Communities and Prosperity

The Missing Link

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# Introduction

# Communities

The community stands at the center of prosperity adventures. Heroes take responsibility to preserve and improve the community; their success or failure impact it and change it. Prospects emerge which allow the heroes to make permanent impacts; threats arise which must be met before they damage the community and those who make it.

This system mechanically describes communities in terms of their size, attributes, features, and obstacles.

## Size

Communities are sized in five categories, relative to other communities of similar structure. For example, when playing with settlements, a village might be a minor settlement while the capital city might be the largest settlement. Similarly, when playing with provinces, a shire might be a metropolis while a territory within a kingdom might be the largest.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Size | Settlement | Region | Organization | Family |
| Minor | Hamlet | Shire |  | Household |
| Small | Village | County |  |  |
| Average | Town | Prefecture |  |  |
| Notable | City | Province | Enterprise | Clan |
| Enormous | Metropolis | Territory |  | Clan of Clans |

## Attributes

Communities are measured in terms of their:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Attribute | Description (the community’s… |
| Fortune | Material resources and commercial activity |
| Milieu | Cohesiveness, fellowship, and ability to extend its fortune, security, and virtue to its members |
| Security | Ability to protect itself from natural disasters and mundane violence |
| Virtue | Spiritual integrity, fortitude, and resilience when faced with supernatural events or threats. |

The four attributes are valued as follows:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Descriptor | Threat Per Season | Difficulty (TN/DC/ Limit) |
| Devastated | 9 | 4 / 25 / -6 |
| Struggling | 6 | 3 / 20 / -4 |
| Stable | 3 | 3 / 20 / -4 |
| Good | 3 | 2 / 15 / -2 |
| Excellent | 6 | 2 / 15 / +0 |
| Great | 9 | 2 / 10 / +2 |

The community has a description from devastated too great for each of the four attributes. Each descriptor adds to the base threat per season the community endures.

Example: *Golden Petal Village is a small, reasonably prosperous community (Size: Small, Fortune: Good) which is sheltered in a secure shire (Security: Stable). Its history and continued reverence of the place where the God Emperor rested grants it sacred status (Virtue: Excellent) but it is somewhat fractious due to long-simmering feuds between the families (Milieu: Stable). The community attracts 15 Threat per season.*

## Features

A community may have features make it notable in some way. Features may relate to one of the four attributes.

Features have the following effects:

* When the community would lose one rank of the associated attribute, it can instead lose one feature
* When an individual takes responsibility for their family’s fortune, milieu, security, or virtue the feature provides them with a bonus

Features can be created through effort or purchased with sufficient Influence.

A character may, if they have the authority to do so, take responsibility for a feature. The rules for this are in the section which describes how to take responsibility.

### Fortune Features

Fortune features improve the community’s affluence and impact the individuals who take responsibility for their family fortune.

#### Market Place

The community hosts a boisterous and profitable market which attracts merchants, artisans, and entertainers from across the region.

#### Rich Soil

The community is surrounded by rich soil and clean water, sufficient for growing good crops most years.

#### Sake Works

A well-reputed maker of rice wine provides a trade good, a reason for people to visit, and a source of potable liquid all at once.

### Milieu Features

Milieu features improve the community’s sense of connection to their area, their history, and one another.

#### Inn of Good Repute

This lively inn serves as the community’s gathering place and shared civic space. Many troubles in the local community are resolved over a good meal in congenial company.

#### Government Office

The local government has prepared a place where a person of learning and skill can help to adjudicate disagreements and take care of criminal matters.

#### School

This house of learning provides the locals with a shared sense of their culture and traditions, along with training in arts, literature, and history. The specific subjects taught at the school are determined on a case by case basis.

### Security Features

Security features improve the community’s protection from physical harm, both internal and external.

#### Clear Sight Lines

The community is situated so that anyone watching can easily see danger as it approaches. A skilled archer can answer that danger just as readily, delivering stinging rebuke long before danger threatens those under their care.

#### Signal Fire

High above the community, where their neighbors can easily see it, rests a signal the community can use to call for aid.

#### Stout Walls

The community is surrounded by stout walls and/or steep cliffs which slow down any who might wish to cause them harm.

### Virtue Features

Virtue features improve the community’s connection with meaning, history, and the inspiration that leads to hope. In worlds with a supernatural bent, this includes connections to the spirits and magic.

#### Peaceful Glade

Close to the community, hidden in the trees, is a glade where people can find peace if they stop for a moment and breathe.

#### Sacred Spring

A spring burbles forth from a wall or a cliff, rumored to have healing properties and certainly filling a small pool in which refreshes even the weariest of souls.

#### Shrine to the Fortunes

A shrine to the gods or spirits provides a place for the community to offer their respects and request aid. So long as it is properly tended, the community can at least count on a neutral stance from the powers that be.

## Hazards

A community may have hazards which prevent it from sustaining itself and growing as well as it could. Each hazard is associated with one of the four community attributes.

Hazards have the following effects:

* Each hazard increases the threat generated by the community each season by 3
* When the community would lose one rank of the associated attribute, it can instead gain a hazard

Hazards can be ameliorated with sufficient effort or Influence.

A character may, if they have the correct authority, take responsibility for a hazard. The rules for this are in the section on how to take responsibility.

### Fortune Hazards

Fortune hazards prevent the inhabitants from acquiring wealth and prosperity.

#### Ill-Favored Reputation

The community is noted for being difficult to do business in and with, leading craftsmen and merchants to avoid the place.

#### Poor Soil

The community is surrounded by blighted or rocky farmland, which must be carefully managed, or the crops will fail.

#### Poisoned Wells

The local water supply is not well suited to supporting crops, homes, or other life. It can, with sufficient work, be used – but at what cost?

### Milieu Hazards

Milieu hazards tear the community apart, making it difficult to find common ground and the shared understanding which leads to successfully waging peace.

#### Bitter Memories

An event occurred which scared the community, sowing distrust, envy, and wrath for generations. These memories bear bitter fruit, causing contention to this day.

#### Ignorant

The people know little of themselves and the outside world, an isolation which proves fertile ground for all manner of discontents.

#### Inn of Ill Repute

This inn is well known as a place for lonely hearts, shady deals, and nursing grudges until they flame into violence.

### Security Hazards

Security hazards make it difficult to protect the community, leaving the people exposed to dangers and harm.

#### Broken Walls

The community is wide open to attack, with many shadowed paths in and out.

#### Far From Aid

The community does not have a way to signal for help, the other local communities will not help them, or for some other reason cannot get help when under attack.

#### Short Sight Lines

Due to the community’s physical location, danger can be at the walls before anyone can see or respond to it.

### Virtue Hazards

Virtue hazards cause the spirit to be factious and contentious, bringing harm to the people and their relationships one another or the spiritual plane.

#### Cursed

The community suffers under a curse, spoken or implied, for deeds which may be completely unknown or known only to a few. Regardless, everyone suffers, and ill fortune stalks the community at every turn.

#### Offended Spirits

Someone or something has offended the local spirits so that they have taken to mischief and occasional malice.

#### Restless Graves

The dead lie uneasy, secrets and shame causing them to haunt the living. This may manifest as dreams, ghostly apparitions, or actual undead depending on the severity of the crimes and the necromantic power at work.

## Combined Features and Hazards

It is possible that a feature which improves one aspect of a community could also be an hazard to another.

# Taking Responsibility

Absent action, a community must simply weather the threats it faces. Fortunately, people are not idle. They work for the betterment of themselves, their families, and their fellows, contributing to the world and creating the peace and prosperity all enjoy.

This tendency to work, to create, is represented mechanically by allowing each character to *take responsibility*. Although the system focuses on player characters taking responsibility, it also contains a mechanism to represent the actions of non-player characters who take responsibility as well.

## Months and Seasons

There are three months to each season, and four seasons to each year. Character responsibility is taken monthly, and community prospects and threat are assessed seasonally.

Each month, a character may take responsibility for:

* Their family’s fortune, milieu, security, or virtue

A character with the correct authority may also take responsibility for:

* A community feature or
* A community hazard

*Example: Hiro and his sister live in Golden Petal Village. She has the position of shrine maiden, so can take responsibility for the shrine feature. Hiro cannot, having no station to do so, but can take responsibility for his family.*

## Family Groups

A family may be a group of friends, a group of individuals related by blood, a group with a shared duty, or some combination of those things.

The maximum number of individuals covered in a family action is equal to the highest of the member’s Social attribute (Charm in Limitless, Air in L5R).

## Responsibilities

The character can take one of the following responsibilities for their family: Fortune, Milieu, Security, or Virtue. They may also take responsibility for a feature or hazard.

### Family Responsibilities

The following family responsibilities aid both the family and the community:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| REsponsiblity | Impact |
| Fortune | Moderate lifestyle, +1 Prospect |
| Milieu | Increase family size, +1 Prospect |
| Security | 1 observation, +1 Prospect |
| Virtue | +1 Prospect, Aid family members |

#### Fortune

The character provides labor and manages capital to create or acquire the resources need to feed, clothe, and house their family. This can take the form of farming, hunting, fishing, or working in a position with a focus providing necessary resources.

On a success the character provides a modest lifestyle for the family members and generates +1 prospect. When two or more family members take this responsibility; each success increases the lifestyle by 1 rank.

The difficulty of the task is determined by the community’s Fortune attribute.

#### Milieu

The character devotes themselves to building and maintaining relationships within the family with a mixture of events, humor, and honest care.

On a success, the character increases the maximum number of family members by their Social attribute (Charm in Limitless, Water in L5R) and generates 1 Prospect for the community.

The difficulty of the task is determined by the community’s Milieu attribute.

#### Security

The character devotes themselves to protecting the family from physical and social threats, standing watch and preventing harm. This may take the form of watching over herds, securing the homestead, or guarding the hencoop from foxes.

On a success, the character reduces community threat by 1 and generates one observation to discover a threat or discover a prospect.

The difficulty of the task is determined by the community’s Security attribute.

#### Virtue

The character devotes themselves to rites, rituals, and readings, bringing the family together through the shared experience of faith.

On a success, the character creates 1 prospect and gives a bonus (Limitless – Advantage; L5R – Aid; D&D 5e: Aid) to other family member’s rolls.

### Feature Responsibility

The character may take responsibility for a community feature, gaining the following benefits on a success:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| REsponsiblity | Impact |
| Fortune | Moderate lifestyle, +2 Prospects |
| Milieu | Increase family size, +1 Prospect;  1 observation |
| Security | 2 observations, +1 Prospects |
| Virtue | +2 Prospects, Aid family members |

The responsibility for a feature is determined by its attribute (fortune, milieu, security, or virtue), as is the mechanic the character uses.

On a failure, the character and the community gain no benefit.

### Hazard Responsibility

The character may take responsibility for a community hazard, gaining the following benefits from a success:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| REsponsiblity | Impact |
| Fortune | Moderate lifestyle, +1 Prospects, -1 threat from hazard |
| Milieu | +1 Prospect;  1 observation; -1 threat from hazard |
| Security | 2 observations, -1 threat from hazard |
| Virtue | +2 Prospects, -1 threat from hazard |

# Resolving Seasons

Every three months forms a season – Spring, Summer, Fall, or Winter. At the start of each season, the characters amass the prospects and threats generated in the previous season and the Game Master applies them to what may happen in the coming season.

## Starting the Season

The community starts the season with threat based on its fortune, milieu, security, and virtue as follows:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Descriptor | Threat Per Season |
| Devastated | 9 |
| Struggling | 6 |
| Stable | 3 |
| Good | 3 |
| Excellent | 6 |
| Great | 9 |

Additionally, it gains **3 threat** for each hazard it must deal with.

### Improving the Season

During the previous season, the characters generated prospects or reduced threat by successfully taking responsibility for themselves and others. Additionally, individuals in the community other than the player characters will have been active as well, generating additional prospect and threat.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Size | Threat | Prospect |
| Minor | 2 | 2 |
| Small | 4 | 4 |
| Average | 6 | 6 |
| Notable | 6 | 6 |
| Enormous | 4 | 4 |

Rather than applying a flat value, the players may also choose to attempt a random roll, using the dice engine appropriate to their game.

* **L5R 5e:** roll ring dice based on the number above, strife is threat, opportunities are prospects, successes are blank, explosive successes still allow a reroll.
* **For Limitless:** roll the indicated number of d10s, 1s become prospects, 10s become threat.
* **For D&D 5e:** roll the required number of d6s, 1s become threat, 6s become prospects.

#### Applying Responsibilities

Through the previous season, the characters amassed threat and prospect by taking responsibilities. The total values are then applied to the community’s total.

A player may choose to use the prospect they generated to remove threat. Each point of prospect sacrificed reduces the total threat to the community this season by 1.

Observations are recorded for later use.

### Applying Threat and Prospect

The Gamemaster may choose to apply the season’s threat and prospect in the following ways:

Use threat or prospect to purchase a peril or prospect

Use threat to obscure a threat or prospect, forcing the players to use observations to discover it

Save the threat or prospect for the next season, adding the value to the next season’s total

### Apply the Effects of Unanswered Perils

Each unanswered peril reduces one of the community’s attributes by 1 rank.

### Apply the Effects of Answered Prospects

Each answered prospect grants a 1 season +1 rank bonus to one attribute. Four answered prospects which boost the same attribute in consecutive seasons give a permanent +1 rank bonus to that attribute.

## Prospects

## Peril

The total threat generated each season is based on the number of hazards

Complications are allocated to threats as follows:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Threat | Peril Rank |
| 3 | Minor |
| 6 | Dangerous |
| 9 | Challenging |
| 12 | Overwhelming |
| 15 | Epic |

**All** threats are keyed to a specific community attribute (fortune, milieu, security, or virtue) and affect that attribute’s Limits or value.

**Minor** threats can be directly addressed by a small group of concerned individuals. They require 3 to 5 progress to resolve and decrease the Limit of the leader’s season attempt by 2 for every prosperity sequence they are unaddressed.

**Medium** threats require concerted effort to address. They require 6 to 10 progress to resolve. For each prosperity sequence they are unaddressed, reduce the leader’s Limit by 3 and generate +1 Complication.

**Large** threats require the concerted effort of a group to resolve. They require 9 to 14 progress to address. For each prosperity sequence they are unaddressed, reduce the leader’s Limit by 3 and generate +2 Complication. Each season, the threat reduces the associated attribute by 1d4.

**Overwhelming** threats require strong and immediate effort to address. They require 15 to 18 progress to resolve. For each prosperity sequence they are unaddressed, reduce the leader’s Limit by 3, generate +3 additional Complications, and reduce the associated attribute by 1.

**Epic** threats require extreme and focused effort to address. They require 6 to 10 progress to resolve. For each prosperity sequence they are unaddressed, reduce the leader’s Limit by 3, generate +3 additional Complications, and reduce the associated attribute by 1d4.

# Battle, Influence, and Prosperity