

13TH AGE

QUICK START RULES



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13TH AGE[™]

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WELCOME TO THE 13TH AGE

The [13th Age](#) roleplaying game grew out of the many RPG campaigns that designers Rob Heinsoo and Jonathan Tweet have run for their own gaming groups over the years. Given full creative control by Pelgrane Press, they drew on decades of design experience to create the game that they most wanted to play together. The result? *13th Age* is a game that's both familiar—adventurers explore dangerous places and fight horrific monsters—and new, taking d20 design forward with storytelling mechanics inspired by modern indie roleplaying games.

Because it grew out of actual play, *13th Age* focuses on *your* experience at *your* table. It's designed to either be played as-is, or hacked, modified, customized, and personalized to make it the most fun for you and your group of friends. Feel free to tweak the game to suit your group, the way Rob and Jonathan tweak systems to suit their needs.

PLAYING 13TH AGE

In *13th Age*, adventurers seek their fortunes in the Dragon Empire: a fantastic setting with living dungeons, flying realms, and demon-haunted hellholes. In this world's chaotic 13th age, powerful individuals known as icons—classic fantasy archetypes such as the Elf Queen, the Archmage, the Lich King, and the Orc Lord—pursue goals that may preserve the Empire from chaos, or send it over the edge.

Players decide which icons their characters ally with, which ones they oppose, and which ones they have conflicted relationships with. These icon relationships, along with free-form character backgrounds and a One Unique Thing, help define an adventurer's place in the world of *13th Age* and lay the groundwork for epic stories that emerge through play.

13TH AGE RESOURCES

This Quick Start document includes the rules and advice you'll need to run or play a game or three of *13th Age*. You'll also need a couple of other things: an introductory adventure, pre-generated characters, and some d20s, d8s, and other dice.

The adventure: [Crown of Axis](#), the introductory adventure included in this bundle, was written with first-time players in mind. Using the rules below, you should have everything you need to run it.

If you want to browse other free adventures, the [13th Age Resources](#) page at PelgranePress.com has a number of adventures to choose from. None are as deliberately beginner-friendly as *Crown of Axis*, but the Free RPG Day adventure [Make Your Own Luck](#) by Gareth Ryder-Hanrahan is intended to be played by newcomers. (*Make Your Own Luck* also includes a less-polished version of the rules summary that's part of this Quick Start. Use the version in the Quick Start!)

If you're inspired to pay a bit more money, there's a good short intro adventure at the back of the *13th Age* core rulebook; or for something more extensive, pick up Robin Laws' 38-page [The Strangling Sea](#).

Pre-generated characters: The [13th Age Resources](#) page at PelgranePress.com has a wide variety of low-level pre-generated characters to choose from.



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CREATING CHARACTERS

Since the d20-rolling game mechanics for combat and adventuring are similar to the mechanics in other games, let's cover the stuff that's unique to *13th Age* first: the storytelling aspects of character creation that help players co-create the campaign along with the GM.

The pre-generated characters on the Pelgrane website have their character stats, abilities, spells, and feats already filled out, so no one has to sort through the crunchy stuff in the game book. The characters don't have names or personalities yet, nor do they have the fun stuff that personalizes your heroes in *13th Age*:

- One Unique Things (that make each hero a special part of the world, someone who may one day have a true hero's legend)
- backgrounds (that tell everyone what your character has been up to before this adventure)
- icon relationships (that connect heroes with the powerful NPCs whose conflicts and alliances set the stage for adventures in the world)

When your players join you at the table for the first game, hand out character sheets and the one-page summary of the icons. While they look over their character sheets, go over what each player gets to add their character.

Since the One Unique Thing (also known as your *unique*) is the most dramatic element of a character, we usually find that it's the thing to get players started thinking about early. Once people have figured out their *unique*, the rest of the character tends to fall into line.

ONE UNIQUE THING

Every *13th Age* character has something about them that makes them different from everyone else. This One Unique Thing can be mundane ("I'm the only halfling knight in the Empire") or supernatural ("I alone among the living can speak the secret language of the undead"). It can define the character's past ("I'm the last survivor of a barbarian tribe, so all our tribal gods ride with me") or future ("I'm destined to be the best swordfighter in the world!"). One Unique Things can't be used directly in combat—if a player really wants to give their character an unusual power that gives them an edge in battle, they should be prepared to either give up something valuable in exchange, or accept that the GM will balance the scales by making their hero's life more difficult.

One Unique Things may or may not come up in a one-shot adventure, but they're an important way that *13th Age* defines player characters, makes them part of the setting, and provides the feeling of heroic fantasy. Sometimes a *unique* may seem like it's not all that heroic or interesting, at first. You can leave the full implications of what's going on with the *unique* to be

worked out during your campaign! (For example, the *unique* "Dogs love me" could provide the seed for an adventure that reveals the character is a descendant of the werewolf Empress in the Age of the Howling Moon.)

Because new players sometimes have trouble coming up with a One Unique Thing, here's a short list of possible *uniques* that could be fun and create amusing situations.

- I may look like a dwarf/halfling/elf to you, but actually I'm a former god from another dimension, fallen into a mortal body.
- I'm the only human who can speak with magic items, even if they're not my magic items. They don't always talk with me, but even the ones that would rather ignore me are surprised when I talk with them.
- I am the only human child born from a zombie mother.
- Wherever I sleep, flowers sprout and bloom.
- I'm the only tiefling with a permanent halo.
- My father was an ogre mage and my mother was a rakshasa. I mostly look human, but that may be magical, and it may change.
- I'm the only halfling acrobat to escape from the Diabolist's Circus of Hell.
- Dragons like me. They don't always take me seriously, treating me like a mascot or a funny pet, but that's better than wanting to eat me.

BACKGROUNDS

Backgrounds are what we use in place of skill points: a character's chance to succeed at non-combat challenges is helped by their previous experiences. In your past, did you do something that required a lot of climbing? That'll help you get up that cliff. Were you exposed to the political intrigues of a royal court? You might be the best person to negotiate with that orc warlord!

Each player has 8 points to assign to backgrounds that they create, with a maximum of +5 going to any one background. As described below, these points provide bonuses to skill checks. For most players, we find that three backgrounds (+5/+2/+1, or +4/+3/+1) is enough to create a well-rounded character with useful skills.

A background can be anything that describes the character's past experiences, talents, or skills. They can be brief and to the point (*Alchemist* +3, *Miner* +2, *Mountaineer* +3) or more descriptive and complex (*Disgraced Apprentice to the Emperor's Chief Alchemist* +3, *Only Survivor of the Thunder Falls Mine Disaster* +3, *Captain of the Dwarven Mountain Rangers* +3, *Prep Chef in a Monster Restaurant in Drakkenhall* +4).

Descriptive backgrounds give players more to riff on when you ask them for a skill check. Pretty soon the mini-stories about a character's previous life as a disgraced apprentice alchemist interweave with the current campaign.

If players have started with one-word backgrounds, you might encourage them to add details during play. Players are especially receptive to that type of advice when it helps them add their background to a skill check that it didn't appear relevant to at first!

As with the One Unique Thing, you can use your backgrounds to tell the GM what you want the campaign to be about. Here's a link to a [fun article](#) on the Pelgrane Press website that discusses using a character's backgrounds to generate an entire adventure.

USING BACKGROUNDS IN SKILL CHECKS

To make a skill check, roll 1d20 and add your level, the most appropriate Ability Bonus (from Strength, Dexterity, Intelligence and so on), and your most relevant background. As mentioned above, *13th Age* doesn't use pre-defined skills.

Instead, each player character has a number of backgrounds, each of which has a numeric rating—like "*Former Royal Bodyguard +4*."

You can apply your background's bonus to any situation in which it's appropriate. So, you might roll 1d20 + Charisma + Level + *Former Royal Bodyguard +4* when trying to impress a noble with your knowledge of courtly etiquette, or 1d20 + Wisdom + Level + *Former Royal Bodyguard +4* when trying to spot an assassin in a crowd. Maybe you could even persuade your GM that your *Former Royal Bodyguard* background applies when trying to detect poisoned food, because part of your *Royal Bodyguarding* duties was to taste the prince's food each day.

When rolling skill checks, the players try to beat a Difficulty Class (DC) that reflects how hard the task is, and which tier of play they're playing in. For low-level adventurers like the ones you'll be starting with, assume that they need to roll a DC 15 check for a normal task, DC 20 for a hard one, and DC 25 for an absurdly hard one.

ICONS

The icons are the movers and shakers in the world of *13th Age*—the rulers, the warlords, the supernatural powers. At lower levels, the PCs interact mainly with the organizations and followers attached to the icons; later on, they'll meet the icons themselves on close to equal footing.

Each player has three relationship dice to assign to up to three icons, allocating them however they choose. A relationship can be positive (you're allied with that icon), negative (you're an enemy of that icon, and ally yourself with others who also hate that icon), or conflicted (things between you and the icon are... complicated). Starting out, stick with mostly positive or conflicted relationships; page 36 of the core rulebook explains why, but you don't need the full explanation yet.

When a player picks icons for their character, they're telling the GM the sort of adventures they want to play. Negative relationship with the Lich King? Expect to be fighting lots of undead! Conflicted with the Great Gold Wyrn? That suggests they want stories about the consequences of duty, and how hard it is to live up to the ideals of lawful goody-ness.

Here are the 13 icons. We envision specific icons as being either heroic, villainous, or ambiguous, but it can be fun to let the players decide that for themselves. Maybe your Lich King is a reasonable fellow who's content to rule his undead subjects, while your version of the Elf Queen is a wicked monarch out of a fairy tale.

THE ARCHMAGE



has preserved the Empire for centuries and created astonishing new lands. He has also threatened the fabric of reality with experiments you'd have to be brilliant or hugely arrogant to attempt.

THE CRUSADER



is the armored fist of the Dark Gods. So long as followers of the Gods of Light stay the hell out of his way, the Crusader turns his wrath against the demons that would destroy the world his own gods want to rule. Follow the Crusader if you must win at any cost.

THE DIABOLIST



controls fiends and tampers with forces even the Archmage avoids. She likes her victims screaming and her chaos pure while claiming that the demons she summons would otherwise overwhelm the Great Gold Wyrn who seals the Abyss. There are two differences between her and her demons: First, she likes keeping destruction personal rather than universal. Second, she's capable of kindness, so long as it comes as a great surprise.

THE DWARF KING



is lord of Forge, the dwarves' new homeland beneath the mountains. He'd love to reclaim the dwarven Underhome lost to war against the dark elves and the creatures of the deeps. But now that the Empire is stumbling, the dwarves find themselves manning the mountain walls that shield the Empire from the orcs and monsters of the north.

THE ELF QUEEN



rules the Court of Stars, the one place where wood elves, dark elves, and high elves come together as peers and allies instead of as rivals or enemies. Honed by centuries of experience, the Queen's innate magic at least equals the Archmage's spells.

THE EMPEROR



rules the world's greatest human kingdom, known as the Dragon Empire for the mounts of its mightiest warriors. All the signs suggest that the age is turning, but will the Empire fall or shift to a new balance?

THE GREAT GOLD WYRM



is the world's protector and the inspiration for holy orders of paladins and independent heroes. Although the Gold Wyrn's physical form seals the gap and prevents the Abyss from erupting into the world, his dreams and the agents he employs still move through the world, helping those who will fight and even die for what's right.

THE HIGH DRUID



is the champion of the resurgent Wild, and the spiritual and magical leader of spirits of nature and the elements that were chained by the Empire but are now working themselves free. She might be the great force that shakes the Empire to pieces or the hero who destroys the destroyers and points to a new way to live.

THE LICH KING



is the lord of the undead, a fallen tyrant who intends to conquer the Dragon Empire and restore his ancient kingdom. He's not entirely insane and mostly understands that ruling a kingdom is not the same as destroying it.

THE ORC LORD



is a figure of legend. The last time he walked the land the Lich King fell, in part because of the Orc Lord's attack. Who will fall before his hordes this time? Who won't?



THE PRIESTESS



hears all the Gods of Light and speaks for those who please her. She is part oracle, part mystic, and part metaphysical engineer, since she created the Cathedral, an ever-expanding temple with rooms or entire wings for each of the faiths she favors.

THE PRINCE OF SHADOWS



is part thief, part trickster, and part assassin. To some he is a hero; to others a villain. He has squandered the riches of the dwarves, murdered the hopes of a dragon, and plundered the dreams of a god. His exploits have changed the world, but none can tell you his ultimate goals or motives.

THE THREE



were among the first dragons to walk the world. The Red is a living engine of destruction. The Blue is a sorceress, perhaps even the original mother of all sorcery. The Black is queen of shadows and assassins. Unlike the Great Gold Wyrms, who must fight alone, the Three have learned to join forces.

Using Icon Advantages

Wade Rockett wrote *Crown of Axis* with sections that give new players direct ways of using icon advantages in specific encounters and negotiations. If you are running *Crown of Axis* first, using icon advantages will be simple.

If you're not running *Crown of Axis*, and you are running *13th Age* for the first time, you may consider skipping this section for now: players of most d20 games might be unfamiliar with the kind of collaborative storytelling and worldbuilding that the icon advantage rules provide, and some groups find it easier to introduce icon relationship advantages in the second or third session. However, they are a powerful resource for both GMs and players, and we encourage you to make them a part of your game.

Storytelling resources: The idea is that relationships with the icons give the player characters storytelling moments where something about the icon's power or organization works out in the player character's favor.

If you're happy to introduce indie-style storytelling options in the first session, read on, but if you want to keep things one touch simpler in the first session, skip ahead to the [Running 13th Age](#) section.

Icon Relationship Rules: Once the players have assigned their three icon relationship dice, determine if anyone gets any

icon advantages this session. Each player rolls 1d6 for each relationship. On a 5 or 6, that character gets some benefit from the corresponding icon; or in the case of a negative relationship, possible assistance from the icon's enemies! Have the player make a note of the storytelling resource they have available, or give them a token that will remind them during play.

The GM can also use these results as inspiration to customize the adventure based on the characters' icon relationships. For example, if the players rolled 5s or 6s for the Emperor, Archmage, and Lich King, the adventure might deal with the themes of power and magic. The GM could make some NPCs servants, allies, or enemies of those icons; or even improvise an entire adventure where the Archmage has fallen under the magical control of the Lich King, and the Emperor calls on the heroes to help save him. The GM might also choose to ignore the results entirely! They're a creative tool, not shackles.

If the GM chooses not to use an icon advantage to benefit a character, the player could choose to "spend" the result as a resource to find help among the icon's followers (*"I use my relationship with the Archmage to gain an audience with the wizard"*), produce a needed item via a flashback (*"I just remembered that before we left town, I stopped by the temple of the Priestess and picked up healing potions"*), and bend—or even break—the rules of the game by using their connection to this demi-godlike being (*"I go into a mystical trance and tap into the power of the Elf Queen to increase the effect of my spell."*)

When an icon advantage is used by either the player or GM, the player rolls a d20. On a result of 1-5, that icon advantage comes with a complication of some kind. Maybe the icon's help comes at the price of a side quest, a personal sacrifice, from allies of the icons who are suffering from their own interesting problems! The best complications spring out of the story the player started for the advantage. Ideally, a complication is about making the game more interesting for the players and the GM.



The "roll a d20 to find out" method of determining whether an icon advantage comes with a complication is different than the method described in the 13th Age core rulebook. In the original version, every result of a 5 on an icon relationship roll leads to a complication. We found over time that this makes some players reluctant to use their advantage, because they know it will come with a downside. This alternate method, which we introduced in 13th Age Glorantha, makes it so that any advantage might come with a complication—but the chances of it happening are low.



RUNNING 13TH AGE

13th Age gives the players more input into the story than many other games, while still aiming for tense, balanced combats where luck and tactics both matter.

When you're GMing *13th Age*, expect to be surprised and stay flexible! Let the players drive the story as much as possible, and concentrate on putting fun foes in their paths. Use the characters' backgrounds, icon relationships, and One Unique Things to fill each session with NPCs, monsters, challenges, and goals that are uniquely relevant to them.

COMBAT

The basic rules of *13th Age* combat should be familiar to anyone who's fought a dragon in a dungeon in the last forty years. Roll initiative at the start of a battle to determine who acts first. Roll a d20 to attack, adding your attack bonus. If the total equals or exceeds your target's Armor Class, you hit and inflict your attack's listed damage dice, which gets subtracted from their hit points. Player characters even do a small amount of damage when they miss; so do really dangerous monsters. When a combatant reaches 0 hit points, they're down and out of the fight (bad guys are generally slain; player characters are unconscious and risk dying unless healed).

A natural 20 inflicts a critical hit for double damage. A natural 1 misses completely and has no effect, even if it would normally have some effect on a miss.

Combat spells work the same way—roll a d20 and add the attack bonus listed for that spell. However, most spells target a foe's Physical Defense (PD) or Mental Defense (MD).

When the player characters hit with attacks, they usually get to roll dice for the damage. Monsters and NPCs are different, they usually have flat damage numbers listed by their attacks—less die-rolling for the GM.

Resisting damage: When creatures resist damage, they take half damage from a specified type of attack unless the attack's natural attack roll equals or exceeds a specified number. It's a bit different than in other d20-rolling games because we want some damage to get through.

Vulnerability: Creatures that are vulnerable to a type of attack have the crit range of those attacks against them expanded by 2, usually to 18+ instead of being critted only on a natural 20.

ACTIONS

On your turn, you can take one standard action, move action, and quick action, and a handful of free actions, in any order.

Standard actions: Usually these actions are attacks, or else spells so good that they're worth casting in place of an attack.

Move actions: Usually these actions involve moving from one part of the battle to another, or maybe just moving a couple steps to a new opponent. Occasionally, a move action might involve some other type of activity like opening a difficult door.

Quick actions: These actions are quick acts like drawing weapons, opening unlocked doors, picking something light off the ground, and reloading a light crossbow.

Free actions: These actions take almost no time, like dropping something, speaking a few words or commands, taking an extra action as part of a power, or activating most magic item powers. It's up to the GM how many free actions a character can take, as well as how much a creature can say with a free action.

Substitute downward: You can use a standard action to take a move action, and you can use a standard or move action to take a quick action.

Interrupt actions: You can use one interrupt action when it's not your turn. You can't use another one until the end of your next turn. These types of actions are limited to certain classes and class powers. (At the moment, only the rogue uses interrupt actions—no one else needs to worry about it.)

Other actions when it's not your turn: In certain circumstances (see below), characters can intercept foes moving past them, make opportunity attacks, or otherwise act out of turn. These actions are usually free actions.

SAVES

Some attacks cause ongoing effects, like being stunned, stuck, dazed, or suffering from ongoing damage. These effects are normally ended by a successful save. To make a "normal" save, roll a d20. If you get 11 or more, you pass. Usually, a save is a straight d20 roll, there aren't many modifiers to saves. You make saves at the end of your turn unless otherwise noted.

Easy saves and hard saves: Most saves require an 11+ on a d20. A save called out as an easy save only requires a 6+. A save called out as a hard save requires a 16+.

Ongoing damage: When a creature is affected by ongoing damage, deal the ongoing damage at the end of the creature's turn, then roll a normal save (11+) to try and end the ongoing damage. A creature that is going to drop to zero because of ongoing damage gets one last turn to try and do something about it!

Movement and maps: You don't need to use a battle map or miniatures on a grid, though many people still play with miniatures. Enemies are either *nearby* or *far away*.

A foe that is nearby can be reached with one move, meaning you could move to that enemy and attack. A foe that's far away is at least two moves away, meaning you'd have to spend your standard action moving to reach them instead of using your standard action to attack.

If you're fighting a foe in melee, you're considered to be *engaged* with that enemy, and must use a move action to attempt a normal save (11+) to disengage from that foe and move somewhere nearby. If you fail, you lose the move action and stay where you are; you could skip attacking and use your standard action to make another attempt to disengage or just move away. If you move away without successfully disengaging, the enemy gets to take a swing at you as you go.

THE ESCALATION DIE

The **escalation die** is a six-sided die—specifically, the biggest, most impressive six-sider the GM can find! It measures the tempo of a combat, so as the fight progresses and gets more dramatic and the heroes grit their teeth and fight harder, the escalation die increases.

The escalation die starts at 0 on round one of a battle, and increases by 1 at the start of each subsequent round. The player characters (and a few select monsters) get to add the current value of the escalation die to their attack rolls. So, in the first round of a fight, the players get no benefit from the escalation die, but a few rounds later, when the escalation die hits 3, they'll all get a +3 bonus to all attack rolls. Some PC class powers are affected by the escalation die.

HEALING & DAMAGE

Player characters heal using recoveries. Most PCs have 8 recoveries, a few PCs have more. Each recovery heals a certain amount of hit points depending on class and Constitution. Out of combat, you can spend recoveries freely. In combat, you can skip your attack and use a standard action to rally and spend a recovery, but you can only count on rallying like this once per fight. When you try to rally the second or subsequent times in a fight, you have to succeed with a save (11+ on a d20). Otherwise, you'll need to rely on healing potions, spells, or special abilities to trigger your recoveries.

If you're dying (at negative hit points) and you spend a recovery, you go back up to 0 hit points and then add on any hit points gained from the recovery.

If you've spent all your recoveries, you can still heal, but every recovery used when you don't actually have any left is only worth half healing and gives you a cumulative -1 penalty on all your attacks and defenses.

Temporary hit points: A few PCs and monsters have ways of gaining temporary hit points, bonus hit points that don't add to your regular hit points but are the first hit points to be removed by damage. Temporary hit points don't stack with each other and go away at the end of a fight if you've been lucky enough not to use them up.

Full heal-ups and the adventuring 'day': There's a twist to how *13th Age* handles resources like daily spells and daily resources like recoveries. Player characters must make careful use of their daily resources through four battles. After the fourth battle, they get all their daily spells and powers and recoveries back. Until that fourth battle, it doesn't matter how many times the sun has risen and set, the PCs don't get a full heal-up (and a reset of their daily spells) until they *deserve* it! Fighting really tough battles can count as two fights, so it doesn't always take four entire battles to get a full heal-up.

DEATH SAVES & DYING

Start making death saves when you're at negative hit points. To pass a death save, roll 16+ on a d20. Succeed, and you can spend a recovery—go back to 0 hit points, and then add on any hit points gained from the recovery. If you succeed with a 20, you can even jump up and act this turn!

Fail four death saves in the same battle, or drop to negative hit points equal to half your normal hit points, and you're dead.

Alas! But there may be an alternative—*13th Age* has a special rule for fleeing from battle when it looks like too many player characters are going to die. So long as one player character is still conscious, the group can decide to flee. The GM or players make up a story for how the fight ended or the PCs got away, everyone who was still alive survives, and the PCs take a campaign loss. Something **Very Bad** happens that the PCs seriously wanted to avoid, but at least some of them survived.

RUNNING MONTAGES

If you are running *Crown of Axis*, there are a couple places that suggest running a montage—a type of group storytelling that entered *13th Age* thanks to ASH LAW's work on our Organized Play adventures. Here are the rules for montages as they appeared in the [13th Age GM's Screen and Resource Book](#). You can find more examples in that book.

EMPOWERING PLAYERS THROUGH MONTAGES

Sometimes you don't want to take the time to go into the details of a trip or activity the heroes are undertaking but do want to give a sense of time passing and what's happening to the heroes during that period. Whether it's overland travel, random dungeon exploration, or even fortifying an old farmhouse against zombies, you can use montages to quickly advance the story while co-creating events and interactions that may contribute in surprising ways later in the session or the campaign.

Start with a player who is comfortable improvising and ask them to describe a problem that the party faces as they travel or undertake an activity, without offering a solution. Then turn to the player to the left of the starting player and ask *them* how their PC does something clever or awesome to solve the problem. After they narrate a solution, ask that same player to describe the *next* obstacle that the group must deal with. The next player clockwise gets to solve the new problem, then offer up a new obstacle, and so on around the table until everyone has invented and solved a problem.

Encourage players creating solutions to draw on any aspect of their character or invent something new, but don't call for any die rolls, even when the solution to a challenge involves combat. These events occur in quick narrative time, and allow the players to invent stories to reinforce their characters' defining qualities, whether those details involve icon relationships, *uniques*, or backgrounds. Their stories can also mention the use of powers their PCs might have, but they won't actually use any resources in providing a solution. Pay attention to the vignettes the players create for the montage, because those story elements provide excellent source material you can revisit later in the campaign to strengthen each PC's story. When you do so, it reinforces the idea that you and the players are creating a shared story experience as they see elements they created come into play.

While the players are generating their obstacles and ways to overcome those challenges, you (the GM) still play a part in the montage stories. As each player tells you how their PC solved the problem, narrate back to the group what that PC did,



but put a spin on it to highlight the character's heroism, wit, or humor. You don't want to change the core idea they give you too much, but this is your chance to add small details about the PC and the world that help make the story come alive for the players, possibly revealing new information to them or even foreshadowing events to come.

Depending on your group, keep in mind that players will start with different comfort levels with the montage process. Some players will offer so many details and wild ideas that you won't have much to add when you play the scene back with embellishments. Other players will choose to provide the bare minimum. It's okay if you or even the other players offer suggestions to reluctant talkers to help flesh out a problem

or solution, but the player should always have final say on what they present. After seeing what other players come up with in a few montages, the process should become smoother for everyone, with more wild, creative, inspirational, and fun outcomes. Once players see something they narrate re-enter the game in some way at a later point, they'll be more likely to offer up stories they care about.

One last note. Not every description is created equal, but each description is valid in its own right. The player who suggests an obstacle of "I lose my left boot and begin tripping everywhere I go" is as valid an option as another player who says "A pack of giant slavers begins tracking the party." As GM, you might suggest that the first PC's tripping problem causes a

ruckus with someone they fall into who wants to squash them, to add an element of danger or conflict for the next player to resolve, but let the group decide what's fun for them.

EXAMPLE 1: SHIPPING TO NEW PORT

Here's an example of the montage rules in play. The players have hired a ship in Axis and are traveling to New Port, a trip of up to a week depending on the winds. The GM doesn't have any specific encounters in mind until they reach New Port, so it's time for a montage of the trip by the players. The GM shows the players the Dragon Empire map, to give them an idea of the geography in case anyone needs some inspiration.

Problem (player 1): "Soon after leaving Azure Bay, the ship gets dry docked on the back of a giant sea turtle that breaches. We're stuck, and the turtle is going south not east."

Solution (player 2): "This isn't a problem. My master revealed a secret about turtles to me when I was a girl. The back of their necks are ticklish, and they'll go underwater to make that stop. I tickle the giant turtle and it dives into the sea."

GM embellishment: "In an act of amazing bravery and skill, [player 2's PC] tickles the turtle. As it suddenly descends, she runs like a gazelle across the water-slick shell, leaping to the ship's rigging just before the vortex of sea from the turtle's descent pulls her into the depths."

There's more: Additionally, *Crown of Axis* builds on the above rule to create a new type of montage – the Investigation Montage. See *Crown of Axis* for the complete rules on this type of montage scene.

ENCUMBRANCE, WEAPON TYPES, EQUIPMENT COSTS, AND ALL THE FIDDLY BITS

Because Rob and Jonathan like their home campaigns to be about mighty heroes doing epic deeds, *13th Age* isn't concerned with how many torches you can carry at a time or whether the heroes have enough gold to buy a lantern. It's also flexible about weapons: you're free to decide that your fighter's heavy weapon is an axe, a warhammer, a polearm, or an elaborate sword that's twice their size—its damage is based on the wielder's class, not a specific weapon type. (Which means a rogue with a dagger is as deadly as a paladin with a longsword.) Your character starts with the gear you'd reasonably expect a character of their class to be carrying with them.

MONSTERS

If you're going to be a hero, you need an enemy—preferably several of them, from scheming masterminds to evil minions, and everything in between!

Only the heroes or exceptional monsters get to add the escalation die to their attacks (noted in their write-ups). Consequently, most monster defenses start slightly higher than they would in a game that didn't use the escalation die.

Monster damage: Most monster attacks deal a set amount of damage instead of being expressed as dice rolls like player character attacks. Monster abilities, triggered powers, critical hits, and the big difference between a hit and a miss vary the amount of damage the monsters deal.

Monsters' triggered abilities: Instead of requiring a separate die roll to see which attack monsters use, use the natural result of the creature's d20 attack roll to see what other riders or attacks trigger. The standard default is 16+. Unpredictable monsters can have effects trigger on other rolls, such as odd/even, 5 or less, 6+, etc.

WHERE TO FIND MONSTERS

If you are running one of the free adventures, you probably have what you need.

If you are making up your own adventures, you're eventually going to want to read the main book and get hold of one or more of the bestiaries. But before spending more money, you can find a few more monsters in the other adventures and in the *13th Age 2-Hour Demo* and *The Next Valley Over: a 13th Age Glorantha 2-Hour Demo* that are linked to from the [13th Age Resources](#) page.



MAGIC ITEMS

We use two types of magic items:

True magic items: In our game, true magic items are amazing and rare. Permanent magic items aren't for sale: they're literally priceless, and only come into adventurers' hands when they deserve them—as loot during adventures or rewards for success.

Every true magic item in *13th Age* is alive, in a sense, and has a personality that is largely defined by its quirk. Nearly all magic items want to be used and used well. But the quirks that make them unique are all over the psych-profile sheets.

As an adventuring hero, you can handle a number of true magic items equal to or less than your level. Your magic items' personality quirks will tug at you, giving you sudden urges and desires that will feel natural to give in to—but you'll be in charge. However, if you get greedy and carry more true magical items than your level, your magic items are now in charge of *you*. Their quirks overwhelm your personality: if your magic armor wants you to drink dwarven ale till you puke, your sword wants you to challenge random strangers to duels, and your cloak is obsessed with bird-watching, you will spend all of your waking hours drinking, fighting, and studying egrets until you give up one of your items and return to normal. (So yes, there is such a thing as “too much treasure.”)

Sample true magic items: You'll find a few items meant to be awarded in *Crown of Axis*. If you want to be more generous, see the last two pages of the [13th Age Convention Demo](#) for a smattering of true magic items that work well in early games.

One-use items: We also want you to be able to spend hard-won gold on worthwhile magical treasure! There are three types of one-use items that supply that demand: potions, oils, and runes. In this *Quick Start*, we'll cover healing potions, the most common one-use items, and leave the less common oils and runes and other potions as something you can dig into if you pick up the full rules.

POTIONS

You can generally buy potions that fall in the tier of the environment you're in. For example, adventurer environment NPCs (level 1–4) aren't likely to sell potions that fall in the champion tier (level 5–7), at least not without interesting consequences . . .

You can carry as many potions as you wish, unless the GM thinks you're abusing the privilege. It shouldn't be a problem for a PC to carry twenty potions at a time; they're small.

Drinking a potion takes a standard action. The standard action includes taking all the steps to get it ready if you don't have it in hand already. Feeding a potion to an unconscious ally is also a standard action.

You can only be under the effect of a single potion at a time. If you're using a potion that has a lingering effect, drinking another potion ends the first effect. Non-healing potions tend to have effects that last until the end of a battle, or around five minutes if you're prepping for a battle and drinking potions beforehand. (Certain character abilities can change this equation, of course.) The typical way this comes up during play is when someone benefits from a potion that's giving them an advantage and then needs to drink a healing potion. Getting the healing will come at the price of losing the other effect.

HEALING POTIONS

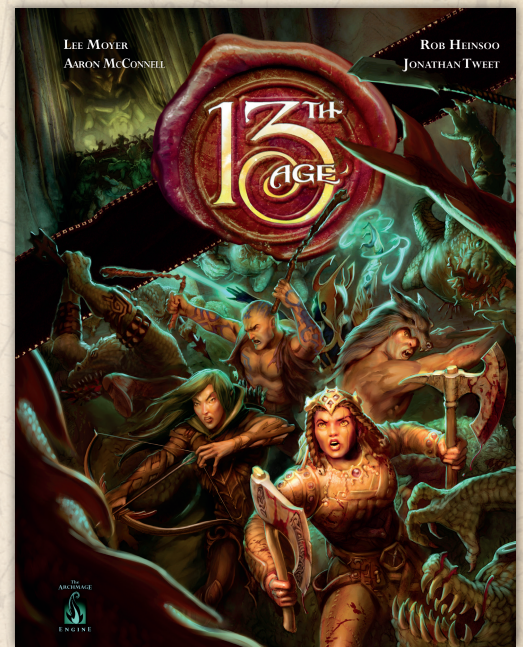
A healing potion lets the creature drinking it heal using one of their recoveries. Potions provide bonus healing on top of what you'd generally get with a recovery, but there's a hit point cap for the maximum healing you can get from a potion. No matter how well you roll your recovery, the healing the potion provides won't exceed the cap—high level characters are going to want to use higher-cost healing potions instead of loading up on the cheap stuff.

HEALING POTION COSTS

Tier/Level	Cost	Effect	HP Cap
Adventurer (level 1–4)	50 gp	Recovery +1d8 hp	30
Champion (level 5–7)	100 gp	Recovery +2d8 hp	60

13TH AGE

Enjoy the Quick Start? Then you'll love the full rules, including character advancement to level 10, tools and advice for building exciting battles, and GM advice for full campaigns.



13 TRUE WAYS

The most important supplement! Players get six new classes including the monk, druid, necromancer, and chaos mage. GMs get devils, dragons, and write-ups for the domains of the Archmage, Emperor, Elf Queen, and the Three.



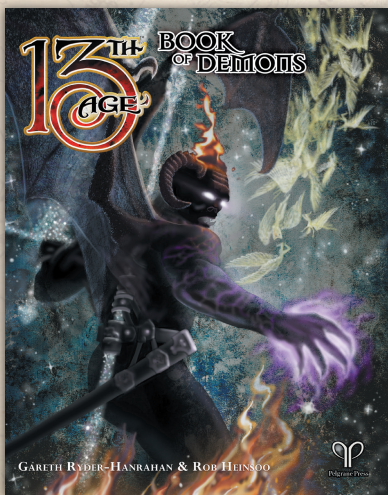
13TH AGE BESTIARY

250+ monsters! Each entry contains monster stats, adventure hooks, connections to the icons, and detailed story options like: Why do manticores think it's legal to hunt humans? Are the PCs really gonna use that magic item made of chuul?



BOOK OF DEMONS

Players get the demonologist class and its three deadly paths: corruption, flame, and slaughter! GMs get hellhole mini-adventures, and notes on the domains of the Crusader and the Diabolist.



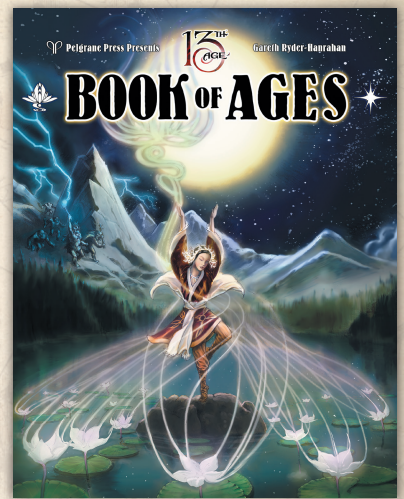
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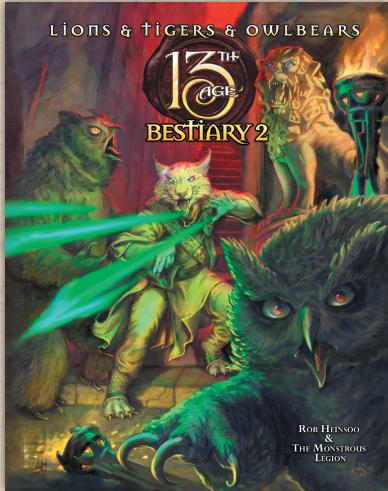
BOOK OF AGES

Use the Engine of the Ages to create your own campaign's backstory with your players, and draw from a glorious assortment of possible past ages—plus new spells, monsters, PC races, and iconic repercussions.



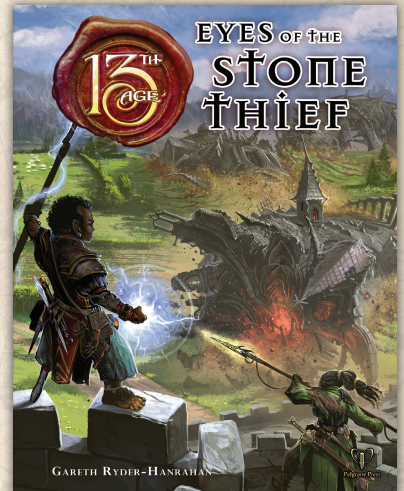
LIONS & TIGERS & OWLBEARS: 13TH AGE BESTIARY 2

Highlights of the 257 monsters in this manual include the resurrecting phoenix, the rakshasa mastermind, disgraceful ghosts, apocalyptic fire giants, and two fallen icons who have been surfacing in other books ever since. Also owlbears.



EYES OF THE STONE THIEF

An introductory adventure with crazed inventors, mutant pirates, a journey into a magical island defined by its shipwrecks, and options that build the story around the player characters' iconic relationships. You could run this at first level, then run *Crown of Axis*.



LOOT HARDER

Who wants more treasure? Players! Especially when the haul might include the Staff of Time, the Orb of the Abyss, the Hammer of Nightfall, or magical knuckle tattoos that unleash thunder and lightning damage with a punch.



13TH AGE GM SCREEN & RESOURCE GUIDE

We asked the 13th Age GM community what advice or rules expansions they needed most, and this book is the result! Along with a beautiful GM screen, you get advice on icon relationships, adventure design, using terrain in battle, travel montages, and more.

