EXPLORATION AND DISCOVERY

Exploration and knowledge are at the heart of your journey in the worlds of Labyrinthian, and through them you will find not just wonder and mystery, but strength, even in the darkest of times.

Why Explore?
The innate urge to explore is universal, particularly in the fantastical realms your characters inhabit. While exploration is inherently rewarding, the knowledge gained is more valuable than you'd expect, significantly impacting your character's connection to the world and their ability to work through the struggles they face.

In Labyrinthian, exploration's benefits are universal and will often come naturally just by playing, enhancing your character's connection to the world even if exploring isn't all that exciting on its own.

Explorable Areas
There are four kinds of **Explorable Areas** one can explore: Locations, Labyrinths, Cities, and Regions.

- **Locations**
- **Labyrinths**
- **Cities**
- **Regions**

Each of these will have a unique level to them called an **Exploration Level**, which is a simultaneous representation of that place's capacity to provide a **Lore Bonus** to the Party, but also what the adventurer has learned and applied since they began exploring there.

Explorable Areas in Detail:
The four types of Explorable Areas in Labyrinthian represent a fairly wide range of different locations that have significance as places to be explored, and they will help you identify and differentiate between all the possibilities your Party could choose to explore.

Regions:
Regions, the largest type of Explorable Area, typically cover entire land, sea, and air areas. While they can span hundreds of miles, they seldom encompass entire Continents, which are instead comprised of numerous different regions. Identifiable by distinct biomes or environments, regions include examples such as vast deserts, rainforests, and mountains.

Other types of Explorable Areas are usually nested within Regions.

Cities:
Cities, although not necessarily the second largest, are among the most prominent and densely packed Explorable Areas. Rich in lore, cities offer exploration opportunities due to their constrained and boxed-in nature. Ranging from tiny villages to grand merchant cities, some mythic Cities are so large that they could be considered regions.

Within Cities, various unique Locations and Labyrinths, sometimes contained within a single building, can be found. While a tavern might not be such a place, a King's Keep is likely teeming with discoveries, and begging to be explored by the stealthy.

Labyrinths:|
Labyrinths, often associated with towers and dungeons, extend beyond those structures to encompass vast, self-contained areas with a common purpose or design. Examples include great forests, canyons, and valleys, which, like cages, contain everything within.

While Locations or even Cities may exist within Labyrinths, they are wild and less likely to house populations beyond beasts or monsters.

Locations:
Locations are self-contained structures covering small land areas, including buildings, glades, or old ruins. They can also be smaller, but significant areas, such as battlefields or small dungeons.

While Locations may serve as entrances to Labyrinths or Cities, they are almost never a unique Explorable Area in their own right, unless reality has been magically manipulated for that purpose. Locations instead are simply places within a larger Explorable Area.

Exploration Level (EL):

The Exploration Level (EL) of a given Explorable Area has dual significance. Firstly, it gauges the difficulty of acquiring information during exploration, influencing the outcomes of skill checks like **Researching**, **Inspecting**, or **Searching**. Your results are compared against the area's EL to determine how well you did. Secondly, the area's EL acts as a limit for your Lore Bonus, determining how high it can climb before requiring expenditure to avoid wasting potential discoveries.

Accumulating a Lore Bonus and utilizing it raises the Exploration Level at a 1:1 rate. This reflects the party's application of acquired knowledge, whether through direct exploitation like calling discovered allies or, more commonly, inspiring creativity in overcoming challenges.

The EL increase not only expands your Lore Bonus capacity but is crucial for establishing a permanent Lore Bonus, offering enduring benefits to the regions or cities you consider home. Every 10th Lore Bonus expenditure yields a permanent +1, serving as an ever-present shield and guiding light, especially in dire situations.

Lore Bonus (LB):

The Lore Bonus is a measure of accumulated Lore, unique and specific to each kind (and each instance) of an explorable area, representing the collective knowledge of that area that your party has learned. This bonus is a positive modifier, such as +5 (indicating five Discoveries your party has made about the area), and will have a maximum equal to the Explorable Area's Exploration Level.

Permanent Lore Bonus (PLB):

The Permanent Lore Bonus, or PLB, is a secondary modifier that can be combined with your normal LB, but should be tracked separately, as the PLB does not go away once used. As noted, you can gain a PLB by making use of your LB

Discoveries:

To gain Lore and the associated Lore Bonus in any of these areas, your party must uncover Discoveries. These can range from seemingly innocuous quirks of the world to profound historical insights and events. Not everything you encounter is a Discovery; the floor remains a floor, even in strange dimensions or foreign lands. Discoveries are usually conspicuous and stand out, but your World Keeper will guide you on whether something is noteworthy.

Discoveries vary, from a peculiar bit of road in the woods to grand and awe-inspiring phenomena, perhaps even the hand of a god. Others may include dusty tombs of forgotten lore, mysterious tablets, and writings. Learning about the Vulnerabilities or the likes and dislikes of monsters and beasts can also constitute a significant Discovery.

Finding Discoveries:

Often you won't have to try to make a discovery; sometimes a wizard might just fall out of the sky, for some reason. While these fortuitous moments will still benefit the wayward adventurer, fate isn't the only means of seeking discovery.

By taking on **Exploration Tasks** like **Research, Inspection, or Searching** while out and about, or simply in the course of doing other things as you travel, you will find discoveries lurking in many different corners, and all you need to do is seek them out, pull on the thread of curiosity, and you may find yourself promptly rewarded.

Exploration Tasks:

Exploration Tasks share a consistent structure regardless of the area under consideration. You select a relevant skill, detail its application, and perform a Skill Check against the Exploration Level (EL) of the area.

Each Task requires a specific time within the relevant timescale, and this will correlate to what you choose to do specifically. The duration and the World Keeper's confirmation dictate the feasibility of additional attempts in a given turn.

Rewards:

Your Skill Check results offer various outcomes based on the EL:

- If your result is within 5 of the EL, you make a Discovery, but a Complication may arise.
- If your result matches or exceeds the EL, you make a Discovery.
- Exceeding the EL by 10 or more yields additional Discoveries, 1 for every 10 in excess..
- A Nat20 results in two initial Discoveries, alongside any bonus Discoveries for exceeding the EL by 10+.

When making these Skill Checks, as they are essentially a form of **Improvised Action**, it is vital that no matter the Skill you choose to use that you are relating how you are using it, and why it should result in some sort of Discovery.

Many times, this will be plainly obvious. Of course if one uses *Striking* to hack away the vines covering up the door to a mine, it should lead to the discovery of said mine. But often times you might find yourself stretched thin if how you're thinking to use the Skill just isn't panning out, and in these times it is wise to either swap to another Skill that might be more straightforward, or think up a different way to use the Skill you chose. You have many options in this regard, and even if you have a +0 to a particular skill, if it makes sense to use it over any other option, it is still worth it to give it a shot.

The following **Exploration Tasks** should provide some guidance in how you might use your Skills to your advantage.

Research:

To Research, a source of knowledge or a city setting is necessary. Attempts take 1 to 10 minutes, potentially longer for complex knowledge sources. Accumulating lore about intended exploration areas is very wise, as it it help prepare you for the challenges ahead. However, knowledge accumulation has limits until you physically venture to the destination and begin to apply your knowledge.

Various methods exist for gathering information, from maps and directions to seeking insights from diverse individuals. Researching typically occurs in cities but can take place wherever knowledge sources are found, such as a wizard's tower or a passing traveller.

Inspecting and Searching:

Unlike *Researching*, Inspecting and Searching will only generate Discoveries related to the Explorable Area they are taken in. Inspecting takes place during Delves, whereas Searching takes place during Expeditions.

Inspecting:

While Delving, Inspecting will take at least 1 minute, up to 10 minutes. Occasionally, if a given Discovery requires multiple steps, you may have to make multiple attempts and/or take more than 10 minutes to uncover them.

Inspecting should be very familiar if you have ever played a tabletop roleplaying game before. While Delving, you will examine your environment and look for different things to learn. Often times you'll be doing this to simply progress further into the place you're exploring, but sometimes you'll find it worthwhile to spend some extra time looking around. You never know what you might find, and finding a barely hidden secret door is just as much a Discovery as an ancient prophecy of dragons and blades carved into a stone wall.

Every Inspection attempt, even with magical concealment, may occasionally give rise to complications in your adventures. These may not always be very consequential, but it is good to keep in mind that sometimes it will be the wiser decision to move on rather than to linger, as Discoveries are not unlimited.

As a general rule of thumb, the smaller the area or room you explore, the less there really will be to learn. As such, larger chambers will be more worthwhile to spend time on, but even they will have their limits.

When your party has reached this limit, your World Keeper will let you know so that you can move on.

Searching:

When Searching, attempts will take at least 30 minutes, upwards to the full 2 Hours of an Expedition Turn. The total area covered while searching will be within a 6 Mile wide area, though you should not think of it as though you have meticulously covered the totality of that area. Your Searching attempt instead corresponds to a much smaller amount of movement focused on finding something.

Searching is effectively a larger scale version of Inspecting, taking place in the greater wilderness rather than in labyrinths or dungeons. As such, the kinds of things you'll find will have a greater variety to them, and you will likely find it easier to use your Skills to explore.

Another benefit of Searching is that your party doesn't need to commit themselves to just Searching; other party members that will benefit from tasks such as Foraging or Prospecting will find it very efficient to use this time while one or two others focus on Searching the area.

Directed Exploring:

Something to note with each of the Exploration tasks is that if you are seeking out something specific that you have heard rumor of or otherwise learned of, such as a hidden room or location, you can use these tasks to search for them directly.

However, in doing so you will forgo the chance to stumble onto other kinds of discoveries; you must achieve a clear success on your Skill check (either equal to or greater than the EL for the area). Failing to do so will not net you any benefits and will cost you the time spent, but if you should roll a Nat20 on your check, you will still receive two Discoveries, with one being the room or location you sought.

Other Means of Discovery:

Learning about the world doesn't always necessitate direct exploration; one can glean valuable insights from various activities. Life inherently exposes us to the world, and discoveries often emerge as natural byproducts of engaging in different pursuits. For instance, those immersed in warfare and combat can amass discoveries by analyzing adversaries, identifying vulnerabilities, or encountering previously unknown enemies.

Meanwhile, those who simply like to Quest for glory or fame will also regularly uncover Discoveries in the course of their journeys, especially the more dire and epic their Quests become.

Oracles:

During Travel Tasks like Foraging, Prospecting, or Pathfinding, adventurers may encounter unique situations known as Oracles, offering a chance to shape their journey. These occurrences are interspersed within task results, allowing players the freedom to pursue, ignore, or incorporate them into their exploration.

When facing an Oracle result, adventurers have two options. The first is to ignore it or share a personal interpretation during the task report, maintaining control over their adventure but not inviting a diversion. Alternatively, they can choose to engage with the Oracle, and so can their friends.

Engaging with Fate:
Upon receiving an Oracle, it will also indicate that you have received the results of the next lowest result. The Oracle itself is a prompt, presenting an incident that asks you to take an immediate action. For instance, during Foraging, an Oracle might state, "They are coming...Run!"

Interpreting within the task's context, if opting for the first choice, players may report that they successfully found some honey, with a minor scare involving angry bees. In contrast, choosing the second option could lead to a more elaborate narrative, such as encountering a bear family, leading them to begin running back to the party.

By engaging with the Oracle, players invite collaborative storytelling. Other players and the World Keeper can contribute to the evolving scenario. For example, a friend on a Prospecting task might report that they discovered a bear den in a cave, and managed to snag a bear cub that was all alone, creating a connection to the encountered bear family.

Consequences will then unfold based on party decisions. This could lead to combat as the bear family realizes their cub has been taken, or, if the cub is swiftly returned, the party could avoid the danger. But upon deciding to investigate the den further, they might Discover an old amulet, bearing the old symbol of the lost city the party is searching for, only for another bear to arrive at the den and immediately fly into a rage as it smells its cub on them, but doesn't see it...

Note for the Funny People:
Oracles provide a very powerful and emergent storytelling medium, and one that is arguably rather unique in the kind of game that Labyrinthian is. While you are given a great deal of leeway in what you introduce, one should be wary of doing things simply because one thinks they're hilarious.

After all, one may indeed find it hilarious to find their character chased down by a hungry dragon. But they might not find it so funny when said dragon shows up and carves a meal out of their friends.

Ultimately, your World Keeper will have the power to deny things if they go too far, or indeed become abusive, and likewise will have the power to turn your funny ideas against you if you're not wise about them. While you may be wise enough to not spring dragons on your friends, trying to use Oracles to twist the gameworld for your personal gain is also most unwise. You might indeed find a giant chest of gold out in the woods...but good luck curing that Ancient Curse.

Using the Lore Bonus:

Finally, after finding some Discoveries, you will have generated a Lore Bonus for the area you have been exploring, and now comes the time to make use of it, if one wishes.

Inspiration:
Inspiration is the basic use for the Lore Bonus, and will be a trusty tool in your adventures, as your collected knowledge inspires you

Whenever you make any kind of Skill or Talent Check (either before or after the roll), you may call for Inspiration. Upon doing so, you may add your Party's Lore Bonus for the area to your roll, and then you will deduct -1 from the Lore Bonus.

Advanced Abilities:
In addition to Inspiration, there a number of different abilities your Party can utilize by spending their Lore Bonus. Some of these abilities will be tied specifically to the Explorable Areas themselves, and as such won't be usable anywhere else. Often times, these abilities will actually have to be discovered in their own right.

However, the below options are generic abilities your Party will be able to call upon more or less anywhere, though note this can vary. Your World Keeper will verify if any are not going to be available, and will also clarify if any others will be immediately available to you.

Calling Allies:
This ability when invoked will allow the Party to call upon a number of allies equal to 1d10 per LB spent. Who these allies are and how they might be called to the party's aid will depend on the specific groups they have met during their Research and Expeditions (all eligible groups will communicate this to the Party), but they will be of equal level to the Party average and they will take at least 10 Minutes in order to arrive.

Once they have done so, they will fight for the Party until they have either perished or otherwise been driven off by the Party's enemies, or until dismissed. Note however that if the Allies are betrayed by the party or otherwise abused, this will have impacts on the Party's Reputation, and they may become hostile to the Party.

Crafting and Gathering Events:
When invoked by a player taking a Crafting or Gathering Travel Task, they will spend 1 LB, and will initiate a special Bout relating to their particular task. Upon completing this Bout, they will be rewarded with a one-time chance to either utilize or gather a unique Crafting Component.

These unique components will be specific to the area they come from and will not be able to be found elsewhere, but note that one does not always need to invoke a Crafting event in order to utilize these components. Unless otherwise specified, they can be used in normal Crafting.

But if one does choose to initiate a Crafting Event, they will receive a bonus to both their Crafting Budget and their Skill Check equal to the item's Rarity Bonus, which will be noted in its description.

Taking A Risk: This ability when invoked by a player (or the party collectively), will allow them to spend any number of points out of the Party's LB pool. With each point spent, the Encounter they are engaged with will become significantly harder, but in exchange the rewards for successfully overcoming the Encounter will be increased. This can often result in increased loot (either from enemies slain or by stumbling onto hidden treasures), but can also lead to more Discoveries.

Well Prepared: This ability when invoked by a player will allow them to spend 1 point of the LB to add 1d6 to any Saving Throw they or another party member makes. This may be invoked after the saving throw has been made.