combat cards for each set of gear you're likely to use. Swapping them based on the situation might seem like a goofy extra step at first but quickly becomes easy, intuitive, and fun.

The Guided Tour

The following pages explain each item on the character sheet in this format:

Name of Stat

What this is: Brief description of what this means and/or how it's used in the game.

Instructions: How to fill this out for a starting character. Often has separate paragraphs for the character card and the combat card.

Notes: Anything else you should know. (Not every stat has a Notes entry.)

This section also serves to define many important terms. If you're having trouble remembering what a term means, there's a good chance you can look it up in this section.

Top Section

What this is: Basic identifying information.

Instructions: In the appropriate places, put your character's name (**Character**), your name (**Player**), and your character's class (**Class**). The large blank box nearby is traditionally used for a drawing of your character, but you can do whatever you want with it.

Heroic Traits

What this is: A rough measure of the aspects of your character's personality that make him or her hero material.

Instructions: Copy these numbers straight over from wherever you wrote them down in step 4 of character creation.

As a quick check, these should add up to 15 if you didn't capture any trait nodes in step 2 or 3. If you did, add 2 to this total for each such node you captured. Each individual trait will be at least 1, and at most 6 plus the number of trait nodes you captured in steps 2 and 3, if any.

Notes: For more information, see **Heroic Traits** starting on page 30.

Experience

What this is: This box has spaces for three pieces of information. **Level** is a rough measure of how experienced, and thus how powerful, your character is. Your level is based on how many Experience Points, or xp, you have earned (**Current XP**), which you can use to determine how many xp you need to reach the **Next Level** (see "Levelling Up" starting on page 44).

Instructions: Normally, you start as a level 1 character with 0 xp. You need 50 xp to reach level 2. (If you are starting at a higher level than this, hopefully your GM let you know that before you started making your character.)

Attack, Defence, Magic, and Ward

What this is: These are the four most common types of dice rolls in combat, and the numbers next to them are the number of dice you normally use for those rolls. (They're sometimes used in other situations too). The small dice symbols next to these numbers show the thresholds for these rolls.

Instructions: On the character card, record your base numbers for these four scores. These can be found in the **Classes** section starting on page 25. You also got to add 1 to one of these numbers back in step 1 – remember to include this!

As a quick check, these should add up to 13. (If they add up to 12, you probably forgot your bonus point.) Each one should be between 2 and 4 inclusive.

On the combat card, record these stats *after* any bonuses from equipment or core masteries. For a starting character, it is possible to get an extra die in **Attack** through **Unarmed** mastery; similarly, you could increase **Defence** via **Dodge** or **Shield** mastery, and **Ward** via **Bracer** mastery. (There is no way for a starting character to raise **Magic**.) These dice should be recorded *only* on the

combat card, not on the character card.

Notes: Even if your character isn't proficient (i.e. has no mastery levels) in Shield or Bracer, you can still use these types of equipment to get an additional die of Defence and Ward respectively. However, these dice have higher thresholds, making them less effective than if you were proficient. Use the **Additional Dice** sections to record this on your combat card.

Hit Points (hp)

What this is: The amount of damage you can take before being defeated (injured too badly to fight).

Instructions: Start with the base value for your class (15, 20 or 25), plus your perseverance. Then add any bonuses from abilities you gained in steps 2 and 3.

For a starting character, this will be the same on your character card and combat card, unless you captured two Light Armour nodes in step 2 of character creation. If you did, the bonus hp for this go only on your combat card.

Notes: Your character starts each day (of game time, not real time) with this number of hit points. When you take damage, subtract it from your current hp. This does not affect your maximum. When something (like the Cure spell) says to "recover" hp, add these hp to your current total, but this can't raise your current total above your maximum.

Base values can be found in the Classes section starting on page 25.

Toughness

What this is: Strictly a calculation aid. This is never used directly in play, it just helps you figure out what happens to your hp if your perseverance changes.

Instructions: Start at 1. Any ability that increases your hp will also increase this.

Notes: See **Toughness, Energy, Perseverance, and Presence** in the **Character Reference**, page 39, for more on this.

Critical

What this is: Some abilities care whether your hp are reduced to this number or less.

Instructions: This is 1/5 of your maximum hp (rounded down, minimum 4).

Notes: If you have no abilities that specifically mention your critical number, nothing special happens when you reach this point. But it's usually a good signal that you need to heal up!

Mana Pool (mp)

What this is: The size of your mana pool; that is, the amount of magical energy ("mana") you can use in a day, for using supernatural abilities like spells.

Instructions: Start with the base value for your class (6, 12 or 18), plus your pres-

Current hp and mp

Lots of character sheets for other RPGs have an area for your *current* hp and mp (or the equivalent) in addition to the maximum. Invariably, this becomes an unreadable grey smudge long before the rest of the character sheet has outlived its usefulness.

Character sheets seldom deserve such premature destruction. Therefore, we suggest tracking current hp and mp on an inexpensive sticky note attached to your character sheet, a separate notepad, or your phone or tablet.

ence. Then add any bonuses for nodes you captured in step 2.

For a starting character, this will be the same on your character card and combat card, unless you captured two Dodge nodes in step 2 of character creation. If you did, the bonus mp for this go only on your combat card.

Notes: Your character starts each day (of game time, not real time) with this amount of mana. When you spend mp, subtract them from your current mp. This does not affect your maximum. When something (like an Æther potion) says to “recover” mp, add these mp to your current total, but this can’t raise your current total above your maximum.

Unlike hp, nothing special happens if your mp are reduced to zero. You just can’t use any more abilities that cost mp.

Base values can be found in the Classes section starting on page 25.

Mana vs Ki

In the world of Aperion, some people refer to mana as “ki” (pronounced like “key”). This is particularly common in the martial arts traditions in which dans are trained.

Some such people insist ki is a completely different thing from mana. They are mistaken.

Energy

What this is: Strictly a calculation aid. This is never used directly in play, it just helps you figure out what happens to your mp if your presence changes.

Instructions: Start at 1. Any ability that increases your mp will also increase this.

Notes: See Toughness, Energy, Perseverance, and Presence in the *Character Reference*, page 39, for more on this.

Armour

What this is: This protects you from physical damage. When you take damage from sources like the swords, teeth, and claws of your enemies, subtract your armour from that damage; whatever is left is subtracted from your hp.

Instructions: On the character card, put the average (rounded down) of your courage and perseverance, plus any bonuses from abilities that don’t depend on specific equipment.

Then on the combat card, record your Armour rating *as you would typically be equipped on an adventure*. Start with the number you put on the character card, then add the armour value for the armour you normally wear, and bonuses from your mastery of that armour type and any other abilities that depend on your equipment.

Resistance

What this is: This protects you from magical damage. When you take damage from a spell or other supernatural ability, or a force that resembles magic (e.g. fire), subtract your resistance from that damage; whatever is left is subtracted from your hp.

Instructions: On the character card, put the average (rounded down) of your passion and presence, plus any bonuses from abilities that don’t depend on

specific equipment.

Then on the combat card, record your Resistance rating *as you would typically be equipped on an adventure*. Start with the number you put on the character card, then add the resistance value for the armour you normally wear, and bonuses from your mastery of that armour type and any other abilities that depend on your equipment.

Quickness

What this is: This helps determine who goes first in combat.

Instructions: On the character card, put the average (rounded down) of passion and ingenuity, plus any bonuses from nodes you've captured that don't depend on specific equipment (e.g. Quickness Bonus).

Then on the combat card, record your Quickness rating *as you would typically be equipped on an adventure*. For a starting character, this is usually the same number as on your character card. The most common reason it would be different is wearing heavy armour, which gives a small penalty to Quickness.

Spell Power (Elemental, Sun, Moon, Cosmic, Anima)

What this is: There are five main types of magic in *Fantasy Infinity*, each of which has its own spell power rating. These numbers help determine how powerful an effect your spells create. For example, spell power can determine how much damage your spells cause (or heal) and how long they last.

Instructions: For each type of spell power, start with the sum (*not* the average) of the two traits whose icons appear here. Add 2 for each level of core mastery you have in that type of magic, and each Spell Power Bonus support ability.

There aren't entries specifically for spell power on the combat card. However, sometimes you'll put a number there that depends on your spell power, such as the amount of damage a spell deals. When this happens, remember to take into account bonuses for your equipment, as well as the inherent power bonuses many spells have.

Bank (Spell Capacity, Destiny, Skill Points)

What this is: This area is used for keeping track of unspent spell capacity, Destiny, and skill points. When you gain points of any of these types and don't use them right away, you are said to have "banked" them for later use.

Spell Capacity is used for learning additional spells, beyond those learned directly from capturing nodes. Destiny and skill points were explained earlier in this chapter, in steps 2 and 3 of character creation.

Instructions: If you didn't spend all your available Destiny in step 2, record the number of unspent points here. Similarly, record your remaining skill points here if you didn't spend them all in step 3.

Spells You'll Never Use

You don't need to fill out the entire spell power area. No character you can make with the rules in the *Origins Set* can use all five types of spells, and some will ignore spells entirely. It's okay to fill out the ones your character might use in the foreseeable future, and leave the rest blank.

To figure out your spell capacity (as a starting character):

1. Start with 1/4 of the sum of your ingenuity and insight, rounded down. (This might be zero.)
2. Add 1 for each magic core and each spell learning support node you captured in step 2. (Exception: Anima spell learning nodes grant 2 spell capacity.)
3. If you chose to learn fewer spells than the maximum you could have in step 2, you should have written down the number of such spells as part of that step. Add this number now.

Notes: You can normally have a maximum of 4 Destiny and 3 skill points banked. There is no limit to the spell capacity you can save up.

Skills (Alchemy, Athletics, Driving, etc)

What this is: Each skill measures how good you are at a kind of non-combat activity that can be important to adventurers. There are nine skills, each divided into three specialties.

Instructions: For each skill, write the number of dice you use for that skill in the corresponding dome-shaped area. This is 1 plus the number of core nodes, if any, that you captured for that skill in step 3 of character creation.

If you captured nodes for any specialties during step 3, fill in half of the “moon” next to the corresponding specialty. (The other half is for the capstone node, which is beyond a starting character’s ability to reach.) This signifies that you roll one additional die when using that specialty. It is possible to have specialties in skills you don’t have any cores in.

Notes: Both the general rules for skills and detailed descriptions of each specialty can be found in chapter 5 of this book.

Flipside of Character Card

What this is: Space for listing your abilities, money, equipment, and spells.

Instructions: List all the nodes you captured in steps 2 and 3 of character creation here, as well as any spells you learned in step 2 and the gear you purchased in step 5.

This section is intentionally free-form, with a lot of open space so you can structure it however you like. Among other benefits, this allows you to include as much or as little information about individual abilities as you’re comfortable with. You don’t, however, need to include information that will end up on your combat cards, like the dice and damage for your offensive abilities.

Equipment Layout

What this is: The spaces in the top left corner of a combat card are used to list the weapon(s), armour, and other gear that combat card assumes you’re carrying or wearing.

Instructions: Fill out the equipment you’ll normally be carrying in an adventure situation.

The “hands” area is for whatever you’d normally be carrying in your hands. This might be a weapon and a shield (one on each side of the faint line in the

middle), or a single two-handed weapon (in which case you should write it across the middle, ignoring the line).

The quick item slots are for things like potions. You can only have so many of these sorts of things set up for easy use in combat.

The other areas should be self-explanatory.

If you don't have one of the types of equipment there's space for, just leave it blank. For example, starting characters seldom have accessories, so your Accessory slots will probably start out empty.

Notes: More details on a lot of the things listed here, such as what chakra are or the finer points of quick item slots, can be found in Chapter 6.

If you anticipate changing equipment frequently, and the change will make a big difference to your stats, you might want to fill out a separate combat card for each set of equipment (e.g. your stats with a sword and shield vs your stats with a bow). This is usually more of a concern for higher-level characters. For a starting character, even if you change gear frequently, it seldom makes a big difference to your stats.

Combat Blocks

What this is: Each of these “swim lanes” has room for the complete game mechanics of one of your abilities, usually emphasizing its offensive uses.

Instructions: Fill out a combat block for the basic strikes of each weapon you are likely to use regularly. Also fill them out for other abilities you're likely to use in combat a lot, especially offensive ones. Likely candidates include modified strikes that make major changes to a strike's stats (especially its base damage), damaging or healing spells, and alchemical items you plan on carrying frequently, like bombs.

If space permits, fill out a block for your unarmed strike, even if you'll normally fight with a weapon.

Each combat block has the following spaces. You'll rarely need to fill out *all* of them for any one ability; just leave the ones you don't need blank.

- ▶ *Blank line:* For basic strikes, put the name of the weapon here. For other abilities, put the name of the ability. If your character calls something by a name other than its “official” one, you can put that here as long as everyone knows what you mean.
- ▶ *Overdrive:* Put a checkmark here if the ability is an overdrive. Optionally, you can put the Focus cost of the overdrive here instead (it's 2 for all overdrives in the *Origins Set*, but future products may introduce a wider variety of costs).
- ▶ *Base Damage:* A number that will help you figure out the damage an ability does. For a strike, this is the average of the two key traits for the type of weapon involved, plus the damage rating of the weapon, plus other bonuses (for example, from core mastery in that weapon type). Make sure to only include bonuses to the *base* damage, not the *total* damage. For other abilities such as spells, their descriptions should make it clear what you should put here (in the case of spells, this is usually derived from the relevant spell

power rating).

- ▶ *Cap (in Base Damage box)*: Another calculation aid, this only applies to strikes. The cap is a base value you can read directly from your weapon's stats, plus a bonus based on your core mastery in that weapon type. Record this in parentheses right next to the base damage.
- ▶ *Dice*: The number of dice you roll to use this ability. This is usually your Attack or Magic. (Instead of the number, some players like to just write "Attack" or "Magic" or whatever.) You can fill in the little diamond symbol with the threshold.
- ▶ *mp*: The number of mp you must spend to use this ability. You can usually read this directly from the ability's description. Basic strikes don't cost mp except for wand strikes, which cost 1 mp.
- ▶ *Recovery*: The time, in ticks, that you must wait after using this ability before your next action. Lower is better. You can usually read this directly from the ability's description, or the weapon's stats for strikes. For more on how this works, see chapter 3.
- ▶ *Targets/Range*: What the ability affects and how far away the target(s) can be. You can usually read this directly from the ability description or weapon's stats. This might say, for example, "1 within 3", meaning 1 target within a range of 3 rows on the battlefield. Weapon stats include range but not targets, since basic strikes *always* have just one target. (So a range of 3 in a weapon's stats is the same as a Targets/Range entry of "1 within 3" in any other context.)
- ▶ *Total Damage*: For each circle, fill in the total damage this ability does when you get the number of net successes listed to the lower right of that circle. In the case of a strike, fill this area out like this:

1. For net successes less than or equal to the cap, total damage is:

$$([\text{base damage}] \times [\text{net successes}] + [\text{bonuses to total damage}])$$
2. For each net success beyond the cap, add 1 additional damage.

For abilities other than strikes, the ability's description should make it clear what you should put here. For spells, this is often a function of your Spell Power for that type of spell.

Note that for non-damaging abilities, there's often some other number that depends on your net successes that you can use this area for. For example, on the character sheet for Mama Kassian, notice how she's used this area to record the Armour bonus granted by her Protect spell.

- ▶ *Details*: You can write whatever else you think might be useful here — other effects the ability has,

Total Damage For Strikes: An Example

Let's do the total damage for Storm's basic spear strike. This strike has a base damage of 12 and a cap of 4. Nothing is giving Storm any bonuses to his total damage.

He would put the following numbers in the Total Damage circles:

12 24 36 48 49 50 51 52 53

For the first four circles, these numbers are just the base damage times the net successes. At this point he reaches his cap, a "point of diminishing returns" past which additional successes don't add much additional damage, and so adds just one more point of damage for each additional circle.

modified strikes you didn't feel needed their own combat blocks, or even a witty one-liner to use the next time you use the ability.

Notes: Sometimes you can use one block for several similar abilities. For example, the basic elemental attack spells (Blizzard, Fire, Flood, Lightning) all work the same way so you can usually use one block for all four of them.

Example of Character Creation

Carl sits down to make a character. Rather taken with an image he found on the Internet, a vaguely Nordic-looking warrior fighting in a lightning storm, he decides to base his character on that image. Carl feels the image suggests an arrogant, foolhardy character, but with an underlying nobility. Tactically he'll mostly be a physical fighter but perhaps with some lightning powers, or at least the potential to develop them. Inspired by the image, with a nod toward another artist he likes, he comes up with the name Storm Thorgor.

Step 1 — Class

Carl thinks about which class to go with, looking over the Destiny Wheels and Defense Webs of a few candidates and occasionally looking up an ability in the **Character Reference**. At first he thought Polymath was the obvious choice, but as he thinks about it more, Carl decides the lightning powers are something he can grow into later and that for now, it's okay if Storm is just a tough fighter. He also reads the description of Dragon Leap and just loves the visual it presents; this is an ability he can't get as a Polymath, only a Warrior (or a Dan, but that doesn't fit Carl's picture of the character at all). So Carl settles on the Warrior class.

There's still one decision to make in this step — where to put his extra die. Storm has no immediate use for Magic, yet invests his extra die there anyway, so when he eventually starts learning elemental spells he can be somewhat effective with them. (If you're making a warrior character at home, you're unlikely to want to emulate this — Defence and Ward are likely to be better, or at least more broadly useful, choices.)

Step 2 — Destiny Wheel/Defence Web

Carl has already decided he wants Dragon Leap, so he decides to go southwest on the Destiny Wheel, capturing a Spear core, which opens the way to Dragon Leap, and then learning Dragon Leap itself. This uses his free capture from the Destiny Wheel and four of his nine points of Destiny.

Carl then flips the chart over and looks at his Defence Web. The two cheapest options are shields and heavy armour. Carl ignores shields because he's already committed to mainly using the spear, a two-handed weapon. He takes a quick look at Chapter 1 of the **Character Reference** and decides he likes the extra damage he can get from Heavy Armour. He also likes that it opens paths to both Stoic and a Bonus hp node. Therefore, he takes a Heavy Armour core as his other freebie.

With five Destiny left, Carl can take one, but not both, of the abilities he

most wants – Stoic from the Defence Web and Bravery from the Destiny Wheel. (He likes the way these complement one another – the same conditions that give him extra Focus via Stoic, which lets him pay for Bravery in the first place, also make Bravery more effective). Figuring Bravery is of little use without a source of Focus, while a source of Focus is useful no matter what, he gets Stoic with three of his five remaining points.

He has two points left, which isn't enough to get another ability with, so he banks them to spend the next time he gains a level. He jots down on a little sticky note that he plans to take Bravery when he reaches 2nd level, using three of the six Destiny he'll have available at that point.

Step 3 — Skills

Next comes spending his skill points. Carl mulls over Athletics and Survival, which seem like the obvious choices for this character at first. But then he recalls Storm's interest in magic. Eventually Carl decides to buy two additional dice in Athletics, to get the most out of Dragon Leap, and one in Lore, ignoring Survival for now. Storm's a reasonably smart guy, and Carl decides the character follows the example of some of Robert E. Howard's protagonists – although Storm isn't big on book-learning, he picks up useful bits and pieces of knowledge everywhere he goes, such that his ostensibly more learned friends are often surprised by how knowledgeable he turns out to be.

Carl also writes a little note to himself that he starts with one die in every skill, because he keeps catching himself forgetting about this. (Therefore, he now has two dice of Lore and three of Athletics.)

Carl has two skill points left, which he decides to spend on a specialty node for Storm's Athletics skill. He's going to put the extra die in Acrobatics, to make Dragon Leap even more effective. Carl can achieve this in two ways – he can go clockwise toward the Perception branch, opening a path to a Passion node, or counter-clockwise toward Survival, giving himself access to another Bonus hp node. Both of these are attractive choices for Storm; eventually he decides he's likely to want the extra hit points sooner, so he goes counter-clockwise.

Step 4 — Heroic Traits

Carl spends a lot of time thinking about this step, taking both mechanical effectiveness and his emerging ideas about Storm's personality into consideration. He ends up with the following numbers:

Courage	6	Ingenuity	2
Passion	3	Insight	1
Perseverance	2	Presence	1

The maxed-out Courage, relatively high Passion and low Insight go with Carl's image of Storm as a character, who tends to charge in first and ask questions later, and can be, frankly, a bit of a jerk. Carl plans on evolving him into a more admirable figure as time goes on, but he can't do that without making him somewhat flawed to start out with.

Equally importantly, with these numbers, he'll be good with spears, which

are the best weapon for Dragon Leap.

The extra point of Perseverance is mainly for the extra hit point, but Carl decides it can also provide the first hint of the more admirable side that will eventually shine through.

The first thing that makes Carl consider the extra point in Ingenuity is purely mechanical – it will help if he decides to learn some lightning spells, meanwhile making his Quickness easier to improve – but the same thinking that went into his unexpected choice of Lore as one of his skills plays a part here too.

For now he doesn't need mp for anything, but he flags Presence as a trait he'll want to work up later on if the opportunity presents itself.

Step 5—Equipment

Storm's GM has told him to use the default of 200 starting gil. Chainmail and a spear are the first obvious things to purchase and will cost 110 gil, leaving 90. In an early hint of the lightning theme he eventually wants to adopt, he splurges on a Lightning Seed, a lightning-based alchemical bomb, spending another 60 on this item. He adds a couple of javelins to his starting layout for 24 gil, and has now spent 194, leaving 6 – just enough for a single night's stay at a decent inn. It's not too hard to see what would motivate him to seek the fortunes that can be gained from adventuring!

Step 6—Quirk

Carl considers skipping this optional step, but decides to give it a shot. He thinks a bit more about the kinds of pulp heroes that inspired Storm, and how there often seems to be some unspoken understanding among them. Carl calls his GM and they create a quirk they call "Warrior's Code" over coffee.

Fellow men of action will tend to recognize Storm as a kindred spirit, and there might be a certain friendliness and respect there even when they are nominally Storm's enemies, so long as all concerned follow a few basic principles of honour. This can provide useful information or even the occasional unexpected ally, but it also means Storm may from time to time be honour-bound to fight trials by combat and other difficult battles that might not be in his or the party's best interests. Over the course of the campaign, the GM establishes that this is part of a widespread tradition some cultures have of settling disputes through combat between small groups of champions, and it becomes an important part of the campaign's plot.

Step 7—Character Sheet

Because this is the first character Carl has created, he decides to set the cheat sheet aside and go through the more detailed explanations in *A Guided Tour of the Character Sheet* on page 32 of this book. As he reads each section, he copies or calculates the relevant information from the notepad he's been using to the correct part of Storm's character sheet. (For Storm specifically, one important part of this process is explained in the sidebar on page 39.)

To see how this step ended up working out, you can find completed character sheets for Storm and eight other characters in the **Handouts** folder.

Levelling Up

When you have accumulated enough **experience points**, your level increases by one the next time you take a night's rest. (The GM can rule that this only requires a breather, not a night's rest. These two types of rest are discussed in chapter 4.) This is referred to as "gaining a level" or "levelling up".

Each time you level up, you receive the benefits listed below. Levels divisible by 6 (6, 12, 18, and so on) are called **milestone levels** and give you greater benefits than other levels. Each level up makes you more effective, sometimes by a little, sometimes by a lot. Your level thus serves as a rough measure of how powerful your character is.

Level Up Benefits

Each level up benefits you in four ways. The darker-coloured text gives the benefits you get at most levels; the normal text below each step gives further notes, including how that step changes at milestone levels.

1. **hp (and Toughness):** You gain the number of hit points specified in your class description (3, 4, or 5).

Remember to update your Critical number as well.

At milestone levels, you gain hp equal to this number *or* your perseverance, whichever is better. In addition, at these levels, your toughness increases by 1. This has no immediate effect, but means you get more hp if your perseverance later increases.

2. **mp (and Energy):** Your mana pool increases by the amount specified in your class description (2, 3, or 4).

At milestone levels, you gain mp equal to this number *or* your presence, whichever is better. In addition, at these levels, your energy increases by 1. This has no immediate effect, but means you get more mp if your presence later increases.

3. **Destiny:** You gain 4 Destiny. Then you may spend Destiny to capture nodes on the Destiny Wheel and/or Defence Web.

You don't have to spend all your Destiny as soon as you get it. But, you can only have 4 Destiny banked at any one time, so if you have 5 or more in total you *must* spend Destiny until you're left with 4 or less. Any Destiny you have left at the end of this step is banked and can be used the next time you level up.

At milestone levels, you can sell back one ability from your class's Destiny Wheel or Defence Web. Do this as the *first* part of this step, just before (and in addition to) gaining 4 Destiny for this level. More detailed rules for this are found below.

4. **Skills:** You gain 2 skill points. Then you may spend skill points to capture nodes on the Skill Tree.

You don't have to spend all your skill points as soon as you get them, but you can only have 3 banked at any one time, so if you have 4 or more in total you *must* spend skill points until you have 3 or fewer. Any skill points you have left at the end of this step are banked and can be used the next time you level up.

At milestone levels, you can sell back one node you've captured from the Skill Tree, giving it up in exchange for more Skill Points. Do this as the *first* part of this step, just before (and in addition to) gaining your 2 Skill Points for this level. More detailed rules for this are found below. You could conceivably wind up with 9 Skill Points available to spend at once in this way.

More on Selling Nodes Back

When you sell a node back, you lose all the benefits it formerly gave you. Basically, make everything as though you'd never had that ability in the first place. You gain back the destiny or skill points the abandoned node would currently cost you to buy. You may immediately spend these points to buy new abilities.

When selling back a Bonus hp or Bonus mp node, subtract your per-level amount or your *current* perseverance (for hp) or presence (for mp), whichever is more, from your hp or mp. (Remember to deduct 1 from your toughness or energy, as well.) Because of the way the toughness and energy stats work, this will leave you with the same hp or mp you would have if you'd had your current nodes all along. This will be true *even if* (because your perseverance or presence has changed in the meantime) you gained a different number of hp or mp when you first captured that node. Trust us, we're very clever and the math works.

For nodes on the Destiny Wheel or Defence Web, you gain back the *lowest* amount of destiny you could capture that node for given the other nodes you have, even if that's not what it originally cost you.

There are two restrictions on which nodes you can sell back:

1. You must have a legal route to every node you still have after doing this.

You can't leave any captured nodes "stranded" with no route back to your Start node. (It's okay if the path you leave is different from the path you actually took when you captured those nodes.) To put it another way, you can't end up with a set of abilities that there's no legal way to get *without* selling nodes back.

2. Certain types of nodes can't be sold back, namely:

- ▶ Trait nodes (i.e. Courage nodes, Passion nodes, and so on)
- ▶ Magic cores
- ▶ Spell-learning nodes

It is legal to sell a node back, then immediately spend the Destiny you gained from doing so to recapture that same node. While there isn't usually much point in doing this, the third example below shows a case where this makes sense.

Why the Restrictions on Selling Back Nodes?

Mostly because of memory issues and other problems with the "make it as though you'd never captured that node in the first place" bit.

For example, say you sell back an Ingenuity node. What other trait, besides ingenuity, should you reduce? If it was perseverance or presence, how much do you roll your hp or mp back by?

Most players don't keep the kind of exhaustive notes they'd need to be able to definitively answer these questions, nor should they have to. This is even more true of deciding which spells you should have to "unlearn" when selling back a Spell-learning node or a Magic core; the latter can also create confusing issues with the prerequisites for one's spells.

Therefore, the decision to capture these nodes is irrevocable and should be thought through even more carefully than usual. Happily, they tend to be nodes you'd rarely want to sell back anyway.

Example: Early in his career, Storm (a Warrior) captures the Staff node just southeast of the Start node on his Destiny Wheel, then goes on to learn Banish. Later in his career, Storm hasn't touched a staff in ages and doesn't want that Staff node anymore, but he still likes Banish and uses it all the time. He doesn't have any other abilities that would connect Banish back to his Start Node (for example, he has not captured the Axe node just east of his Start Node). He can't sell the Staff node back because that would "strand" Banish, leaving it with no route back to the Start node.

Example: In a different campaign, a slightly different version of Storm captures the same Staff and Banish nodes, then later captures the innermost Axe node on the same Destiny Wheel. Still later, he decides he doesn't want Banish anymore. The player can sell Banish back, but would get three Destiny for doing this, even though it originally cost four.

Example: Yet another version of Storm learns Remedy early in his career. This ability makes you better at resisting one status ailment, which you choose from a list of five when you learn Remedy. Being poisoned *sucks* when you're low-level, so Storm chose Poison. Months later, the GM hasn't thrown a venomous monster at the party for a long time, and if she did Storm would be better able to handle it now. But now every second monster seems to inflict Lock. Lock shuts down Dragon Leap, still a signature ability for Storm. Storm's player has had just about enough of this and sells back Remedy, then immediately learns it again, this time choosing Lock. Storm now resists Lock instead of Poison.