

THE SWORN SHIELD

A Guardian playbook for the shining city-states. Written against Wizards & Lizards v0.10 (BETA, not yet playtested).

When the line breaks, you are where it holds. In a world of proud cities and the goddesses who wear their names, you took an oath that is older than any of them: to stand between the helpless and the harm. Others win the songs. You make sure there is someone left to sing them.

YOU ARE THE WALL

You are tough, armored, and immovable, and your gift is not to strike but to *draw the blow*. A guardian who is merely hard to kill protects no one, foes simply step around you. So you make yourself impossible to ignore: you hold the line, and you throw yourself in the way.

"They will tell you the wall is the city's stone. The wall is a person. The stone only marks where she stood." — a captain of the Walled Mother's shrine-guard

MAKE YOUR SHIELD

Your **Might** begins at +2. Agility, Wits, and Presence begin at +0; the tables below will raise them.

You begin with:

- **Hit Points 16** (you are the sturdiest of your company).
- **Speed 1** (heavy armor is slow).
- **Stress 4 + your Presence.**
- **Defense** = Agility + shield + cover.
- Training in **heavy armor and the shield**, and the **Hold the Line** action (below).
- **Endurance**, the long patience of the body that lets you take a blow and keep your feet.

Now walk the tables. Roll or choose; take what each one grants.

WHERE DID YOU STAND YOUR FIRST WATCH? (1D6)

1. On a city's high wall, against the raiders of rival states. (+1 **Might** · **Soldiery**)
2. At the shrine of your city's goddess, guarding her veil. (+1 **Presence** · **Devotion**)
3. On the caravan roads, where bandits and worse prey. (+1 **Agility** · **Wayfaring**)
4. At a great house's gate, a hired shield among schemers. (+1 **Presence** · **Courtesy**)
5. In the fighting pits, where you learned to take a blow. (+1 **Might** · **Brawling**)
6. On your own threshold, the night war came home. (+1 **Wits** · **Watchfulness**)

WHAT BINDS YOU TO THE OATH? (1D6)

1. A dying captain made you swear to guard those they could not. (**Command**)
2. Your city's goddess marked you in a dream you still feel. (**Old Lore**)
3. You failed someone once. You will not fail again. (**Resolve**)
4. The watch raised you, and you never left the wall. (**Drill**)
5. You guard a person, not a place, a ward you would die for. (**Bodyguarding**)
6. Your blood has held this shield-oath for generations. (**Heraldry**)

WHOSE SHIELD ARE YOU?

Choose another player's character, the one you have sworn, in your heart, to keep alive. They gain +1 to any one skill of their choosing (your training, your watchfulness). And once per session, when they would be Downed, you may declare you saw it coming, take the blow in their place, and stay standing.

YOUR SHIELD (1D6)

1. **A tower of city iron**, taller than you knelt. When you brace (do not move), +1 Defense.
2. **A round shield blessed at the goddess's shrine**. Once per day, reroll an Endure against fear.
3. **A scarred buckler from the pits**. When you Defend, you may shove a foe back a step for free.
4. **A heater bright with your house's arms**. Allies beside you ignore the first point of any fear penalty.
5. **A board of faewood, light as a lie**. Heavy armor costs you no Speed while you bear it.
6. **A door you tore from its hinges in a last stand**. It counts as a tower shield, and those who saw you remember.

ADVANCED ACTIONS

You have **Hold the Line** already. Choose **one** more now; you will gain others as you rise (see below).

- **Hold the Line** (*granted*). On your activation, spend **one action** to set yourself as the wall. Until your next activation, an enemy within your reach that strikes an ally instead of you does so at **-4** (most will simply come for you), and any foe that breaks past you draws a free **Strike**, up to **your level + 1** of them each round, so you hold your ground without spending Defend.
- **Bulwark**. While you bear a shield and do not move, you gain **+2 Defense**, and allies directly behind you have **cover** (+1 Defense) against attacks from your front.
- **Counterblow**. When a foe misses you in melee, you may mark **1 stress** to Strike it at once (a reaction).
- **Unbreakable**. Your Hit Points rise by **4**, and you ignore the first point of Ongoing damage each activation.
- **Rally**. Spend an action to Rally: each ally who can see or hear you may shake one condition or steady against fear.

Bram sets his shield and bellows, Hold the Line. The bandits know that to reach the wounded captain behind him they must take -4, so three of them turn on Bram instead. His armor turns two blows; the third he simply endures. The captain lives to loose another shot.

YOUR ACTIONS

Like every adventurer you have the shared actions, roll 3d6, add the attribute, read the ladder (8- miss, 9-12 partial, 13-17 success, 18+ critical):

Strike (Might) · **Shoot** (Agility) · **Defend** (Agility) · **Maneuver** (Might/Agility) · **Endure** (the fitting attribute) · **Skill** (use one of your skills). And you may always **mark stress** to push a roll, resist a blow, or fuel an Advanced Action.

AS YOU RISE

You grow over five levels. At **2nd and 4th level** you gain a new skill and a new Advanced Action (choose from the list above, or invent one with your GM). At **3rd and 5th level** you raise an attribute (to a cap of +3) and your blows hit harder.

At **3rd level** you also learn the guardian's truest art:

- **Intercept** (*reaction*). When an ally within reach is struck, you may mark **1 stress**, once per round, to take the blow in their place: resolve the hit against *your* Defense and armor instead of theirs.

ADVANCEMENT

Your company rises together over five levels. The GM picks how you earn them: a level at each story milestone, or one for every three significant challenges overcome (optionally counting hauls of treasure). Fill a level's three marks as you earn them; when all three are filled, take that level's gains and write in what you chose.

LEVEL 2 ○ ○ ○ *competence*

+4 Hit Points · new skill _____

new Advanced Action _____

LEVEL 3 ○ ○ ○ *power*

+4 Hit Points · raise an attribute _____ to +_____ · +1 damage (see playbook)

LEVEL 4 ○ ○ ○ *competence*

+4 Hit Points · new skill _____

new Advanced Action _____

LEVEL 5 ○ ○ ○ *power*

+4 Hit Points · raise an attribute _____ to +_____ · +1 damage (see playbook)

By level 5: about 30 Hit Points, attributes up to +3, five or six skills, four Advanced Actions. Advanced Actions are chosen freely from your playbook as you gain them (unless one names a prerequisite).

PORTRAIT

Draw or paste your hero here.

CHARACTER SHEET

Wizards & Lizards

NAME _____

LEVEL _____

ARCHETYPE _____

ANCESTRY _____

MIGHT

AGILITY

WITS

PRESENCE

HP _____ / _____

DEFENSE

SPEED

STRESS :

SHAKEN ☐ :

SKILLS

ADVANCED ACTIONS

KIT AND COIN

BASIC ACTIONS

Strike (Might) · Shoot (Agility) · Defend (Agility) · Maneuver (Might/Agility) · Endure (varies) · Skill (varies). Roll 3d6 + attribute: 8- miss, 9-12 partial, 13-17 success, 18+ crit.

NOTES AND CONDITIONS
