

# Forgeborn

## A Roleplaying Game about Crafting Magical Objects

The Sword of the Red Phoenix. The Flamewright Hammer. The Nightfall Cloak. The Boots of Nythrial. These powerful Artifacts were all crafted by the Master Smiths of the Forge, and now after many trials, much training, and years of apprenticeship you've joined their number. You can only hope that you will be worthy to place your works among the treasures of the Citadel, to be held in its well-guarded vault until a Heroine shall come and prove their need to the Masters.

### Overview

This is a game for 2-4 players plus a GM. Each of the players represents a Master Smith of the Citadel of the Forge, responsible for crafting wondrous objects and endowing them upon the supplicant Heroines who require them to fulfill their quests and fight the evils that plague the kingdom.

### How to Play

Play begins by creating the Map of the Realm.

After the map is created, players each create their Master Smith.

Play then begins, starting with the player with the largest forearms, proceeding around the table in turns.

Players will gain Victory points by creating Artifacts and defeating the Dragon and other monstrous guardians; Victory points are counted after the Dragon is defeated and all players other than the slayer of the Dragon take one final turn.

### Creating The Map of the Realm

Create a map of the realm using a die-drop method. Gather a collection of dice that includes 4d4, 6d6, 3d8, 1d10, and 1d12. Take a blank sheet of paper, the larger the better, and draw a compass rose in one corner. Drop each die from a height above the map sheet; 4 inches (10cm) is good for A4/letter size paper. Re-drop any dice that bounce off the sheet, until they're all settled.

One at a time, take each die off the map and mark the feature it represents.

- The d12 represents the Lair of the Dragon, a mountain fastness. Draw a tremendous mountain there, with a dragon at its peak. The number rolled on the die is the Dragon's Power; if the roll is less than 8, treat it as 8. Write the Dragon's Power on the mountain. (For a longer game, set the Dragon's power to 12, or even higher.)

- The d10 represents the Citadel of the Forge. Draw a tower there. The number on the die is the Citadel's Power; write it on the tower.
- The d8 that rolled the highest number represents the City of the Prince, the capital of the realm. In case of ties, use the d8 that's closest to the center of the map. Mark that location with a crown icon. The City of the Prince has a Power of 8 regardless of the number on the die; write an 8 on the crown. The other d8s represent Ruins. Mark their locations with diamonds, and write the number on the die on each diamond. These are the Powers of the monstrous guardians of the ruins.
- The d4s are Villages. Mark them with a triangle and write the number on the die inside the triangle; this is the Power of the problem the village faces.
- The even d6s are Mountains; the odd d6s are Forests. Create a Mountain range by connecting the even d6s, winding between the other features as necessary, drawing mountain peaks along the route. Create Forests similarly, but Forests don't cross over Mountains, so you may have two disjoint Forests. At least one Forest should be present; change the even d6 furthest from the center of the map to a Forest if no odd d6 were rolled.

Once the locations are drawn, connect the City of the Prince, the Villages, and the Citadel of the Forge with each other by Roads (represented with a solid line), each one to its closest neighbor. Roads don't cross mountains, but you can draw a Trail (a dotted line) through the mountains to link up unconnected road networks.

Connect the Lair of the Dragon and each Ruins to their nearest settlement by a dotted-line Trail as long as it's not too far and looks reasonable, aesthetically and geographically. Trails of this sort don't cross mountains.

Connect the largest patch of Forest to a nearby Village or Ruins by a Trail.

## Creating Master Smiths of the Forge

Each player controls one Master Smith of the Forge, capable of creating beautiful, wondrous, powerful, and useful Artifacts. These Artifacts are key to overcoming Conflicts in the game and ultimately to defeating the Dragon of the mountain.

To create a Master Smith, choose a name, and come up with a brief description of the Smith. Some names and other traits are listed toward the end of the rules.

Next, select your dice. You can spend up to 72 "faces" of dice on any mix of d4, d6, d8, d10, and d12. Dice are used for two functions: you roll them in Conflicts, and you sacrifice them to create powerful Artifacts. The number of dice you use at once in Conflicts is normally limited, which makes large dice more attractive, but that makes them more dear to spend in Artifact creation. You should record the number of dice of each size that your Master Smith has on your character sheet.

Place a pawn, figure, or other marker on the map at the Citadel of the Forge to represent your Master Smith.

## Heroines (and Heroes)

Besides the Master Smith, players can recruit Heroines (or Heroes; hereafter, the rules will always refer to Heroines, but it is understood that all such rules apply to Heroines of any gender identity). Heroines roll dice in Conflicts the same way that Master Smiths do, but cannot create Artifacts.

Whenever a Heroine you've recruited does something that would gain victory points, you get the points.

If a Master Smith and a Heroine are in the same location, the Master Smith may give the Heroine any Wondrous Artifacts in their possession. If the Heroine is one of their recruits, they may take any Wondrous Artifacts from the Heroine.

On any given turn, you will control either your Master Smith or one of your recruited Heroines; you won't be able to use both.

## Conflict Rolls

Certain actions require you to face a Conflict of some kind. The GM will describe the situation, and the player will describe how their Heroine or Master Smith faces the challenge. Then the player makes a Conflict roll.

In a normal Conflict roll, you may use up to 3 of your Master Smith or Heroine's dice. In addition to the character dice you roll, you can also use the dice imbued within an Artifact in the character's possession if you can describe how the Artifact helps you.

If you have more than 3 character dice available, you may Sacrifice one or more of those dice in a Conflict. When you do so, the additional dice don't count against your 3 die limit, but you lose those dice *if you win the conflict*.

In ordinary Conflicts, your dice will be rolled, totaled up, and compared against a number of d12s (determined by a Power score) rolled by the GM.

If your total is equal to or greater than the total on the d12s, you have won the conflict, marking off any sacrifice dice on your character sheet.

If your total is less than the d12 total, you have failed. When you fail a conflict, you can either gain an additional d4 for the character making the roll, or you can promote one of their dice to the next larger size - d4 to d6, d6 to d8, d8 to d10, d10 to d12.

## Turn Actions

Players take turns in fixed sequence around the table; each player takes one action (possibly after one free Journey action) on their turn, using either a Master Smith or a Heroine. Some actions are only available to Master Smiths; some are only available to Heroines.

The actions are:

- Journey Through the Realm
- Create an Artifact of Wondrous Power (Master Smith only)
- Recruit a Heroine (Master Smith only)
- Test a Heroine (Heroine only)
- Take an Artifact from the Vault (Master Smith only)
- Face the Dragon
- Explore Ruins
- Assist a Village
- Commune with the Spirits of the Forest (Master Smith only)
- Beseech the Prince (Master Smith only)

Each action is described in detail below.

## **Journey Through the Realm**

You can move from the Citadel and go to other places. You must move along Roads and Trails. A move from one location to another by Road is a “free move,” allowing you to take one additional action; a second move along a Road ends the turn. Moving from one location to another by Trail takes an entire turn.

## **Create an Artifact of Wondrous Power**

If your Master Smith is in the Citadel of the Forge, you can attempt to create a wondrous Artifact.

To do so, first decide on the Artifact’s form. You may sacrifice one die, or spend a Resource token, to determine the form of the item. Resource tokens are “wild” and can be used for any form; otherwise, the form is determined by the die sacrificed.

d4: A piece of clothing or other such, e.g. a cloak, gloves, or hat.

d6: A piece of jewelry, e.g. a ring, necklace, or crown.

d8: A blunt weapon, e.g. mace, club, hammer, or staff.

d10: A ranged weapon, e.g. a bow, set of arrows, or throwing knife.

d12: A bladed weapon, e.g. a sword or axe.

Next, decide on the Artifact's function. Sacrifice a die or spend a Secret token to determine the function. Secret tokens are "wild" and can be used for any function; otherwise, the function is determined by the die sacrificed.

d4: The artifact bestows information, knowledge, wisdom, prophecy, or the like.

d6: The artifact gives powers of persuasion, charm, leadership, illusions, or similar.

d8: The artifact bestows fortune, glory, riches, luck, powers of flight, or some such.

d10: The artifact provides transformation, invisibility, shape changing, heightened senses, or similar.

d12: The artifact has a puissant physical combat effect, perhaps fire, lightning, or speed.

Name the Artifact and imbue it with magical power. Collect and roll your Conflict dice, Sacrificing any over the normal 3-die limit as usual. You cannot use Artifact dice here. Other Master Smiths may join you in trying to create the Artifact, contributing their dice to your roll — again, up to 3 dice per Smith, plus Sacrificial dice.

Unlike ordinary Conflict rolls, there is no target Power to hit. Just total up the value of the dice rolled, and spend those points on dice to grant to the Artifact. This is similar to creating a Master Smith, except each die costs one more point than it has faces:

- d4 costs 5 points
- d6 costs 7 points
- d8 costs 9 points
- d10 costs 11 points
- d12 costs 13 points

The Power of the Artifact is equal to the number of dice you select. More Powerful artifacts will, in general, be harder for your Master Smith to possess, but easier for Heroines to possess, which may inform your choice of dice.

For example, say your Master Smith uses 2d8 and 1d10 of dice in the creation of an Artifact. You roll 1, 8, and 6 for a total of 15. You could give the Artifact d12 for 1 Power, or d8+d4, or d6+d6 for 2 Power, or d4+d4+d4 for 3 Power.

If your dice total less than 5, you have failed; the Artifact is useless junk and your Sacrifices wasted, but this is considered a Conflict failure and so you are entitled to gain a d4 or improve another die, as with any other Conflict failure.

The newly created Artifact is placed in the Vault at the Citadel of the Forge. You gain victory points equal to the Power of the Artifact. Anyone who helped you also gains one victory point. To gain possession of the Artifact, your Master Smith or Heroine will have to earn it in a separate Conflict.

## **Recruit a Heroine**

If your Master Smith is in a Village, or in the City of the Prince, you may recruit a Heroine.

This works similarly to Artifact creation, but without the form and function sacrifices. Name and describe the Heroine you are recruiting, and tell how you convince them to join your cause. Collect and roll your Conflict dice, Sacrificing any over the normal 3-die limit. You may use Artifact dice here if they're appropriate.

Total up the value of the dice rolled, and spend those points on dice to bestow on the Heroine.

- d4 costs 5 points
- d6 costs 7 points
- d8 costs 9 points
- d10 costs 11 points
- d12 costs 13 points

Make a note of the Heroine's name and dice, and find a token to represent her on the board. She starts in the Village or City where she was recruited. Her loyalty, victories, and resources are yours, and you may take turn actions using her instead of your Master Smith.

## **Take an Artifact from the Vault**

If you wish to take an Artifact from the vault in the Citadel of the Forge, you must get the other Master Smiths to concede that it is appropriate by law and prophecy for the Artifact to be taken from the vault. Name the Artifact you want to take; if, for some strange reason, a majority of the other players agree that you should have it (and why should they?), it comes into your possession. If a majority of the

other players do *not* agree to let you have it, you may make a Conflict roll against the power of the Artifact; if you succeed, you possess the Artifact.

If the Power of the Artifact is especially high, it may be easier to have a Heroine retrieve it by being Tested.

### **Be Tested**

Any time a Heroine is at the Citadel, they may be asked to be tested. To pass the test, they must select one Artifact from the vault and use that Artifact to make a Conflict roll against the power of the Citadel itself. If they pass, they are found worthy of the Artifact and take possession of it.

A Heroine may use only her innate dice and the dice of the Artifact they are trying to possess for this Conflict, even if she possesses other Artifacts.

If the Power of the Citadel is high, only the most powerful Artifacts can be taken this way; the Master Smith may have an easier time liberating lesser artifacts.

### **Face the Dragon**

At the Lair of the Dragon, you (or your Heroine) may face this powerful foe. Make a Conflict roll against the Power of the Dragon. If you win, you get victory points equal to the dragon's Power. Once the dragon is defeated, each player except the one who defeated the Dragon gets one more turn; the Master Smith with the most victory points at the end of that wins the game. You may be in the lead after slaying the dragon, but if another Smith is able to produce a truly marvelous Artifact, they may be remembered through the ages!

### **Explore Ruins**

Within a ruins, there is danger, but by exploring you may find the secrets of ancient Artifacts. The GM will describe the danger within the ruin — usually a fearsome and monstrous guardian, but it could also be a less direct threat. If you wish to risk it, make a Conflict roll against the Power of the ruins using your Master Smith or Heroine. If you Succeed, you gain a Secret token, valuable in providing magical functions to Artifacts.

Once you explore a Ruins successfully, that particular Ruins can not be Explored again. Erase its number; it remains as a location to travel to, but it has no other function. The location of another Ruin becomes known, however; take another d8 and drop it on the map from a height. Mark another Ruins where that one lands, with whatever number is rolled as its Power, connecting it to the nearest settlement or ruins already on the map with a Trail.

Exploring a Ruins successfully earns you one victory point.

Secret tokens earned by a Heroine are immediately available for the Master Smith's use, even if they are in different locations; the Heroine doesn't need to carry the token back to the Citadel.

## **Assist A Village**

A Master Smith or Heroine can make a Conflict roll to solve the problem of the village. If you succeed, you gain a Resource token, valuable in creating new Artifacts.

Once you successfully resolve a Village's problem, create another problem, by rolling a d4 to determine the Power of the problem and noting the number on the map.

Resource tokens earned by a Heroine are immediately available for the Master Smith's use, even if they are in different locations; the Heroine doesn't need to carry the token back to the Citadel.

## **Commune with the Spirits of the Forest**

If your Master Smith is in the Forest, you may commune with the Spirits there in an attempt to improve your dice.

Choose any number, any size of dice, d4 to d12, and roll them together. If the total is 9 or less, the GM describes your encounter with the Spirits and you may take those dice for your Master Smith. If the total is 10 or higher, you lose any one die you currently have, and leave the Forest by the trail you came on, with no memory of your encounter with the Spirits.

Some odds:

attempting d6+d6 has an 83% chance of success.

d8+d6 has an 68% chance.

d6+d6+d4, or d8+d4+d4, has a 50% chance.

d10+d10 has a 36% chance.

d12+d12 has a 25% chance.

5d4 has a 12% chance.

## **Beseech the Prince**

If your Master Smith is in the City of the Prince, you can attempt to sway the Prince to your aid by making a Conflict roll against the Prince's Power of 8; this could be through diplomacy, trickery, or by defeating the Prince's champion in combat. Once you have successfully swayed the Prince, you may take any of the following actions on any subsequent turn when your Master Smith or one of your Heroines are in the City of the Prince.

- Take a Secret token (as if you'd Explored Ruins)
- Take a Resource token (as if you'd Assisted a Village)
- Take an additional d4, or improve another die by one size (as if you'd failed a Conflict)

- Name any one Artifact in the vault; you can take it from the vault when you or your Heroine next goes to the Citadel, and none of the other Masters can contest this (but they can try to take it themselves before you get there!)

## Appendix: Role-playing elements

Village Threats: charismatic gang of bandits; wolves; werewolves; night-howlers; a short-tempered warlord; a pack of orcs camped nearby; a wicked baron; famine; disease; feuding clans; a serial killer; fire; earthquake; tornado; misplaced yeti; goblin kidnappings; a petty demon demanding worship; ill-mannered mercenaries encamped nearby; ritual cannibalism cult; drug trafficking; a vampire's hunger; poisoned wells; man-eating leopard; volcanic rumblings; mists that bring madness; timey-wimey shenanigans.

Monstrous Guardians: hell-bear with green-flaming eyes; animated skeletons that whimper and giggle; giant ants with rusted iron exoskeletons; invisible demon with icy talons; a great stinking troll with fingers like sausages; a pack of scarlet goblins wielding jagged scimitars; an amorphous golden acid-spitting slime-blob; a ghost fond of riddle-games and whispered secrets; a maze of spore-spewing fungi; shadow hounds; fog spirits; a misanthropic wizard with a migraine; a gigantic burrowing beast; complex system of traps.

## Appendix: Strategies And Observations

Small Artifacts lead to big Artifacts.

If the Citadel has a high power score, it will generally be easier for the Master Smith to take Artifacts from the vault than for their Heroine to gain Artifacts by being tested. Once Artifacts are in your possession, of course, it's easy to trade them between the Master Smith and the Heroine.

Master Smiths must choose between trying to collect Resource and Secret tokens (requiring time and luck) versus sacrificing their own dice to create Artifacts.

If your Master Smith spends too many dice in creating Artifacts, they can bumble around Villages and Ruins failing Conflicts in order to earn them back, or go to the Forest; once you've lost all your dice, the Forest is your only option.

One Heroine is probably enough. Two would let you park one on a Village, repeatedly earning Resource tokens, while the other went from Ruins to Ruins to earn Secret tokens, letting you produce Artifacts at a steady pace.

If someone's going for the Dragon, you may want to stay close to the Citadel, so you have a chance to make one more world-shaking Artifact to win at the last moment.

## Appendix: Some Names (For Smiths, Heroines, Monsters, Villages, etc.)

Brika, Gaugr, Psist, Bandi, Wrodyterd, Alyrocaly, Hele, Ricria, Léon, Melbodia, Oswinmum, Castr, Rohamnus, Olis, Schysan, Elgurraf, Chellos, Sogliasha, Micarpan, Phys, Sisia, Charis, Phillori, Hemos-till, Everlífatad, Dican, Alba, Leirania, Jorius, Akis, Roothala, Opsia, Óþvnia, Eldgihoryma, Achie, Brancetia, Sielook, Wilum, Pscardium, Soya, Guðmum, Marochle, Blacra, Dolum, Neudia, Triodor, Bron, Craelcann, Mungovia, Pina, Echne, Leuxa, Nyca, Disahadylum, Ambopsime, Lowin, Thus, Ania, Kendrium, Thyllotila, Scapma, Barque, Poranov, Podo, Menbloprin, Roug, Fawystietia, Soythys, Ouimon, Titterolium, Anangia, Korantiono, Headanaea, Caria, Simungvik, Apogleus, Rapra, Annes, Olephoca, Ærli, Jakk, Normardia, Ishibyne, Zvetoulai, Snælfra, Bungar, Þórachlo, Hawina, Lutz, Cer-rana, Oniano, Loporoc, Noropsia, Oxyli, Excus, Hert, Hatus, Nerock, Mohum, Carossium, Brandaria, Quildus, Ferea, Gasthusla, Guboidiceo, Fabran, Paria, Lomír, Theapolyton, Lidorya, Vanda, Viloa, Bohjont, Gamne, Romm, Shus, Rallia, Plexalishus, Shossa, Kinsosa, Hoodesia, Buha, Yonseuda, Aque-ra, Lalarcira, Sebra, Roburida, Nepronca, Felipyont, Balus, Yosema, Progyn, Othus, Lukr, Turiedop-los, Esson, Tass, Janniffe, Ogchus, Gilva, Heiolles, Ríkuchiinia, Tirtia, Ráðsky, Valen, Johali, Hazum, Gartushis, Ichellara, Nummi, Kermunelhar, Adia, Lydra, Bortus, Moniosa, Ixisellania, Tibur, Nebium, Thoce, Tena, Abdus, Ceoa, Cantr, Braugok, Teld, Petrodooni, Robe, Oponapnon, Leum, Megarkr, Scychys, Þjóðólfráðr, Geitian, Holama, Emmayern, Gunna, Sallats, Aphylinko, Flokasan, Acola, Séba, Gauffu, Serna, Synetema, Sins, Calavis, Stann, Villamayo, Maridt, Kumbermum, Psen, Ambide, Bolyper, Mora, Macarditsyn, Xolin, Marmaritt, Patea, Oris, Coly, Samia, Zwin, Roscoa, Clittij, Leobin, Sibarkeatum, Vild, Oyersakr, Nomo, Algam