

FIVE OATHS

2023 Rules Update

Before we begin our games this year we are making a number of updates to the rulebook. Some of these updates are small quality of life changes, others are much more substantial. We understand that changes to the rulebook, especially large ones, are disruptive but we want to make sure we're running the best version of this game that we can be and we believe that these changes are worth the trouble. These changes are heavily informed by player feedback and player discussion and we are very grateful for all your enthusiasm and engagement that make this game possible and make continuing to improve the game possible. We will continue to develop the game based on player feedback in future but we don't expect to ever make an update this large again. We want to especially thank those players who helped to review and refine these updates, their input was invaluable.

Several of these updates, mostly notably the Species Feat Rework, make changes to existing feats. As a result of the Species Feat changes, every character in play will have to choose at least one new feat. Over the next few days the database may be inaccessible as we apply the updates. When it comes back online all characters will have been set to be editable by their players. All players must reconfirm their characters on the database. If you wish to more extensively rebuild your character as a result of the changes detailed below you are welcome to do so and this will also be possible through the character database at this time.

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Species Feat Rework

This rework will significantly alter how characters are built in Five Oaths. We are removing automatically assigned Species Feats and replacing them with the Way of Affinity.

We understand that this is a particularly large and disruptive change that will affect every character in play, but we believe that it will significantly benefit the game in the long run and so we want to make it sooner rather than later.

Like many players, we have had concerns about the balance of the existing set of species feats. We are also unhappy with the pigeon-holing effect of the current system, whereby a particular species can appear to always be the best choice for a particular role or archetype. This effect has also impacted how the lore of the species has been viewed and pushed the perception of some species away from what was intended.

We also have concerns about thematic problems and inconsistencies created by the current system. The existing feats draw variously on a mix of biological, personal, and cultural factors and by implication, flatten all of that variety to a function of species. The current feats can also be incongruous and limiting in unintended ways. It is, for example, not currently mechanically possible to represent a young, sheltered Laesair.

The Way of Affinity is more complex than the existing system and thereby creates more space for both species and individual characters to be interesting and distinctive. All members of a species will still have certain things in common, but they won't all have exactly the same one feat in every case.

The Way of Affinity is made up of 27 feats. Most of these are entirely new, but some versions of the existing species feats are also included. Each species has access to one exclusive feat and to a unique combination of four other feats that are shared across species. Weeping players will choose a species to count as for the purposes of Way of Affinity feats, much like they previously did for Species feats.

At creation, every character must take one of the feats available to their species from the Way of Affinity and, as with the other Ways, they may take up to three. After character creation, further feats from the Way of Affinity can be purchased with XP as normal.

Players with existing characters may choose any Affinity feat available to their species to replace their existing species feat. If you wish to rebuild your character in light of these changes, this will be possible through the character database.

Each species will share access to some feats with other species. For example, there are common affinities between the Creidhe and the Fathach, and between the Laesair and the Wildlings. The Creidhe and the Firetouched, or the Laesair and Humans however share no feats in common. There are in-universe reasons for the combinations and we hope exploring them will be of interest to some players.

It is our intention that the new system of feats give each species their own particular way of approaching different areas of the game and avoiding locking every character to a feat that may or may not be relevant to how they engage with the game.

This change is a purely out-of-character mechanical update and characters will not be aware of anything changing. For example, your character should not be surprised to see a Krieger repairing things as quickly as a Creidhe.

The table below shows which feats are available to each species from The Way of Affinity. The full Way of Affinity, as well as other new feats added or altered by this update can be viewed [here](#).

Creidhe	Drakeblooded	Fathach
Careful Maintenance Unshakable Camaraderie Odds and Ends Ever Onwards Deft Hands	Dragon's Roar Endless Reach Closing the Circle Profitable Prowl Furious Endurance	Pillar of the Community Expanded Potential Joint Purpose Prosperous Works Unshakeable Camaraderie
Firetouched	Humans	Leasair
Inner Power Bloody Resistance Beacon of Life Unexpected Opportunities Waste Not, Want Not	Ingenious Craft Endless Reach Expanded Potential Fascinations and Distractions Odds and Ends	Lasting Impressions Ever Onwards Closing the Circle What Doesn't Kill You Quick Exit

Krieger	Vartach	Wildlings
<p>In the Face of Danger</p> <p>Beacon of Life Furious Endurance Deft Hands Profitable Prowl</p>	<p>Mark of Destiny</p> <p>Joint Purpose Bloody Resistance Waste Not, Want Not Fascinations and Distractions</p>	<p>In Beast's Clothing</p> <p>Unexpected Opportunities Prosperous Works Quick Exit What Doesn't Kill You</p>

One Second Rule Change

We are changing the one second rule so that characters are now limited to generating one effect per second, *per target*. It is important to note that when generating different effects within a small amount of time, care must be taken to ensure that the recipient of each effect can clearly hear what effect they have been targeted with.

Changes to Chain Casting

One thing that we want to aim for is that there should be no one thing that appears to always be the best option. Currently we believe that the efficiency of Chain Casting for low-cost spells is shutting down other approaches to spellcasting.

For this reason, we are increasing the minimum cost for Chain Casting from 1 to 2 so that the average cost of spells cast through Chain Casting is always greater than 0. At the same time we are also opening up some more casting options by changing the feats to allow additional casts on the same target to be chained at increasing costs.

Stacking Effects

We have realised that certain effects in the rulebook were written under the assumption that they would not stack but that we previously failed to explicitly state this. In order to clarify this: no character may benefit from multiple instances of the same ritual or item (with a non-instantaneous effect) at the same time

Eg. A character who has attuned to a pair of "True Foes Swords" would receive the benefit of only one. A character who is subject to multiple "Shaper's Blessing Of The Flock" rituals would not gain a card unless they had already torn the card granted from the earlier ritual.

Weapon Safety Standards

To improve clarity around weapons at our events we will be publishing written guidelines on weapons standards. These standards are based on Profound Decisions' Empire ruleset with their permission. There are several differences in our implementation from the Empire rules, such as the removal of "thrust safe" weapons. The standards can be found [here](#).

One major item that is included in this is a change to the requirements for arrowheads. The new standard will be more restrictive and is likely to disallow many arrows currently in use by players. In light of this, arrows which do not meet our new requirements but pass weapons check in accordance with our previous standards will be permitted until the start of 2024.

Rumours Rework

We are removing the existing Rumours feats from the game and replacing them with Informant feats. These feats allow characters interested in information gathering to be more targeted and proactive in their pursuit of knowledge. Previously the Scouting action has served as a general purpose information gathering action, with this update we will be clarifying its text to bring it more in line with its intended purpose of providing information on threats that characters are likely to face in the field. To avoid cutting players off from information before they've had time to purchase some of the new feats, we will be gradually narrowing the scope of Scouting reports over the course of the coming year. If you wish to rebuild your character in light of these changes, this will be possible through the character database.

Rituals Update

We are adding rules to Ritual Magic that are intended to allow us to add more diversity and depth to ritual gameplay in an ongoing way without having to continuously update the rulebook. We are also creating space in the rules for ritualist characters who are not heavily invested in the Church of the Shaper. These changes shouldn't significantly alter the experience of learning and performing rituals but some new content and a few

new wrinkles have been added. To avoid confusion with a new item type relating to rituals we are removing Ritual Scrolls from the game and replacing the recipe with Warding Charms. All of these changes are purely out-of-character and characters should not be aware of anything being different.

Connection Lammies

We are adding a new type of lammie to the game. Instead of representing items these lammies will represent the mechanical effects of certain connections that players have made to individuals or organisations outside of the band. By default, they are non-transferable and do not require a phys-rep.

The Anatomist Feat

We are removing the feats Bandaging and Diagnostician from the game as we believe they are not individually worth the opportunity cost of a feat. In their place the Anatomist feat is being added to the Way of the Scholar. The new feat provides the benefits of both of the removed feats as well as access to additional information. The feat Armour Bearer will replace Bandaging in the Way of Leather and Steel but for now nothing will replace Diagnostician in the Way of Martial Prowess. Characters who had either of the removed feats will have a free choice of feats to replace them. If you wish to rebuild your character in light of these changes, this will be possible through the character database.

Lingering Wounds and Afflictions

Starting at the next event it will be possible for characters to receive Lingering Wounds that cannot be fully resolved by simple magical healing. The ability to correctly diagnose and treat Lingering Wounds will rely on the Anatomist Feat.

Afflictions will represent lasting non-physical effects of a magical or spiritual nature. This could be the malign influence of a Gwyllt, the curse that befalls trespassers in the tomb of an ancient Dragon, or the consequences of ritual experimentation. The criteria for dealing with Afflictions will be varied, but Way of the Scholar feats will be important for correctly identifying an Affliction and learning more about it.

Mechanically, the two systems will work similarly. If your character is affected by a Lingering Wound or Affliction, you will be given a tearable lammie with details of skills required to diagnose the issue and any

roleplay effects printed on the outside. You will have an opportunity to exchange the effect for a different one if the effect is one you are uncomfortable with roleplaying on an OOC level. Instructions for how to resolve the Lingering Wound or Affliction will be printed on the inside of the lammie. A character with the appropriate skills to diagnose may open the lammie and read this information, but a character may not do this for themselves, even if they have the appropriate skill.

We hope that this change will add depth and drama to the game, particularly for characters focused on scholarly skills and healing, while keeping the requirement for referee involvement (and time spent waiting for referees) low.

Consumables Crafting

In order to improve the action economy of crafters we are updating the Craft downtime action to allow for 1 to 3 Consumable Items with the same recipe to be produced by a single action. The full ingredient cost for each item must still be paid.

Fear Effect Rewording

We are rewording the Fear effect to be more thematically appropriate and mechanically distinctive from the Push effect.

Ranged Weapons Damage

In order to improve the efficacy of ranged weapons we are making it so that damage from ranged weapons is applied directly to Body hits, ignoring Armour. This is distinct from ranged weapons automatically doing Through, as it will be possible to deliver an effect alongside the Armour-ignoring damage. This applies to ranged weapons (such as bows) only, not to thrown weapons.

Repairing Thrown Weapons

In order to make thrown weapons more useful to the people who bring them to the fight than they are to the people they get thrown at, it will now be necessary to Repair a thrown weapon that is picked up before throwing it again.

Searching and Disarming

To simplify some previous unintuitive cases, it will now be possible to simply take visible IC items and weapons from unresisting characters. This means it'll be possible to retrieve an "In Case Of Emergencies" Potion without searching the character first, so long as it is worn somewhere clearly visible. This does not apply however, to Halted characters who now may not have items taken from them.

Fair Escape

We are adding Fair Escape to the rulebook as an event team call.

Action Calls

We are adding the concept of Action Calls to the rulebook. This is a codification of the idea of counting down while describing an action and is being added so that it can be deployed with clarity when useful.

Vigour Loops

We are adding a note to the rulebook regarding vigour loops and vigour-positive interactions. Although there may be cases where these things are possible by the letter of the rules, engaging in them intentionally should be regarded as a dangerous activity *in-character* that will result in unpleasant consequences.

Minor Balance Changes

We are also making some minor changes for the sake of game balance. These include reducing the activation cost of the feat "Fatal Blow" and changing the effects of the Master Arcanist item "Casting Crystal".

Clarifications

Alongside the changes listed above we have also made a number of smaller textual changes to the rulebook to improve clarity or to carry through consequences of the larger changes.