

• THE GAME SYSTEM •

Feats

The basic mechanic of **High Valor** is fairly simple. The Teller establishes a situation for a scene. The players decide how they wish to approach resolving that situation.

The player then takes the two most appropriate traits, and adds their ranks together.

Each trait is rated from Lesser (+2) rank to Mythic (+8) Rank, in steps of 2. This should be noted on the character sheet for simplicity.

Lesser +2
Greater +4
Heroic +6
Legendary +8
Mythic +10

Once that is done, the player should roll the most appropriate die pool (**Faith, Will, or Valor**) for how he is choosing to solve the situation before him. **Once the pool is selected the player rolls that many d10s**, and then takes the highest die showing and add it to the two traits. However, do not discard the other dice—if the highest die shows a 10, the player takes it and the next highest die result as well.

The total score a hero needs to surpass is set by the Teller and ranked similarly to traits.

Feat	Target Numbers
Lesser	8
Greater	12
Heroic	16
Legendary	22
Mythic	28

Yes, you must roll HIGHER than the Feat number. A tie merely results in a stalemate.

Example Feat

Larry is playing the character of Simon, a priest with some skill with a sword. He is in a battle against a fearsome foe.

Valor covers armed conflict and will be the die pool Larry rolls.

Larry rolls and gets a 1, 6, 7, 4

This means he takes the 7 result and adds the traits of Inherited Sword (Lesser) +2, and Swordsman (Lesser) +2. This gives him a total of 11, which means he beats the target number for a “Lesser” ranked foe.

Larry is fighting another foe who is a bit more difficult. This one is a “Greater” threat according to the Teller, so Larry rolls again. This time Larry gets a 5, 6, 3, and 10 for his hero, Simon. So Simon’s total is 20!

Check the math: He rolled a 10, which lets him add the 6. Then he adds in his traits, both of which are Lesser.

So Larry adds 10 plus 6 plus 2 plus 2 for a grand total of 20, an impressive display of his prowess (with a touch of luck).

Attacks and Defenses

Ordinarily a roll is performed to influence the scene. That is, you only roll when you can make a difference to the outcome—slay a foe, rout an army, etc. A player rolls her dice to both apply her hero’s influence (and succeed at her action), and avoid any retaliatory actions from a foe. If she succeeds she inflicts her chosen setback on a foe; if she fails she suffers a setback instead. This can be altered by the Teller (allowing attacks and defenses to be rolled separately) based on the current scale of interaction.

Stalemates

In the case of a roll that ties the target number for a Feat action, there are two options. One is to simply accept the tie and try again with a new action, strike, or attempt. The other option is to accept a minor setback of some sort. A scratch on the arm from clambering up a dangerous slope, a sword stuck in a foe, or similar minor things that can occur in the scene that fits the action attempted. This minor setback still allows you to claim victory and just barely succeed at your Feat.

Tellers, however, if the situation involves a non-player characters they're representing, may take a minor setback for that character. This will let them win control over the conflict, unless the hero also took a setback. If both sides take a setback, they are both again at stalemate, and must up the stakes, pushing from a minor ("Lesser") setback up to more significant and long-term issues. If they don't however, their foe may win the day!

Types of Rolls

Now, there are three dice pools that may be drawn upon in play, each covering a certain range of feats that may be attempted. For example, Valor is important in combat and other conflict centered around battle. It is not so useful for tracking a foe through the forest or asking the High Lord to intervene on your behalf.

What does Valor cover?

Conflict that falls under the Valor pool covers armed and unarmed battle, the ability to face

down a terrifying foe and stay on the battlefield, or avoiding injury through risky actions. (Such as leaping across a chasm, or running across a rain-slicked ledge) Anytime courage or physical ability is necessary.

While Valor covers certain areas when you win, it also sets the tone for any setback that occurs when one fails. More on types of setbacks is covered in the Challenges and Setbacks chapter.

What does Will cover?

Although there might seem some overlap with Valor, Will covers a bit broader area of mental concentration and stubborn behavior. It is used most often for magic because magic demands one be strong enough of self to shape it. Will covers concentration—this comes up most often in scenes where a skill type trait needs to be used to fashion an item or focus on a task for some length of time. Tracking a foe after they have a significant lead, observing details about an enemy encampment, or clinging to a rope in frigid water that is rising—these are all tasks of will.

Will is primarily covering ground where there is only the self that can fail—no actual opponent or ongoing conflict except for the internal one.

Just like Valor, Will also determines the nature of a setback when you fail at tasks associated with it. Often these setbacks are temporary and immediate—you simply fail at the given Feat you were attempting and cannot retry it unless something significant changes.

Use Valor For:

- Armed combat
- Unarmed combat
- Arm wrestling
- Maneuvering around a battlefield
- Chasing a foe
- Staring down an enemy
- Intimidation
- Physical actions that risk life and limb

Use Will For:

- Magic spells success
- Staring contests
- Resisting magic
- Concentrating on a task
- Utilizing a skill over time
- Tracking
- Scavenging
- Observation
- Memory

What does Faith cover?

Faith covers just what it suggests, the belief in the greater forces in life—in the High Lord and His servants.

Faith is most often invoked when a task seems too great or too extreme for one person, adding a bit of hope that the High Lord's hand will move in either tasks of Will or Valor. (See Borrowing Dice below) Faith covers the surety in the divine and helps to deflect dark magics and corruption from the faithful. It also will allow them to hold back temptation against evil or selfish acts. It can also be used to influence events or people due to the strength of faith alone. A priest standing on a battlefield may manage to stand down an army by walking unarmed and giving a moving speech in the name of the High Lord.

Faith's failures often come up in the breaking of faith itself, of rejection of the High Lord, or His will. In most circumstances it brings forth some measure of doubt as to the rightness of the hero's cause.

Use Faith For:

- Blessings
- Miracles
- Smiting/Deterring Evil
- Sacrifice of self for Good
- Turning back Dark magic
- Aiding someone else
- Desperate actions

Challenges and Setbacks

Challenges are ongoing limitations that a hero may face; they simply **increase the difficulty of any Feat attempted when the challenge is involved.**

For example, a hero with the challenge "Drunkard" is trying to overhear bandits drinking around a campfire. The temptation of ale is so strong that as he listens he mishears things and cannot pay attention to what they are saying. Make the entire

scene an issue of his drinking versus his task.

Most challenges will be preexisting situations that have occurred sometimes in the past and are included in character generation. However, some challenges occur in play as the result of a **Heroic or greater setback.** These things include permanent injuries such as losing a limb or an eye, or being cursed by a dark fate.

Ordinarily setbacks will be temporary, impacting the character for several scenes, though the length of time a setback impairs should be based on the Feat rating he is aiming for when he fails.

Setbacks

Valor

- Physical injury
- Breaking of courage
- Death
- Fleeing from battle
- Being captured or overcome
- Being disarmed
- Being Delayed
- Knocked out or Stunned

Will

- Magical setback (See Magic)
- Loss of concentration
- Failure to perform action
- Flaw in the outcome
- Breaking of will
- Blinded or Deafened
- Looking away at critical moment
- Being Surprised
- Losing a trail
- Convinced/Seduced

Faith

- Doubt
- No influence on action
- Failure of Blessing or Miracle
- Broken faith
- Rejection of belief
- Magic setback (See Magic)

Setbacks should be theme-based on the die pool drawn upon to perform the feat. Always remember the Feat level they are aiming for. Instant death should only be likely at Heroic and greater feats, and should be made known as a possible outcome before dice are rolled.

There are thousands of possible variations of setbacks and challenges. Just remember the guidelines that permanent and lasting effects should most likely come from Heroic and greater feats failing for a hero. Below that, wounds, setbacks, and the like should be temporary. This also occurs when someone is stalemated and takes a setback to win the conflict; most effects should be temporary, lasting several scenes or even several weeks of game time at the most.

Any feat that performs incredibly well or fails spectacularly should be noted as either a Doom (bad things) or a Triumph (good things), and written on the character sheet for a hero. These events shape future play and possible changes to the character as time passes.



Borrowing Dice

While one can choose a dice pool to perform an action, it is not possible to use Faith to entirely fight a physical battle, nor use Valor to cast a magical spell.

However, there are times when desperate measure may ask the heroes to strain themselves to the limit of their abilities. When this happens a hero may choose to borrow a die from another die pool. In order to borrow a single die from one of their other dice pools, the hero must in-character evoke an action that fits the theme of utilizing that pool. A hero wishing to get the High Lord's aid to land a blow against a dragon may say a little prayer (aloud for the Teller and other heroes.)

A Priest may draw upon his own courage to enact a Miracle. "I'll step up to the myrk pack and raise my staff among them as I pray." **A single die may then be temporarily transferred to the other dice pool, allowing the hero to roll one more die for his action. However, the die is lost for acts governed by the original dice pool for an entire scene.**

There is a limitation here—not a mechanical or balance aiming one—but an in-game setting limitation. Faith cannot be used for Magic and Will may not be used for Miracles or Blessings. This is because Faith and Will are fundamentally opposites when involving magic—magic demands that you have enough confidence in your abilities to conquer and shape it, and Faith is giving up self-will to some extent to let the High Lord handle things. These two are in conflict in many ways.

This does not mean a faithful person lacks willpower or that a magic wielder will lack faith—just that for resolving such situations they do not possess what is needed for enacting the powerful forces that each pool governs. A faithful person often simply accepts what happens as part of the divine will of the High Lord, while a mage cannot give up enough of his own desires to leave things in the High Lord's hands.

Lending Dice

Just as players can borrow dice from one pool to utilize in another, another player may lend a die from one of their pools in order to assist another at an action. Lending a die is done by stating intent, and using their in-character actions and choices to support this situation.

Essentially a hero will say things like “I’ve got your back, my friend!” and transfer a Valor die to their heroic ally. They may offer up a prayer for their friend and give them a die from Faith to support their actions, or may pat the friend on the back and say, “I believe in you, you can do this,” lending a Will die.

Lent dice only last for the next single action on the acting hero’s part. The lender, however, will not be able to use that die for their pools for the rest of the scene. There are no limits on which pool may be used when a hero uses a die they’ve received, unlike borrowed dice (above). A Will die may be lent to support another hero’s Faith action, a Faith die may be lent to support another hero’s Will action, or any combination. The player does have to accept the help, and the lender must have the die to lend in the first place. A hero may also only use one lent die at any time.

When the scene ends the dice borrowed or lent are all reset to their proper pools and can be used again.

Enemies

When in conflict with a foe, the Teller needs to only set the Feat necessary to remove that threat or enemy from action. It is suggested he use only one rating to represent the force’s challenge both offensively and defensively. This single Feat rank is then the target for a hero’s actions against that foe—and what he will suffer if he fails.

Lesser Stakes

Sometimes a hero will engage a foe who is too tough to kill in a single blow (or rather, the target number is so high, the hero is more likely to take a lethal setback.).

In cases where a foe seems tough or too numerous, a hero can attempt to whittle down a foe, perform less risky, less decisive actions, and perform a Feat at a lower target number. This allows the hero to slowly bring down groups or powerful enemies by inflicting lesser setbacks to the opponents.

In this case the Teller should lower the target Feat for landing a lethal blow as the hero builds up minor setbacks against their foe. It is up to the Teller how many setbacks it will take to drop the overall Feat rank the heroes are aiming at to succeed.

Fallout

Challenges come in two forms: those that show up and plague the hero as an ongoing plot element, and those that show up only to vanish in time. Make sure that the player knows which kind they are choosing before they roll for a Feat.

Make sure that if it could be important and character-impairing, they are willing to accept that change. Losing a limb may make the character cooler for one player, but make a character completely nonviable for another. Give them options to choose from when there is risk, but make sure they know the risk before they roll.

If they don’t like those risks at all, give them an out—a lesser risk to escape the moment, run away, or lesser but longer consequences for their actions. **High Valor** is about the courage to face the risks, but it is also about a hero’s choice to face it, or accept their failure and cowardice. Good gaming can come from making that choice hard, but not impossible.