LOSS

Lair of Sword & Sorcery

OSR CONVERSION

TABLE OF CONTENTS

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Lair of Sword & Sorcery is a game of high adventure Sword and Sorcery roleplaying. It is designed to bring back the wonder and excitement of that very first roleplaying experience. It is not based on the rules of those very first roleplaying games, but the system is kept simple and quick.

These conversion rules modify certain elements of those original roleplaying rules, as well as their more-recent retroclones and derivatives collectively known as the Old School Renaissance (or OSR), so that they can be used with Lair of Sword & Sorcery materials and the world of Kartharka. This means that both games are required to use these guidelines, but the necessary charts are all here, along with an all-new set of Lair templates.

A quick breakdown of some of the changes:

- The combat system is more brutal
- Treasure is more precious
- Guidelines for a light-magic Sword and Sorcery world
- Changes to character classes for the world of Kartharka
- Lair and Story Templates updated for OSR games

LAIR OF SWORD & SORCERY IS A CONCEPT

Lair of Sword & Sorcery is based on classic Sword and Sorcery adventure stories. Heroes are much more powerful than regular folk. Combat is deadly, even for professional soldiers. Magic is rare, powerful, and dangerous.

Sword and Sorcery adventures usually involve a small band of heroes (or antiheroes), who stumble upon a person or place steeped in occult mystery. They must destroy this threat immediately or be trapped by it forever.

Here are some examples:

- The heroes stumble upon an ancient city or tower that is commanded by an evil sorcerer, priest, or deity.
- The antiheroes plan to rob a rich merchant or temple, ultimately finding that they are now being hunted.
- The heroes get caught up in a war or battle that requires them to fight a wholly unexpected evil.

Lair of Sword & Sorcery is really about adventure, excitement, and the unknown. It may focus on the heroes getting lost in a blizzard and then finding themselves in a strange land with a green-colored sky filled with an army of flying lizards, who are commanded by a dread sorcerer living in a castle of frozen fire.

THE WORLD OF KARTHARKA

Lair of Sword & Sorcery takes place in the vast lands of Kartharka. It is a world of frozen wastes, sprawling jungles, and barren desserts. Kartharka was blasted centuries ago with powerful magic. This twisted the landscape, locking the northern lands in ice and snow forever, while scorching the deserts of the south with blasting heat.

Foul magics and terrible sorceries creep into the land from beneath, as it hides in lost caverns, twisted forests, and other dark and mysterious places. Once found, these places either disappear or invade our world, the latter making everything much worse. These places are otherworldly. They have different rules, like a summer valley full of dinosaurs in the middle of the northern snow-covered mountains.

Yet, the world is resistant to magic and sorcery. The heroes may interact with these places, but such places are soon swallowed by earthquakes, landslides, avalanches, or floods once brought to the attention of the world.

The land of Kartharka is bizarre, mysterious, unexplainable, and beholden to no laws of physics—or even common sense at times. Sorcery is bizarre, unexplainable, and chaotic. The only thing that can be trusted in the world of Kartharka is a strong sword—even the most-powerful sorcerer or terrible nine-armed fish god can bleed.

CORE VALUES

Lair of Sword & Sorcery is based on certain concepts that may be different from the more typical fantasy games to which you are likely accustomed. These concepts are detailed below to better explain the purpose behind the changes found later in this book.

Magic is Rare and Dangerous

Regular people never see or use magic, unless they are its victims. Magic often ends with the user's destruction.

Combat is Deadly

Most fights end in a death, usually after one or two hits.

Heroes are Truly Heroic

Heroes have a little something extra that helps them survive. It is as if they possess superhuman powers or are protected by the gods.

Gold is Valuable;
Equipment and Supplies are Expensive

Gold is extremely valuable. A few coins is more than most people will have in their entire lives. A chest full of gold is reward enough for the hero to retire and live to an old age. Of course, they never would, since the lure of adventure is too great. Everything other than food and shelter costs a fortune. Equipment, travel, protection, weapons, education, and research are well-beyond the reach of normal people.

Lawlessness

The land is primarily lawless, but actions still have consequences much worse than fines and prison. There is only one true law of the Winterlands: protect your own.

Merchants should be strong enough to protect themselves and their merchandise along the roads traveled. If a bandit makes off with a merchant's goods, they are free to sell it in the nearest town—anyone there will gladly buy it. If the merchant should survive the attack, they are well within their rights in hiring a gang of thugs to hunt the thieves and cut them down in the streets. Of course, if any of the thieves survive, they are also able to take their revenge on the thugs or merchant that hired them.
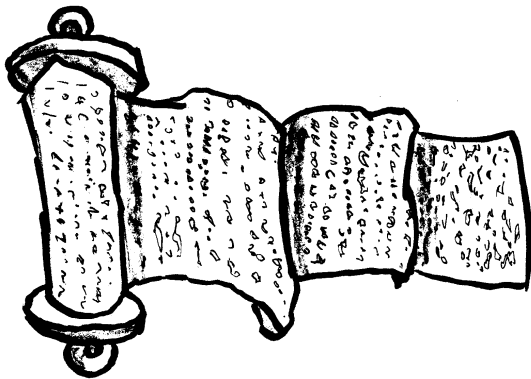
IRON AND PLATINUM

The world of Kartharka is more primitive than that of most fantasy games. The primary metal used for tools and weapons is bronze for most of the world. Iron is incredibly rare, being even more valuable than gold. This does not mean that people cannot work iron into steel. The knowledge of doing so just happens to be very rare and well-protected.

Platinum is even rarer than iron. It is incredibly valuable. The Emperor's lust for platinum is so great that it has been made illegal to own. Any platinum found must be immediately traded to the Empire's agents for its value in gold.

RACE AND CLASS CHANGES

These guidelines describe how to modify some of the standard OSR classes for use with the world of Kartharka.

Elves and Dwarves

Elves and Dwarves are extremely rare in the world of Kartharka. They exist, but no one believes that they are real. Players may portray these races, but are likely to be attacked or imprisoned if discovered. This means that they would need to avoid towns and villages, and stay covered or hidden on the roads.

Halflings

Halflings are uncommon, but accepted as an anomaly among Humans. Rather than being a separate species, consider Halflings as small Humans that somehow took a slightly different evolutionary path. People may stare at or view them as curiosities, but they are generally welcome everywhere.

Magic-Users

Magic-users, or more-appropriately wizards, have always been a part of Kartharka, but theirs powers are the Empire's hidden secret. After the Wizard Wars, their source of magic was destroyed. The Empire eventually discovered how to tap into the hidden sources of magic again, using amulets and items made of platinum. It is for this reason that the Empire seeks and hoards platinum, making it illegal throughout the land. Wizards are a well-kept secret. Their power protects the black caravans.

Wizards are actually a subset of the Sages. A secret core of the Sages keeps the knowledge of magic alive in the Winterlands. They continue to copy and memorize spells. They know that platinum is the key to using magic, but have not yet discovered the secret to creating these platinum amulets. The Sages occasionally come across one that was lost by an Imperial Wizard or smuggled into the Winterlands.

In Kartharka, wizards learn spells in the usual way and must still carry their spellbooks. They do not memorize spells every day, however. They know all of the spells for the levels to which they have access, and may use any of them whenever desired. Spellbooks are still needed, so that wizards can refresh their memories of all their known spells each day.

Magic-users now use spell points (SP) to measure their magical capabilities. When characters are reduced to 0 spell points, they are temporarily incapable of casting any spells. Spell points are fully restored to their original values at the start of a new day.

To determine how many spell points a magic-user has, multiply the number of spells he can cast at each spell level by that level. Total this value for each spell level. For example, if a 5th-level magic-user can cast 2 first-level spells, 2 second-level spells, and 1 third-level spell, he would have $2×1 + 2×2 + 1×3 = 9$ spell points.

Each casting, whether or not successful, reduces a character's spell points by an amount equal to its level. Most powers can be unleashed in the midst of combat and reused as many times as the character has the spell points to cover them. Note that only one spell can be cast per round and its level must be equal to or less than maximum spell level listed for the character's level.

Upon reaching a new maximum spell level, the magic-user must create or locate a new platinum amulet capable of focusing his new power. Without this amulet, the magic-user remains at the same spell-casting limits (though this does not affect his change in spell points). The amulet is what allows for actual magic, so its limits become the wizard's limits. A magic-user cannot use an amulet that is greater than his own maximum spell level.

Clerics

Cleric spells work like those of magic-users, except that they do not require spellbooks or amulets (they can only cast cleric spells). Additionally, clerics now use both spell points (SP) and healing spell points (HSP). Calculate spell points as per magic-users, but half are considered to be regular spell points and the other half are healing spell points. Both of these work the same, except that HSP can only be used to cast the *Cure Light Wounds*, *Cure Serious Wounds*, *Purify Food and Water*, and *Cure Disease* spells. On the other hand, SP can be used to cast any cleric spells, including the aforementioned spells.

While there are many priests and acolytes in Kartharka, they do not receive spells from their gods. Only clerics (and similar monsters) can cast cleric spells, but this class is very rare in Kartharka. The gods here are not on some elusive plane of existence; they are present in the physical world, though usually in distant or inaccessible regions.

Keep in mind that the moral code of the Winterlands favors combat, war, defending one's rights, and maintaining one's possessions. The tenets and morals of a Winterlands god is not based on "doing good" or "charitable works." It focuses on defending the Winterlands, its people, and its resources against foreign threats. Clerics are meant to defend the people against the invasion of the Empire and protect them from being harmed by outside forces.

Sorcerers

Sorcerers have the power to contact and control supernatural beings with strange magical powers. These beings (generally called spirits) actually perform the magical feats that sorcerers desire, taking the form of demons of the Underworld, undead ghosts of powerful mortals from ancient history, or once-worshiped spirits of the land. Just about all magical items in Kartharka have powers because of spirits trapped within them.

This is a secondary class, which means that a character can gain sorcerer levels in conjunction with another class incapable of magic (fighters or thieves, for example). Becoming a sorcerer as a secondary class should be an adventure in itself, as it requires one of the following:

- Another sorcerer who can pass on the knowledge of summoning and commanding spirits.
- Another sorcerer's belongings and scrolls containing enough knowledge to safely summon and control spirits.
- A legendary tomb or ancient residence of a long-dead sorcerer that has not been looted of its valuable knowledge.
- Ancient vaults and treasuries of the Sages' halls with enough information on summoning spirits and bending them to the character's will.

When a character gains enough experience to increase in level, he may do so for a secondary class sorcerer rather than his original class (this does not prevent increasing the original class's level at another time). Keep a record of which experience is allocated to the original class and which is for the secondary class.

Every sorcerer gains a familiar spirit. This is his first spirit ever summoned and controlled, and is linked to him forever. The spirit may be summoned simply by saying its name. It is dismissed just as easily, disappearing in a puff of smoke. These minor spirits usually appear to the sorcerer as a wisp of ash, glowing sphere, flickering flame, or crackling of electricity. See the Sorcery section of Lair of Sword & Sorcery for a familiar spirit's capabilities.

For every level of sorcerer assigned to a character, he adds either one +2 or two +1 bonuses to any of the sorcerer skills below. Note that a Wisdom check is made to use these skills.

If the system you are using does not utilize ability/skill checks, simply make a 1d20 roll and achieve a result less than or equal to the character's Wisdom score to succeed (increase the Wisdom score for this check if a bonus has been assigned to the relevant skill).

Summoning: The sorcerer makes a Wisdom check to summon a spirit. If successful, the spirit can make a save to resist it. If the spirit fails the save, it appears and attacks the sorcerer unless previously summoned by him.

Protective Circle: A Wisdom check can be made to create a protective circle, whether drawn in the dirt, on stone with chalk, or carved into wood. Everyone within this circle cannot be harmed by summoned spirits with hit dice equal to or less than the sorcerer's level (the number of sorcerer levels the character has). The same spirits can also be trapped within a circle until the sorcerer releases them.

Command: The sorcerer makes a Wisdom check to command a spirit. If successful, the spirit can make a save to resist it. If the spirit fails the save, it must truthfully answer one question or perform one action as requested by the sorcerer.

Enslavement: The sorcerer makes three Wisdom checks to enslave a spirit. All three must be successful for the spirit to be bound to an item somehow connected to the spirit. Once enslaved, the sorcerer can dismiss and summon the spirit at any time, taking one round to arrive; the sorcerer may also command the spirit without a roll. A sorcerer may only enslave a number of spirits at any given time equal to his sorcerer level.

Imprisonment: The sorcerer must first create a suitable item to hold a spirit. It is extremely expensive and likely to be the focus of an adventure. The sorcerer then makes a Wisdom check to imprison an already-enslaved spirit in the item. A successful roll means that this spirit is forever trapped in the item (and incapable of doing anything), while a failure indicates that the spirit is free of its enslavement to the sorcerer. Such items produce "magical effects" as byproducts of the spirits within them. For example, a fire demon trapped in a sword could cause it to radiate heat or flames, or an otherworldly smelly beast trapped in a jar could give off noxious fumes.

CHANGES TO COMBAT

This collection of rules is grouped together as being combat-related. A Sword and Sorcery game should focus on quick combat that is more lethal than usual fantasy games. Players must keep this in mind, especially as their characters gain higher levels. They are certainly not invincible, easily taken down if rushing in without a battle plan.

Weapons

All existing weapons should be considered to be made of bronze. There is no need to apply a modifier for these, as everyone else is also considered to be using bronze weapons.

Steel weapons are much better than their bronze counterparts, so all of them have a damage bonus from +1 to +4, depending on the quality. Note that steel weapons with a +4 bonus are so rare that most heroes are not likely to even see one. While these bonuses typically only affect damage, the gamemaster may elect for them to also aid attack rolls.

BONUS	QUALITY
+1	Basic Steel
+2	Well-Worked Steel
+3	Superior Steel
+4	Well-Worked Superior Steel

Magic weapons do not produce any damage bonuses in Lair of Sword & Sorcery, even though they provide other special abilities. If the heroes come across a magical weapon with a damage bonus, treat it as a steel weapon instead. Any creature that can only be harmed by magical weapons can still take damage from a steel weapon that produces a damage bonus. While the gamemaster can still opt to make such creatures impervious to even steel weapons, magical weapons are unbelievably rare.

Hit Points

Combat is quick and dangerous in Lair of Sword & Sorcery, so characters need extra hit points to give them a chance at surviving.

Rather than rolling for a character's hit points when creating him, simply assign the maximum possible roll (plus any other possible modifiers). Double this amount to determine the character's total hit points. The first half of these hit points are considered to be heroic hit points that represent luck, skill, and endurance to sustain extended periods of fighting. The second half is the character's physical hit points that represent his actual injuries.

Whenever the character gains more HP for reaching a new level, roll for the increase normally, adding it to the total amount of hit points. Heroic and physical hit points are now both equal to half the total HP.

Monsters still have the normal amount of hit points. Do not adjust their HP. This change is reserved only for player characters. Encounters may be adjusted to account for the heroes' HP by increasing the number of monsters or enemies present. If a range is given for the number of monsters appearing, use the highest value.

Damage

The most-important rule during melee combat (attacks not involving bows, missile weapons, or spells) is that all involved parties receive at least 1 point of damage each round. This simulates the combatants tiring and being overwhelmed by multiple enemies.

- If a character attacks an enemy and is successful, he receives 1 point of damage himself.
- If a character attacks an enemy and fails to hit him, he receives 1 point of damage himself.
- If a character is successfully hit by an attack, damage is determined normally. Even if damage is somehow negated, the character stills receives 1 point of damage.
- If a character is not hit by an attack, he stills receives 1 point of damage, even if some power would normally absorb or negate the damage.

When damage is applied, it is first deducted from a character's heroic HP, and then his physical HP. Put simply, his total hit points are split into two halves. The first half can be restored with rest, but the second requires healing (see below).

Resting

A group of characters who have completed a combat may choose to rest at any time. Resting means that they are relaxed, binding their wounds, and generally getting themselves back together. Resting requires two rounds. After that time has elapsed, half of a character's lost heroic hit points are restored. Characters can only rest again after they have completed another combat or at the end of the day when they sleep for the night. Resting cannot heal physical HP.

Healing

Physical hit points cannot be restored by resting. This requires healing magic (either from a cleric or potion) and time. Lost physical hit points are healed at a rate of one per day not spent adventuring.
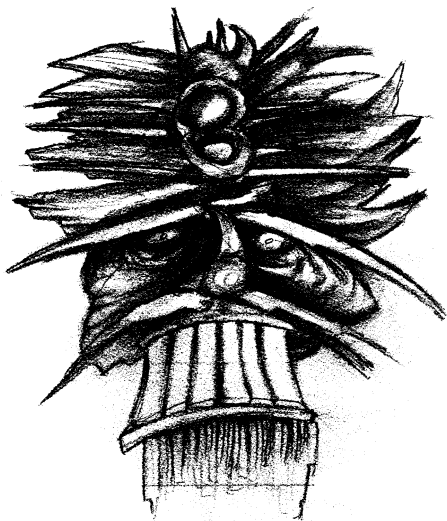
EXPERIENCE POINTS (XP)

Experience points are gained by surviving encounters with an opposition that is equal or greater in power. It is not important how a character outlasts such a conflict, just that he does—fighting, trickery, and diplomacy are all valid methods to gain experience. There must be some sort of altercation in order for the encounter to generate experience (an amount equal to the XP that the enemies are worth), but the characters need not win the conflict. If they flee the scene and then return at another time, the characters would earn experience for both conflicts.

Determining a group's power is done by totaling the level of all its members. For example, a group of player characters would have a total power equal to the sum of its members' levels. A group of monsters' power would be equal to their combined hit dice.

Note that characters earn no XP from treasure, nor do they from triggering, avoiding, or disarming traps or other impediments. Only interaction with monsters and similar threats can produce experience.

MONSTERS

Use monsters and other enemies from Lair of Sword & Sorcery as follows:

- A monster's Attack score is converted to its hit dice equivalent for combat (a creature with Attack +2 would had 2HD, for example).
- Use the tables below to convert a monster's Endurance score to hit points, and Defense score to armor class (AC) or ascending armor class (AAC), depending on the system being used.

ENDURANCE	HP		DEFENSE	AC	AAC
-2	1		-1	9	10
-1	2		0	8	11
0	5		1	7	12
1	10		2	6	13
2	15		3	5	14
3	20		4	4	15
4	25		5	3	16
5	35		6	2	17
6	40		7	1	18
7	45		8	0	19
8	50		9	-1	20
9	55		10	-2	21
10	70				

The same can be done for characters, treating most as fighters with a level equal to half their Attack score.

MONEY AND TREASURE

Gold and treasure are extremely rare in Lair of Sword & Sorcery. Food and shelter are extremely cheap, but hard goods are very expensive. Regular people cannot afford rope, clothing, weapons, and metal goods. These folk are far more likely to make the things they need rather than buy them, or at least trade their own goods for them. Use the following rules when dealing with treasure.

- All gems, jewelry, and other treasures costs 5% of their original value (divide by 20).
- All equipment that is normally purchased during the course of an adventure costs 5% of their original value (divide by 20), with a minimum of 1gp.
- All food, lodging, and travel costs 2% of their original value (divide by 50), with a minimum of 1cp.

Metals

All equipment purchased is assumed to be bronze. Platinum is used to make magical items, but also has an intrinsic value like money. Iron is used to make iron items, but also has an intrinsic value. Gold is extremely valuable, considered the money of the rich, such as royalty and merchants. Iron and platinum are both found in coin form, with platinum jewelery also available.

Magic Treasure

Magic treasure is extremely rare in Kartharka. Normally, if a magical weapon is found, it should be replaced with a steel weapon of the equivalent bonus. If the heroes are in places where magical items could be found, however, then they should not be modified in this manner. Keep in mind the following:

- There are no places to buy or sell magic items or potions, since there are no magical markets.
- Magic is highly illegal and distrusted in the Winterlands, so characters must take care in how they use or talk about it.

Coins

Rather than calculate these changes to costs, the price lists in the Lair of Sword & Sorcery Core Book may be used. One Iron Coin is worth ten Gold Coins. One Platinum Coin is worth ten Iron Coins.

ADVENTURING

Instead of entire adventures taking place on a single Demonboard, it is used in a more free-form way. Each Demonboard is used to illustrate where the heroes are, how the rooms appear, and the enemies' positions. As heroes move from one room to another, take apart the first set of rooms and set up the next. When moving through a dungeon, the Demonboard is not even needed unless combat occurs.

Each square on the Demonboard represents five feet, so each character's movement rate determines how many squares may be moved each round as well as distance (divide the rate in feet by five to determine the number of squares).

A character may perform the following actions during each round:

- Make one attack
- Attempt one action other than attacking
- Move up to his maximum rate at any time during his round; partial moves can be made, so even before an attack and then again after it.

Fleeing

Fleeing is an option to avoid combat and defeat. It is treated in the same manner as it is in Lair of Sword & Sorcery. Once the characters have fled, they are safe and the adventure is done. This is more flexible than just losing, since they may be able to return to a large dungeon, although such a return encounter should only occur once to prevent the characters from running away and coming back continuously.

Balancing

Encounters may be balanced as they are in Lair of Sword & Sorcery, but this is based on character level and hit dice. Simply add up the total levels for the heroes' party to calculate their Rank. The enemy Rank is equal to their combined hit dice.

Fame and Favor

Lair of Sword & Sorcery's fame and favor rules can be used as-is or ignored.

Followers and Henchmen

Lair of Sword & Sorcery's follower rules can be used as-is or ignored.

Templates

Updated lair and story templates are provided here. Consult the Lair of Sword & Sorcery rules for guidelines on their use. The primary change consists of terminology and statistics.

A page with a mapping area is also included. It can be used to map specific areas in more detail and also large dungeons, showing all of the encounter areas and lairs, and how they are interconnected. Piece together multiple copies of this page to form larger lairs and dungeons, or simply use your own graphing paper.
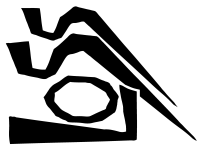
LoSS STORY FLOWCHART

SETTING

ACTIVE STORY	BACKGROUND STORY	MISC	TRIGGERED
ACTIVE STORY	BACKGROUND STORY	MISC	TRIGGERED
ACTIVE STORY	BACKGROUND STORY	MISC	TRIGGERED
ACTIVE STORY	BACKGROUND STORY	MISC	TRIGGERED
ACTIVE STORY	BACKGROUND STORY	MISC	TRIGGERED
ACTIVE STORY	BACKGROUND STORY	MISC	TRIGGERED
ACTIVE STORY	BACKGROUND STORY	MISC	TRIGGERED
ACTIVE STORY	BACKGROUND STORY	MISC	TRIGGERED

LoSS STORY BACKGROUND

HIGHEST TOTAL ENCOUNTER HIT DICE

STORY

LOCATION

FOR THE GAMEMASTER

HOOK

WANDER IN

READ ALOUD TEXT FOR THE HEROES

DUNGEON LAYOUT

NOTES _____

1 SQUARE = 10 FEET

LoSS

LAIR OUTLINE

OBJECTIVE

PUNISHMENT

REWARD

SPECIAL FEATURES
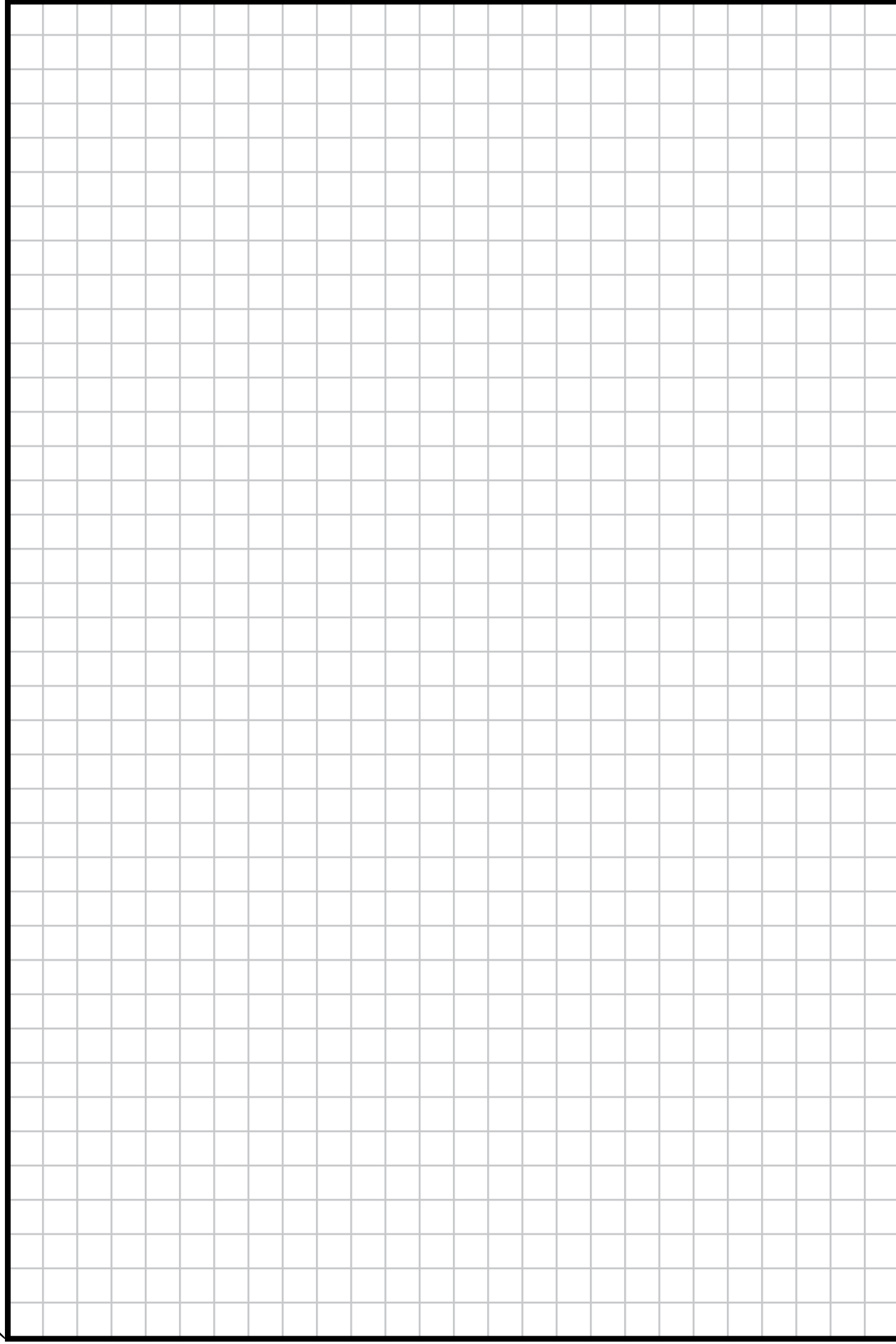
FOLLOWERS AVAILABLE

SETUP

KEY:

1 SQUARE = 5 FEET

LAIR
SETTING

SCENARIO
STORY

☐ ACTIVE
☐ BACKGROUND

LAIR DETAILS

LoSS

FORCE LIST	HD	AC	HP	HIT	DAMAGE	SAVE	MOVE	XP	NOTES

NOTES

AREAS

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