

# Knights of Panthalassia

Atlantis. Lemuria. Mu. All great continents, all gone, vanished below the waves thanks to humanity's greed and hubris. The Ice Age did not die a natural death, it was hounded to the grave by sciences obscured by myth and rumour when even Greece was young. The great glaciers fell decaying, their bloated corpses flowing into the ever-swelling oceans and suddenly, lands that were great and glorious were no more, humbled beneath the wave.

Yet some survived. Their nigh-magical science, tempered with religious fervour, allowed them a second chance in the bosom of the deep. Those that saw the waters rising, that predicted the coming of the great flood, had time to prepare. Many fled to other less developed continents high above the rising waters, but those who could not or would not trusted in the science that had destroyed their homes to alter their bodies to breathe water as fish do through gill slits in the neck. Folklore would call them mermaids and mermen, but they called themselves Panthalassians, citizens of the All-Ocean.

And so these great continents sank, and the old Atlantians, Lemurians and Murians discarded the technology that had nearly destroyed them all in favour of the old ways, of shield and spear. But neither humanity's greed nor its hubris could be drowned. As the world approached its two thousand and fiftieth year under the new reckoning, it seemed to the Panthalassians that all the lessons of the past had been forgotten. Humanity's science, though not a patch on what the ancients had wrought in terms of power, was more plentiful and more filthy than ever. Earth's protective layers were stripped away one by one, and the last of the great ice floes waned. The sea was on the rise once more, but still the humans clung to their harmful technologies, and now they invade the sea.

The Senate of Panthalassia has debated for twenty long years since the first of the underwater dome-cities was constructed off the coast of Japan. The debates raged on as humanity polluted the waters as well as the skies, as the deep swallowed up more and more land. And still they talk, while the noble houses grow restless. Divided on two fronts, there are those who would destroy the technology at the root of this second great flood and maybe reverse that process. There are other dark souls who would rather see the All-Ocean swallow the whole globe, so that all Earth would become a part of their kingdom. There is no place in their ideology for sea-polluting submariners from the surface world.

Which side would you take? As a Knight of Panthalassia, it's time for you to choose.

## Game Style

Knights of Panthalassia is a traditional Games Master led role-playing game. One player takes the role of the GM, who guides the path of the story and informs the others on the world around them. The remaining players each take the role of a single Knight of Panthalassia and attempt to shape the story as they see fit. When a PC attempts to do something important, the GM may call for a test to see if they succeed.

To play the game, you will need several eight, ten and twelve sided dice. Five of each should be enough. You will also need one twenty-sided die.

## Dice, Virtue and Tactics

You begin the game with five Virtue dice and five Vice dice. Depending on your character, one of these types will be ten-sided while the other is twelve-sided. Virtue dice are used whenever your character is being straightforward, valorous and noble. Vice dice are used for tasks that are underhand, sneaky or manipulative. Dice can be lost if your character is injured.

The GM can also award Tactics dice for clever plans. These are eight-sided dice. Finally there is the Council die, which may have eight, ten, twelve or even twenty sides. More on this later.

## Your Attributes

Every character has certain attributes, which are valued between 1 and 5. This indicates the maximum number of dice you may roll when performing a task that relates to that attribute. See the box below for a run-down of what each is for. You can roll fewer dice than the maximum if you want to, or if you don't have enough of a particular type left, but you cannot roll more.

## A Regular Test

The GM will let you know which attribute you should test, and whether you should use Virtue or Vice dice. Pick as many as you want, up to the maximum of your attribute, and roll them. If you plan your actions carefully the GM may also grant between one and three Tactics dice. Each die that rolls lucky seven or higher is one success. The average task requires one success to complete, tricky ones two, harder ones may need three, four, even five for legendary tasks.

## Danger Threshold

If you attempt a task that could result in your Knight being hurt, the GM will set a danger threshold of between one and five. Any dice that roll equal to or lower than the danger threshold are lost until you have time to rest and heal.

Characters do not die if they run out of dice, but they cannot act and are in a very vulnerable position. Remember you have two different stocks of dice, so if you run out of Virtue you still have Vice... if you're willing to use it!

Any test that requires a Knight of Panthalassia to spend more than an hour out of water has a danger threshold of one, or two if it is very hot. Panthalassians have to keep their skin moist to avoid burning up in the sun. Because of this, the act of losing dice to damage is sometimes called burning them. Burnt dice return once the character has a chance to rest for a few hours.

## Common Attributes

### Nobility

Panthalassian culture revolves around social status, and the nobility are treated like celebrities by common folk. This attribute governs how high you are in the social order, and is used for any form of social interaction including persuasion, seduction and intimidation.

### Fitness

All Knights of Panthalassia are expected to fight in defence of their country, not to mention lead a force of soldiers, and as such need to maintain a certain level of physical fitness. This attribute measures how strong, fast and agile your knight is, and is used for pretty much all physical tests.

### Wisdom

Though the undersea world has left higher science behind, its inhabitants are far from stupid. Just because they refuse to use polluting technology doesn't mean they don't understand it. This attribute is a measure of intellectual ability, governing knowledge of the sciences and also perceptive ability. It is used for most intellectual tests.

### Mount

This attribute refers not to the Knight himself, but his trusty mount. All knights have some form of trained sea creature upon which to ride, although in recent years the giant seahorse has become less popular than the likes of conga eels, sharks or even whales. Use this attribute for any test that relies upon your mount, such as covering vast distances quickly or cavalry fighting underwater.



## Combat Scenes

If a large fight ensues, then everyone must take it in turns to declare what they are doing. This is called a round. During each round, every combatant chooses one enemy to attack and makes an opposed test against them using their Fitness, or Mount if they are riding into battle. If successful, the enemy suffers a damage threshold which may burn away some dice.

The target's damage threshold is dictated by the weapon that the winner is using – see the table below. If the target is wearing armour, its protection value is deducted from the damage threshold.

The attacker also has a small chance of being hurt during the attack, but his damage threshold is only one. If his target is unwilling or incapable of fighting back, it is zero. All attacks are simultaneous, so lost dice aren't removed until the end of the round.

If the GM wishes, the same rules can be applied to other forms of conflict such as political debates or running races. Naturally different attributes will have to be tested if this option is used. The combat rules can apply to any extended contest between two or more opposing teams.

Weapon	Damage
Harpoon	4
Deepsword	5
Lance*	6
Pistol	4
Rifle	5
Machine Gun	6
Grenade	7
*only when using Mount	
Armour	Protection
Target Shield*	+1
Bouyant Plate	1
Praetorian Armour	2
Human Tactical Armour	1
Human Power Armour	2
*adds to other armour	

Difficulty	Successes
Average	1
Tricky	2
Hard	3
Legendary	4
Near Impossible	5
Danger	Threshold
Bothersome	1
Unpleasant	2
Painful	3
Crippling	4
Deadly	5

*Example: Lemurian Knight Persephone is attempting to infiltrate an underwater human dome-city to sabotage the power supply, but first she needs to hack into the electronic lock on the airlock. The GM informs her that this is a Wisdom test using Vice, since she is being underhand and sneaky. The lock has to be well protected against water as well as intrusion, so the difficulty will be Tricky. Additionally there is a chance that the lock will short out and give her a nasty shock. The GM sets the Danger Threshold at 1.*

*Fortunately Persephone's Wisdom is 4. Unfortunately, her vice dice are only D10s. Persephone therefore rolls four ten-sided dice, obtaining 1, 5, 7 and 10. She's got two successes, and she needed two successes, so she's done it. However since one of her dice rolled a 1, the lock shorts out and she loses one vice die.*

## Opposed Tests

If two characters are directly opposing one another, as in (for example) an arm-wrestling match or one character attempting to sneak past another, they both roll the dice and the one with the most successes is the winner. Depending on the situation, the participants may be testing different attributes and may have different danger thresholds too.

## Morality Tests

If you need to boost your chances of success, you can declare a Morality Test. To do so you must describe two ways in which you might overcome the problem in front of you, one of them virtuous and the other vicious. You roll for both tasks simultaneously. Successes are counted across all of your dice, but the method you finally choose is also based on the roll.

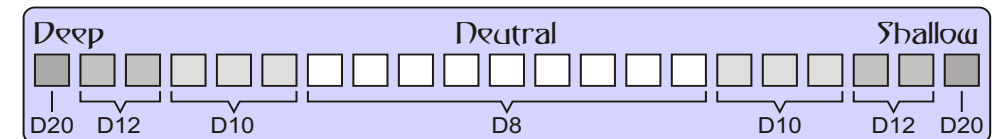
If the highest rolling die on the table is a virtue die, you must follow the virtuous route. If it is a vice die, you must follow the wicked path. If it's a tie, remove those dice from the table and look at the second highest. If this is still a tie, look at the third and so on. If you run out of dice to compare and it's still a tie, you may choose which path to follow.

The danger threshold of a morality test should be based on the method that is eventually used. If the test is opposed, the opponent decides how to react and makes his roll after the method has been ascertained.

## Balance of Power

The actions of every single Knight of Panthalassia affect the views of the Senate. Every time a player character succeeds at a morality test the Balance of Power between the two political movements of Panthalassia shifts. A virtuous victory causes it to move one point in favour of the Shallows, while a vicious victory causes a swing toward the Deeps. At the beginning of the game the balance of power is zero.

Once per session each player may request assistance from the Senate with a single test, but only if the purpose of that test – virtuous or vicious – matches the Senate's current disposition. Whatever form the assistance takes (players should feel free to describe it) the result is an extra die to roll. The Council Die's type is based on its disposition. See the diagram below.



## Making a Character

### Noble House

There are three noble houses in Panthalassia, named after the lost continent that they hail from. Choose noble Atlantis, powerful Lemuria, or wise Mu.

### Deep or Shallow?

Deep dwellers have midnight black or bluish-black skin, bulging, milky white eyes and faces more fish-like than human. Some don't even have legs. They are clumsy on land and dislike bright light. Virtue dice are ten-sided, vice dice are twelve-sided.

Dwellers in the shallows have light coloured skin, usually blue or yellow though any colour is possible, and more human features. They don't see so well in the darkness, but are much better suited to operating out of water. Virtue dice are twelve-sided, vice dice are ten-sided.

### Attributes

You have 8 points to spread between Nobility, Fitness, Wisdom and Mount. You must have at least one point in each, and may place no more than four in any one of them. You gain one bonus point in the attribute associated with your noble house. This may take that attribute above four. House Atlantis grants a bonus to Nobility, Lemuria to Fitness and Mu to Wisdom.

### Equipment

All knights have a lance, and you may choose either a deepsword or harpoon. Harpoons can be thrown, but deepswords are melee weapons only.

All knights have a round target shield. If your Nobility is two or more, you may also have bouyant plate. Those with a Nobility of four or more may have praetorian armour.