Dragon Quest XI ~ Echoes of an Elusive Age

A Jumpchain CYOA based on the RPG by Square Enix
Version 1.1 – Can't Believe I Missed Those Edition

Do you know the story of Erdrea? If not, please listen. The vast continent of Erdrea, spanning climes from the burning Hotto Steppe and Celestial Sands to the freezing Snaerfelt and rainy Champs Sauvage, is the stage for a battle between light and darkness. Long ago, the chosen hero Erdwin slew the incarnation of evil, a being known only as the Dark One. This he did with the aid of his trusted friends and allies, the sage Serenica, the mage Morcant, and the warrior Drustan, and with the blessing of Yggdrasil. The World Tree towers and soars high above Erdrea, and every life is a leaf on Her branches, returning to Her at its ending to be born anew. However, the forces of darkness have had their victories throughout history. One need only look to the ancient ruins of Nhou Wat, or to the more recent wreckage of the great kingdoms of Zwaardsrust and Dundrasil. Yes, just thirty years ago, Zwaardsrust fell before a massive monstrous army, and only sixteen years ago, Dundrasil met that very same fate. The latter attack was far fiercer, as the kings of Erdrea were meeting to discuss an important matter on that fateful day. Dundrasil's king and queen were slain, and its infant prince was lost to all knowledge. All the worse that the missing child was none other than the Luminary, Yggdrasil's chosen one and Erdwin reborn. Still, Erdrea as of now is stable. Heliodor, Gallopolis, and Sniflheim still stand, and their peoples enjoy a reign of peace and plenty. Monsters, though now common in the wilderness, are mostly manageable, and children can come of age without much issue. Indeed, that is the situation right now. A young man in a little Heliodorian village called Cobblestone is about to partake in his hometown's rite of passage, ascending the great Tor in the valley behind the village.

Have you listened? Good. The story to come will, if left alone, play out in a certain fashion. However, this is the part where where you, my wandering friend, take the stage. Will you enact your will upon Erdrea and change the conclusion of this tale, take in the sights and sounds as the course of events passes you by, or do something in between? Whatever your choice, you'll be needing these **1000 Drasilian Sovereigns** to help you out. They may not be legal tender anymore, but spend them right below and you'll find yourself with the abilities and equipment you need to make your mark here, one way or another.

Chapter One: An Annotated Atlas of Erdrea

Let us start with an easy question. Where would you like to enter this world? As previously mentioned, Erdrea holds a vast array of locales, with different peoples, climates, and wildlife. Please, choose whichever of the following you like. While you're here, however, you do have an important choice to make between two timelines. In one, the world will face its darkest hour, as the Lord of Shadows briefly triumphs. In the other, the Dark One, an even more ancient evil, will return to the world at last. You may start in either freely.

Heliodor Region – This temperate, mountainous kingdom stands sovereign over much of central Erdrea. The capital city, Heliodor proper, is ruled by the wise King Carnelian, who has brought peace and prosperity to most of its people through his just and magnanimous reign. Heliodor's knights, led by the mighty commanders Hendrik and Jasper, are the envy of much of the world. From the glimmering Emerald Coast to the thick boughs of the Manglegrove and the valley-bound village of Cobblestone, anywhere under the banner of Heliodor is yours to start in. The capital even has a seedy underbelly, for those fond of a life of crime.

Hotto Steppe – This volcanic plain, holds a gleaming jewel aloft, Hotto is its name. Famous for its spring, Miko the priestess leads here, the people know joy. Welcome you will be, should you decide to start here, on Mount Huji's slope.

Gallopolis Region – The sprawling desert just west of the Hotto Steppe is home to the capital of horsemanship in Erdrea, the Sultanate of Gallopolis. Indeed, every year, the Sand National puts Erdrea's best horse racers to the test, pushing them to their very limits. Beyond its noble knights and famed horsemen, Gallopolis is also home to a well-beloved circus, and the mysteries of the nearby Celestial Sands are as intriguing as they are dangerous. The Sultan himself is a kind and jovial man, and his son Faris is the most beloved prince in Erdrea. Brave, chivalrous, handsome, and *definitely* an expert horseman, he is seen as the epitome of princeliness!

Laguna di Gondolia – Due west of the Gallopolis desert, the lands surrounding the city-state of Gondolia are in many ways the opposite of their neighbor. A lush, wet swamp and glittering coastal grotto are primary features of this land, and the city itself is a maritime treasure. Doge Rotondo oversees the bustling trade which flows in and out of the city's port and along its many canals, as well as hosting the famous Signor Universo contest. Just a lifetime ago, this was a small fishing village on the northern edge of a coastal swamp. Look at it now!

Costa Valor – Just across the Inland Sea from Gondolia sits the port city of Puerto Valor. Where Gondolia's Doge focuses on trade, Puerto Valor's Don Rodrigo holds to the true ideals of chivalry. If Helidor is famous for its knights, Puerto Valor is the city of knighthood itself. That's not to say everyone here is so stolid. Many come to Puerto Valor and the surrounding coastline for relaxation, as its beaches are simply to die for. That isn't to mention the sea passage leading to Erdrea's outer oceans, or the recently-opened casino drawing tourists like never before.

The Champs Sauvage – A ways west of the Costa Valor, this swamp holds wonders old and new. Its southern end is strewn with the ruins of the ancient kingdom of Nhou Wat, and the city of Phnom Nonh draws on that ancient history as one of its many tourist attractions. Within the ancient ruins east of the city is said to be a mural which confers good fortune upon all who gaze upon it. To the north, the land dries up for the most part, and thick crags make for many eerie eyries. However, in the northwest corner of this region stands an interesting facility. Founded by an eccentric collector in honor

of his daughter, L'Académie de Notre Maître des Médailles continues its mission to train Erdrea's young ladies in all of the things they will find essential in life. Elegance, the arts and sciences, and of course, the proper technique for hunting Mini Medals!

Mount Pang Lai – North of the Costa Valor stands a mighty mountain, and on its slopes one may find the ancient city of Angri-La. For as long as Dundrasil stood, it sent its princes to train among the master monks of this sky-high sanctuary, and they did not relent. The current Grand Master, Pang, trained two generations of Dundrasil's kings. Had it not been for the horror of sixteen years ago, she would be training a third right now. Those under her watchful eye here seek enlightenment through a mastery of the martial arts and of their own minds.

Zwaardsrust Region – The ruin of this once-mighty kingdom is tragic to witness. Its site in northeast Erdrea is home to poisoned waters and overgrown fields, still lush with wheat which will never be reaped. The famous flower fields are nearly gone, and skeletal knights stalk the land at night, reliving the tragedy of their failure forever. There remains one bastion of hope here, in the form of the Warrior's Rest Inn. There, those seeking nearby Octagonia can lay their heads down safely, at least for a time.

Dundrasil Region – Two citadels may be found here, one living and one dead. Just north of the ruins of Zwaardsrust, you may find yourself at a crossroads. The west road will lead you to the bleached bones of Dundrasil itself, where powerful monsters stalk the land and mighty walls moss over. However, following the north road, one finds bustling Octagonia, home of the annual Masked Martial Arts Tournament. There, fearsome fighters don dazzling disguises and struggle beneath a statue of the Heliodorian knight Hendrik, who held the monsters at bay when nearby Dundrasil fell. Will the champion, Vince Vanquish, defend his title this year? That is soon to be seen.

Lonalulu – Situated on Erdrea's southern coast, just across the nigh-impassable mountains south of Hotto, lies this small tropical fishing village. There, they tell terrifying tales of malevolent mermaids, and live laid-back lives hauling up fish and diving for pearls. Their kahuna may or may not take some issue with the old woman who fires a cannon to mark each morning and evening, though.

Nautica – Sail upon the inland sea, and if you sink, then here you'll be. This city in the briny deep is where the mermaids hold their keep. Queen Marina, just and fair, is loved by sea-life everywhere. Despite the tales that some might wind, the people here are kind, you'll find. Their coral kingdom, clear and bright, has wonders seen both day and night. The mermaids and their fishy friends all hope the good times never end.

Sniflheim Region – The icy north of Erdrea is home to a vast kingdom of scholars and architects. From the city of Sniflheim, Queen Frysabel rules with the gentle poise of her father Gustaf before her. Surrounding the city, however, are multiple locales of note. For instance, the hideout of the Viking rovers and their golden gains lies just west of Sniflheim's port. To the west, the great Snaerfelt may be found, home to the ancient Royal Library and bordered to the north by the Hekswood. Try to stay warm.

Arborian Highlands – Southeast of the Snaerfelt, these rocky highlands are the gateway to Yggdrasil Herself. The very center of the region holds the city of Arboria, carved into the very rock and home to the World Tree's most devout disciples. The Keepers, as they are called, first came in the wake of Erdwin himself, and have since dedicated themselves to preparing for the new Luminary. Even now, two of their brightest scions have left to find this reincarnated hero. Just past the city proper is the First

Forest, a tangle of enchanted boughs at the very feet of Yggdrasil. There, all manner of wondrous herbs may be found.

Chapter Two: An Interesting Itinerary of Identities

Now that we have answered the question of when and where you are, we should circle back to asking who and what you are. There are many ways your tale in this world might be told, and so you may choose freely many of its details. Your physical sex, for instance, or your age (within reason). There are some more substantial choices outlined below. First, *what* are you? Please choose an option below.

Human [Free] – The most common denizens of Erdrea, and to you, likely the most familiar. With that said, the range of natural hair colors available to the people of this world is greater than in yours. Tall knights walk the world with violet locks, and dashing rogues sport sky-blue spikes. Furthermore, their martial and magical potential may be greater than you are used to. Still, most of them are the same as those of your home.

Tockle [Free] – Small, vaguely humanoid, and prone to temporal wordplay, the Tockles of Tickington are an interesting lot. As one of them, you may or may not be charged with the maintenance of time in some fashion. While perhaps you are just a cog in the great clock of Tockle society for now, you and your people will soon have quite the role to play in coming events. The hero foretold may be just who you need to help, or who you need to help you. **This optionally allows you to start your journey in your kindred's home of Tickington, a town outside time.**

Mermaid [Free] – Despite the name, this still pertains to men who wish to look like fish. This does not count Mermaniacs, for those are Monsters, that's a fact. Though mermaids live five hundred years, true love may bring them other fears. To fall in love with humans true, a problem that might pose for you. Forsake your tail and leave the sea, if human love is dear to thee, but know that you will melt to foam if ever then you swim for home. Oddly strange, but such an end is never met by fishy men. They walk and swim and do not die, and none in all Erdrea know why. Here's something else, you might have guessed, with skill at rhyme are mermaids blessed. **If a mermaid you wish to be, then you may start in any sea. But Nautica we'll recommend, as there you'll find your kind and friends. And if on the other hand, you seek to start upon dry land, you may well beach upon The Strand.**

Watcher [Free] – About half a human's height and with a tendency to SPEAK LIKE THIS, these mostly hairless beings (though males can grow facial hair) with pastel skin tones have been allies of Yggdrasil for so long as she has stood. They also possess a number of what are either advanced technologies or sublime magics, allowing them to construct floating cities, towers which straddle the waves of time, and surprisingly potent arms and armor. Their lifespans amount in the millennia, but they are not fighters themselves. The land known now as The Battleground was once a mining operation of theirs, until monsters arrived and massacred them. **If you wish, as a Watcher, you may optionally start your time here in the Havens Above.**

Monster [Varies] – There are many varieties of monster in Erdrea, and not all are hostile to humanity and its allies. Some simply wish to live their own lives, while others work closely with human society. For **Free**, you may become among the weakest of monsters. Basic Slimes, though a threat to the cowardly, are weak enough that an average dog can overcome them, and many monsters are not naturally much stronger than this. From Succubats to Grublins, there are many common monster varieties, some of which can match average soldiers, but little more. **For 50 Drasilian Sovereigns**, you may become a Metal version of one of these simple creatures. Swift and steely, your defenses will give even proper knights trouble, but you should probably flee from any real heroes, lest they find a weak point and strengthen themselves by striking you at a critical moment. Alternatively,

for 100 Drasilian Sovereigns, you may become a more menacing monster, akin to the Slayer of the Sands. A formidable foe to an entire company, you stand head and shoulders above most monsters, but there are still truly unique creatures which stand as your superiors. Finally, if you **pay another 100 Drasilian Sovereigns on top of the precious price, for a total of 200,** you may stand as a truly unique beast in power, if not necessarily in looks. Without any further enhancement, you would threaten a whole village by your mere presence. **As a Monster, if you so wish, you may begin your time in Erdrea within any of its ancient dungeons, ruins, or caverns.**

With that done, it falls to you next to decide your history in this world – or indeed, if you have one at all. Please select an **Origin** below. You may also elect to forgo a history in this world despite whatever Origin your abilities have, acting as a **Drop-In.** It is not as if great goods or evils have not come to Erdrea from nowhere before.

Ephemeral – Perhaps you are a spirit from ancient days, perhaps you are from outside of time, perhaps you descended from on high, or perhaps you have transcended beyond the limits of this world through enlightenment. Whatever the case, you find yourself attuned to the strangest phenomena of Erdrea, and may even be partly responsible for them.

Wicked – Whether human or monster, your heart is far from pure. Unless, that is, you count pure evil. Whatever your reasons, you have delved into the dark secrets of Erdrea, and from them reaped malignant power. You may be no Dark One or Lord of Shadows now, but with enough time perhaps your name will elicit greater terror still. *Muahahaha!*

Heroic – Whether you be a noble knight, a wandering adventurer, a reformed thief, or even an entertainer, your goal in this world is to ensure Erdrea's people can keep smiling. How you go about that is up to you, but you ought to be careful. The forces of darkness could make their move at any second now.

Mundane – You're here, too! There's plenty of regular people in Erdrea, and whether common folk or of noble birth, they aren't necessarily tied to the great destinies of this world. Let the forces of light and darkness clash about you if they must. You've got a job to do!

Chapter Three: An Astonishing Almanac of Abilities

Here, you may use the **Drasilian Sovereigns** you acquired earlier to purchase new abilities for yourself. Those under your particular **Origin** are discounted to you by a full half of their base price, and two of those three under your **Origin** which would cost others **100 Sovereigns** are instead yours to take for free.

Ephemeral

Nothing to See Here [100] – Maybe you're something resembling a bunny girl, standing in the middle of the Battleground offering 'puff-puffs' that are more like bungee jumping sessions. Maybe you're a tiny translucent Tockle, turning up time after time wherever you so please. The fact is, whatever you are, you're not likely to get awkward questions about how you got to wherever you're standing. They might ask themselves about it later, but the heroes won't bother badgering you about where you came from when you offer to help them out in the middle of the dungeon.

The True Treasure [100] – Maybe you're a sage of old, or maybe you're just a smart cookie, but you can ask some fairly interesting questions. Call it a hunch, but in situations where twins or impostors are afoot, you seem to know just what to ask to be able to tell them apart by their answers. "Something only the real one would know," so to speak. This is fairly situational, yes, but anyone you help out this way will agree that it's better to have you around than not when a faker's involved.

"It is rather an imposing appearance, I agree. Why don't we try another?" [100] – Whether you're a physical being or not, you may need to adopt a form your allies are more comfortable with. Now, you can! Though it is perhaps an illusion and perhaps a mere change of shape, you may appear as a Healslime, a young girl, an average sorceress, or even the person from whose soul you split long ago! In the last case, let's hope you're the good half. It's not clear whether this is a spell or something you can simply do, but it doesn't make you any more powerful in any other sense.

Hook, Line, and Sinker [200] – When it comes time to teach what you know to others, you may notice that they learn better when something is explained in terms they understand. Thus, you have cultivated a knack for metaphors, tailoring even the most esoteric advice into something the listener can grasp *just enough of*. For some reason, your skill defaults to fishing terminology. What's more, sometimes these metaphors will become relevant in a literal sense as well. Depending on how you explained things, that should be amusing to see.

Big Dreams [200] – This is interesting. Every now and again, when you go to sleep or perform some equivalent, you'll find yourself catching glimpses of events to come. These visions aren't perfectly clear, but they tend to give you enough information that you can give two teenage girls directions to be in a certain town by a certain day, lest they miss the hero destined to save the world, and be sure that they won't get lost or waylaid too badly. Not incredibly precise, but not frustratingly vague.

"We have a record to break." [200] – Let it never be said that you cannot discipline those you mean to guide. Not only do those who see you as a teacher take your scolding more seriously than they otherwise would, but even the most recalcitrant of them should learn a thing or two from your expert application of a Naughty Stick! You know just how hard to slap someone with that thing (or similar objects) to really leave a mark, without doing any permanent damage. Of course, you *also* know how to use it in a real fight, but its more intended application won't work as well on someone who enjoys your, ahem, *reprimand*.

Forgetting Something? [400] – Sometimes, people lose things. Sometimes, those things are their memories, their skills, their power, their very selves. It's a good thing you know how to bring it all back around. Whether it be restoring powers that someone else has stolen from your patient, giving them back their memories of what they learned in a timeline that was undone, or unleashing the potential that another event would have unlocked had it not been retroactively prevented, you've just about mastered getting people back the esoteric things of which they've been robbed. If you tried, you could probably give someone back their soul (or a new one that works just the same), provided it was stolen from them (by someone other than you, mind you) and not just traded away in a short-sighted bid for power or wealth.

Holy Beasts [400] – Long ago, the wicked ice witch Krystalinda was sealed away within a magical tome. However, those who sealed her knew that she might someday be released by the curious or the vile, and so placed a second seal, trapping some of her power within the holy beast Jormun. You now know how to perform the ritual that enabled this, allowing a nearby animal or friendly monster to act as a secondary seal on a being you have locked away. Even should the horrid thing escape its imprisonment, they will not return to their full power unless your chosen creature is slain. While it is unclear how much of the enemy's power the beast's survival will hold at bay, it will be enough that should the enemy escape, they will not feel safe unless they can have it dealt with. Because it would be helpful, you are also well-versed in several kinds of sealing magic, ranging from trapping a dragon beneath a glacier to trapping a witch inside a book.

A Luminary's Reward [400] – So, the hero has passed your trial and proven worthy of your boon. It'd be terrible if you couldn't actually give anything worth the effort, right? Sure, they say a good deed is its own reward, but that can ring hollow to those who come before you drenched in blood, steaming from sweat, and knee-deep in sewage. That's where this comes in. When someone passes a test of skill or heroism that you set for them, you can grant them a minor wish proportional to the difficulty of the test. Whether it be good fortune in love, more power for their favorite weapon, rare treasures, or even arranging for their favorite sport to give them more of a challenge, few if any would go away unsatisfied.

The Grandest Master [600] – For ages, the monks of Angi-La have trained the princes of Dundrasil in weaponry, magic, and the martial arts. As an heir to this proud tradition, you have proven very good at training just about *anyone*. The tests of character, resolve, endurance, and skill you devise, while never so draconian as to be insurmountable, will push your students to their limits. Under your tutelage, a village boy, a petty thief, a fat pervert, or a *literal clown* could grow to challenge dark gods and win. Consider also the level of martial and magical skill this implies *you* have, if you can impart such enlightenment.

A Leaf on the Wind [600] – Death is a curious thing, especially in Erdrea. Each life is a leaf from Yggdrasil, and each returns to Her when it is over, to be born anew. Sometimes, those lives retain more features from their past incarnations than others. You, in fact, are one such case. If ever the time comes that you have no way of cheating death left to you, and death indeed should take you, your story may continue in one last way. Centuries will pass, but eventually, your soul will return to the world in a new life. The newborn child will grow up to resemble you somewhat, will have a natural affinity for any powers or weapons you yourself possess or favor, and will have a personality much like your own. Should your abilities prove seemingly contradictory, you may even be split into twins, each holding half of the power. Should you have left descendants in the world, your new incarnation will be born among their number, but if not they will simply be born into circumstances which will help shape them

in your image. Your case is *particularly* interesting, as unlike the other known cases, your future incarnation may or may not slowly regain your memories passively. There is more to be said, perhaps, but know that up to once in any particular world, death need not be the end for you.

Sowing the Seeds of Salvation [600] – On the other hand, perhaps you mean not to fling your light forward, but to give your all for those living right now. So be it. Up to once in any world you walk, you may carry on as a spirit, lingering between the living world and that of the dead, without forfeiture of your great adventure. However, this comes at a price – that death must be a sacrifice that another, or many others, might live, and you cannot thereafter affect the living world. Anyone who comes to the place between life and death can easily interact with you, but you cannot go to them. There is another benefit to this, however! Up to once in any given world, you may sacrifice your life to blunt the damage of any sudden cataclysm. If, for instance, a great object fell upon the world from the heavens above, destroying much of life and blocking out the sun with dust clouds, you could sacrifice yourself to preserve a mountain monastery and the surrounding land from the effects of the impact. Depending on the scale of the event, you might be the sole reason anything survives at all. Naturally, this effect counts as a sacrifice for the purposes of the first effect. However, it cannot prevent a slow decay – only swift ends are averted by these means.

Wicked

Pardon my Jargon [100] – Whether it be jars, ice, gold, or dancing**,** I am sure you have some kind of specific theme to your vile villainy. Why not lean into it? In addition to having a slightly easier time using and mastering abilities which fit your theme, you are armed at all times with puns and turns of phrase related to it. You can choose whether or not you pepper your day-to-day speech with such puns automatically or not, and I do not know what results if your theme *is* puns.

Into-mural Invitational [100] – Are you a real villain? Have you ever tricked someone using their own desires? Well, now you can! You're good enough at reading people to exploit the common man's greatest weaknesses, and can use that to lead different kinds of people into the same trap. Take a haunted ruin. You could promise an ailing beggar that a mural within will cure his disease, tell a thief of the riches left behind, assure an archaeologist that a new discovery awaits within, and ask a pious man to find your parents, who went in earlier and left you alone. This works best if you can pass yourself off as something trustworthy or non-threatening, but for people from such different walks of life to fall into the same trap is delicious. Just hope no one *truly* savvy catches on to you beforehand – or worse, survives the trap.

"Muahahaha!" [100] – There's something to be said for presentation, when you're doing your evil deeds. That's where your natural talent for performance comes in. While some heroes might be jesters, you're more of an orator. There's not much use for your chilling monologues and dramatic revelations besides watching a hero's face twist with rage or a town of witless mortals cower and quake, but isn't making them all squirm the point?

Spectral Sentinel [200] – You may not be on top of the pile yet, but you're certainly on your way. There's just something about you. Whether it's your natural power or the dark potential your greatest vice lends you, any demon king worth his salt will consider you a worthy investment, especially if he's looking for generals to head his dark armies. As an example, even if you're otherwise just an ordinary human girl, your greed might inspire a master of darkness to grant you immense power reflecting your hunger for gold! What can you do with the power you gain? Whatever you want, provided you don't get in your new benefactor's way. Perhaps you are already used to a similar arrangement, hm?

Monster Mash [200] – Whether you've rounded up a gang of monsters or ensorcelled some knights into your service, you're actually rather good at leading them in battle. Whether it be getting chaotic, disorganized monsters to form proper ranks or hidebound, honor-crazy knights to fight more pragmatically, you've got the skills to ensure whoever is fighting for you does it the way you *need* them to!

Just Enchanted That Way [200] – You're not *that* bad, not really. Sure, maybe you froze a whole city that one time, but it's not like anyone died. It was just a harmless prank, really! So, as long as you mean it, why wouldn't they forgive you? Assuming you haven't done any *permanent* damage in your career of villainy, surrendering is less likely to get you killed and more likely to see you being drawn to the side of "good," more or less. They'll likely give you a very firm talking to about why what you did was bad, sure, and you'll have to accept whatever consequences your actions brought. Maybe you'll even have to help them solve the next crisis, lest they think you're up to no good again – and of course, there's no chance of this clemency from those you've taken loved ones from. But in the end, you'll be surprised what people can forgive.

Pernicious Plots [400] – Someday, when their kingdoms lie broken, the champions of mankind will ask if you were behind all of this. Now, you can say that you were indeed, and that your machinations lay undetected for years! If you're old enough, they might lay undetected for *centuries.* Do you need to light a fire under the world's greatest hero so you can steal the sacred sword he's meant to wield right as he opens the way, all the while ensuring he doesn't suspect who you really are until it's too late? You know well enough how to set that up in advance. A lie here, a borrowed body there, a few willing (or brainwashed, possessed, or deceived) minions in the corner, a fallen kingdom or two, and you have an evil plan par excellence. Things will generally go smoothly, and you might even take care of your other greatest enemies as a result. This does *not* give you greater skill at on-the-fly improvisation, however. In light of that, you should *probably* not frame someone for your lies in front of the *one* person who would know that they couldn't be responsible – or otherwise invalidate your script.

"World War G!" [400] – However strong you are in proper combat, you have an ace in the hole which can leave an entire city reeling. It could be just about anything. Maybe you can cast a curse that forces all of the young adults in a city to dance uncontrollably until either you die or they do. Maybe you can spread a plague that turns people into solid gold statues. Maybe you can transform people into demons loyal to yourself using the darkness in their hearts (though this would be harder to do to good people for that reason). Whatever the case, even a monster of middling strength could rule or ruin a kingdom with a power like this. If you have **Pardon my Jargon,** this power likely fits whatever your theme is.

Gloomnivore [400] – This is a truly awful power. You see, there is one monster with a particular ability which allows him to sustain himself on a single victim for years on end. He has been doing so since the fall of Dundrasil. How is this? He has trapped the soul of its late king in a recurring nightmare, forcing him to relive his own death and that of his kingdom for sixteen years. The sheer despair he feels from this is enough to sustain that horrible monster, and now you too can perform this act of darkness. Should you overcome another in battle, whether your victim is living or a lingering ghost, you can trap them in a loop of their worst memory, and the despair they emit will sustain you as the finest food and drink would. If you prefer to move around, you'll find you may also feed on the misery and despair of the people wherever you go, though this will require them to feel such things. You might never go hungry again, assuming you can live with yourself.

“Hardly fitting for the Lord of Shadows!” [600] – Holy power is annoying, isn’t it? Heroes who should otherwise stand no chance against you can strike against you with a power that undoes your defenses or blunts your attacks just because you’re evil! But then you got an awful idea, and now you know exactly what to do with that power. See, should you overcome a hero wielding ‘holy’ power or artifacts, you can steal that power or item and corrupt it to serve you! Turn a Sword of Light into a Sword of Shadows, or steal the very mark that allowed that pesky protagonist to wield it! This has more uses than just empowering yourself, though. You also easily discern how to use stolen artifacts to empower your minions, enhancing their inborn abilities or granting them new ones reflecting the darkness in their hearts – raising lieutenants from your wicked ranks would be a good use for this. Lastly, your stolen blessings will still be just as benevolently effective against other evils, lest any try to rival your dark throne.

“I N A N O T H E R T I M E A N D P L A C E I W A S D E S T R O Y E D” [600] – It’s not always easy when you’re evil, and it’s not always the hero you have to watch out for. Sometimes you corrupt someone, and he stabs you in the back, just like he stabbed his best friend at your command. That’s probably your fault, for trusting a traitor. However, you have two things to help you. The first is an eye for detail as pertains to the plans of other great evils around you. The second is more a twist of fate. Once in each world you travel to, should you be slain or otherwise rendered harmless by the actions of another evil, one of the heroes opposing *them* will make a mistake. Whether it be allowing you to hitch a ride with them in a trip to the past or accidentally carrying out some ritual, the work of your wicked foe will be prevented or undone, allowing you to unleash your might on the world. They thought they’d freed their people, but now you’ll put them under new management.

Vicious, Malicious Monsters [600] – Your penumbral presence does not merely encourage the forces of darkness, it truly makes them stronger. Such is your dark power that by merely being in the world, you may if you so choose make any inhuman creature born of or aligned with darkness and evil much mightier. Besides the terrifying red or green glow this will give their eyes, it will drive them mad as never before, as their attacks ramp up and become more destructive. The sorts of monsters a common housepet could slay would become threats to whole villages. Monsters a city guard could hold at bay in peacetime might push an army back to a tiny redoubt in the mountains despite their war footing and preparations. Monsters that were somewhat threatening to heroes as their journeys began could single-handedly terrorize entire cities. As for monsters that would already threaten whole cities or kingdoms by their presence, feel free to amuse yourself with the thought of what they’ll do now.

Heroic

“That glorious hair!” [100] – There’s just something about you, you know? Maybe you’ve got a fresh face and the glossiest hair most people have ever seen, maybe you’re a slab of muscle cut just right, maybe even demons would die happy if you crushed them between your thighs – or something a bit higher up. Whatever your most distinguishing feature is, the point is that you’re objectively rather attractive. Some would go so far as to claim you can’t be a real hero without looks like yours, but you know better than that, right?

Thy Hero’s March [100] – The heroes of this world have all kinds of physiques. Yes, most are young adults and look fit enough, but the tiny girl and the fat old man have to be doing something right to keep up on these grand adventures! Now, you too have the strength, stamina, and agility to cross deep jungles, snowy tundras, stormy coasts, or steep mountains on a daily basis, all while fighting off hordes of monsters!

Gallant Galloper [100] – The hero arrives on a white horse! That's how it goes in some of the stories, and that's how it can go for you, considering your newfound skill at riding. However, there are also certain monsters out in the world that can be ridden under the right circumstances, and you'll find that your horsemanship applies to them as well, assuming you can get on their backs to begin with!

Camping Master [200] – So, night is falling and dangerous monsters are likely to wake up soon. What's a budding hero to do? Luckily, you've learned from the best when it comes to roughing it on the road. Not only are you a dab hand at all the skills you'd need for outdoor survival, you can also find proper Campsites out in the wilderness wherever you might go. These are safe nooks and crannies nestled in otherwise dangerous environments, and they usually include a statue you can pray at for certain benefits, such as breaking curses or purging poison from yourself and your seven closest allies. Sometimes a traveling merchant will show up once you set camp, too! Furthermore, if you have the **Fun-Sized Forge**, it will also deploy the moment you settle in at one of these Campsites, allowing you to get your forging done on the fly. Convenient, isn't it?

Dragon Side Quest [200] – Some people say that no good deed goes unpunished. Those people have never met you! While you don't always get anything of consequence, people seemingly can't help but reward you when you answer their cries for help. The bigger the favor, the bigger the likely reward, and sometimes, by some *tiny* chance, the things you get from a stranger on the road will prove crucial to your greatest mission in a given world.

Chivalry Isn't Dead [200] – A knight's word is his bond, his kingdom his master. He serves the weak untiringly, challenges the strong unflinchingly, and never retreats in the face of adversity. This is the Knight's Pledge, and there is power in it some would not realize. By acting in accordance with the Knights' Pledge, you too can gain abilities which lend themselves to upholding it under otherwise impossible circumstances, like forcing all enemies in a battle to focus their attacks on you or spending your own vitality and life force to grant it to an ally. Chivalry, courage, and self-sacrifice will make you a stronger hero than you'd ever dreamed!

Alluring Showmanship [400] – Not everyone is a destined hero or a veteran knight. Some heroes have traits that shouldn't be of much effect on the battlefield. "Shouldn't," I say, because like some others here, you have found a way to weaponize some defining trait of yours that wouldn't otherwise be of much use when a ten-ton monster is trying to eat you. As a dirty old man, you could gain actual, dragon-tossing strength should the right young lady show you a bit of leg. If you *are* that young lady, you might be able to run up to a rampaging demon, perform your best puff-puff, and watch him stand stock-still in bliss as your allies hack him to pieces. As a performer, you may treat your enemies to your fire-breathing act, or be able to heal allies and confuse enemies with the right dances! Just how *do* you do it?

Re-Vamp [400] – Are you an attractive young hero? Do you know a horrid monster with eyes for you? Does that monster have access to some method of corruption or mind control? If your answer to those questions is "yes," you can probably imagine what's going to happen. Luckily for you, there's something about you that can help you out of that jam. For one, any allies and friends you normally have can beat some sense back into you – literally! This requires them to defeat you in battle, but it'll work like a charm. But wait, there's more! If your corruption or brainwashing happened to come with new dark powers, you'll retain access to them and make them truly yours. You'll have to consciously tap into that empowered state and expend some of your own energy, but by all means, do use that demonic bunny girl outfit to crush the Lord of Shadows! It won't brainwash you again.

You'll Need This [400] – And, unfortunately, they aren't using it anymore. Strive all you want to avoid this fate, but sometimes those close to you may fall upon the sword. Luckily, they need not die in vain – for when at last they pass, you shall carry their torch, unless you seek to take it by treachery. The closer you are to your old ally and the more powerful they were, the greater the gift they can grant you. While your mundane old grandfather might only leave you the key to a door you'll need to open soon, an old friend who's fought countless battles at your side could create a powerful suit of armor representing your shared legacy, which defends you against even the mightiest blows. Your twin sister, who is the other reincarnation of an ancient hero, and who died saving you? She may well be able to pass on the whole of her power to you, making you a truly mighty magician in addition to your healing hands.

A New Legend Begins [600] – Every legendary legacy has to begin somewhere, and perhaps that somewhere is you. There's just something about you that lends your heroic deeds a greater effect. Let's say that the world is in crisis. Let's say that the skies are blackened and burnt, the people are attacked constantly by monsters gone mad, and the gods on whom the folk rely have been murdered. Let's say you were to go around fighting those monsters and bringing smiles at the head of a parade of jesters. That alone would rekindle the hope of the entire continent, even acting as a beacon for those likewise hoping to avenge the world they could not save. But do something truly inspiring, such as destroying the most ancient of evils once and for all? Your new title may become the name by which heroes are known for all time, and the gods may smile on your (possible) descendants forevermore. You still have to succeed, mind you, but every good deed seems to go just that much father.

Ancient Legacy [600] – The ancient past was a time of heroes, of mighty deeds and great empires. Its remains echo into the present, and particularly in you. You see, you are either the reincarnation or the descendant of an ancient hero, the sort you'd hear of in the tale of Erdwin. A warrior as strong as Drustan, a mage as learned as Morcant, a sage as gentle as Serenica, all of those are options – though not the only ones. Maybe you bear the blood of a legendary martial artist, who with bare fist threw back a monstrous horde. Maybe in a past life, you were a thief so elusive that even your most noteworthy heists were never solved. Whatever the case may be, this legacy has a way of finding its way into your hands. Whether it be direct advice from your ancestor or past incarnation's spirit, an inherent affinity for their greatest skills, or even their mightiest magical possessions, here you will inherit a piece of the Age of Heroes. In future worlds, should there have been an ancient age of heroes, you may choose to inherit similar gifts from someone who lived in that time. Given how such legacies have manifested here, if you so wish, you may be the reincarnation or descendant of any member of Erdwin's merry band – save Morcant, for reasons we will not get into at the moment. That would, however, put you in an interesting position.*

The Daily Grind [600] – But maybe you don't care about the seeds you'd sow for the future, or the gifts you'd get from the past. Maybe you care about what you can become right here in the present. Well, this will help! Henceforth, your every battle, no matter how trivial, sees you growing just a little bit stronger, as if you were gaining 'experience points' or 'levels' in a roleplaying game. More threatening enemies will yield larger amounts of 'experience,' and as you grow stronger and stronger, you will do so at a slower and slower rate. However, with this enhancement to your rate of growth alone, you could go from cowering before nearly harmless Slimes to striking at godlike beings and seriously hurting them within about two years. What's more, as you grow you will unlock new 'skills,' which are generally variations on or combinations of your most used abilities, or else flat improvements to the relevant 'stats'. As a healer, unlocking greater 'magical mending' will simply make healing spells you cast heal *more* with each cast, whereas specializing in swords will see them do more damage in your hands than in another's, even if the two swords are identical. Likewise, a

swordsman can expect techniques that let him swing twice as fast or coat his sword in fire, while a sorceress might unlock more powerful versions of her favorite spells or abilities relating to the magic bound in her staff.

Mundane

Honest Living [100] – Maybe you're one of the people who keeps the world turning, whether those around you know it or not. While you're no true expert, you're as dab a hand as any at the skills you'd need to be a farmer, woodcutter, fisherman, or other such humble profession here in Erdrea, as if you've been doing it all your life. Come to think of it, you probably have.

Silver Spoon [100] – Or perhaps you'd rather be one of the upper crust? That's certainly doable. Whatever you'll lack in skill at labor, your life of royal courts and balls has made up for with a lifetime of experience in politics, intrigue, and management. You're not perfect at it, but you've been trained for this since you were old enough to walk, which is enough to keep things running unless you neglect your responsibilities.

A Hard Day's Work [100] – Ah, but did you want to start somewhere in the middle? With this, you've a lifetime of experience not as a noble or as a peasant, but as some kind of skilled tradesman. You're not a true expert at blacksmithing, glassblowing, goldsmithing, tailoring, or whatever it is you're doing, but you did complete your apprenticeship, and you've been doing it well enough to feed, clothe, and house yourself ever since.

The Fine Print [200] – Were you a common thief, in your younger years? Did you maybe decide you weren't that good at it? Do you still feel a little affection for the gang you left behind, even while they languish in the dungeons? The world might think you've gone straight, but maybe you can still help your old partners in crime. See, the skill you've cultivated over your years here is one of corruption. Why sneak around and break into a vault when you instinctively know just who to palm a little money to for free access to financial records and a story that you were never there? Why risk your life breaking your friends out of jail when you can pay the guards to look the other way while they dig their own ways out? This alone won't make you the power behind the throne or anything, but you'd be surprised at the things you get away with, paying the right person the right price at the right time.

The Scales of Commerce [200] – I'll be honest, sometimes when you run a shop in Erdrea, some hotshot wannabe hero will dump the oddest things on your counter. A sword stolen from Grublins, droplets of Slime, maybe even a demon's tail or the pelt of a creature you've never heard of. If you're not careful, they might trick you into buying some worthless hide off a beast they're still covered in the blood of! The nerve of them! Lucky for you, you have a strange sense for just how much anything someone tries to sell you is really worth in the local currency. This won't just help you avoid getting fleeced with a fleece; it also means you'll know how much that nice village boy should get for the little crown he brought you from that King Slime!

Dragon Questgiver [200] – When you need something done, you needn't necessarily do it yourself. After all, heroes fresh-faced and seasoned alike are drawn to you like flies to stink. As long as you offer an appropriate reward, they'll scour the globe for whatever random item you're looking for or whatever rare enemy you're hoping they'll slay. This doesn't *guarantee* they'll succeed, but should one would-be hero fail, you'll likely find another.

Dungeon Guest [400] – When a hero sets off from their home town or from someplace they've visited along the journey, there's no guarantee that they'll be able to return to it when their quest is done. For one thing, someone might go right ahead and *destroy* the place. That'd be bad for you, considering you're one of the folks awaiting the hero's return, but fret not! You seem to be relatively lucky in this regard. Should those close to you receive a call to adventure, you'll find yourself and those around you far less likely than normal to become casualties of said call, so long as you don't resist the ensuing events too much. The army sent to destroy your village may merely imprison you all rather than slay you (even if they do burn down your houses, requiring someone to help rebuild the whole thing), or maybe that curse of constant dancing will just make you a very good dancer once it's broken rather than see you die of exhaustion, thirst, or hunger. Whatever you might be put through, those you love can rest easy knowing they'll have a people to come back to once they've saved the world.

Yggdrasil Save the King [400] – Nobility and royalty often think themselves more important than the common folk. For you, at least, this is to an extent true in a way that extends beyond society's structures. Call it luck, call it 'plot armor,' but your high rank in society seems to confer a level of cushioning for terrible fates. You could spend a decade possessed by a powerful demon and be just fine the moment he's exorcised, suffer no ill effects from being sealed inside a book, and even survive the collapse of your kingdom as the world burns around you. If you push your luck too much, you might get royally wrecked one way or another, but as long as you're in line for the crown, you've got better odds than most of coming out with both mind and body intact when things go south.

Outstanding Outfitter [400] – Whether a tailor or a blacksmith, you're exceptionally good at creating the sort of equipment a traveling adventurer might want! Swords primed for slaying dragons, shields that block curses, and even sandals that help one's skills grow faster just by walking around are among the things you can create. There's more to it than that, though, and you've learned another neat trick. Whenever you create something for an adventurer to *wear*, such as a chestplate, dress, or hat, you can designate it as part or all of an 'outfit.' If someone has ever owned all the pieces of one of your 'outfits,' they can layer its appearance over whatever they happen to be wearing.

Beloved Sovereign [600] – It is one thing for a king or queen to be wise and good, and beloved by the people. It is another thing entirely for a queen to befriend the very witch who cursed her kingdom and stole her form, or for a lord of demons to keep a king as his favorite host! Luckily, you are equipped for both. Not only are you well-trained in the skills necessary to lead an entire kingdom admirably in a world full of wild, dangerous monsters and powerful magic, but for some reason even those with designs against your throne seem to like or at least respect you somewhat. That won't stop an evil spirit from enslaving your people or cursing your land, but that same spirit *would* go to the effort of possessing your body or pretending to be you, rather than killing you. Also, if for whatever reason it ends up changing its ways, it will probably think to *work for you* before it thinks of any other means of putting its power to good use!

Building Better Business [600] – The Sultan of Gallopolis is a jolly, magnanimous, kind, just, and generous king. What he is not, however, is good with money. It's good for you that you're his opposite in that respect. Your head for numbers, skill at haggling, frugality, business acumen, and other monetary skills are such that you could start a small stall in a tiny village on your first day here, and expand your business to have branches in every major settlement in Erdrea by the time you're due to leave, or gain some power in a failing village to begin with and look on it again in old age, having made it the richest city in the world.

Notre Maître de Je ne Sais Quoi [600] – Not everyone has practical interests. Some people collect items

that are of little to no use outside their value to said collectors. No one ever said that you couldn't carve out a place for that hobby of yours here in Erdrea! Much like the founder of a certain academy, when you found or rebuild an institution around a peaceful, impractical hobby of yours, it seems to last longer and gain more respect! Why just have an all-girls' boarding school when you could also teach these young ladies to collect Mini Medals properly? Why just found a new village when you could center it on a brand-new trading card game? The love and dedication you bring to your hobby will buoy your legacy for centuries to come. Why, if the world should come crashing down, your hobbyist bastion may be one of the few places left unscathed!

General

Pep In Your Step [Free] – For whatever reason, everyone in this world has a slight chance of achieving a state of higher power in battle. This power, referred to as Pep, activates randomly after some time in a fight. Generally, it doubles the base potency of one's greatest attributes, making the fleet faster, the muscly mightier, and the wise more wizardly! Now, you too possess this power! It only lasts for a short time, but should you finish a battle before it runs out, you'll retain it until either the next battle comes and its timer finishes, or a full day passes. However, you can also expend it before that time runs out to execute combination techniques with your allies. These Pep Powers unite and amplify your disparate abilities into a greater whole, allowing two healers to mend wounds neither of them could alone, or two mages with spells of fire and earth respectively to raise volcanic spikes beneath their foes' feet! There are far more Pep Powers than that, but those are good examples.

Classy Person [Free] – Everyone around here also seems to have some kind of specialty when it comes to fighting. This usually involves a few kinds of weapons and/or certain kinds of magic. You can choose up to four of the following to specialize in: swords, greatswords, knives, axes, whips, shields, wands, heavy wands, claws, spears, martial arts, healing and buffing magic, attack and debuffing magic, or monster abilities* (the last of these only if you happen to be a **Monster**). Whatever you specialize in, you'll naturally grow stronger at over time, perhaps slightly faster than a normal person would. With this alone, you can expect to have a good shot at the Masked Martial Arts tournament within about five years.

Mini Medal Maniac [100] – Are you a graduate of L'Academie, perhaps? If not, maybe you just have a natural talent for it. That is to say, collecting Mini Medals! From the darkest caverns to the brightest cities, and from the coldest tundras to the hottest volcanoes, your eye for such tiny collectible trinkets is itself a rarity! Not only do you both enjoy and excel at finding such things in out-of-the-way places, you are far more likely to meet like-minded collectors, who are willing to part with other valuable things in exchange for them! After all, should those keen to the true beauty of Mini Medals not help one another?

Know-It-All [100] – You have a strange talent for collecting gossip. Much like the scoundrel Noah, you tend to overhear the most relevant conversations you can wherever you go. Should you visit a tavern, you'd hear rumors of a hidden treasure over the din of any singing or arguments, as an example. Now, you can use that information yourself, or you can turn it over to interested parties for a pretty penny.

Chapter Four: An Enlightening Encyclopedia of Equipment

As with the abilities above, equipment under your **Origin** costs half as much for you as it would for others, and those which would ordinarily cost **100 Sovereigns** are instead free should they be discounted for you.

Ephemeral

Changing Rings [100] – What you have here is a seemingly inexhaustible supply of an enchanted ring with a rather specific effect. If someone who underwent a change in physical appearance suddenly never did due to an alteration in the timeline, they can regain their new look that never was by wearing this ring. It can bring back impressive scars, an important hairstyle change, or anything on that level, even from the abyss of time. That's all it does, but you never know when someone will want something like this.

Naughty Stick [100] – This little wooden paddle shaped like a slapping arm is mostly useful for the training of disciples at Angri-La. Grand Master Pang is notably skilled in its use for that purpose, but she can also use it in a real fight. For some reason, when used that way, it doesn't do much normal damage at all, but is *bizarrely* effective at striking an opponent's weak points, dealing 'critical hits' on half of your swings on average! Also, for your safety, it won't break just by you swinging it, or through normal wear and tear.

Sea Queen's Conch [200] – It is said that when you put your ear to a seashell, you'll hear the voice of the ocean. Anyone who puts their ear to this conch shell will instead be hearing you. You see, if you grant this shell to a person, you may give them up to three clues at a time on places where you think (or know) they might need to be. Once you've set these clues, any time they consult the shell, they'll hear you repeat these clues until the situations they hint at are resolved. Rather useful for guiding would-be heroes when you can't appear to them physically.

"You might have taken a bit of a wrong turn somewhere." [200] – This cozy little fishing hut overlooks clear, calm waters, but rarely do you or any who come here catch anything. There are no substantial fish here, you see. Where is this hut, exactly? Well, it's nowhere, really. Call it a dream world, a pocket dimension, or even a tiny afterlife antechamber, but it's nowhere in proper reality. As for those who come here? Besides anyone you bring with you, this realm also seems to pull on heroes at the lowest points in their lives, defeated and dying and seemingly stripped of their power. Luckily for them, if you find them here, it means it's not their time yet. Feel free to leave them with some sage advice for their return to the world of the living.

Pearl of Wisdom [400] – Whichever oyster grew this pearl must have been massive indeed. You see, this pearl is about the size of a human head. However, there's more to it than that. Through it, you can easily witness current events the world over, limited only by your awareness of the existence of its various locales. It won't show you the past or future, but it will show you what is happening as you speak, and it even leads you to ongoing problems that could really use a hero to solve them. How else are you meant to guide them to the places they need to be?

Training Grounds [400] – This mountaintop monastery is small, but the arena it centers on is no laughing matter. The monks who staff it take their training seriously, and can aid you in the instruction of whatever would-be heroes come to you – as well as in sharpening your own skills. There is also a small town ringing the monastery, with a small number of amenities for those who come to train here.

This twin of Angri-La, and the twin to Mount Pang Lai it sits on, may now follow you from world to world.

A Place Beyond Space [600] – Maybe you buried this place beneath your royal dungeon, or maybe not, but when the time comes for a hero's true test, your gauntlet is what will separate the wheat from the chaff. You see, in this place outside of reality proper which follows you on your journeys, you can pit those whose mettle you seek to test against greatly empowered versions of their previous experiences, from areas of the world they've explored to notable enemies they've faced. In doing so, they may prove their worth, grow ever stronger, and even find upgraded versions of equipment they've seen before! Naturally, you can also hide things here yourself, in case you only want the right sort of hero to find it – after all, nothing and no one you do not allow may enter this space, even if you wouldn't necessarily want to live here.

A Town Beyond Time [600] – Normally, this twin of Tickington is just that, a town populated mostly by a few hundred Tockles and existing alongside and outside of time, which follows you on your travels and to which you always have access. The Tockles live and work here, and can provide most of the amenities you would need for a small Erdrean town to survive. There's an inn, a bank, and presumably the various trades that keep the town running. However, it does have one particular feature of note. You see, this twin of Tickington includes a twin to the Altar of Ages, the place in which foundational events throughout time are enshrined. Not only will the Altar decay and its statues vanish should the flow of time be tampered with by outside actors in a given world, but once it does, you will be able to dispatch the local Tockles with a collection of Pastwords for any heroes willing to aid you in restoring time's proper course (and the beauty of the Altar of Ages)! Of course, helping you repair time doesn't mean they can't acquire experience or new equipment while out there themselves, so there's plenty of incentive. As a side note, should you invite any beings who naturally help to enforce the proper flow or respect of time, they may find this little town especially welcoming.

Wicked

Monstrous Mount [100] – Dragon Riders, Skullriders, Horknights, and more have a multitude of monstrous mounts! Now, you have one of those in your possession! Whether you pilot an Eggsoskeleton, scuttle on a Skullrider's steed, hover on a Horknight's hornet, or soar on the back of a Dragon Rider's dragon, your strange steed is guaranteed to serve you well! You'll also get a new one at the next nightfall if anything happens to it.

Vile Vial [100] – Ah, here's the stuff. This fist-sized bottle of stolen human life-force really does a monster's body good. Not only is it delicious to monsters (humans find it about as bitter as strong medicine), it also increases the drinker's physical might by a certain amount for about a day or so. Interestingly, this bottle refills daily, whether you've got any strong folk to steal life energy from or not. Either way, its effects seem to be much more pronounced on the weak. A strong monster won't gain *noticeable* strength from this, but an average man who drinks it will become a powerhouse among his peers, taking on fighters with years of experience and barely breaking a sweat. Of course, any human who drinks this, especially on a regular basis, will find it's both addictive and rotting their guts, but that's not *your* problem, now is it?

Accursed Accessory [200] – What you have here is some article of cursed clothing or jewelry, designed to grant power at a price to whoever petitions you! Maybe you'll give a poor girl a necklace that lets her turn anything she touches to gold, at the price of inflaming her greed and turning her to gold if she ever tries to remove it. Maybe instead this is a bunny girl costume that can bring its wearer back from

the brink of death over and over, at the cost of slowly staining their soul with darkness. Whatever it is, it has an obvious benefit to whoever you offer it to – yet the real benefit is the opportunities it creates for you. After all, those corrupted by such gifts are remarkably easy to turn into powerful lieutenants, aren't they?

Urn of Unearned Unpleasantness [200] – This pot doesn't hold gold, but you can make sure something valuable goes in this. You see, this jar is a seemingly bottomless vessel for magical power, and should you aim its open top at someone not significantly more powerful than you in that respect, you can steal their magic and seal it inside. You can take that unurned power with you, and do any number of things with it. Draw on it to fuel your own spells, grant it to your boss to increase their power and urn their favor, maybe even consume it yourself. Perhaps the most jarring feature of all, however, is that if you so choose, stealing someone's ability to sustain spellwork will also turn them back into tiny tots. Let's see them get their magic back when they can't even reach the top shelf!

Warlock's Wicked Weapon [400] – Much like the staff of the Lord of Shadows, you have a weapon that's almost as aggravating to fight as you are! You see, not only is it immune to normal wear and tear, it has a number of handy abilities! It can create a duplicate of itself in battle and fight on its own, each floating in the air and helping you overcome your enemies! It's also well-suited to your preferred style of combat, whatever that may be.

The Sword of Shadows [400] – This weapon isn't supposed to exist yet, but here you have it somehow. This wicked greatsword, resembling some horrid claw with a twitching eye set inside, is a corrupted Sword of Light. As such, it has interesting properties. The light and darkness in it have combined, allowing you to break through otherwise oppressive barriers of darkness with it. It could even destroy the Dark One's true form with a good swing, provided you were to deprive said body of his will. Finally, drawing on its full power to fuse with it will allow you to become a terrifying two-headed beast, one truly worthy to bring the world to its knees!

Fortress of Fear [600] – A dark bastion hangs above the world, guarded by horrid monsters and filled with devious traps. This is the seat of your penumbral power, and from here you could easily organize a conquest of the world! While the benefits of owning a gigantic flying fortress should be obvious, there's one feature that makes this one really stand out! You see, a barrier of pure darkness surrounds the castle, which only the brightest holy light could hope to break! You and those you allow can move through it just fine, but entire armies will shatter just trying and failing to bring down the walls! Still, should a hero bear a weapon equal to the Super Sword of Light against it, you can kiss the barrier goodbye. You do have a plan for such eventualities, right?

The Other Side [600] – This is rather ominous. What you have here is another dimension entirely! It's rather barren inside, though if you create things within it, they will remain. The point of this pocket realm isn't to live in, though – it's a prison for whatever poor saps you can shove into it! Those who you trap within will slowly but surely render their lifeforce unto you, and getting them in there is relatively easy! You see, it's tied to a work of art depicting you in the real world, and anyone who looks at said artwork too closely or for too long will find themselves cast inside. Monsters can live inside just fine, but you don't even need to send any in there to garrison it. Any humans who die inside your realm will rise again as its undead guardians, after all!

Heroic

Dedicated Follower of Fashion [100] – When you go out to save the world, you should do it in style!

However, some fashions aren't very practical when you're out on the road. Luckily, you have a number of 'outfits' that you can 'layer' over anything you're wearing, and you can add a new outfit to the list just by wishing it so. The result is that you can roam around looking like you've got your favorite threads on, while actually wearing something much more practical! Want to perform martial arts in a ballroom dress, or summon spikes of ice in a cute little kitty costume? Why not? From the word 'go,' you have at least three outfits; one of them is you dressing like someone important from your personal past, one is perfect for your combat style in this world, and one is a bit silly in a way that still fits you. Notably, if you are female you will also have among these one L'Académie de Notre Maître des Médailles uniform sized perfectly for you, even if you've never been anywhere near them and despite having never told them your measurements. How *do* they do it?

Wanderer's Welcome Weapon [100] – You shouldn't go adventuring without a trusty weapon at your side! It could be a sword, a dagger, a greatsword, a wand, a staff, a boomerang, a spear, a whip, or even an axe, but whatever it is, normal wear and tear will never make it useless. It's no legendary divine blade, but it gets the job done!

Compendium [200] – This eminently helpful tome has a habit of filling itself with new information on your foes as you encounter and defeat them. This works on humans, monsters, and just about anything else you get in a decisive scrap with. It'll record their habitats, general 'type' of being, notable abilities, and even what they're most likely to have on their person. It'll also note if they've been magically enhanced or mind-controlled in some way. Perhaps you're not the bookish sort, but it's good to take notes.

Keys to the Kingdom [200] – All across Erdrea, there are magical doors, behind which are sealed wonderful treasures. You have the keys to open them! The Magic Key and the Ultimate Key will let you open just about any physical or magical lock on a doorway in Erdrea and beyond! However, this only seems to apply to physical doors even if the lock is magical. Still, there's a lot you can get your hands on this way! Try not to walk off with anything a certain other hero will *really* need, unless you are that person, in which case go right ahead.

Zoom Network [400] – The Zoom spell is rather useful, isn't it? Any area above a certain population will have a Zoom point here, as well as some areas that aren't. Teleporting between settlements is certainly convenient. This purchase ensures that not only will you be able to find or set up a similar network in worlds to come, linking major settlements and travel hubs, but also that you'll be able to teach the locals how to use it. You have to have visited a Zoom point to attune to it properly, but once you do, you can send yourself or even others there any time you'd like! Just be careful with this, won't you?

The Salty Stallion [400] – Much like the great Sylvando, you own a rather speedy ship! In addition to its tall mast and fine sails, it can also propel itself with a pair of paddlewheels near the back. There's storage enough for several months of food, space enough for a few dozen people on the deck alone, and a loyal, hardy, competent crew. Your helmsman is especially skilled at his job, and especially loyal – possibly a personal friend of yours? Whatever the case, the high seas are your oyster when you're got this ship.

Panlopy of the Past [600] – Whether they were an ancestor or a past life, someone you're connected to had some very lovely things to take with them into battle! A personal weapon, suit of armor, pair of accessories, and possibly a shield. Perhaps even multiple weapons. Whatever the case, you now possess these ancient arms, and they're incredibly powerful. Their form is really up to you, with a few

guarantees. First, it's all guaranteed to look good on you! Second, it'll all fit your preferred fighting style, whether you're an agile claw-swiping martial artist or a slow but steady knight of sword and shield. Third, it'll enhance your abilities in that style to legendary levels, such that you could take on the Dark One and stand a decent chance. Of course, if you've taken the narrative place of a certain someone via **Ancient Legacy**, and they have a set of gear already waiting for them like this, you'll get the whole thing. The Luminary, for instance, would bear the normal, Super, and Supreme Sword of Light, as well as Erdwin's Tunic, Erdwin's Coronet, and Erdwin's Shield.

The Tower of Lost Time [600] – I have a question for you. How familiar are you with time travel? It's a rare and special thing to get a do-over in life, but when the world itself is at stake, you can be afforded it. That's what this place is. Somewhere in the wilderness stands a mighty tower, full to bursting with clockwork within and congregated about by speechless Tockles, drawn here by its sheer temporal majesty. At the very heart of the tower, near its apex, stands a mysterious being known as the Keeper of Time. This Keeper guards a crystalline sphere which, if shattered, may allow one to sunder the very flow of time and undo that which has come to pass. You can break that sphere once in every world, sending you back to a single past moment in that world on which you must concentrate. There are a few rules, and a suggestion, but other than that there's not much else to it. First, when you go back, you'll be undoing the future you came from. No one but you and those in tune with time's mysteries will remember anything that happened after the very moment you return to. This also means undoing your own efforts from that moment on, exchanging the shattered timeline for this new one, so be careful not to leave anything too important in the future. Second, only one person (and everything they're carrying on their person) can go back. Normally, that would be you, but you can lend this chance to someone else who needs it more, provided you lead them to this tower. Third, you should probably get stronger *before* you take the chance to go back. No sense in getting your rear handed to you *again*. If your enemy had some kind of barrier you couldn't break, you should get something you can break it with before you go back. The chance will remain open for as long as you're still in the world.

Mundane

Traveler's Pack [100] – Sometimes you have to go to where the money's at rather than hoping it'll come to you. That's where this tall backpack comes in! The whole thing is about the size of a grown man, and as somehow it can hold up to ten times as much as a bag of its size should be able to! That might be enough for a whole shop's worth of inventory, which is good if your usual haunt gets overrun by monsters or something!

Humble Home [100] – Somewhere in Erdrea's wilderness, you've carved out a place for yourself. This tiny cottage is in a safe enough spot even in a monster-infested region, and has enough dried food to get you by for a few months. Then there's the furniture. The bed, desk, fireplace, kitchen, and nearby outhouse are sure to see you through your days.

Merry Old Inn [200] – Much like the Warrior's Rest in the fields of old Zwaardsrust, you're the owner and proprietor of a charming little inn! What's more, while anyone who needs a place to stay while passing by will consider it, traveling heroes will find it even more appealing than that. All the better for you to learn what's going on in the world and profit off of these prodigious patrons' pudgy purses!

Luckiest Charm [200] – This lucky palm-sized pouch isn't for you, but you'll love what it does! Should someone close to you set off on a journey, you should make sure to give them this! So long as they keep it on their person, they'll find it eases their travels and protects them somewhat in battle. In

addition to softening the enemy's blows, they'll find it wards away curses and beguilement.

Academic Achievements [400] – Whether you teach weapon techniques, magic, or how to collect Mini Medals elegantly, you are now the recognized owner and possibly headmaster of a boarding school! Perhaps it is not as large as L'Académie de Notre Maître des Médailles, but your students can rest assured that in addition to your main focus they will receive a comprehensive education in the arts, sciences, and life skills. What's more, they can rely on good food, clean living space, and the community of their classmates to weather the rigors of growing up. Even if the world should come crumbling down around them, they'll find this school a safe place – as will any other prospective students. The staff will follow you along with the campus itself, but the student body will generally draw itself from the locals in each new world. That said, there's nothing preventing the population of some town or city that follows you from sending their own children on as students, and there'd be no sense in keeping them from going back home once they graduate, no?

Amusement Arena [400] – In times as dark as these, with Zwaardsrust and Dundrasil both smoking ruins and the Darkspawn on the loose in Heliodor, people need something to entertain them. Gallopolis has its circus and its horse-racing arena. Octagonia has its famous fighting ring. Even Puerto Valor has its bustling casino. You're now the owner and proprietor of a similar entertainment venue! Aside from making a tidy profit, you'll find that people flock to your venue even more in the worst of times.

Erdrean Enterprise [600] – The Rainbow's End Bank spans all of Erdrea and beyond. Even the Watchers above, the mermaids below, and the Tockles beyond time run their own branches of it just in case some hero comes along with a bulging purse. Now, you own a business with a similar reach. Just about any settlement larger than a shack in the woods has at least a branch of it. Maybe you run a chain general stores, providing dry goods, basic crafting materials, and other sundry to the people. Maybe your arms and armor are famed across the land, and local merchants have signed contracts with you to distribute your work. Whatever the case may be, this business will follow you as you go forward, surely continuing to grow as you reinvest your profits and open more branches – and like the Rainbow's End, even those who would seem to have no need for such stores are oddly receptive to the idea of becoming franchisees.

Welcome to Our Town [600] – Cobblestone, in Heliodor. Hotto, on the Hotto Steppe. Lonalulu, in a cove on the Outer Sea. These are not the major cities of the world, but they are sizable settlements nonetheless. You are now the recognized leader of a town of similar size somewhere in Erdrea. Perhaps your town once paid tribute to the king of Zwaardsrust or Dundrasil, or perhaps you reside in the ice north of Sniflheim. Perhaps your town even claims one of the islands of the Outer Sea, or exists beneath it. Whatever the case, your town is prosperous enough to sustain itself through a mix of produce, industry, and trade, and it has its own particular draw on the level of Hotto's hot springs or Lonalulu's pearls. What's more, if you have a **Humble Home** or a **Merry Old Inn**, you will find it in this town (rather than the wilderness) should you so desire. As it follows you on your future journeys, the town will accept and keep whatever new developments you make to it. Gondolia was once a tiny fishing village, after all. Likewise, anyone born here will be free to come along with it as a follower of sorts, and that includes the three hundred or so souls who already live here. Whether humans, mermaids, or even monsters, the broad stokes of their demographics are up to you. You can also, if you like, attach this settlement and its population as a new neighborhood in another settlement under your control.

General

Ogler's Digest, Issue 1 [50] – A profoundly perverse print publication. This titillating tabloid is rare enough that as its owner, you will be the envy of dirty old men, knights with guilty pleasures, and even some women the world over! What's more, though, having it seems to slightly increase your chance of becoming Pepped Up. Strange, isn't that?

Horse Hailer [50] – This handy whistle is an Yggdrasil-send to any would-be jockey, allowing them to summon any horse or other such mount they own to their position with but a single blow, provided they're outside of a town or city and outdoors with enough space for said mount to stand. Never be without swift conveyance again!

Swift Steed [50] – But what's a whistle without a horse to call? Fret not, the stables are open! You are now the (hopefully) proud owner of a truly splendid steed. It comes in any natural coat color you wish, but its stamina and speed put many others to shame. This is the sort of horse that can carry you across the land in days where it would otherwise take weeks, or win even the illustrious Sand National, the most prestigious horse race in all Erdrea!

Fun-Size Forge [50] – This forge can cost a fortune to acquire, provided you seek it legally, but by buying it here, you'll get it on the cheap. This portable magical forge, complete with little hammer, allows you to make just about any weapon, armor, article of clothing, or accessory you know the recipe for with ease! How? Rather than labor at a loom or anvil, just pop the ingredients into the pot on the top, hammer away at the glowing hemisphere at the center, and presto! You'll need to manage your hammering and the heat properly if you want to make anything good without acquiring a supply of rare Perfectionist's Pearls, but the gear will get made regardless.

Botanical Aids [50] – This little nondescript bag contains a sprig of Pretty Betsy, which will permanently make whoever eats it slightly more attractive, as well as one each of the following: a Seed of Skill, which slightly boosts the skills of its consumer; a Seed of Life, which will slightly increase the imbiber's vitality; a Seed of Therapusis, which will slightly increase the eater's Magical Mending; a Seed of Sorcery, which will slightly increase the devourer's Magical Might; a Seed of Strength, which will slightly increase the muncher's physical strength; a Seed of Defense, which will slightly increase the swallower's resilience against attacks; a Seed of Agility, which will slightly increase the snacker's agility; and a Seed of Deftness, which will slightly increase the fine motor skill of the one who sups upon it. You will find another of each of these consumables in the bag one month after it has been emptied, and the effects are so small as to be negligible – until they start to build up over time, of course.

Recipe Book Collection [50] – For those in possession of a **Fun-Size Forge**, this may prove vital. This collection of books includes any and every smithing recipe to be found in Erdrea proper, from simple bronze weapons to regalia forged from Liquid Metal Slime droplets. There are certain books which are not in Erdrea proper, such as those found in the realms linked to Drustan's Trial Isle, that you will have to acquire yourself.

Sage's Stone [100] – This little rod, topped with a jewel, is a potent boon to many a party. While it does take the time to use that you'd take to cast a spell or swing your weapon, it can reliably, with no cost to you, mend some of your wounds and those of your nearest allies each time you hold it aloft. While not enough to hold up against the mightiest blows, those within a few meters of you will appreciate having their smaller wounds knit shut.

Forge Materials [100] – Perhaps you have the forge, and perhaps you have the recipes, but can you make what must be made? From humble copper ore to rare Chronocrystals, you'll receive a shipment of the various crafting materials Erdrea has to offer on a monthly basis. Generally, you'll have enough of the more common materials to make a few dozen things with them, while rare things like Sainted Soma and Kaleidocloth may only yield enough for one project that requires them within that time. You'll have to be careful with your resources, but if you use them right, you'll be churning them out.

Precious Pooch [100] – You have a loyal dog, now. While otherwise no different from any friendly mutt you'd find in Erdrea, your new pet seems strangely able to notice when someone isn't quite themselves (such as being possessed or corrupted) and is brave enough to take on weak monsters like basic Slimes.

Mirror of Truth [200] – This lovely mirror isn't just for admiring oneself. When charged with a bit of Lumen Essence, it can restore someone who has been forcibly transmogrified to their true self, simply by being held in front of them. You will also receive just enough Lumen Essence to activate this mirror once every month.

Yggdrasil's Providence [200] – What have you here? A vial of Yggdrasil Dew, capable of fully restoring the health of the conscious, and an Yggdrasil Leaf, capable of bringing those on the brink of death (or even those who have perished mere moments prior) back to peak condition. You are especially blessed, to receive a new one of each one month after exhausting the last.

Pep Pop [200] – This bottle of fizzy Pep Pip juice has a curious effect when used. The imbiber and their three closest allies will all immediately become Pepped Up, as per **Pep In Your Step**. Your bottle empties each time it is used, but will refill one month later.

Chapter Five: A Compendium of Compelling Companions & A Folio of Friendly Followers

Below, you may see several options for the acquisition of allies in the troubled times to come. You are not required to take any, but there is strength in numbers.

Hero's Companions [50/200] – Do you already have some friends? If you'd like, you can give them some bonuses for coming along with you! For just **50 Drasilian Sovereigns**, you can bring one of your existing companions along, giving them **800 Drasilian Sovereigns** of their own to spend on an origin, species, perks, and items. They won't be able to buy companions or take Drawbacks of their own, mind you. Now, for **200 Drasilian Sovereigns**, you can add up to eight of your pre-existing friends under the same rules!

In Search of Lost Friends [50] – Maybe you'd prefer to bring someone from this world along with you? So be it! By paying **50 Drasilian Sovereigns**, you can ensure you'll start off on the right foot with one of the notable personages of Erdrea! Should they agree to it by the end of your time here, they'll follow you as your journey continues!

Idol Hands [100, discounted to Ephemeral] – You may not have found a hero, but you can work with this. This humble tradesperson of your rough physical description has a dream, and that dream involves building something new from the remains of Zwaardsrust and Dundrasil. This is more literal than you might expect, and they've certainly got the skills for it. Their skills at their trade and business are roughly equal to **A Hard Day's Work**, **The Fine Print**, and **The Scales of Commerce**, and they have a version of the **Humble Home** that also contains the tools of their trade – whatever that might be. What's more, they seem to attract those willing to help them, as if they had **Dragon Questgiver**. This person seems to regard you as a guardian spirit or advisor, which you may or may not actually be, so they'll hear out your requests unless you ask something truly bizarre of them.

Hare Splitter [100, discounted to Wicked] – Regardless of *how* you did this, I have a fair idea *why*. Some time in the past, you met a gorgeous young lady of the adventuring persuasion, and at some point you gifted her a cursed bunny suit. It saved her life time and time again, but each resurrection came at the price of corruption. By now, you're the most important person in her life, and she does your bidding gladly, whatever that may be. While she'd certainly be happy to be your favorite eye candy, with looks that might leave you saying **"That glorious hair!"**, you should remember that she was something of a local hero before she met you (even if she perhaps does not). Her old experiences left her with physicality equivalent to **Thy Hero's March** and made her a rather **Classy Person** (with a noted fondness for swords, spears, and axes), and her newfound luxuriant loyalty has given her both **Alluring Showmanship** and a warped version of **Chivalry Isn't Dead**, running on her devotion to you rather than to the Knight's Pledge. Finally, the bunny suit she wears is as described in **Accursed Accessory**, ensuring that every near-death only plunges her deeper into your dark power.

Deviled Exemplar [100, discounted to Heroic] – Once upon a time, you met a monster who preyed upon all those who dared use its favorite road. For whatever reason, you spared the creature as it begged for mercy and promised never to harm the common folk again. In hindsight, it's a good thing that you did, for this monster has gone on to be a champion of justice! This was already a powerful monster, the sort that could be called a threat to formidable foe to an entire company of soldiers, and while it wasn't a **Classy Person** back then, it was about that skilled with its own inherent Monster abilities, along with offensive and defensive magic. In addition, it's whipped up its own team by impressing the same lesson it learned on other monsters nearby, using its own skill at creating a **Monster Mash** to raise a group akin to the **Soldiers of Something**. Finally, this creature has since

acquired some quality highly likely to endear it to your allies – something that would make it **Spectral Sentinel** material were it still evil, but now draws the attention of goodlier forces willing to give this relative novelty a chance. There's plenty of monsters who just want to live their lives, but a monstrous hero? Now there's a sight to see.

Unstrategic Guide [100, discounted to Mundane] – Once upon a dream, you met this mysterious, physically nondescript spirit. Whether that was just another false shape or they have no true form is unclear, but you have since learned that they can change shapes, as if to say that **"it is a rather imposing appearance, I agree. Why don't we try another?"** You have also since learned that they are willing to lead you **Hook, Line, and Sinker** into both personal triumph and minor bits of trouble, for laughs. Taking their advice will never put you in a situation you can't get yourself out of, but you will find it embarrassing if you let them play one of their pranks. Perhaps this is the only way they can entertain themselves, and they're unable to interact with the world besides through you.

Soldiers of Something [50] – It looks like you've found yourself some backup! This group of ten or so folks are looking forward to supporting you, and what they are exactly depends on what you are! A mermaid might find herself with some fellow mermaids or some fishy friends, a jester might have other members of his troupe, a knight might be followed by some loyal foot-soldiers, and a shopkeeper might have employees. Why, even a monster would be followed by lesser monsters of their kind! All in all, they're not very strong, but they'll do whatever they can for you – and because they're Followers rather than Companions, your Companions can get some backup, too!

Chapter Six: Draconian Quest and an Entirely Everyday Ending

Perhaps your initial budget was not enough? Here, you may take on additional challenges so as to increase your bounty of **Sovereigns**. Is this really worth the pain?

In Search of Lost Time [+0] – Perhaps you would rather begin your time here on that fateful day, sixteen years ago? So be it. Rather than entering Erdrea just as a certain young man and his childhood friend climb the Cobblestone Tor, you will begin instead on the day of his birth, as monsters swarm toward Dundrasil's capital. Will you help its defenders, or ensure none of them survive? The choice is yours, but know that your actions here could change *everything* that is to come. Keep also in mind that you will be extending your time here somewhat, leaving only after the Luminary would otherwise fulfills his destiny.

Post-Credits [+0] – A shocking twist! This world is not what it seems. Or, rather, its story isn't over! By selecting this, when your time in Erdrea ends, you may immediately proceed to **Dragon Quest III.** When you arrive, if you take the time to dig, you *may* find evidence of your deeds here, buried thousands of years later. It's also possible, however, that your deeds here are but a story told to children, in which case they may find it rather odd when you arrive.

"You're only young… twice!" [+100] – Oh, dear. You may not be kidding around, but the world sees it differently. Seeing as you're currently trapped in the form of a tiny tot no older than six, don't expect most people to take your seriously. Whether your newfound childhood is the result of an attempt to steal your magic, a spell gone wrong, or some kind of curse, you can expect it to keep getting in your way. You won't be stuck unable to reach the top shelf *forever,* mind, but you will have to grow up the slow way, whatever your form. Those of you for whom age is power will likely find this *especially* irritating.

Preponderously Punishing [+100] – You just can't take it anymore. The woes of witless wordplay have wounded you so, and this world is even more full of it than normal! Expect to groan, gripe, and grumble at every Weartiger, Horknight, and Hammerhood you meet, and to pause perplexedly at every peasant's peppering of punderful prose.

Townsfolk Talk Tripe [+100] – There's all the puns, and then there's this. Did you know that young lady is a ghost, and her body is buried right beneath where she's standing? It's not true, of course, but in your time here you'll find the commonfolk of Erdrea seem to think themselves proper pranksters. They're more interested in getting a reaction out of you than they are in telling you what you need to know, at least the first time around. Hopefully you don't lose your patience with this and do something you'll regret.

No Shopping [+100] – You were looking for some holy water, but the store is closed! Well, only for you. For whatever reason, your money's no good in Erdrea. You can forage, mine, harvest, beg, or forge anything you'd like, but you can never *buy* anything from anyone else. It's not as if the people have blacklisted you or anything. Any old shopkeep would be glad to spin a yarn or two about their day with you, just not to actually sell you anything. What's *with* that?

No Fleeing From Battle [+100] – Perhaps you consider this a free investiture. Perhaps you think you fear nothing. Please understand, however, that this bizarre curse also means you cannot flee even from a foe who greatly outmatches you. Discretion can be the better part of valor. To think otherwise is reckless and naive, not brave. If you bite off more than you can chew, don't say you weren't warned.

From Bad to Verse [+100] – You have a problem. Speaking any other way, that you cannot do. Your options are these, you can rhyme your sentences, or speak in haiku.

“Do I… know you or something?” [+200] – Expect to ask this a lot. Why? Quite simply put, you don’t remember anything beyond your name and possibly there being something important you have to do. Beyond that, nothing. Obviously, this is going to cost you the use of any ability you had to *learn* how to use until such time as your memories can be returned to you, but you are guaranteed at least one chance to recall what you were missing. Your friends (you do have those, right?) had better hope they can figure out what will bring it all flooding back.

“The articles, I tell ye!” [+200] – You’re an incorrigible little pervert, aren’t you? Normally, this would just get you a bad reputation, but Erdrea has a surprising number of monsters that wield the Puff-Puff and other seductive techniques to get the better of their foes! As you might imagine, you’re amorous enough to be abnormally affected by these alluring abilities. A simple Succubat could turn you against your entire traveling fellowship, if you’re truly unlucky. You might be able to salvage your reputation if you repress it as much as possible, but that’ll make you even weaker against those tempting techniques in battle!

Super Shypox [+200] – You and your friends were just about to strike down that horrid beast or ask someone for directions, when suddenly… you all remembered something *horribly embarassing*! That’s right, you and your companions have been infected with the bizarre malady known as Shypox. Not only does it call up your least flattering habits or memories at the worst times when trying to speak with others, but your intermittent cringing will even cause you to leave openings for your enemies in battle. Perhaps you thought you had no sense of shame? Believe me, you *will* find something to get all flustered about.

No Armor [+200] – This is troublesome. For whatever reason, you cannot wear any form of armor or other specially protective clothing. You may think this little problem should you prefer magically protective robes, but you couldn’t be more wrong! Those, too, are a potent form of armor in this world, and thus lost to you! It’s not as if you can’t *make* armor anymore, just that you and your companions can’t *wear* it or otherwise use it to protect yourselves.

A Fool And Their Money [+200] – Are soon parted. Unfortunately, that describes you now. Maybe you’re overconfident in your investments, maybe you’re exceedingly generous, or maybe you’re just bad at haggling. Whatever the reason, you find yourself no less able to *make* money, but *much* less able to *keep* it. Your poor financial discipline will never be enough to make a beggar of you, thank Yggdrasil, but it *will* cause problems for you and others alike. As a king, for instance, you might find yourself selling off royal heirlooms to fund an important national event, given your propensity for generous civil spending – right when a hero trying to save the world *needs* that royal heirloom in order to do so. Oh dear.

“Yield your power to me!” [+300] – This is not good. You see, a certain Lord of Shadows is now aware of your power, and like the power of the Luminary, he hungers for it. Worse, he actually has a way to *get* it. Whether that be ripping it out of you after beating you in a fight or tricking you into giving it up, he’ll try anything and everything to make all that is yours his own. Now, he still has to *succeed* at that – he doesn’t have your powers yet, but he’ll certainly spare no expense in expediting that outcome. Don’t let your guard down. I should not need to tell you why you do not want him to succeed.

All Enemies Are Super Strong [+300] – Are you sure about this? If you were likely to encounter threatening enemies on your journey here, now you're guaranteed that your enemies will be horrendous dangers. Slimes might chase you down in packs large enough or vicious enough to tear Great Dragons apart, and any one of the greater monsters might be an equal to the Lord of Shadows himself! Try not to imagine how much greater the Dark One has become. Of course, don't think that being a wicked monster will save you. Terrorize a city with your horde of minions and you'll see bakers and inn keepers forming a militia that could break most armies, individual soldiers and knights with the skill and might to match the ancient hero Drustan, studious children revealing themselves as archmages who could shatter kingdoms on their own, and *don't* get on the bad side of the Luminary. As a courtesy to every other living thing in the world, this bizarre power only exists in those arrayed specifically against you or your direct allies. You needn't worry about the Knights of Heliodor carving new valleys into the earth as they do battle with the Darkspawn.

Too Late [+300] – "At least things can't get any worse," you say? I don't know about that. You've landed in a much darker world indeed! Erdrea is tearing at the seams. The Luminary is missing (or perhaps is you?), most of his fated companions have perished, and those who haven't are in the thrall of various monsters in service to the Lord of Shadows or the Dark One. The Lord of Shadows has stolen the Luminary's power and murdered the World Tree, but the Dark One has reclaimed his true body, and now their servants wage a massive war. The Havens Above are broken and scorched, and with Yggdrasil gone, the undead are overrunning the world. What few human settlements remain are scraping by on scraps, barely able to eke out enough food and water to survive. Worse, both of the monstrous majordomos of this world have their eyes on conquering time itself, and it's only a matter of time until one or both finds a way into Tickington or the Tower of Lost Time. What does this have to do with you? Well, first of all, try to survive. Secondly, should either the Lord of Shadows or the Dark One take full control of Erdrea, you'll be on your way home as if you'd died – assuming you don't go home because you *did* die. Third, if you happened to take the place of one of this world's fated heroes, you're going to have your work cut out for you. Fourth, if you fancy yourself more of a villain instead, this bleak, broken world may provide an opportunity or two.

Past Masters [+300] – Once, they were ten regular monsters. Perhaps they consist of a Great Dragon, a Liege Lizard, an Iron Maiden, a Mechan-o'-wyrm, a Cyclops, a Bilhaw, a Coralotl, a Hooper Trooper, a Jerkules, and a Pruslas. Perhaps they are a different set of monsters, more appropriate to the powers they are set to inherit. Whatever the case, they now hold the might and malice of the ten greatest foes in your past, and one way or another you will need to face and defeat them before you can leave this world. Once you challenge them, the first six will come to you three at a time, with some time to rest between the two sets, then the last four will attack in back-to-back pairs. If you ever wish to leave, you must strike them down.

Morcant's Mastery of Murder [+300] – Sadly, the battle of light and darkness has sundered even your company. At some crucial point in your quest here, one who was meant to be your ally – a traveling companion of yours, from this world or another – will betray you. Perhaps you are a truly wicked soul, and they find they cannot abide what you mean to do. Perhaps you are a hero, and the Dark One whispered promises of power to them. Perhaps you two are common criminals, and your partner saw the chance to make off with both shares of the loot. Whatever the case, this betrayal will prevent you, at least for a time, from overcoming your greatest enemy in this world. Keep your wits about you, and you *may* survive, but unless you truly outclass them, there will be problems. Should it so happen that you are ordinarily aware of such complications, you will not be. A knife in the back means nothing if it is expected, after all. At the very least, the most likely culprit is one who would side with either the

Luminary or the Dark One, had your paths not crossed, and depending on which one you set yourself against.

Whatever happens, should you survive the decade to come, you will have one last choice to make. Will you **Zoom Home**, satisfied with what you have acquired and accomplished so far and enacting whatever plans you have for your home reality? Will you **Stay Overnight**, adopting Erdrea as your new home, retaining all you brought with you, and ensuring your affairs at home are smoothly wrapped up? Or will you **Continue Playing**, riding down the road to your next great adventure? Regardless of your decision, we hope you have enjoyed your time in Erdrea.

Chapter Seven: A Selection of Strange Scenarios

There are other ways in which you might tell your story here. You may take one (1) Major Scenario, and up to two (2) Minor Scenarios.

Minor Scenarios

The Very Model of a Modern Medal Maniac

Mini Medals. It seems they're every young lady's obsession these days, and it seems they're yours, too. Wouldn't you like to collect as many as you can? Well, now you have the chance. Someone or something has scattered ten thousand Mini Medals all over Erdrea, and it's up to you to collect them all! Scour the lairs of monsters, the bottom of the seas, far-flung islands, the highest peaks, personal treasuries, and more! Cut deals with residents of the towns you visit, fight fearsome foes, or even travel back in time. Whatever you must do to get those Mini Medals before someone else does, do it. It might well take you a whole decade to find this many. Less than that, if you're really good. Your reward, besides recognition as perhaps the most dedicated collector in Erdrea's history, is to keep your collection. Not only will it find a place of honor wherever you might like to put it, but whosoever sees it will recognize the sheer weight of your accomplishment, even if they've never heard of a Mini Medal before.

The Race to First Place

Gallopolis' national obsession is the Sand National, the greatest horse race in all of Erdrea. It may well be *your* obsession, too, because you've got a dream. You'd best train yourself well, because the racetrack awaits. Before your time in this world ends, you must compete in the Bronze Cup, the Silver Cup, the Gold Cup, and the grueling Black Cup, achieving equestrian victory in each. From there, you must prepare yourself further, as the next year's Sand National will be the most terrifying, most daring, most harrowing horse race Erdrea has ever known. Your opponents will be of legendary skill. Their steeds will be of impeccable training and breeding. You, and your chosen horse, must be better. Your reward for all of this? Besides recognition as Erdrea's finest jockey (a recognition which will follow you on your journey) and the assuredly opulent trophy, you'll find the Sand National itself standing as the equestrian institution it's meant to be, wherever you might go – so long as there's still horses to race and a desert stadium to race them in.

High Roller

This could be the easiest thing you'd do here, or the hardest. It depends. Do you feel lucky? You see, some seek their wealth through honest living, others by dishonest deeds, and some by plundering dungeons for ancient treasures. You, on the other hand, have elected to leave it all to chance. Your goal here is to score a Jackpot on every game in Erdrea's casinos by the end of your time here. Be warned that Jackpots only happen on certain days, and you'll be up against some real sharks who have been at this for years. Still, in becoming the land's best (or luckiest) gambler, you'll have earned yourself a pretty penny. Not only do you get to keep your winnings, you'll find yourself with a shining golden card in your possession. Show it off at any casino you find in your journeys, and they'll recognize you for the high roller you are and act accordingly!

King of the Ring

The Masked Martial Arts tournament. An all-out brawl, where teams of two take to the ring with swords, spells, or whatever else they're skilled at wielding, bedecked in fantastical domino masks! Competitors come from all over the world, and though most of the crop is human, there may well have been a wild bear among the fighters back in King Robert's reign over Dundrasil. While it's an Octagonian tradition, it'll soon enough be on its way out in favor of a gambling den. Perhaps you don't enjoy that thought, and if you take this path, neither does an eccentric fan of the show! The loss of his favorite blood sport in about a year's time will take its toll on him, and he'll prepare to host one last MMA tourney himself, at his villa in Puerto Valor. That will give you eight years to train, as in the final year of your time here, you'll need to enter and win along with your partner.

Your opponents will be the best Erdrea has to offer, including famous fighters and some newcomers. Golden Boy, Sinderella and Whambelina, The Underdigger and the Abominable Showman, these names and more will find themselves assembling at an arena constructed just for this purpose. Should they have somehow survived the great conflict now set to embroil the world, even powerful monsters who once served the Lord of Shadows or the Dark One may find themselves entering, and the fated heroes of this land may elect to do so as well. Overcome all of them with your partner (assigned randomly at the beginning of the tournament), and you'll not only be awarded an astounding trophy belt, but will find this no-holds-barred tag-team tournament nestling itself neatly into the annual calendars of whatever lands you might venture through henceforth.

Major Scenarios

Taking the Throne

This will take a bit of doing. You see, Dundrasil wasn't built in a day. It *fell* in a day, yes, but it wasn't *built* in one. Luckily for you, you've got a lifetime to build a kingdom of your own, and some prime places to start from. The ruins of Dundrasil are still fresh, as are those of Zwaardsrust to a lesser extent, but there's other places you could establish your own realm. From the islands of the Outer Sea to the northern Champs Sauvage, you could easily make your capital wherever you might like. Of course, you could also take an *existing* city as your capital, but that will make certain other things a little bit more difficult.

You see, your goal here is to found (or conquer) your own kingdom, on the same level as Heliodor, Gallopolis, or Sniflheim, by the end of a century. More than that, you must be *recognized* by the other kingdoms of Erdrea as legitimate by the time that century ends. As your reward, you would obviously be free to *keep* what you have built (or taken), ensuring your kingdom follows you on your journeys. Should you have bought the item **Welcome To Our Town**, by any chance, expanding it into a proper capital city should be a simple matter, and it will retain its existing benefits.

Should you seek to found a new kingdom, one easy-ish way to do it is on the bones of an old one. Should you overcome the mighty monsters which still infest Dundrasil's cooling corpse, or that of Zwaardsrust, you might be able to begin working on restoring the ancient citadels to a usable condition. The main challenges this presents are the monster armies still roaming those areas and, in Dundrasil's case, the fact that members of the old royal family still live. Given that one of them also happens to be the *Luminary,* who grew up with no knowledge of this but might be encouraged by others to reclaim his birthright, you may or may not be willing to risk it. Another possibility is the northern Champs Sauvage. While the southern half contains Phnom Nonh and the ruins of Nhou Wat, your site in the

northern crags would have only L'Academie to contest it, and it's possible the old academy would simply accept your patronage. Most of your issues here would be logistical, such as ensuring enough farmland to feed your new kingdom and making good use of the various waterways.

If you're more conquest-minded but would rather the existing greater kings recognize your gains sooner than have to negotiate with the others from atop one of their skulls, you do still have some options. Lonalulu is highly defensible, with its back to the Hotto Steppe's mountains and its front to the sea. Marshal what forces you have right, and the Outer Sea islands could easily be your domain. On the other hand, you could make much from Erdrea's trade were you to take Gondolia and Puerto Valor as your own. Control of these two ports would make you easily the master of the Inner Sea's surface, and if you are feeling particularly daring, you might try to strike at the seafloor kingdom of Nautica as well. Finally, if you're up to it, you really *could* just take one of the greater thrones and make an even larger empire of it. Taking over Gallopolis and bringing its knights to bear could see you reigning over the trade port of Gondolia and the tourist destination of Hotto rather easily, though roping in Lonalulu might be more difficult what with the mountains in the way.

Should you manage to unify the *entire* continent of Erdrea, I don't know what to tell you other than "congratulations."

Time and Time Again

This is a world where the flow of itself is not a straightforward thing. The past can be changed, for better or for worse. If you go back, what is it you mean to change? Should you change the past at all, or simply accept the world and keep moving forward? If you embark on this path, know that within the first year of your journey, someone has gone ahead of you and chosen to change something seemingly inconsequential. "Seemingly," I say, because it's very consequential indeed. Whatever tiny change they made has spiraled out of control, to the point that multiple potential presents are currently jockeying for position! A world where the Lord of Shadows possessed a different king at the fall of Dundrasil, a world where the Dark One was never defeated, a world where the Dark One never existed at all, a world where monsters reign supreme and humans are relegated to the wilderness, or even a world where L'Academie's madness for Mini Medals or Gallopolis' equestrian enthusiasm proved far too infectious; all these and more are trying to impose themselves on Erdrea as its one true history. One hopes that you mean to do something about it. Here is what you need to know.

Firstly, the Tockles have already dealt with whoever it was who went back and knocked over all of these dominoes. Let it never be said that Tickington's wardens are not vigilant. Indeed, they will be the ones who contact you not long after you notice the different histories vying for attention. At this point, they will explain, the Luminary and his companions are still able to make their journey as they need to, despite whatever changes they may be suffering to their memories or relationships. If this nonsense keeps up, however, that will change drastically. That's where you come in.

Your role in all of this is to ensure that the Luminary and his companions can still overcome the Lord of Shadows and the Dark One, as is their destiny. Whether you stay with the group to keep them on track rather than allowing their altered histories to tear them apart, make use of the Tockles' aid to prevent them from having never been born at all, or banish the strange, elusive monsters that seem to be the false histories incarnate, you've got to keep this train on the rails. Do try to keep on top of things, lest the Tockles be forced to accept some bizarre offshoot of history as its true form just for the world to make sense at all.

Should you accomplish this, know that your deeds will not go unrecognized. Thenceforth, wherever you might roam, you too will be known as a Friend of Time. This ensures a good first impression between you and all those who have been appointed as guardians or stewards of time, and your experience here will surely make it easier for you to overcome any temporal troubles you face in the future.

Boldly Bashing the Big Bosses!

The streams of time are full of great conflicts just like the one that currently rages in Erdrea. Each was home to herculean heroes, and mighty monsters. They engaged in battles that shook the land, and even beyond the salvation of the world, there were greater fights still. If you are prepared to fight a truly titanic battle, this is the path you seek. To accept this challenge, simply step through the portal which will appear in the room you awake in on the first day of your final year here. There, you will be taken to a small room with three doors. Prepare yourself for what is to come, put on your best equipment, and gather up to three allies before you step through that portal. There is no backing out once you enter. Once you're through, choose one door and face the foe within.

Behind the left door awaits an ancient evil challenged time and again as a "bonus boss" by several heroes – **Estark**. A being from the ancient past, with no memory of anything besides his name and his brutal battle techniques. He is called the Lord of the Underworld and Emperor of Monsterkind for a reason, and to face the three-eyed demon is to face calamity incarnate. Long has he slumbered between each battle, restoring his power. Now, in terms of pure physical threat, he is the greatest of the three foes you might face here by far. His every sword strike is as swift as the wind and could split a castle in half. His hide is strong enough to withstand the fangs of dragons, the spells of archmages, and even the attacks of other archfiends. The Dark One himself would struggle to match Estark blow for blow. Should you fell him, he will entrust you with the care of Starkers, his only son (who will thus become a Companion). While little Starkers is little more threatening than a Slime right now, he holds the potential to grow as mighty as his father, if not more so.

Behind the right door awaits a test of your speed, rather than your fortitude, though you will need great might for this as well. **Xenlon**, a mighty dragoness, offers you a challenge. She will grant you her boon, should you compel her to surrender within five minutes. Should you take longer, she will simply banish you from the arena, empty-handed. Be warned: no spell can weaken or hobble her, and her attacks can ignore both armor and magical defenses. While she does not necessarily hit as *hard* as Estark does, and is less resistant to magic, you have far less time. You'll need to bring her down with swift, overwhelming force. Even stopping to heal may slow you too much. Accomplish this feat of speed, and Xenlon will offer you one wish within her power. Examples include (but are not limited to) giving you the mighty Xenlon Claws (a pair of clawed gauntlets which are utterly devastating to dragons, carving through their scales like a hot knife through warm butter), reviving any one person in Erdrea (regardless of what killed them or whether it should be possible to resurrect them), and opening a path to an even stronger monster to fight somewhere in the world (you adrenaline junkie, you). As for what else she could grant, perhaps imagining you summoned her by assembling seven small spheres would help turn the gears in your head?

Behind the center door awaits a test of your tactics. Once upon a time, in a faraway place, a diabolical demon lord devised a dark duplicate of a dashing, daring damsel, so as to besmirch that heroine's good name. Evidently, whatever force opened the way to this bastion of brutal battles had a similar idea, deciding that a dark version of this land's heroes would prove an effective adversary. Now, **Nevele the Maluminary** and his twisted versions of the Luminary's companions (if you must address

them by name, say the originals' names backwards) draw near. While none of them are as individually powerful as Estark or Xenlon, there are eight of them, and they are as powerful as the originals possibly can be. Their teamwork is impeccable, their equipment is optimized, and their usage of their own abilities is astounding. You and your allies will have to be a better team than them if you wish to overcome this trial. Should you win, then from the defeated Maluminary you will claim the Maluminary's Mark. This glowing purple brand on the back of your right hand, taking the shape of an inverted Luminary's brand, grants you a dark equivalent to the true hero's blessings of light. Who knows where that will get you?

Chapter Eight: A Necessary Notary

Here you will find answers to some questions you may have.

- Concerning Draconian Quests: The fact that the game has such arbitrary challenges built in made the Drawback section so much easier, you have no idea.
- Concerning **"Yield your power to me!"**: The long and short of it is that if he beats you, Mordegon has a way past any protections against him stealing your powers for his own. To try and wear you down for that to happen, he's sending any monsters he can spare after you, which really means any that aren't getting in the Luminary's way.
- Concerning **Past Masters**: If you don't have ten past enemies for them to inherit from on the level of Dragon Quest final bosses, they'll instead be the canonical Past Masters, channeling the final threats of the previous Dragon Quest games.
- Concerning **Post-Credits**: Oh, yes, that is the big final twist. This entire thing is an ambiguous prequel to Dragon Quest III, possibly by millennia. I said there were spoilers, didn't I? Of course, it could also be fiction. That scene is somewhat ambiguous.
- Concerning **Super Shypox**: You and anyone fighting at your side will find something to be embarrassed about every now and again. Depending on what you've done, it could be a bout of sudden remorse for some heinous atrocity, or something ultimately harmless.
- Concerning **All Enemies Are Super Strong**: The poetic description exaggerates the destruction that might result a bit; think of it as everything being normal when you're just going about your business, but any direct combat you're involved in jumping straight to Dante Must Die Mode/Give Me God of War/Lunatic/Proud Mode sorts of difficulty.
- Concerning the * in Ancient Legacy: If you want to be the Luminary (or Serena, or Veronica, or Hendrik) yourself, you're going to want this option.
- Concerning **"The articles, I tell ye!"**: Should one of your traveling companions prove more enticing than the enemy, they may well be able to wrest your senses back from an enemy who's turned you against them, but you'll still likely find yourself stunned and sluggish the whole time. It will help if your friend has Alluring Showmanship.
- Concerning an option in **Accursed Accessory**: I'd assume that destroying the outfit itself might make your pawn rather less immortal. Be careful of that. Granted, the thing probably holds up like armor.
- Concerning **Taking the Throne**: Yes, if you conquer the whole continent you get to take the whole continent with you. Good luck with that. Yes, if you *are* the Luminary, you can re-establish Dundrasil. Indeed, the other kingdoms may go out of their way to help you do so, what with you being the prince and all. Should you go beyond that and aim to make all of Erdrea your own after saving it and all, expect everyone to be *thoroughly* confused. On the other hand, being a powerful Monster would allow you to establish a kingdom of monsters more easily, but you'll have much more trouble with the overall recognition and legitimacy thing when it comes to the human kingdoms.
- Concerning **Boldly Bashing the Big Bosses!**: If you happen to *be* the Luminary or one of Erdrea's other fated heroes, and pass through the center door, know that your dark doppelganger will be a *match* for you on the battlefield, but does not necessarily have an exact *copy* of your equipment and abilities. Also note that, as a provision to allow you to win at all, Edaj's bunny-suit does *not* render her utterly immortal. As another note for those of you who specifically *are* the Luminary, acquiring the Maluminary's Mark will not cause you to explode or anything. Please do not be alarmed.
- Concerning copyright: It should not need to be said that this document comprises an elaborate form of fanfiction, and that Dragon Quest XI: Echoes of an Elusive Age is the intellectual

property of Square Enix and its associates. However, this notice has been recommended for inclusion by the Seer, lest those akin to Mia grow too bold in their doings.