BINARY IN TWO PAGES

A quick look for players and Game Masters



PAGE ONE: PLAYING

WHAT IS BINARY?

Look up. Hanging in the sky is another world. When Veyr comes near, the sea rises to meet her and whole coastlines drown. When she draws away, the water gives it all back: reefs, caves and doors no one alive has opened.

BINARY is a science-fantasy roleplaying game of exploration, discovery and danger. It takes the open map and sharp teeth of old-school play, adds hex-grid tactical combat, and keeps the table talking. You live on Tareth, a world that is old, beautiful and full of things your people didn't build. You're about to go and find out what's out there.

TALK FIRST, ROLL LATER

The game is a conversation. The GM describes the world. You say what your character does and how. Most of the time the GM just tells you what happens. The dice come out only when the outcome is uncertain and it matters.

THE CORE ROLL

Roll 1d12, plus a d6 for each level of training in the action. Meet or beat the difficulty. You'll usually know the difficulty and the risk before you roll.

TRAINING	DICE
Untrained	d12 only
Proficient	+1d6
Expert	+2d6
Master	+3d6

DIFFICULTY	TARGET
Easy	6
Standard	8
Hard	12
Very Hard	16

A miss doesn't stop the story; it changes it. It costs time, draws attention or forces a new choice.

Sixes count. Roll a 6 on a proficiency die and add a **bonus d6**. If that shows a 6 too, it's an **Epic Success**: something extraordinary happens.

Attributes. Might, Agility, Wits and Spirit. Outside a fight, the GM may add one when it clearly helps.

TWELVE ACTIONS

Say what you're doing; the way you do it picks the action.

KNOWLEDGE	EXPLORATION	SOCIAL	COMBAT
Lore	Navigate	Persuade	Melee
Investigate	Traverse	Deceive	Ranged
Aevum	Survive	Command	Finesse

FOUR PLAYBOOKS

- **Vanguard.** Heavy armour, front line. Stands between friends and whatever wants them dead.
- **Scoundrel.** Speed, nerve and every advantage going. Always knows another way in.
- **Aevist.** Shapes Aevum, the force between the worlds, into Forms, and wakes the old machines.
- **Nymari.** A rare four-armed, feline-eyed people of Tareth, attuned to Aevum and defined by what they choose to become.

THE GREAT CYCLE

The worlds turn and the water follows: **Far → Rising → Near → Falling**. At Far the sea draws back and ruins open up. At Near the Shallows flood and sea lanes return. The same cave is a different place in a different month. Knowing when to go is half the trick.

AEVUM AND AEVIC DEVICES

Between the two worlds runs **Aevum**, a force that swells and ebbs as Tareth and Veyr draw near and far. It comes in three humours: **Earth**, **Water** and **Aether**.

- **Everyday Aevum.** Lanterns, lifts and trams that glide by themselves. Anyone can use an ordinary Aevic device without a roll.
- **Old works.** The Vael built on a scale no one does now, and much of what they left is still a mystery. Sensing, studying or waking an unfamiliar device uses the **Aevum** action.
- **Aevists** shape Aevum into **Forms**: heal, ward, push, light the dark. The **Nymari** simply feel it.
- **The Cycle matters.** At Far, Earth Forms gain +1. At Near, Water Forms gain +1.

WHEN IT COMES TO BLOWS

Fights move onto a hex grid. There's no initiative: **players go first**, in any order, then the GM acts for the creatures.

- **Two actions a turn.** Move (3 hexes), Attack, Defend (+1 AC), or a manoeuvre: Shove, Trip, Grapple, Disarm, Pass Through.
- **Attack:** d12 + proficiency d6s against the target's **Armour Class (AC)**. On a hit, roll the weapon die and add **+1 for every d6** you rolled.
- **Epic Success in a fight:** roll the weapon damage twice.
- **Flanking:** two allies with a hex between them put an enemy on the **Back Foot (−1 AC)**.
- **Damage** comes off Armour first, then Health.

At zero Health you fall. Put a d3 in a cup, shake it and turn it over without looking. That's how many rounds your friends have to reach you. Nobody knows until they do.

Fights aren't balanced in your favour. Planning, bargaining and running away are all good ideas.

REST AND FATIGUE

- **Breather** (ten minutes): repair Armour, heal yourself, or heal an ally. Stay longer for more, but the odds of being interrupted climb.
- **Camp** (a night): succeed and you're restored to full Health and Armour. Fail and you gain Fatigue.
- **Fatigue** wears you down in four steps, from Tired to Incapacitated. Each good Camp removes one.

FOR THE GAME MASTER

- **Say what's there.** Start with what the characters see, hear and know. Be generous; they live here.
- **Ask intent and approach.** What do they want, and how are they doing it? Then: it just works, it can't work, or roll.
- **Set the difficulty by the situation,** not the character, and say it before they roll.
- **Make misses interesting.** Cost time, raise the water, draw eyes, change the plan.
- **Let the world move.** Its people have their own plans. The Cycle turns whether anyone is ready or not.

WHAT YOU NEED

A GM, a few players, a character sheet each, a d12, a handful of d6s, pencils and a hex grid.

IN THE PLAYTEST

- **Adventure Book:** the rules for playing and running the game.
- **World Book:** Tareth, Port City and the Shallows, and the secrets beneath.
- **S1 A Cave Beneath the Shallows:** the first adventure, built to teach the game.

So. Look up. Then go and see.