

The Makers' Roads

The West Road stretches from the Old Wall all the way up to Gordin's Delve, a 4-day march. The Highway goes even further, from the great gate of Barrier Pass all the way through the Flats and the Steplands, to Marshedge and the Manmarch beyond.

The roads are wide, grand and humbling, clearly a work of the Makers. They have lasted for centuries, strangely well kept and free of growth. Rain and snowmelt drains off into gutters that never clog. Sediment and debris do not accumulate. Predators shun the roads. Creatures and spirits of darkness, chaos, or death cannot cross them.

When you *attempt to commit violence while on the road*, or to *harm the road or anything upon it*, you hesitate. If you *will yourself to continue*, roll +CHA: **on a 10+**, you are free to act until this fight ends and the blood stops pounding in your ears; **on a 7-9**, you act this once but will hesitate again; **on a miss**, you fail to act—mark XP and ask the GM what happens.

IMPRESSIONS

- Z The road itself, wide and smooth and stretching to the horizon
- Z Grass growing tall on either side, in places so high as to block your vision
- Z Slabs of gray-black basalt, tiled one after the other, free of dust or debris
- Z A gentle bevel, curving down towards curb-stones to make gutters
- Z Rainfall flowing down gutters like tiny streams, into grates that lead who-knows where
- Z Snow billowing about, refusing to build up and soon melting when it does
- Z A sense of profound... *impropriety*, and... *distaste* at the thought of bloodshed, strong enough to stay your hand

THE CROSSROADS

The West Road and the Highway cross about 10 miles out of town. And while the roads themselves are warded against evil spirits and harmful intent, there's something unnerving about the crossroads. Everyone feels it. No one likes to talk about it.

Crows gather often. There's a copse of dool trees in the distance, which no one even *thinks* of cutting. The wind blows colder here. Voices hush, or fall silent, or trail off into half-finished sentences.

There are stories, if you can pry them from the lips of elders or those-who-know. Stories about calling up the dead. Or meaning to, at least. Sometimes you call up something worse.

When you *stand at the crossroads at night and call the name of one who has passed through the Black Gates*, roll and add...

- +1 if you bring a possession of theirs
- +1 if you offer food or drink they loved
- +1 if you are tied to them by blood

On a 7+, their shade appears, but choose 1 (on a 10+) or 2 (on a 7-9):

- Z They are deranged, confused, muddled, unreasonable
- Z They have no intention of returning peaceably to their rest
- Z Something else comes through the Black Gates with them (a DOOL SPIRIT, a SPECTER or WRAITH, a pack of CRIN ANNWUN, etc.); the GM decides what

THE WAYSIDES

Every 25 miles or so, the roads expand to a broad circle, wide enough for travelers to camp without leaving the warded stones. Each wayside might include any or all of the following: a firepit, an obelisk marked with a single rune, a slab of slate on which travelers leave chalk messages.

NOSGOLAU

Veteran travelers tell stories of lights seen at night, in the distance, dancing and weaving. Some folk hear their name on the wind. Some follow the call and wander off into the night. Those who do never return, and there is no trace of them come morning.

When you *cross the Flats on the Makers' roads*, determine how many travelers are susceptible to the nosgolau (by default, you are; veteran travelers might not be). Then roll 1d6 + the number of susceptible travelers. **On a 7+**, the nosgolau appear during at least one night of your journey.

When *night falls and the nosgolau appear*, roll +WIS: **on a 10+**, you see the lights, but they are naught but a curiosity; you are no longer susceptible to the nosgolau and never need to make this move again; **on a 7-9**, you see the lights and hear your name, and feel the call of the nosgolau; mark XP if you leave the roads to follow them; **on a 6-**, the lights and the voices compel you to come to them, and you will do so unless forcibly restrained.

What are the nosgolau? Perhaps they are...

- Z Unquiet souls, called up at the crossroads or leftover from ancient battles
- Z Nightmare spirits bubbling up from Below, hungering for fresh meat
- Z Spirits of the wild, resentful of the roads and those that travel them

RUNIC CALLIGRAPHY

Cut a paving stone from its mortar and pull it up, and you'll find the bottom laced with impossibly intricate runes. Your vision blurs just look at them. These runes impart three separate spells upon the roads. Alas, they are unintelligible unless you have already mastered the spells individually.

To unlock the mysteries of this runic calligraphy, you must...

- ☐ Master the following spells (each of which is its own minor arcana):
 - ☐ Peacebond
 - ☐ Azm Qadir's Preservation
 - ☐ Sanctifying Mark
- ☐ Acquire an intact road-stone
- ☐ Spend a season and 1d4 handfuls of silver studying the runes on the road-stone and attempting to replicate them

When you *mark at the requirements*, you gain access to the following move:

When you *make a magic mark or rune*, you can weave multiple magical effects that you know. Each effect must involve runes, markings, or writing. Such combined runes take no longer to make than the most complex of the individual spells. Beyond that, work out the details with the GM.

☐ IMPROVEMENT: ROADMAKING

Requires all of the following, in order:

- ☐ Unlock the secrets of runic calligraphy
- ☐ Teach the runes to at least 2 full-time artisans of sharp mind and steady hand
- ☐ Secure a nigh unlimited source of stone and a means to transport it
- ☐ Recruit a foreman of moderate skill, who has studied the construction of the roads themselves
- ☐ Recruit and maintain a skilled crew of about 50 laborers and stone masons

When you *mark at the requirements*, you can expand or repair the Makers' roads.

Every 1/2 day of travel (10-15 miles) of road requires one season of labor, 2 Surplus (to provide for the laborers), and a purse of silver (for payment and supplies). If the laborers are from Stonetop, the steading must Pull Together.