

MEDIEVAL FANTASY

CORE RULEBOOK



By Peter Hesseloe

Credits

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CHAPTER 1.0.0

INTRODUCTION



I begyndelsen...

I begyndelsen var Keski-Ajån et stort samlet kontinent. Det mægtige verdenstræ Heimurinn's rødder strakte sig langt både under og over jorden og bandt alting sammen. Kronen dækkede himlen så langt øjet rakte og holdt himmelhvelvet på plads. Under dette træ vågnede de 5 kendte guder, som de første i verden, til live ved solens varme stråler. De vidste at solen Rana var deres far. Men de kendte ikke deres moder Aitua, som var skæbnens gudinde.

Disse var ildens gud Lustru, vandets gudinde Lacus, luftens gud Aeriur, jordens gudinde Tellus samt Divus - sjælens og selvets Gud. De var alle i perfekt balance med sig selv og deres omgivelser, og levede i mange år i fred og fordragelighed med hverandre trods deres store modsætninger i væsen, element og udseende. Men lykken varede ikke ved...

Divus opdagede, takket være sin særlige indsigt i sindet, at guderne langsomt ældedes og svækkedes. Han rådførte sig med sin fader. Rana kunne konstatere, at Divus havde ret. Hans børn var i fare for en dag at svinde bort og det var en ubærlig tanke. Han foreslog at de befolkede verden med skabninger, som besad en kim af deres kraft. Kimen skulle næres ved tilhængernes livsenergi og dermed styrke guderne og holde dem evigt unge. Divus kaldte de øvrige guder til sig, og efter en kort rådslagning blev de enige om at følge Ranas råd.

Tellus og Divus, som havde valgt at danne par, gav da sammen liv til en datter, som de navngav Cineal. Hun blev naturens gudinde og fandt bolig i det store verdenstræ. Sammen med de andre guder og gudinder pustede hun liv i alle verdens planter og dyr og formede verden som vi kender den i dag med dens mange alsidige miljøer og klimaer.

Efterfølgende begyndte de 5 ældste guder en venskabelig kappestrid om hvem der først kunne skabe et intelligent væsen som besad de bedste egenskaber fra den gud eller gudinde der skabte dem. Rana gav hver et timeglas med sand til 435 år. Deres færdige skabningers gennemsnitlige levealder ville svare til den resterende tid. Efterhånden som kappestriden skred frem blev den stadig mindre venskabelig, da de hver især blev mere og mere opsat på at vinde. Cineal prøvede at mægle mellem dem flere gange, men til sidst måtte hun give op. Langsomt gled de fra hinanden med hvert deres kontinent, idet selv ikke rødderne fra verdenstræet kunne modstå 5 så stærke guders samlede kræfter. Cineal forsøgte af alt sin magt at holde sammen på det hele, men måtte til sidst opgive og stod nu alene tilbage med sit eget stykke land: Asphyxion.

I gudernes kamp om at komme først med skabelsen af et intelligent væsen, var der mange fejlslagne eksperimenter. Væsner, der ikke besad tilstrækkeligt mange af de ønskede egenskaber, kastedes bort. Langt fra alle de kasserede væsner blev dog tilintetgjort og der blev derfor stadig flere af disse fravalgte skabninger. Nogle af dem kender man nu kun igennem eventyr og legender fra svunden tid. Ingen i dag ved om de endnu lever i skjul et fjernt sted eller blot overlever gennem historierne. I visse kredse er der strid om fortolkningen af dette stykke af skabelsen. Nogle mener at de mørke magter skabte disse væsner for at stoppe gudernes skabelsesarbejde. Dette har ligefrem ført til en del krige gennem tiden.

Lustru var den første til at skabe noget. Ud af varm aske og gløder formede han et væsen kaldt Cinerá. Ikke helt tilfreds, men velvidende at han var tæt på, besluttede han at grave sig ned i bjergene. Her fandt han det hårdeste stykke granit som han bragte med sig til sit værksted. Her lagde han stenen på sin ambolt, og begyndte at hamre på den for at teste dens styrke. Den gav sig ikke og var umulig at forme. I vrede knugede han hårdt om stenen, og efter lidt tid begyndte stenen at blive blødere i kanten, og enkelte af de hårde kanter smeltede væk som magma. Så fik han den idé at betragte den som hårdt metal i stedet for at arbejde med den som sten. Ved hjælp af sin flydende magma og sin hammer lykkedes det ham endelig at finde en måde at forme stenen på. En uge arbejdede han på dette, og skabte et væsen, der var hårdt som sten, urokkeligt som bjerget selv og stabilt som en bærende søjle. Da han var færdig med stenen, stillede han den fra sig og beundrede sit værk. Lustru blæste derpå liv i det med sin ånde og beskuede det fra alle leder og kanter. Det var som om noget manglede, men han kunne ikke sætte fingeren på hvad det var. Han kradsede sig frustreret i sit store fyldige skæg, og et par skæghår faldt på hans nye skabning og smeltede sig fast. Det mægtigste skæg voksede ud, og nu vidste han skabningen var perfekt. Efter 165 års hårdt arbejde kunne han glad fremvise skabningen for sin familie og han kaldte væsenet for Dværg.

Da Lacus så, hvad hendes bror havde lavet af en sten, og hvordan denne firkantede og klodsede lille skabning bragte ham glæde, rystede hun opgivende på hovedet. Hun bestemte sig for at vise ham den perfekte skabning, om ikke andet så for at vise ham hvor stor en fejl han havde lavet i sin skabning. Hun kiggede på Keski-Ajån og de skabninger hun allerede havde været med til at skabe, studerede de egenskaber, de hver især besad, og så hvordan naturen i verdens skove skiftede farve som symbol på respekten overfor livets og naturens gang. Hun så også, hvordan piletræerne, i stedet for at knække, blot bøjede sig smidigt for vinden og rejste sig urørte igen, når stormen havde lagt sig. Hun besluttede, at hendes skabning skulle besidde den samme respekt og smidighed. Hun kiggede derpå i skovsøens stille vand og så sit spejlbillede, lagde mærke til det smukke ydre der stirrede tilbage på hende og ideen tog form. Af pil fra foråret flettede hun lemmerne, af mudder fra sumpen om efteråret byggede hun kroppen og hovedet, af det lange græs som sommervinden havde brændt brunt lavede hun håret, af et par vinterbrune bøgeblade lavede hun ørerne. Ansigtet formede hun ud fra sit eget spejlbillede i skovsøen. Lacus forsøgte at puste liv i sin skabning, men livets glød var så flygtig som ringe i vandet. Så snart hun stoppede

med at puste forsvandt den. Hun grublede længe over dette og fandt til sidst en løsning. Hun skabte en boble med sin ånde, så væsnet nærmedes af hendes livskraft. Som en sidegevinst reducerede det kropsvægten for hendes perfekte skabning. 30 år senere end sin bror kunne hun stolt vise skabningen til sin familie. Hun kaldte den Elver.

Selvom hendes to søskende var overbevist om, at deres skabninger var perfekte, så Tellus et alvorligt problem. De to nye racer havde arvet overbevisningen om deres egen perfektion fra deres skaber. Hun forudså at de ville komme til at hade hinanden. Det ville uundgåeligt føre til krig. Hvad kunne hun gøre? På hvilken måde kunne hun sørge for, at de ikke ville ødelægge hinanden og hendes elskede jord? Hun gik i gang med at udtænke en plan for en ny race, der var godmodig, glad og ukuelig. En race der ikke udadtil virkede overlegen i forhold til de andre, men kunne fungere som mellemmand. Tellus besluttede at hendes skabning skulle være lavere end dværgen, så ingen af racerne kunne opfatte den som en trussel. Den skulle både elske hjemmet og verden. Hun grublede over, hvordan det var muligt at kombinere. Hun sad i et helt år og grublede, mens hun ubevidst stirrede på en bærbusk, der blomstrede, gav frugt og gik i dvale, og blomstrede igen. Det inspirerede hende til at bruge årets cyklus. Foråret som et barn, nysgerrig og åben over for det meste. Sommer som ung, med oplevelser og mere styr på verden. Efteråret, hvor man skal hjem og plukke frugten af sin anstrengelser. Vinteren, hvor man forbereder sig på næste cyklus. Hun fandt de ingredienserne i jorden, formede dem ud fra sine ønsker og befalede den at have liv. Svaret var et melodisk ”som de ønsker ædle frue” og halvingen var hermed skabt, 150 år efter at hendes søster havde fremvist sin skabning.

Aerius arbejdede mest med at indhente viden om alting i verden. Intet måtte gå hans næse ustuderet forbi. Han tog ikke den indbyrdes kappestrid med sine søskende så alvorligt, for det var jo bare en leg. Efterhånden som tiden gik, blev det dog sværere for ham at følge med i deres eksperimenter. Derfor besluttede han til sidst alligevel at deltage i konkurrencen. Hans skabning skulle være en, der kunne tjene ham, være videbegærlig og analyserende som ham og interessere sig for tre ting: Viden, mere viden og frem for alt viden. Hvilken skabning kunne gøre dette? De ting, han ønskede, var ikke noget der fandtes i en eksisterende skabning, så han måtte tilbage til tegnebrættet. Han lavede lister og tegninger over, hvad der måske kunne fungere, og prøvede hver ny idé af i et væsen. Efter mange eksperimenter endte Aerius til sidst med en detaljeret plan for sit perfekte væsen. Hans skabning var lille af størrelse, så den kunne besøge steder, der ellers var svære at få adgang til. Den var fra naturens side nysgerrig, med en brændende lyst til at se det ukendte og gøre nye opdagelser. Endelig besad den en naturlig skepsis, for bedre at kunne vurdere de indtryk, sanserne opfattede. Men hvordan skulle han nu skabe den? For at gøre den perfekt tilkaldte han den hvirvlende østenvind, der medbragte støv fra fjerne verdensdele. Ud af støvet formede han sin perfekte skabning. Søndenvinden brugte han til at fylde sin skabning med varme og liv. Nordenvindens brugte han til at forme det kølige og skarpe sind. Vestenvinden pumpede eventyrlyst ind i skabningen. 15 år efter at Tellus skabte halvingen, stod han med sit mesterværk. Aerius så på den med stolthed og gav den navnet Gnom.

Divus betragtede tålmodigt sine søskende. Han var sikker på, at hvis han så hvad de andre lavede, ville han kunne overgå dem. Da de hver især havde lavet en race gik han i gang. Som sin søster ønskede han en skabning, der gik godt i spænd med de andre racer, men med en anden indgangsvinkel: De skulle ikke fedtes for, men ledes! Han tog ånden fra en alfa-ulv og gemte den til senere brug. Han havde ligeledes brug for styrke, som han fandt hos bjørnen. Han ønskede at finde stædighed og en vilje, der nærmede sig dumdristighed. Igen gik han på jagt, men dette var straks sværere. Divus ledte længe og endte ved et æsel. Netop som han skulle til at gemme dets ånd, bemærkede han geden og indfangede den i stedet. Ørnens overblik og en vildsvinmoders medfølelse var de sidste elementer, han havde brug. Disse fem ånder smeltede han sammen i en skabning og lod det første menneske være et spejlbillede af sig selv. Divus' måde at arbejde på medførte dog, at mange af dyrenes andre evner også fik plads i skabningen. Det medførte en enorm mangfoldighed hos den nye race. Mennesket var den sidst ankomne af gudernes perfekte skabninger og fødtes med en overbevisning om sin egen overlegenhed. Men da skabelsen tog hele 375 år, betalte mennesket med en stærkt begrænset levealder.

Skæbnegudinden Aitua skabte derpå i hemmelighed et væsen, med evnen til at tage skikkelse af et hvert af de 5 guders skabninger, således at han kunne færdes frit og ubemærket. Han skulle holde styr på elementernes rasen og sørge for at den kim af guddommelig energi, som de havde givet skabningerne, ikke kom ud af kontrol. Desværre blev de 5 guder rasende da de opdagede væsnet. Hver af dem mistænkte, at det var en af de andre der havde skabt ham for at overgå eller sabotere deres unikke skabning. For at overkomme mistroen enedes de om at forbande væsnet med evigt liv og til at hans sjæl oplugte kaosset og elementernes rasen fuldstændig. Dette bevirker, at hans omskiftelige humør påvirker miljø og klima i området, så ingen ved hvilket vejr det bliver i morgen, om det bliver iskoldt eller brændende varmt. Det er ham vi kender som storkongens rådgiver og ærke-troldmand i dag.

Da endelig guderne havde skabt deres ypperligste væsner, stoppede de deres forsøg. De væsener, der havde overlevet at blive kasseret, gjorde oprør. Hvis guderne ikke ville vide af dem, skulle de heller ikke nyde godt af deres foretrukne skabninger. De svor ikke at hvile før disse fem racer var helt udsluttet. Efterhånden som tiden gik gled monstrene fra hinanden og de fik sværere ved at kommunikere. Til sidst havde de også glemt deres svorne ed. Dog havde de stadig et indgroet had til de fem racer, og så dem enten som dødsfjender eller bytte.

Mange tusinde år senere fik Solen Rana sammen med månen Mesiac også to børn: Nimm og Nyx. De to søskende var så forskellige som dag og nat, liv og død, og blev også gud og gudinde herfor. De to begyndte snart at strides. Da Rana prøvede at stoppe dem, besluttede Nyx at den ikke ville finde fred i sjælen før den havde dræbt sin far og dermed skabt evig nat i verden. Stridighederne, som varede i flere tusinde år, resulterede i jordskælv, flodbølger og vulkanudbrud, som skæmmede verden. I mellemtiden blev Rana og Mesiacs navne glemt. I stedet opstod myter om at de andre guder havde skabt solen og månen. Især nævntes Lustru som solens mulige skaber og Nyx i forbindelse med månen.

Nimm og Nyx indså efter de lange kampe, at de var jævnbyrdige. I desperation inddrog de nu de levende væsner i Keski-Ajân. De mørkeste sjæle sluttede sig til Nyx mens de lyseste udvalgte til Nimms hær. Den mørkeste sjæl Nyx fandt i verden hed Erebus og blev udnævnt til Mørkets fyrste og leder af nattens hær. Ligeledes fandt Nimm den lyseste sjæl i verden, Eriel, Lysets fyrstinde og leder af dagens hær. Stridighederne lagde størstedelen af kontinenterne i ruiner. Kun hovedstæderne med deres tykke mure modstod de fleste af ødelæggelserne.

Mange af verdens nedskrevne legender og overleveringer gik tabt. Gamle skrifter og især bøger er et sjældent syn, og bogbinderiets kunst er et meget sjældent håndværk. De få gamle bøger, der findes i dag, er enten at finde hos de rigeste i samfundet eller på magi-akademierne. Mørkets magter tiltrækkes af oldgammel viden og magi, især hvis begge er at finde i en genstand eller et relikvie. De opsøger sådanne genstande og forsøger at opløse deres kraft eller holde dem væk fra lysets kræfter i håb om at påvirke balancen til fordel for Nyx.

De enorme ødelæggelser fik til sidst guderne til at danne fælles front mod de to søskende og kræve, at stridighederne i Keski-Ajân kun måtte foregå en gang hvert årtusinde. De skabte et rige kaldet Skæbnelandet, hvor deres skabninger kom hen, når de døde. Her boede de uden frygt for sygdom, fattigdom eller sult, indtil de enten blev genfødt i Keski-Ajân eller ophøjet til krigere i én af de to hære. I bunden af en dal nær indgangen skabte de en stor majestætisk slette, kaldet Aaziltøren. Man kunne kun finde dertil, hvis Aitua, skæbnens gudinde, viste vej. Hun er kun synlig for de døde og kun få - dødelige såvel som udødelige - kender til hendes eksistens.

På sletten kunne hærene kæmpe i den mellemliggende tid. Nyx gik med til dette mod at Keski-Ajân blev henlagt i mørke ved at lade Rana blive forblindet under hele fejden i verden. Samtidig forhandlede Nimm sig frem til, at fejderne måtte kun vare i 50 år, så livet og skønheden i Keski-Ajân havde en bedre chance for at redde sig igennem. Cineal beskyttede sine skabninger og naturen mod det længerevarende mørke ved at velsigne dem med evnen til at gå i dvale, indtil Rana strålede igen. Den overordnede universelle balance i størrelsen af de to hære sikrer, at der aldrig er en afgørende sejr for én af de to parter.

Årtusinder senere...

Efter at have levet i gudernes verden i mange årtusinder skabte dværgene, anført af deres første konge Delzak, riget Urbo Fajro. Nogle hundrede år før den næste solformørkelse i Keski-Ajân, udgravedes det bjerg, hvor man senere anlagde en ny hovedstad, opkaldt efter landets grundlægger. Orin, en højt respekteret dværg, der havde udmærket sig ved sit noget nær geniale bygningsarbejde, ledte en lille flok højtuddannede konstruktører og arbejdere, der arbejdede i bjergets mørke dyb. For hver dag trængte de længere ned i undergrunden, der bestod af ældgamle, let gyldne sten, der ikke krævede meget oplysning for at give et kraftigt genskær. Man skulle næsten tro, at man befandt sig udendørs og ikke langt under jordens overflade. Stenene var hårde, men lette at arbejde med, og ofte fandt dværgene både ædelstene og diamanter i bjergets rødder, hvilket kun øgede incitamentet for at grave videre. Disse værdifulde fund gjorde dog også, at grådigheden for hver eneste dag voksede i Orins sind. Han beordrede derfor sine mænd til at grave stadigt hurtigere og dybere.

Grådigheden viste sig at blive Orins endeligt. Han førte selv an og hurtigere end nogen anden hakkede han nådesløst i bjergets rødder, der for hvert slag syntes at vande sig og sukke højt i smerte. Havde dværgene ikke været så begærlige havde de nok lyttet til det gamle bjergs advarsler, men Orins besættelse var som en febevildelse, der bredte sig til hans mænd. Det siges, at da Orin en vintermorgen hastigt og stadig mere gerrigt arbejdede sig dybere ned, vækkede han en ældgammel vrede, et forhistorisk væsen. Orins arbejdere kom styrtende, da de hørte ekkoet af deres arbejdsgivers skrig. De nåede frem tids nok til at se et sort væsen fortære det sidste af ham i sit store, rygende gab. De gyldne sten var røde af Orins blod og hans dødsskrig hang endnu som et ekko i gangene. En af arbejderne angreb uhyret og stak det med sin klinge. Væsenet udstødte et højt brøl, der fik dværgene til at stivne af rædsel. Hvor kniven sad fast, vældede det ud med en rygende væske, der spildtes på arbejderens fødder. I ubegribelig smerte skreg han og sank i knæ, da uhyrets blod ætsede hans fødder bort på et øjeblik. Væsenet rystede sig, så klingens kastedes bort. Derpå fortærede det den døende arbejder på sekunder, og spyttede hans knoglerester ud, så de landede foran de resterende dværge. Monsteret kastede sit hoved tilbage og brølede endnu højere end før; for dværgene var der ingen tvivl om, at det lo. Det blottede sine enorme tænder, hvori der endnu sad røde trevler, i et grin, hvorefter den betragtede dværgene med sammenknebne, sorte øjne. Dværgene kastede sig hovedkulds gennem gangene for at undslippe dette grusomme væsen, men det forfulgte og indhentede med lethed de fleste af dem. De få overlevende fortalte Kong Belrak, at væsenet var større end noget andet dyr, de nogensinde havde set. Det var dækket af blanke sorte skæl og havde reptillignende fødder med lange, skarpe kløer. Kongen sendte straks en deling af sine mænd

ned i bjergets dyb for at bekæmpe dette uhyre, men kun ganske få vendte tilbage igen. De var så rædselsslagne, at det tog flere uger at få et fornuftigt ord ud af dem. De fortalte, at der havde siddet halvvrådne lig mellem væsenets skæl og at dets svovllugtende ånde brændte alt bort, hvis man kom for nær. Soldaterne havde bemærket, at uhyret syntes at vokse både i størrelse og styrke for hvert liv, det tog og at det snedigt og i stilhed ventede på, at man opsøgte det. Delzaks dygtigste magikere kom til kort, for deres magi prellede af på det mørke væsen, der opslugte magikernes mana og brugte det til at helbrede sig selv. Uden mana var magikerne hjælpeløse over for uhyrets kløer og tænder, og de blev dræbt endnu hurtigere end de dygtige krigere.

Monsteret fik hurtigt tilnavnet Darackh, som betød "Rædsel" på dværgenes ældgamle sprog. Kongen sendte gang på gang sine dygtigste krigere ned i bjergets dyb for at bekæmpe uhyret, men kongen så hvordan hans hær gradvist forsvandt til uhyrets glubende appetit over de næste måneder. Man sagde, at Darackh nu havde bevæget sig højere op i bjerget og man begyndte at frygte for Delzaks overlevelse. Derfor begyndte kongen at tilrettelægge evakueringsplaner, i fald den dag kom, at de alle måtte flygte ud i Urbo Fajros vilde landskab.

Kong Belrak kontaktede i ren desperation Storkonge Nalthic af Asphyxion, og tryglede ham om hjælp, til trods for, at de to havde ry for ikke at kunne udstå hinanden. Kong Nalthic øjnede en mulighed for at forbedre forholdet mellem de to riger. Han indvilligede derfor og sendte sin magi stormester, Ansell Morgu, ledsaget af sin bedste kriger, Johnas Harring til Delzak. Selvom de to legender rejste hurtigere end andre, følte ventetiden alligevel uendelig lang for den angstramte by. Ansell og Harring blev modtaget med stor taknemmelighed og hengivenhed, og man tilbød dem hvile efter rejsens strabadser, men menneskene ville hellere høre om Darackh fra de overlevende. De blev derfor ført ind i den smukke tronsal, hvor man opvartede dem med delikatesser, mens de hørte historierne. Med jævne mellemrum så man Harring og Ansell Morgu udveksle dystre blikke, men ingen af dem blev opfyldt af den samme rædsel, der havde grebet Delzaks indbyggere. Da historien var slut, rejste menneskene sig næsten samtidigt og bad dværgene vise sig vej ned i dybet. Dværgene kiggede forskrækkede på hinanden, tydeligvis i håbet om at en eller anden ville melde sig frivilligt. Da det ikke skete, tog Kong Belrak sagen i egne hænder og råbte med klar røst, at han ville vise vejen. Kong Belrak, der var gammel og plaget af gigt, rejste sig uden at vise tegn på svaghed og ledte vejen. Ansell Morgus ansigtsudtryk blev mørkere og mørkere, desto nærmere de kom uhyrets opholdssted, og han fortalte, at han fornemmede en ondskab så kraftig, at den måtte tilhøre den mørkeste del af Skæbnelandet. Kong Belrak blev rædselsslagen ved hans ord og vaklede på sine gamle ben, så Harring måtte gribe ham for at undgå, at kongen skulle falde på de hårde sten. Da lyset forsvandt i gangene vendte Ansell sig mod kongen og fortalte ham, at han skulle vende tilbage til sit folk. Knap havde troldmanden sagt sætningen, før kongen stavrede tilbage med en fart, man ellers havde troet umulig for den gamle mand.

Den frygtindgydende og dystre Darackh, der længe havde vidst, at menneskene var på vej, trådte ud af mørket. Harring betragtede uhyret med en blanding af rædsel og foragt. Den tvedelte tunge hvislede onde ord på et urgammelt sprog, som Harring ikke forstod. Alligevel havde de en hypnotisk effekt på ham, og han stod som forstenet. Ansell forstod derimod udmærket, hvad Darackh hvislede. Han havde ingenlunde i sinde at underkaste sig uhyret, og fik tvunget Harring ud af trancen. Da Darackh opdagede dette, brølede det ondskabsfulde monster rasende, blottede sine skarpe tænder og fór frem i et hurtigt angreb.

Kampen, der fulgte, var lang, brutal og blodig, men eftersom ingen så den, kendes de enkelte detaljer kun af Harring og Ansell. Tre dage efter, at Kong Belrak havde ledt menneskene ned til uhyret, kom Ansell og Harring vaklende tilbage. Begge havde mange, dybe sår, der blødte voldsomt og var svært forbrændt og led af høj feber. Dværgene tog sig af dem, det bedste de havde lært, men det varede flere uger, før menneskene var raske nok til at fortælle, hvad der var sket.

Ansell beskrev, hvordan kampen bølgede frem og tilbage i dagevis. Harring og han var nær bukket under for uhyrets enorme styrke og de mareridtsagtige visioner, det plantede i deres sind. De indså dog til sidst, at intet væsen af denne verden kunne dræbe Darackh. Harring bar et sværd, kraftigt velsignet af Ansell's magi. Det var lykkedes at stikke det så dybt i Darackhs bug, at monsteret var ude af stand til selv at kunne trække det ud. Dværgene var målløse og fulde af ærefrygt, for denne handling havde kostet ham dyrt. Monsterets blod havde ætset højre arm bort.

Darackh flygtede dybt ned i bjerget. En tid havde menneskene fulgt den, indtil de selv var for udmattede til at fortsætte. Ansell vurderede, at uhyret ville være for svækket til at angribe igen, så længe sværdet sad begravet i dets bug. Harring havde set særdeles kostbare ædelstene i dybet, og ifølge Ansell kunne dværgene roligt genoptage minedriften, bare de ikke gravede for dybt. Historien om Harrings gerning spredtes over hele Keski-Ajån og gjorde ham til en legende: Den dygtige menneskekriger, der gav sin sværdarm, ikke for sine nærmeste, men for at redde fremmede dværge.

Dværgene holdt en storslået fest til ære for menneskene og belønnede dem rigt med ædelstene fra skatkammeret. Harring vidste, at karrieren som kriger var overstået. Han tog gladelig imod de kostbare sten, der kunne hjælpe med at forsørge familien hjemme i Asphyxion. Ansell, havde derimod ikke meget til overs for jordens materielle gaver. Han takkede dværgene og lod henkastet stenene falde ned i sin taske.

Kong Belrak, der var ude af sig selv af lykke over sit held, mente det passende også at vise Kong Nalthic sin taknemmelighed over at denne havde sendt Asphyxions bedste mænd. Han kaldte sine absolut bedste håndværkere til sig:

Gilgirn, Reigal, Faraim, Durgen og Maral. Sammen skulle de til Kong Nalthic smede en krone så smuk, at Keski-Ajån ikke havde set dens lige før. Samtidig skulle de også give kronen magiske kræfter, der kunne hjælpe Asphyxions vise konge i fremtiden. Netop disse dværge var hver især verdenskendte for deres evne til at smede fantastiske våben og smykker. Derfor regnedes det for en stor ære og en passende gestus at belønne Kong Nalthic med en gave, de havde smedet.

De fem dværge vandrede ned i det mørke, hvor det sorte væsen kort forinden blev bekæmpet. De fandt hvad de søgte; seks ædelstene, hvis kostbarhed slog alt andet, de nogensinde var stødt på. Af en yderst sjælden, og hidtil ukendt, legering af platin og hvidguld smededes selve kronen, der med sine udsøgte detaljer gjorde den til et prægtigt mesterværk. Da dette var gjort fæstnede man stenene, der hver især repræsenterede et element og en retning. Mod syd placeredes en flammerød rubin, der repræsenterede guden Lustrø, hvis element var ild. Mod vest påsattes en havblå safir for at hylde gudinden Lacus, der repræsenterede vand. En flot og klar topas sættes i retningen øst for at hylde guden Aerijs, der repræsenterede vind. Forrest flankeredes kronen af to sten; til venstre en skinnende lilla ametyst, der i guden Divus' billede bragte hyldest til ånden og til højre en funkende, grøn smaragd, der på vegne af gudinden Cineal, stod for naturen. Mellem de to sten sættes, for at repræsentere nord, en smuk, brunlig diamant, der i gudinden Tellus' billede hædrede jorden.

De fem dværge legendariske smedekunst fangede elementernes magi i hver sin ædelsten. Smedekundskaben de brugte er siden gået tabt. Hvert element har både positive og negative energier, og kun kongeligt blod er beskyttet mod den negative påvirkning. Guderne værdsatte dværgenes enestående arbejde og velsignede deres mesterværk. Den samlede krone giver en kongelig bærer immunitet mod sygdom og forgiftning. Desuden skænker den evig ungdom, ved at rette ældningsprocessen mod en alder omkring det 30. år for et menneske, eller den tilsvarende alder for andre racer. Såfremt bæreren af kronen ikke var af kongeligt blod, ville vedkommende stadig være underlagt elementerne på godt og ondt, men ville ikke være påvirket af gudernes velsignelse.

Kronen blev, under en storslået ceremoni i Asphyxion, foræret til Kong Nalthic. Det siges, at han blev så beæret over at modtage denne gave, at han tilkendegav, at alle fortidige stridigheder mellem mennesker og dværge nu var glemt. Deres nye alliance ville være så stærk som det blodsband, der holder familier samlet. Da Kong Nalthic mange år senere trættes af at regere, gav han kronen videre til sin søn, Dulcitus, der i dag regerer som Storkonge af Asphyxion og det samlede Keski-Ajån.

Ikke meget har ændret sig i dværgenes land siden dengang, kronen blev smedet. Urbo Fajro er stadig kendetegnet ved høje, stejle bjerge, iklædt sneens ynde foruden dybe dale med tætte, lave skove og buskadser. Terrænet er svært tilgængeligt og iskoldt størstedelen af tiden, men dværgene, der fra naturens side er skabt stærke og robuste finder det ideelt. Besøgende fra andre kontinenter er en sjældenhed, for at rejse gennem dværgenes rige er ikke bare farligt, det tager også flere måneder at komme gennem det barske landskab. Snestorme kan komme som lyn fra en klar himmel og eftersom horisonten er et sjældent syn sker det let, at selv de bedste vejvisere mister overblikket, hvilket som oftest er fatalt for vejviseren og hans selskab.

Dværgenes hovedstad, Delzak, er imponerende af størrelse og rigdom. Opkaldt efter dværgenes første konge, ligger den dybt inde i hjertet af det største af bjergene. Der findes utallige ind- og udgange til byen, men de fleste er kun kendt af dværge selv, hvorfor Delzak fremstår stort set uberørt af angrebene ved den sidste solformørkelse, der ellers lagde land og rige øde verden over. Delzak er smuk, mørk og består af store, prægtigt udhuggede sale med store stensøjler, der stolt knejser mod det høje loft. Overalt hænger tændte fakler, der giver korridorerne og de mange sale et varmt og rødt skær. Sollyset trænger aldrig gennem de massive stenvægge, hvorfor de få elvere og mennesker, der har besøgt Delzak mistrivedes ganske forfærdeligt i løbet af kort tid. Dværge lærer af disse "underlegne" racers svaghed, og har gennem tiden flere gange krævet at holde møder med de andre rigers konger i netop Delzak. Ikke blot fordi de finder de andres svaghed underholdende, men de besøgende indgår gerne hurtigt og ukritisk forlig for at slippe ud i den friske luft og sollyset.

I centrum af byen ligger kongens residens. Den består af en audienssal, omgivet af et antal af mindre sale til både de kongelige og deres tjenestefolk. Det er i denne audienssal, svagt oplyst af fakler, kongen normalt tager imod sine gæster. Af taktiske grunde har dværge udhugget en øvre sal, som der kun er adgang til gennem en hemmelig gang fra audienssalen. I den øverste sal er der i loftet et cirkelformet hul hele vejen op til bjergets top, hvor solens stråler får lov at trænge ned og oplyse alt. Langs væggene er der opsat spejle, der reflekterer lyset, så hvert et hjørne er fuldt oplyst. Her vil ingen af de mørke væsner fra dybderne nogensinde vove sig ind. Væggene, søjlerne og gulvene er fantastisk smukt udskåret med kunstfærdige detaljer, og tronsalen indgyder ærefrygt hos enhver. Det kraftige, hvide sollys blænder så voldsomt, at man, efter at have bevæget sig rundt i bjergets mørke, kunne tro, at der sad en gud på den store stentrone. I denne sal møder kongen dog kun gæster, mod hvem han er særlig venligt stemt eller virkelig skal imponere.

Kong Durgal, hvis slægt kan spores helt tilbage til Kong Belrak, har regeret de sidste 150 år. Selvom han er ved at blive gammel, er arvefølgen er sikret; Kong Durgal har sammen med Dronning Tholi fået to sønner og to døtre.

Dronningen var en robust kvinde med et helbred som bjergets rødder. Hun blev dog syg under solformørkelsen og døde inden krigen var forbi. Hvad hun fejlede, forbliver et mysterium. Der går rygter om, at hun blev forgiftet, og at giften i virkeligheden var tiltænkt hendes mand. Men hvem kunne dog have interesse i at forgifte de kongelige?

Sønnerne er de ældste og er desuden tvillinger - en uforudset begivenhed, der gjorde arvefølgen uklar. Hvem skulle overtage tronen, når deres far abdicerede eller døde? Tvivlen har gjort Bazgal og Bolrim til hinandens rivaler fra første åndedrag. Ikke engang som små kunne de enes. Mange erindrer synet af to børn, der vredt og med feje tricks bekrigede hinanden i korridorerne. Snart havde den ene overtaget, snart den anden. Deres forældre var nødt til at lade dem sove hver for sig, så stridighederne ikke fortsatte om natten. Dermed brød de den urgamle tradition med, at børnene sov i samme værelse indtil teenageårene.

Tvillingerne voksede op og blev stærke, robuste og intelligente. Begge fik de flotte, beundringsværdige skæg som det sig hør og bør for dværge, og begge blev de af hunkøn anset for at være attråværdige. De lignede hinanden ganske meget, men kiggede man ordentligt efter kunne man godt se forskel, selvom deres brune skæg dækkede det meste af ansigtet. Bolrim havde altid været en anelse mere blid af sind og det sås, især i sammenligning med Bazgal, der i en tidlig alder begyndte at få vrede linjer omkring de brune øjne.

For fem år siden indkaldte Kong Durgal til forsamling blandt Delzaks adelige og i tronsalen bekendtgjorde han med høj røst, at han havde i sinde at krone Prins Bolrim til konge dagen efter. Bolrim bøjede ærbødigt hovedet i taknemmelighed og Prins Bazgal valgte hurtigt at gøre det samme i behørig respekt for sin fader og sin bror, morgendagens nye konge. Samme aften lod Prins Bazgal til at være i vældig godt humør. Han indhentede sin bror en times tid efter bekendtgørelsen i tronsalen og fortalte ham, at han var glad for, at det endelig var besluttet hvem der skulle være konge. Det lettede en byrde fra hans skuldre, der havde vejet godt til i mange år. Han foreslog, at de fandt et sted at få en øl for at fejre, at deres rivalisering af hinanden endelig var overstået og at de nu bare kunne være brødre. De fandt en kro og begyndte at drikke; begge var de vant til øl og de drak derfor godt til. En dværgekvinde kom ind i kroen og Bolrim fulgte hende straks med øjnene, med åben mund og øl i skægget. Hun havde langt rødbrunt hår, der gik ned til taljen, brede, vuggende hofter, slank talje og en kavaler gang, der ville få selv en elvermand til at kigge en ekstra gang. Bazgal lo hjerteligt af sin brors åbenlyse betagelse, kaldte kvinden til sig og introducerede hende for Bolrim. Tilsyneladende kendte Bazgal og kvinden, hvis navn var Makara, hinanden vældig godt, men hun syntes at kigge mere efter Bolrim end Bazgal, hvilket Bolrim var yderst tilfreds med. Ivrig efter at imponere hende drak han mere og mere mens han fortalte sjove historier, der fik Makara til at le så højt, at Bolrim følte sig sikker på sejr. Han opdagede end ikke, at Bazgal havde forladt ham, så optaget var han af den yndige Makara. Han endte med at tilbringe natten hos hende.

Da kroningsceremonien skulle stå næste dag var Prins Bolrim ikke dukket op. Kongen, Prins Bazgal og byens adelige ventede en time inden et eftersøgningshold blev sendt ud for at finde ham. De fandt ham i Makaras hus i dyb søvn, nøgen og snorkende. Kong Durgal blev rasende da man fortalte ham om hans søns udskejelser, og han bekendtgjorde på stedet, at Prins Bolrim alligevel ikke skulle være konge. Bazgal smilede lumsk i skægget, sikker på, at æren ville tilfalde ham i stedet. Kong Durgal, der hurtigt gennemskuede, at dette var Bazgals værk, havde dog andre planer.

Senere samme dag indkaldte han igen folk til samling og han råbte med dyb røst, så alle i nærheden kunne høre ham, at han ikke var sikker på, at nogen af hans sønner var parate til at varetage dværgenes interesser. Derfor skulle de gennemgå en prøve, som det ikke var sikkert, at nogen af dem kunne bestå. De skulle finde den krone, som dværgene havde smedet til storkongen mange år forinden, og som var blevet stjålet for ti år siden. Kong Durgal gav sine sønner femten år til at vende tilbage med kronen; kunne de ikke det, ville han krone den ældste af sine døtre, Garbryn, til dronning af Urbo Fajro i stedet.

Tvillingerne råbte op i forfærdelse og mente, at deres faders dom var højst uretfærdig. De ville have kastet sig næsegrus for deres fader og tigget ham om at ombestemme sig, hvis ikke deres æreskodeks - og deres stolthed - havde forhindret dem deri. Da de forlod salen kiggede de end ikke på hinanden; de foragtede hinanden for meget til at kunne ytre blot et enkelt ord. Det siges, at intensiteten af deres følelser kunne fornemmes af alle de tilstedeværende, der blev dybt berørt af brødrenes gensidige had. Prinsesse Garbryn foragtede sine brødres reaktion, og vendte dem ryggen. Prinsessen, der efter sigende aldrig har ønsket at regere, har flere gange bedt sin fader finde en anden til at varetage kronens interesser, i fald brødrenes foretagende ikke lykkes, men kongens vilje er ubøjelig. Den sorthårede prinsesse er vældig populær blandt sit folk og i Delzaks kroge er man begyndt at hviske om, at hun - netop på grund af sin jordbundethed og manglende herskesyge - måske i virkeligheden er den bedst egnede til at regere Urbo Fajro. I Delzaks mørke undergrund er der endda rygter om, at visse dværge ønsker at brødrene skal fejle. Måske vil de endda gå så langt som til at likvidere brødrene for at få kronet Garbryn så hurtigt som muligt. Dette er dog ikke alment kendt og kom det kongen for øre ville de involverede blive anklaget for landsforræderi og højst sandsynligt blive henrettet på stedet.

Kongen tillod dem at medbringe, hvad de end fandt passende til turen. Selv da brødrene skulle sammensætte deres følge, var de som små børn: De fór frem og tilbage for at sikre sig, at den ene ikke fik bare en kobbermønt mere den anden. Det resulterede i, at hver prins dagen efter drog af sted med en betragtelig del af hæren foruden rangers, spioner og healere og - selvfølgelig - en større del af mønterne fra skatkammeret, hvilket gjorde kongen både vred og pinligt berørt. I skyndingen glemte prinserne helt at sige farvel til familien. Det efterlod deres højt elskede yngste søster, Yurdred, i tårer. Hun var

stadig et stort barn, så de beskyttede hende mod at blive inddraget i deres stridigheder. Hun løb efter dem og råbte dem an, men brødrene havde så travlt med at komme først ud af Delzak, at de helt overhørte hende.

Bolrim og Bazgal har nu hver for sig ledt efter kronen i fem år, indtil videre uden held. Undervejs har de mistet mange mænd til kulde, sult og sværd, selvom deres følger stadig må betragtes som store. Man fortæller, at tvillingerne ligger søvnløse om natten i frygt for, at den anden i ly af mørket skulle have sendt snigmordere. De gør sig derfor dagligt store anstrengelser i forsøget på at forudsige alt, hvilket kun øger forfølgelsesvanviddet og bitterheden hos dem begge. Det hårde liv på landevejen har sat sine spor på brødrene, der med tiden er blevet mere og mere beregnende og kyniske. De rider nu i rask trav kontinenterne tynde i forsøget på at finde kronen - og dermed få magten i kongeriget. På deres rejse spreder brødrene rædsel, hvor end de kommer frem, og giver hele dværgeracen et dårligt ry.

Det forlyder, at Bolrim bliver mere og mere tilbøjelig til at bruge sværd frem for forhandling. Mere end én person har mistet livet ved at modsætte sig Bolrims ret til at gennemrode hans private ejendele.

Om Bazgal fortælles der også talrige lidet flatterende historier. For et år siden mødte han på en mark i Urhíría en ung, betagende elverkvinde, som han straks ville have. Kvinden afslog hans tilnærmelser, hvorefter Bazgal med et fingerknips fik fire af sine mænd til at slæbe den skrigende kvinde ind i et buskads, hvor han forgreb sig på hende. Herefter red han og hans følge videre, efterladende den forulempede og grædende kvinde. Da Bazgal og hans selskab havde forladt området, flygtede elverkvinden til Arach Nor – elvernes hovedstad, hvor hun omgående fik audiens for elverdronningen. Artanis, der med egne øjne betragtede kvindens iturevne tøj, var kendt for sin handlekraft. Hun sendte hurtigt en større flok elverkrigere og diplomater til Delzak for på pigens vegne at kræve en retfærdig rettergang. Dværgeprinsen syntes at være temmelig beskyttet af sin titel og selvom Kong Durgal lod til at skamme sig på sin søns vegne, havde han tilsyneladende svært ved at finde på en passende erstatning til den forulempede elverkvinde. Således betragter elverne i øjeblikket dværgene med ringeagtelse og vrede. Kong Durgal har dog for nylig sendt en delegation af sted til Urhíría, elvernes land, med en skriftlig undskyldning og en lille samling af ædelstene til kvinden. Forhåbentlig kan det løse den diplomatiske krise, inden det udvikler sig til decideret fjendskab racerne imellem. Det er ikke uden nervøsitet, at de udsendte dværge bevæger sig ind på elvisk territorium og med god grund; selvom elverne endnu ikke har angrebet dværgene, behandles de med udtalt foragt. Måske er det kun et spørgsmål om tid, før en konfrontation vil finde sted, selvom elverdronningen har givet sit folk strenge ordrer om ikke at angribe. Når dværge bevæger sig gennem Urhíría er det derfor ikke usædvanligt, at en større gruppe stærkt bevæbnede elvere følger dem på behørig afstand.

Urhíría, elvernes rige, er dækket af imponerende store skove og marskland. Selvom klimaet ændrer sig i takt med årstiderne, er det nærmest altid behageligt. Det er som om, naturen i sin vælde byder enhver velkommen med en ældgammel mystik, der omkranser hele landet. Uanset hvor man bevæger sig hen bliver man betaget af den ældgamle skønhed, der giver den rejsende lyst til at slå sig ned og aldrig forlade landet igen. Naturen virker særlig stærkt på de letpåvirkelige mennesker, der, hvis de ikke passer på, lader skovens sange fortrylle sig til at lægge våbnene fra sig og overgive sig fuldstændigt til den. De smukkeste historier om evig kærlighed stammer fra Urhíría, for det er som om, selve landet opildner til dette. Barder finder inspiration til kærlighedsviser i elvernes skove og også de smukkeste vuggeviser stammer herfra, for naturens beroligende væsen griber enhver musikalsk sjæl.

Arach Nor, elvernes hovedstad, led – som resten af landet - store kvaler under den sidste solformørkelse. Visse bydele ligger halvt i ruiner, men alligevel må man betages af byens storslåede skønhed, for selv i ødelæggelsen af elvernes prægtige bygningsværker fremstår de endnu smukke. Synet af ruinerne får selv det mest kyniske hjerte til at vånede sig i smerte; at ødelægge noget så smukt er blasfemisk for enhver, der hylder livet. Alligevel ser man leende elverbørn, der med elegant lethed klatrer rundt i de gamle ruiner, så selvom stedet stadig bærer præg af ødelæggelse ser man dog, at livet og lyset stadig har overtaget i Arach Nor.

Man skal blot vende sig om for at se hvordan andre dele af byen stadig står i deres pragt. De høje tårne og tage strækker sig yndefuldt mod himlen. Hvis man lytter godt efter, kan man høre, hvordan den svage brise hvisker historier fra byens storhedstid. Om dagen reflekteres sollyset i bygningernes mange kulørte glasvinduer og skaber et skønt farvespil. Gaderne er brolagt med hvide sten af snekvarts, der om natten reflekterer skåret fra månen og fra de mange kerter på bygningernes vægge. Dette skaber en illusion af at vandre på en gylden bro af lys og skønhed, der sikkert bærer dem gennem byen. Selv inden for bymuren er der grønt - det er som om, elverne har bragt skoven med sig ind i byen. Overalt ser man store, knejsende træer, hvis kroner svajer i vinden og orkidéer, hvis fløjsbløde blade synes at kysse de forbipasserendes ankler. Selvom man overalt er ved at genopbygge det ødelagte, tager det kunstfærdige arbejde tid. Mange elvere har svært ved at glemme de rædsler, de oplevede under solformørkelsen. Kun de elvere, der er født siden hen, synes at besidde det lyse sind, der sædvanligvis kendetegner racen. En af dem, der siges at have sværest ved at slippe fortiden, er den skønne dronning Artanis. Fortællinger om den fagre dronning har bredt sig udover hele Keski-Ajân. Hendes lange, flammerøde hår, de ravgyldne, mandelformede øjne og den porcelænshvide hud, der skinner svagt i skåret fra månen, får mange til at fortabes i skønheden og forelske sig på stedet.

Arach Nor overlevede solformørkelsen på grund af sine store bymure, der holdt de fleste fjender ude. Byen var dog ganske tæt på at falde, da det lykkedes en hel flok af Skæbnelandets krigere at bryde igennem bagporten. Dronning Artanis og hendes mand, Gildor, stod forrest i geledet da fjenderne væltede frem. Begge kæmpede de med styrke og mod som kun helte gør. Dronningens vrede var et fantastisk skue; hendes hår smældede i vinden som flammer, de ravgyldne øjne havde indtaget en dyb orange farve og hendes sværd lynede med en hurtighed og præcision som en sand mester.

Det lykkedes elverne at bekæmpe angriberne, men netop som de sidste var ved at falde, var kongen i et overmodigt øjeblik uforsigtig. En fjendtlig sergent stak sit sværd dybt i kongens bryst. Artanis løb sin mand til undsætning, skrigende af raseri og afmagt. Hun overmandede hurtigt sergenten og han måtte bøde med sit liv.

Kong Gildor blødte voldsomt og var ikke længere ved bevidsthed, da hans hustru samlede ham op og egenhændigt bar ham tilbage til slottet. Alle der nærmede sig blev brutalt skubbet til side og fik ordre på i stedet at hente healere. Dronningens ansigt og hendes vårgrønne, flagrende gevandter skiftede farve til en dyb rød på vej til slottet og hendes sko satte blodige spor hele vejen derop. Først da hun kom indenfor tillod hun byens førende healere at komme til. Gildor var så hårdt såret, at døden kunne indtræffe hvert øjeblik. Kongen var blevet stukket med en klinge fra Skæbnelandet og fordærvet derfra flød i hans blod. Derfor var healerne ikke i stand til at bringe ham til bevidsthed, selvom de reddede hans liv.

I årene, der fulgte, arbejdede dronning Artanis intenst og sammenbidt på at bringe byen tilbage til sin storhedstid.

Nætterne tilbragte hun ved Gildors leje, kun oplyst af måneskinnet, mens hendes tårer vædede kongens ansigt. Man frygtede at dronningen ville miste sin legendariske viljestyrke og lægge sig til at dø ved hans side.

Der er dog pludselig opstået håb; en berejst og berømt elverhealer er netop vendt tilbage med nyt. Den magiske krone, der for ti år siden blev stjålet fra Storkongen i Asphyxion, kunne måske helbrede Gildor. Imidlertid forlød det at kronens dele var spredt ud over Keski-Ajån, og det ville være en vanskelig opgave at finde dem. For første gang i de fyrrer år siden solformørkelsen og episoden spillede der nu et lille håbefuldt smil på dronningens læber. Hun har sendt spioner, rangere og eventyrere ud i alle retninger i forsøget på at finde de omtalte dele af kronen.

Ingen ved dog nøjagtig hvordan dronningen har det i disse dage, for hun betror sig ikke længere til nogen. Man plejede ofte at se hende i selskab med menneskekongen Marice af Vaimlinn, med hvem hun havde et tæt venskab. Hun har dog for nylig, af ukendte årsager, afbrudt enhver forbindelse og taler ikke længere om ham. Man gætter på, at de har skændtes, og at han har gjort noget utilgiveligt.

Vaimlinn er dækket af ørkener, sletter og sumpe, og tilrejsende overvældes ofte af klimaet og landskabet. Man skal nærmest være født og opvokset i landet for rigtigt at værdsætte dets barske skønhed.

At slippe levende gennem ørkenen kræver en erfaren vejviser og oppakning til både dagtimernes ekstreme varme og nattens isnende kulde. Mange foretrækker derfor at tage den sikre, men længere, omvej nær kysten. Vandmanglen og temperaturforskellene er ikke de eneste farer i ørkenen; der fortælles historier om enorme væsener, kaldet Gurunhogr, der lever under det hvide sand og kun kommer op for at jage. Disse grusomme væsener er omgærdet af mystik, fordi så få har overlevet mødet med dem. Man er så godt som chanceløs, hvis én af dem først har udset sig én som sit bytte. Forældre bruger historier om dem til skræk og advarsel, når deres børn ikke makker ret.

Sumpene er vanskelige at krydse, da man som regel står i dynd til anklerne – mange steder dybere, så man skal passe på, hvor man træder. Er man først gennemblødt, varer det ikke længe, før man udmattes og bliver kold. Når solen går ned, kommer store myggesværme frem, på jagt efter frisk blod. Sædvanligvis er deres stik blot årsag til irritation, men det hænder, at de medfører alvorlig feber, der kan vare i dagevis og forårsage bevidstløshed. Uden behandling kan dette være dødbringende. Er man først blevet smittet, vil den vende tilbage af og til. Når man betræder sumpene, er det vigtigt, at bære lange støvler som beskyttelse mod bid fra de mange giftige slanger. Endnu mere skræmmende er dog kæmpeedderkopperne, der gerne forfølger deres bytte igennem længere tid og slår til, når det er udmattet. Til tider anføres de af mystiske væsener, der er halvt edderkop, halvt menneske. Sumpens krokodiller angriber som regel kun mennesker i desperation eller hvis det udsete bytte er svækket. Det sker ikke sjældent, at en krokodille bliver en edderkops måltid eller omvendt. Til trods for farerne er sumpene langt at foretrække over ørkenen.

I forhold til ørken- og sumpområderne er de grønne sletter nærmest et paradys. Her græsser både slanke antiloper og store, sorte bisonokser, hvis kød er særdeles populært i hele Vaimlinn. Der findes store søer, der reflekterer den blå, skyfri himmel og hvis vand er noget af det rene, man overhovedet kan finde. Det flade landskab med sine få, lave træer indeholder en skønhed, som hverken skovens elvere eller halvinger, der er vant til bakkede landskaber, kan forstå. De føler sig udsat og længes efter deres hjemland, hvor det er nemmere at søge tilflugt bag træerne eller forhøjninger. Enkelte af de ellers så uforanderlige elvere lærer dog med tiden at elske landskabet og kunne aldrig drømme om at forlade det igen. De har kastet gamle traditioner og materielle goder fra sig og lever i ét med sletterne, anvender simple våben og er ofte kun iklædt skind. Deres vilde skønhed er medrivende, men disse elvere er sky og man får sjældent lejlighed til at stifte nærmere bekendtskab med dem. Elvernes sprog er velkendt for sin melodiske accent, men dette er ikke tilfældet for sletteelverne. Deres stemmer er blevet dybe og hæse af den tørre vind, der jager over sletterne, og sproget er mere barskt og hårdt.

De, der færdes på sletterne, støder ind imellem på sletteelveren Amroth Amandil, der bærer tydeligt præg af at leve under åben himmel. Hans solbrune ansigt fremhæver de mørke øjne, og vinden leger med hans lange lyse hår, når han kommer ridende på sin brogede hingst. Han er lidt af et mysterium; det ene øjeblik er han der, det næste er han væk. Amroth går klædt i tøj af antilopeskind og hans støvler er lavet af det noget stærkere læder, der kommer fra bisonokserne. Som andre elvere er han slank, men sletterne har præget Amroths udseende gennemgribende; hans muskulatur er veludviklet og han besidder større styrke end de fleste. Hans evner med bue og pil er helt uovertrufne. Efter han engang reddede nogle menneskebørn fra en løbsk bisonokse, ved at skyde den i hjertet på flere hundrede meters afstand, har han opnået heltstatus. Denne gerning førte også til, at han blev udnævnt til ranger i Falenshire, menneskenes hovedstad, der ligger midt på sletterne. Amroth foretrækker dog at leve i ensomhed, og han lader ikke menneskenes beundrende blikke og historier stige sig til hovedet.

Vilde heste og ponyer løber på sletterne i store flokke. Her hvirvler de så meget støv op, at det kan ses på lang afstand. At indfange, tæmme og sælge disse heste er menneskenes største indtægtskilde i Vaimlinn. Det er et farligt erhverv, der hyppigt giver alvorlige skader for de, der varetager jobbet. På sletterne lever også de grå kæmpeulve, som i store kobler tuder, lever og jager sammen i måneskinnet. Selvom der er masser af liv på sletterne, kan man nemt føle sig ensom i sin vandring over dem. Ikke alle kan håndtere slettens særlige natur og for nogle er det en direkte ubehagelig oplevelse. Uanset hvad, er turen over sletterne en uforglemmelig rejse.

Falenshires prægtige bymur er bygget af store klippesten, hentet i ørkenen for flere hundrede år siden. Under solformørkelsen forsøgte mørkets hære af al magt at erobre byen, men den stærke mur holdt dem ude, og sikrede den prægtige stads overlevelse. Man siger at Falenshire var den første by, der blev bygget efter guderne pustede liv i Keski-Ajån. Kong Marice er en høj, stærk konge, tæt på 30 somre. Hans hår er næsten sort og under de tykke øjenbryn mødes man af tindrende, mørkegrønne øjne. Kongens stemme er på samme tid dyb og silkeblød, og når han ler, giver hans smittende latter genlyd i hele slottet. Marice har været konge i et årti. Han overtog tronen fra sin aldrende far, der havde mistet lysten til at regere. Marice blev født af en ganske ung mor; knap atten var hun, da hun fødte ham, Hun døde i barselsengen inden hun nåede at navngive sin søn. Den gamle konge, Pieter, var en skørtejæger, der havde adskillige elskerinder både før og efter sin unge dronnings død. Marice har derfor det meste af sit liv været omringet af skiftende kvinder, der forsøgte at indtage en moderlig rolle overfor ham. Den unge prins besad tidligt samme kvindetække som sin fader. Ingen af de mange kvinder, der indtil nu har besøgt hans soveværelse, har imponeret Marice tilstrækkeligt til, at han har ønsket at opgive sin status som ungarl.

Marice har fulgt sin faders eksempel og leder riget med stor autoritet og konsekvens. Selvom han afskyr de utallige, langtrukne forhandlinger med andre rigers ledere, kan man altid regne med hans tilstedeværelse. Han møder frem i stiveste puds, men bruger meget energi på at kontrollere sin nervøsitet. Det siges, at årsagen til den unge mands evige anspændthed skal findes hos den smukke Artanis, dronning af elverriget Urhíria.

Marice var lige fyldt 17 da han så hende første gang. Den gamle Kong Pieter tog ham med til et forhandlingsmøde angående årets kommende skatter i staden Asphyxion, Marice ænsede dog intet andet end Artanis' skønhed. Hun sad overfor ham på den udendørs terrasse i forårsbrisen, der kælent fik de røde lokker til at vugge omkring det pragtfulde, stolte ansigt. Når hun af og til så i hans retning, følte han sit hjerte gå våndefuldt i stå. Hendes ravgyldne øjne syntes på samme tid at hvile på ham i evigheder og blot en brøkdæl af et sekund. Hver gang hendes blik vandrede videre blev han opfyldt af både lettelse og bitterhed; han ønskede hendes fulde opmærksomhed, også selvom den var ham så intens, at det gjorde helt ondt.

Det varede et år, før han så hende igen. Nu var han ikke bare voksen, men han var netop blevet konge. Hun måtte da falde for ham, sådan som alle andre kvinder gjorde! Han såredes dybt da han indså, at Artanis, ligesom året før, respektfuldt lyttede til, hvad han sagde, men gav ham samme behandling som de andre kongelige ved bordet. Hans skuffelse gjorde det umuligt at finde ro, og natten tilbragte han med at vende og dreje sig i sin store seng.

Efter Marice var blevet kronet, gik der sjældent mere end tre måneder mellem hvert møde med Artanis. Hver gang havde han forberedt en ny taktik for at fange skønhedens interesse. Intet syntes at virke på hende, men kongens følelser voksede i styrke og intensitet ved hvert eneste møde. Da han var fyldt 25, følte han sig mere selvsikker end nogensinde før. Efter et møde i Arach Nor lykkedes det ham at få hende til at vise sig rundt i byen. Artanis havde denne dag sat det lange, blanke hår op med perlebesatte spænder, der passede til øreringene. Hun bar en lang, måneskinsfarvet kjole, der tæt smøg sig om hendes slanke skikkelse og Marice fandt hende smukkere end nogensinde. I kraft af sin egen selvsikkerhed, der var et resultat af alder og erfaring med kvinder, lykkedes det ham at holde en samtale kørende og fastholde hendes blik. Solen var ved at gå ned, da de nærmede sig slottet igen. De sidste stråler indhyllede byen i et sart, rosa skær og grebet af øjeblikket tog han blidt hendes hånd. Dette var tydeligvis en fejltagelse, for hun stivnede og afviste ham høfligt ved langsomt at trække hånden til sig og henlede opmærksomheden på månen. Hun nævnte at den så større ud her end i Vaimlinn, men Marice havde tankerne andetsteds.

Marice blev nedslået, men tænkte at hendes reaktion skyldtes, at hun som elver var mindre omskiftelig af natur og derfor havde brug for mere tid. Det lykkedes efterfølgende den unge konge at få elverdronningen med ud på lange gåture efter møderne og undertiden endda at fremmane et lille smil på hendes læber. I Vaimlinn siges det, at Dronning Artanis, til trods for at være elver, ikke var helt upåvirket af Marices charme. Elverdronningen lod sig ikke imponere af hans vilde historier, men ville langt hellere høre om hans barndom og om den moder, han aldrig havde kendt. Ligeledes forstod Marice instinktivt, at Artanis længtes efter en forbundsfælle. En der kunne forstå hendes sorger og ikke behandlede hende som en svag kvinde, blot fordi hun viste sine følelser. Deres forbindelse syntes at blive tættere hver gang de så hinanden, men Marice var frustreret over, at Artanis tilsyneladende ikke havde i sinde at lukke ham helt ind i sit hjerte.

Kort før sin 28-års fødselsdag gik det op for Marice, at han havde ventet på Artanis i hele ti år. Selvom han havde stillet sit begær i andre kvinders skød, tilhørte hans hjerte kun hende. En aften, efter endnu en politisk forsamling i Aroch Nor, fulgte han efter hende. Marice fandt hende i det store, lyse soveværelse, hvor hun hulkende sad bøjet over sin mand, der stadig trak vejret men intet ænsede. Han nærmede sig med stille skridt, tog blidt fast om hendes håndled og trak hende på fødderne. Marice strøg hende over det lange, røde hår, kyssede hendes tårevædede kinder og fortalte hende, at hun spildte tiden på sin livløse mand frem for at bruge den på de levende. Artanis betragtede ham med store, blanke øjne og skælvede umiskendeligt i hans favn. Han trak hende helt ind til sig og kyssede hendes læber med al den kærlighed, han havde opbygget til hende gennem de mange år. Efter et øjeblik mærkede han, hvordan hun lagde armene om hans hals, overgav sig til ham og viste, at hun gengældte hans følelser. Han vidste ikke hvor længe de stod omfavnet; det kunne have været få minutter, det kunne have været hele natten. Aldrig havde han været lykkeligere.

Han blev dog revet brutalt ud af paradiset da hun pludseligt og voldsomt trak sig bort fra ham med chok og fortrydelse i de ravgyldne øjne, der i løbet af ingen tid antog en mørk, sorgfuld glød. Hun tog sig til læberne, der stadig smagte af hans kys, og vidste, at hun var skyldig. Hun stod et øjeblik og betragtede ham med nye øjne, fulde af bebrejelse, inden hun stålfast fortalte ham, at de ikke kunne ses længere. Hun vendte sig mod sin mand og kiggede end ikke Marice i øjnene, da hun bad ham gå.

Marice forstod at slaget, i hvert fald nu, var tabt, så han forlod lydløst værelset. På samme tid var han både mere lykkelig og ulykkelig end nogensinde før. I løbet af få øjeblikke havde han både fået en forsmag på Artanis' kærlighed og mistet den igen. Han havde følt sig sikker på at vinde hendes hjerte og få hende til at glemme sin hjælpeløse mand, men måtte sande, at tiden var imod ham. Han havde allerede brugt ti år på at få hende til at elske sig, og tid betyder jo mere for mennesker end for elvere. Med denne fart ville han blive gammel, før hun overgav sig til ham.

Kong Marice forstod, at han var besat, men at miste hende fuldstændigt ville koste ham forstanden. Da han vendte tilbage til Falenshire var han så desperat, at han satte sine alkymister i gang med at finde hvad som helst, der kunne øge hans chancer for genvinde hendes kærlighed. Intet skulle være uafprøvet, om det så var kærlighedsdrikke eller endog mørke ofringsritualer. Pludselig faldt de tilfældigvis over noget, som han egentlig godt vidste i forvejen: Storkongen i Asphyxion fik for ti år forinden stjålet sin magiske krone, der efter sigende gav både evig ungdom og udødelighed til bæreren. Marice lo højt da det gik op for ham, at han, med denne krone, havde rigeligt med tid til at vinde sin elskedes hjerte. Samtidig tænkte han, med et smil på læben, at den øgede magt, han ville komme i besiddelse af, heller ikke ville være hende helt uinteressant.

Han tilkaldte omgående Falenshires bedste rangere, eventyrere og spioner. Han bad dem rejse ud og om nødvendigt vende hver en sten i Keski-Ajån for at tilvejebringe nyt om kronen, de skulle ikke sky nogen midler i deres søgen. Kong Marice har nu fra flere kilder hørt, at der i landet AardeSal fortælles om mystiske og overnaturlige hændelser i skovene uden for hovedstaden, Sumervale. Hans opmærksomhed er derfor stadigt rettet mod dette sted, hvor han mistænker, at kronen - eller dele af denne - befinder sig. Der hviskes i krogene hos Falenshires befolkning at kongen griber det helt forkert an. Det er sikkert bare dværgene selv der har stjålet den dyrebare krone, enten af griskhed eller for at skabe splid mellem racerne, så der kan vælges en ny storkonge af Keski-Ajån.

I AardeSal, det bakkede land, holder halvingerne til. Det frodige land kendetegnes ved et forholdsvist mildt klima, der aldrig for alvor bliver ubehageligt varmt eller koldt. Det blide vejr betyder også, at halvingernes afgrøder oftest giver de bedste afkast, hvilket gør det muligt for netop dette folk at rejse sig hurtigt efter solformørkelserne. AardeSal består af dybgrønne vange, hvor græsset vajer i vinden, og ræveunger frydefuldt leger og snapper efter hinanden mellem de store sten og klippestykker.

Selvom årstiderne og farverne skifter, behøver man sjældent mere end en ulden kappe om vinteren for at kunne holde varmen. Om sommeren dækkes de grønne områder pletvist af små røde og lilla blomster, hvis karakteristiske dufte bæres omkring af vinden og indhyller landet i en sommersødme, der ikke kendes nogen andre steder. AardeSal er ophavslandet for nogle af de glædeste viser, for landets omfavnende mystik giver enhver barde lyst til at forevige oplevelsen i musikkens fagre verden.

Hovedstaden, Sumervale, ligner i højere grad en stor provinsby end en kongsstad. De grønne enge og de rislende bække er fulgt med ind i byen og gaderne er brolagt med ujævne sten, der får kærene til at hoppe og danse når de trækkes hen af

gaderne. Børnene, der ofte er krølhårede, plejer at flokkes om at få lov til at sidde bag på kærterne, når de hopper allerværst. Uanset hvor man bevæger sig hen i Sumervale, kan man høre lyden af børnelatter. De fleste af husene er udgravet i bakker, og tagene er dækket af det silkebløde græs, der findes i hele AardeSal. Alligevel er husene ikke så mørke, som man måske skulle tro; de har alle store glasvinduer, som er elverne værdige. Man siger da også, om end mest i spøg, at halvingerne må være nært beslægtet med elverne på grund af deres små, spidse ører og dygtige håndværk.

Den midaldrende Kong Xaneak har regeret AardeSal de sidste to årtier. Han husker derfor med gru, hvordan solformørkelsen og dens ødelæggelser lagde hans land øde, og hvordan halvingerne nær var blevet udryddet. Selvom bymurene beskyttede Sumervale var byens indbyggere alligevel ikke sikre. En lille flok af fjendens udsendte kravlede over muren på det svageste sted, og det lykkedes dem at trænge ind i kongelige palæ, inden nogen nåede at stoppe dem eller advare kongefamilien.

Xaneaks fader, Kong Celden, var blot 30 år gammel, og kæmpede ikke bare for sit land, men også for sin familie. Den unge dronning Milliana greb sin blot 5-årige søn for at flygte med ham, men blev standset af en fjende, der kom fra den anden side. Dronningen skreg, skubbende Prins Xaneak om bag sig, løftede op i sin røde kjole og trak en daggert frem fra sin skindstøvle. Fjenden, der var på størrelse med et voksent menneske, begik den dumhed at le af den lille dronning.

Milliana var hurtigere end han troede, og inden smilet forlod hans læber havde hun skåret halsen over på ham. Milliana vendte sig, dækket af blod, mod sin søn og ville trække ham med sig i flugten, da hun så, at Kong Celden var faldet.

Egenhændigt havde han dræbt fire soldater, men undervejs havde de også såret ham. Han klyngede sig stadig til livet, men blødte fra flere dybe sår og svævede ind og ud af bevidsthed. Milliana udstødte et dybt hulk, gik hen til sin mand, satte sig ved hans side og placerede hans hoved i sit skød, mens hun kærligt tørrede blodet væk fra hans ansigt. Hun vendte sig mod sin søn med overraskende klarhed i blikket, kaldte ham til sig og fortalte ham, at han skulle tage afsked med sin far.

Xaneak, der blot var et barn, forstod mere end man skulle tro og det lykkedes kongen at få sagt ordentligt farvel til både sin hustru og sin søn, inden hans sjæl forlod denne verden.

Fjenderne var nedkæmpet, men Sumervale havde lidt et stort tab. De fleste i Keski-Ajån kender til de mange viser om Kong Celdens mod og Dronning Millianas snarrådighed. Selvom alle de kongelige familier led tab under Solformørkelsen er det dog halvingernes, der fortælles mest om.

Dronning Milliana var kun 27 år gammel, da hun blev enkedronning, og hun betragtede situationen anderledes end så mange andre, måske fordi hun kom fra en familie af bønder. De fleste forventede, at hun i tiden efter sin mands død ville begræde sit tab og være ude af stand til at handle, men sådan var Milliana slet ikke. Udover at være i besiddelse af overlevelsesinstinkt, var hun også en glimrende begavelse, der konstant analyserede alt omkring sig med det formål at forbedre. Hendes opdragelse af Xaneak blev, nok grundet faderens død, hårdere og mere disciplineret end den ellers ville have været. Hun sørgede for, at han hver eneste dag vandrede blandt sit folk, høj som lav, for at fastholde hans praktiske sans, jordforbindelse og kærlighed til folket. Milliana gik ikke ind for fysisk afstraffelse, men alligevel var alle, folket såvel som hendes egen søn, bange for at vække hendes vrede, for dronningen var en kvinde med en skarp tunge, der gerne satte hvem som helst på plads. Under et møde kom hun op at skændes med den ellers urokkelige elverdronning Artanis, der ydmygt var endt med at undskylde over for hende.

Den lille, mørkhårede Xaneak med de viltre krøller og blå øjne voksede op og blev en konge, der havde hånd og hanke med alt, der foregik i hans rige og nød sit folks respekt. Han fortsatte sine daglige ture rundt i Sumervale og markerne omkring, som hans moder havde lært ham, og overalt blev han mødt med venlige smil og hilsener, som han altid returnerede. Xaneak er blevet en mand, der trods at have mødt ondskab og modgang i en tidlig alder, ikke er blevet korruperet og kynisk. Tværtimod er han opsat på at efterstræbe godhed i alle sine handlinger, især dem der omhandler AardeSal.

Til trods for et ry for at være forudseende, blev Kong Xaneak dog ganske chokeret. En ellers dejlig sommermorgen blev brutalt ødelagt, da hans moder vandrede ind i tronsalen med forrevne, blodige klæder. Milliana havde vandret i skoven nær Sumervale og var blevet overfaldet af en bjørn. Hun havde i en alder af 67 år forsvaret sig med kun en kniv, og var undsluppet med ganske få skrammer; blodet, hun var tilsølet i, var bjørnens. At Milliana overlevede et overfald og oven i købet omtalte det som en "dårlig begyndelse på dagen", var der ikke mange, der undredes over, men det foruroligende var, at bjørnen overhovedet havde angrebet. Bjørnene i AardeSal var kendetegnet ved at være sky og altid vælge flugt frem for kamp. Kong Xaneak sendte derfor straks en deling ud til stedet i skoven for at undersøge, om den døde bjørn skulle have været syg, eller om der kunne være anden grund til dens uventede angreb.

Delingen, der havde haft Sumervales' dygtigste rangere og healere med sig, vendte tilbage med forfærdende nyheder; bjørnen var ikke bare større end bjørne normalt er, dens øjne havde også været fuldstændig sorte som om dens mørke sjæl stirrede gennem øjenhulerne. Healerne havde fornemmet en sær tilstedeværelse omkring bjørnen og bad om tilladelse til at vende tilbage dagen efter for at undersøge sagen, hvilket kongen straks indvilligede i.

Dagen efter kom kun halvdelen af delingen tilbage og de, der kom tilbage, var frygteligt skræmte og talte om væsener og ånder fra Skæbnelandet. Kongen havde svært ved at tro, at der skulle findes ondskab i den fredelige skov og mente, at der måtte være tale om et særlig snedigt angreb fra jordiske fjender, som han endnu ikke vidste, hvem var. De tilbagevendte

fortalte, at det ikke var til at tage fejl af stedet; midt i skoven fandt man en lysning, hvor alt så ud som om, at det var blevet brændt af. Det var et dødt, sort og iskoldt område, hvor der hverken var fuglesang eller bevoksning – alting var unaturligt stille og emmede af død og ødelæggelse. Da kongen spurgte efter de resterende halvinger, fik han svaret, at ingen vidste, hvor de var. De var pludselig blevet grebet af en helt afsindig frygt, der fik dem til at løbe i alle retninger. I løbet af de næste par dage vendte de resterende halvinger tilbage, flove over deres pludselige rædsel og ude af stand til at beskrive den fyldestgørende.

Kongen besluttede da at spørge sin bedste veninde, den dygtige magiker Milwen til råds, da han betragtede hende som en autoritet inden for sit felt. Den yndige, blonde magiker fortalte ham, at hun intet præcist kunne sige, før hun selv havde set området. Fuld af bange anelser besøgte Kong Xaneak og Milwen selv den ødelagte lysning dagen efter. Lysningen var nøjagtig som beskrevet; sort, mørk, død og alt, alt for stille. Xaneak fornemmede, at noget var helt galt, mens Milwen gjorde store øjne af angst og snappede efter vejret. Hun vendte sig mod Xaneak og hviskede, at det var sandt, hvad de andre havde sagt; dette havde at gøre med Skæbnelandet. Hun lukkede øjnene nogle sekunder, som for at genvinde kontrollen over sig selv, og åbnede dem så igen. Med hæs stemme sagde hun derpå: ”Ondskaben er endnu forholdsvis svag, men det døde område vil sikkert ville brede sig, og dermed styrke mørkets kræfter.” Milwens ord skræmte Kong Xaneak, der besluttede, at de havde set nok og de vendte deres heste. Da de nåede ud i det sikre, varme sollys på markerne ud for Sumervale standsede Milwen, så kongen i øjnene og fortalte ham, at hun kun kunne komme i tanke om én ting, der kunne hjælpe i kampen mod sådan en ondskab: den krone, der for ti år siden blev stjålet fra Kongen i staden Asphyxion. Hun fortalte ham, at kronen indeholdt stor magi og at hun, hvis hun kom i besiddelse af kronen, muligvis kunne jage ondskaben bort for altid.

Milwen fortæller ofte kongen, at tiden er knap og at ondskaben, der findes i skoven, breder sig for hver eneste dag. Hun har tilsyneladende haft ret, for flere og flere beretter nu om bjørneangreb i den lille skov og indtil videre har fem halvinger på blodig vis mistet livet.

Kong Xaneak, der har stor tillid til Milwens råd, er nu begyndt at sende rangere, eventyrere og spioner ud i hele Keski-Ajån for at finde den stjålne krone, i håb om at ondskaben kan overvindes, inden den vokser sig stærk. Desuden har han fra Awyrddinås bestilt et større lager af deres giftige pile, der har vist sig at være særdeles effektive mod de store bjørne, der kommer stadig nærmere Sumervales mure.

Awyrddinås er gnomerne grønne ø-rige, hvis landområder er dækket af store jungler. Klimaet er varmt og fugtigt, og uanset hvor man er, kan man høre rislende bække eller brusende vandfald. Især vandfaldene, der er smukke i deres overvældende styrke, tiltrækker gæster af alle slags. Frodigheden i klimaet betager de fleste og overalt hænger der modne, saftige frugter, som er lige til at plukke. Selvom junglen yder en vis beskyttelse mod den bagende sol er der dog meget varmt, men den lette adgang til frugt og vand gør rejsen gennem gnomernes rige overkommelig. Af samme årsag finder de fleste, at Awyrddinås’ øer er både charmerende og eksotiske. Man skal dog ikke bilde sig ind, at der ikke findes farer i dette varme paradys; man må være særdeles påpasselig med hvor man træder, for terrænet er meget kuperet og det er let at brække en ankel. Der er langt mellem byerne, og er man alene og såret midt i junglen, kan det nemt ende fatalt.

Der er også andre, der trives i dette klima. Der findes flere slags frøer og slanger, hvis gifte kan slå en mand ihjel i løbet få timer – visse gifte er så stærke, at døden indtræffer på få minutter og selvom gnomerne kan fremstille modgifte mod de fleste gifte er tiden altid den afgørende faktor. Det, der dog skræmmer både gnomer og alle andre, der færdes i junglerne, mest er de store, sorte pantere.

Det fortælles, at de enorme kattedyr vejer mere end en fuldvoksen mand, at de altid er aggressive og evigt på jagt. Desuden siges det, at de er kløgtigere end de fleste civiliserede racer. En panter angriber ikke blindt sit bytte; den usder sig det ganske nøje og betragter dets gøren og laden længe før den beslutter om et angreb vil være fordelagtigt. Når en panter brøler lyder det som en kvindes fortvivlede, skræmte skrig og enhver, der hører sådan et brøl, skal tage sig i agt for ikke at fastfryse til stedet i ren frygt.

Gnomernes hovedstad, Isto Shadizar, ligner ikke nogen anden hovedstad, man har set før. Husene er højt hævet over jordens overflade ved hjælp af store, solide stolper og gnomerne farer adræt op og ned mellem deres hjem og jorden via rebstiger konstant. I de tætteste dele af byen er husene dog også forbundet med hinanden ved hjælp af hængebroer for at minimere rejsetiden mest muligt. Selve husene minder i virkeligheden mere om hytter end om huse, for væggene er lavet af rå, ubehandlede planker og taget er flettet af store bananblade, der bedre end nogen andre materialer giver læ for den enorme mængde af regn, der falder hver eneste sommer. Hver sommer, når regnen begynder, fester gnomerne. De fejrer deres lands frugtbarhed og livet generelt ved at synge, danse og feste en hel uge i træk, mens de bliver gennemblødte af den lune regn – af alle tidspunkter er Sommerfesten det tidspunkt, hvor der er allermest liv og flest besøgende i Isto Shadizar, for alle ved, at ingen kan feste som gnomer. Gnomerne indhenter gerne de dygtigste gøglere og barder til denne fest og det er ikke usædvanligt, at selv de sky elvere rejser langt for at deltage i festlighederne.

At leve i træerne har visse fordele; først og fremmest har gnomerne et eminent overblik over den nærmeste del af junglen fra træernes højde, hvilket i utallige sammenhænge er en fordel. Når en fjendtlig hær nærmer sig har gnomerne for vane at

gemme sig i træerne, så Isto Shadizar ser fuldstændig forladt ud. I de fleste tilfælde er det nok til at få de angribende til at miste interessen, men skulle de vove at komme nærmere er gnomerne klar til at forsvare deres elskede by med et sandt inferno af pile, magi og pusterør. Man skal aldrig undervurdere gnomerne; selvom de er små og for det meste er i godt humør kæmper de gerne til den bitre ende. Det er før set, at gnomerne har dypet pilene i slangegift inden de sender dem mod fjenden, hvilket er særdeles effektivt.

Kong Xannan er ganske ung, blot 25 år gammel og netop kronet til konge af Awyrddinås. Han har store, mørke krøller, udtryksfulde lysebrune øjne og et bredt, charmerende grin. Som enebarn og prins har han hele livet været vant til at få nøjagtig hvad han har bedt om, hvilket gjorde, at han indtil for nylig var i besiddelse af et barns naivitet og godmodige tro på at alt nok skulle arte sig til det bedste. Blandt gnomkvinder har han altid været populær og det skyldes ikke blot hans status – flere gange har han forklædt deltaget i Sommerfesten for at opleve festen som en gnom uden status oplever den. Altid har kvinderne strømmedes om ham, sat blomsterkranse på hans smukke krøller og hevet ham med i dansene. Kong Xannan har, så længe folk kan huske, altid været i selskab med kønne, leende gnompiger, der betragtede ham med blanke, tilbedende øjne.

Xannan kendte gennem sin barndom aldrig til ondskab. Hans forældre, Kong Trixan og Dronning Ikvazil, skærmede efter bedste evne deres søn mod alt, der kunne skade ham, eftersom de mente, at den bedste leder måtte være en, hvis sjæl var fuldstændig uplettet. Selv overlevede de kun med nød og næppe Solformørkelsen, hvilket satte dybe, mørke spor hos især Dronning Ikvazil. Man siger, at hun aldrig helt kom sig oven på rædslerne og at hun stadig den dag i dag er svækket. Trixan og Ikvazil har nu trukket sig tilbage til udkanten af byen for at nyde deres alderdom i fred og for at lade deres unge søn regere i fred.

Kong Xannan er dog ikke længere den glade og troskyldige unge mand, han plejede at være. For to år siden mødte han en gnomkvinde, som han ikke siden har været i stand til at slå ud af hovedet. Om aftenen står den unge konge i vinduet med bøjet nakke og sukker tungt. De leende piger ved hans side holdt hurtigt op med at smile da de indså, at det ikke var dem, han sukede efter. Xannan søger ensomheden om aftenen og om dagen spejder han ivrigt mod horisonten, som om han konstant venter nyheder.

Ixilica, kvinden der har stjålet hans hjerte, har ikke været i Isto Shadizar i over et år, men Xannan er ude af stand til at glemme hende. Når han om aftenen ikke kan sove betragter han himlen mens han hvisker ud i natten i et barnligt håb om, at hun et sted langt derfra kan høre ham. Xannans nærmeste fortæller hvordan han mindes, længes tilbage til den tid, hvor de gik hånd i hånd og hvor alting var overjordisk smukt. Når han lukker øjnene kan han for sig se hendes store, mørklilla øjne, hvis dybde mindede ham om de mørke junglesøer. Han erindrer hvordan hun talte med en yndighed som lyden af små klokker, mens hendes lange, lyse hår dansede i den svage brise.

Man siger, at Xannans tanker bliver ved at vende tilbage til den dag, hun forsvandt. De havde aftalt at mødes ved Sjælesøen, der lå et par kilometer uden for byen. Xannan var allerede faldet på knæ foran den smilende Ixilica for at fri til hende, da han hørte latter bag sig. Han så angsten i Ixilicas uskyldige øjne inden han vendte sig om. De var omringet af dværge, der alle bar hævede våben. Deres anfører, Prins Bazgal, som Kong Xannan ellers kun kendte af ry, trådte nærmere med et ubehageligt smil om munden. Det gik pludselig op for Xannan, at han havde bevæget sig ubevæbnet ud af Isto Shadizar og påmindelsen herom, da han ledte efter sin daggert, var ham yderst smertefuld. Selv et år efter hændelsen giver det stadig den unge mand tårer i øjnene at tænke på det.

”Jeg har brug for din hjælp, Xannan” sagde Prins Bazgal.

Prins Bazgal havde dernæst fortalt Xannan om en mægtig krone, der i sin tid blev stjålet fra Storkongen i staden Asphyxion, som han absolut måtte finde. Xannan nægtede først at hjælpe Bazgal med hans foretagende; han havde længe hørt rygter om hvordan Bazgal vanvittigt og uden hensyn til andres liv vendte hver en sten på sin vej for at finde kronen. Bazgal havde smilet hånligt af Xannan og fortalt ham, at han nok ville ændre mening. Dernæst fik han med et fingerknips – som han havde for vane – to af sine mænd til at gribe Ixilica og slæbe hende bort mens to andre holdt Xannan tilbage. Xannan skreg af vrede og rædsel, men blev hurtigt bragt til tavshed af Bazgal, der fortalte ham, at han sagtens kunne få sin kvinde tilbage; han skulle blot finde og aflevere ham kronen. Når han havde fundet kronen skulle han sende Bazgal besked, så kunne de aftale tid og sted at bytte deres ”skatte”, som han udtrykte det.

Dværgene efterlod en ung mand i knæ, mærket af sorg, ydmygelse, vrede og fuldkommen håbløshed. Da fornuften vendte tilbage stak Xannan i løb mod Isto Shadizar, hvor han hurtigt fik samlet en hær, der tog af sted for at finde dværgene, der ikke kunne være langt borte. Til trods for, at gnomerne var hurtige og kendte området langt bedre end dværgene, lykkedes det dem ikke at opspore dem, hvilket hele byen længe sørgede over. Det år blev Sommerfesten aflyst, hvilket fortæller meget om den sindsstemning, der havde grebet hovedstaden.

Kong Xannan, der er ung og forelsket og måske derfor ikke helt ved sine sansers fulde brug, bruger meget tid på at indsamle nyt om sin elskede og på at sende nye hære ud for at finde Prins Bazgal – men åbenbart er Bazgal svær at finde når han ikke ønsker at blive fundet, for hærene vender tilbage uden nyt og uden håb. Xannan er derfor begyndt at sende rangere, spioner og eventyrer ud for at finde kronen og derved forhåbentlig få sin elskede Ixilica tilbage i god behold. Kong

Xannan har dog også netop sendt en budbringer til staden Asphyxion for at advare Kong Dulcitus mod dværgene, der netop nu jager kronen mere aggressivt end nogen andre.

Storkongen, Dulcitus, i den store, hvide stad Asphyxion holder ikke længere audiens. Han har trukket sig tilbage fra offentligheden og afslår at møde alle. Selv de kongelige fra de andre kontinenter kan ikke få ham i tale og det siges, at den eneste, der nu om dage kan få et ord ud af den sørgmodige konge er Ansell Morgu, kongens magi stor mester. Ensom sidder Storkongen med bøjet nakke og knækket håb i sit mørke kammer. Der forlyder rygter fra tyende på slottet om, at han om natten vandrer som et blegt spøgelse gennem slottets korridorer mens han sukker så dybt, at enhver må græde når de betragter ham. Det er cirka et årti siden kongen sidst viste sig offentligt og siden nogen kunne berette om hans smil, der plejede at lyse som daggryet.

Man troede i begyndelsen, at Storkongens dybe sorg skyldtes tabet af hans unge, smukke dronning, men efterhånden har man indset, at kongen den skæbnesvangre nat, sorgen fik sit tag i ham, mistede mere end blot sin store kærlighed. For ti år siden lykkedes det en maskeret og lynhurtig snigmorder at få adgang til slottet – ingen ved den dag i dag hvordan – og han stod pludselig i Storkongens soveværelse, bøjet over den sovende konge med en kniv, hvis æg var dyppet i gift. Der var ingen tvivl om hans intentioner, men snigmorderen havde ikke taget højde for Storkongens hustru, der var halvvel og derfor havde skarpere sanser end de fleste mennesker. Idet morderen løftede kniven havde Anyana Debris allerede kastet sig ind foran sin ægtemand og den forgiftede kniv sad dybt i hendes bryst før nogen opdagede hvad der var foregået.

Da vagterne hørte dronningens skrig kom de løbende ind i soveværelset med parate sværd, men snigmorderen var allerede undsluppet ud af vinduet. I sengen sad Storkongen, bøjet over sin hustru, hvis sjæl allerede havde forladt kroppen. Han førte igen og igen sine fingre gennem det blanke, sorte hår og bad hende grådkvalt vende tilbage til livet. Vagterne fortalte, hvordan først den perlebesatte natkjole, dernæst Storkongens klæder og gulvet blev tilsølet af dronningens blod, mens han fortvivlet kyssede de endnu varme røde læber. Men det, der brændte sig mest fast hos vagterne, var ansigtsudtrykket. De lilla øjne lyste af en klarhed bag de lange, sorte øjenvipper. Dronningen havde vidst, hvad hun gjorde, og havde set gerningsmanden lige i øjnene, da hun gav sit liv i bytte for sin mands. Man kunne ane antydningen af et smil i mundvigen, der viste at hun forlod verden med fred i sjælen.

Da en fortvivlet vagt stammende af frygt gjorde opmærksom på, at kronen, der normalt lå på Storkongens natbord om natten, var væk, kunne kongens skrig høres i hele kongestaden. Hans gråd og skrig hørtes langt udover hovedstadens grænser i flere dage, inden Storkongen gav sin sidste ordre, inden tavsheden greb ham; hele Asphyxion skulle i stilhed begræde tabet af dronningen og ikke et ord måtte ytres nogen steder i fire uger. Befolkningen, der var rystede og chokerede over deres elskede dronnings død, adlød. Aldrig har en stilhed larmet så meget, som den gjorde i Asphyxion i sorgens fire uger. Det er med tiden blevet en tradition, som befolkningen i Asphyxion har taget til sig; når et familiemedlem dør, anses det for god tone, at de nærmeste iklæder sig tavshed i fire uger som tegn på respekt for den afdøde – og for at vise dybden af deres sorg.

På Storkongens vegne sender Ansell Morgu jævnligt spioner, rangere og eventyrere af sted for at finde den forsvundne krone med løfte om en klækkelig dusør. Kun ganske få er endnu vendt tilbage og de er som oftest dødeligt sårede og taler i tåger, som ingen – ikke engang Ansell Morgu – kan finde megen mening i. Alligevel er det lykket at opspore nyt om kronen; tyven, der med al sandsynlighed kendte til kronens magiske kræfter, har slået kronen i ti stykker og solgt dem enkeltvis. Disse stykker er nu spredt over hele Keski-Ajån og ingen ved præcist hvor de befinder sig. Hvis kronen kan samles og leveres tilbage til Storkongen, kan han fortsætte sit liv som udødelig og forhåbentlig vende tilbage til glæden – og ikke mindst til tronen. Tiden er kostbar og langsomt rinder den ud. Kongen ældes og der går rygter om, at der er kommet sølvstænk i Storkongens mørke hår.

I det daglige er det Ansell Morgu, der holder audiens på Storkongens vegne. Ligeledes er han den, der træffer alle vigtige beslutninger. De få gange nogen finder på at komme med indvendinger mod Ansell Morgus styre, er den dygtige magi stormester hurtig til at fremvise dokumenter, der bærer kongens segl og vilje, hvortil eventuelle modstandere må bøje sig. Befolkningen er dog ikke helt tryk ved Storkongens magi stormester, der for år tilbage pådrog sig en forbandelse, der dagligt påvirker den hvide stad i ganske høj grad. Ansell Morgus humør er omskifteligt og ligeså er vejret og klimaet, der grundet forbandelsen er nært knyttet til Ansell Morgus sind. Befolkningen kan derfor aldrig vide sig sikker når de forlader deres hjem; det ene øjeblik kan en lun sommerbrise kærtegne kinden og solen tilsmile en, det næste øjeblik kan man være blændet af en kraftfuld snestorm, der med dræbende kulde på få øjeblikke kan tvinge selv en voksen mand i knæ. Men på trods af dronningens utidelige død og kronens forsvinden, går livet videre. Gaderne i den hvide stad er altid travle af beskæftigelse, rig på racer og forskelligheder, tyk af fremmedartede dialekter, tung af forskellige dufte og fuld af smil, latter, gråd, godhed og ondskab.

Hele Keski-Ajån dirrer i øjeblikket af diverse diplomatiske kriser, og grufulde beskyldninger bliver uden omtanke kastet i alle retninger. Gamle alliancer svækkes og nyt had opstår på et split sekund. Det er dog ikke kun landene imellem, disse nye situationer opstår; også inden for landenes grænser opstår der konstant splid mellem folk og der dannes nye,

usandsynlige alliancer alle vegne. Det er som om, at en ny tidsalder er ved at gribe hele Keski-Ajån; egenskaber som viljestyrke og ambition hyldes nu i højere grad end de gamle begreber, der omhandlede tolerance, loyalitet og kærlighed. Solformørkelsen – som sluttede for 40 år siden, der indtil for nylig samlede de forskellige lande under samme banner, er nu så tilstrækkelig langt borte, at folk vender sig bort for at opfylde deres egne og deres lands behov uden at tænke på hvilke konsekvenser det kan have for naboen og for resten af verden. Godhed findes stadig, men for mange er det en luksus, man kan tilegne sig når man først selv har sit på det tørre. Keski-Ajån overstrømmes af nysgerrige eventyrere, opportunistiske skattejægere og nogle få kongelige delegationer, der søger nyheder om kronen. Verden er endnu ikke kortlagt og nu, hvor verden har rystet den sidste Solformørkelse af sig, er jagten på rigdomme og magt gået ind; der synes at være en holdning om, at enhver er sin egen lykkes smed og at man med høje ambitioner kan nå langt – måske endda blive bærer af den stjålne krone og opnå magt, der er en konge værdig.

I slutningen...

De enkelte dele af kongens krone er forbandet med deres elements værste sider, så længe de er adskilt, og bæres af en person som ikke er af kongelig æt. Med tiden fordærves stadig flere sjæle og mørkets hær styrkes. Kampene vil bølge frem og tilbage i årtusinder og lægge store dele af Keski-Ajån øde. Væsner og byer vil falde flere end bladene om efteråret, inden det endelig lykkes mørket at sejre, om ikke evigt, så for en tid. Nyx vil forsøge at distrahere Mesiac (Månen) ved at få sine lavere rangerende officerer til at forføre hende. Til sidst spiller han sit bedste kort i form af general Erebus, der har held med projektet i en grad, så Mesiac bliver gravid med deres barn, Kalona. Med hendes opmærksomhed borte kan Nyx indhulle verden helt i sit uigennemtrængelige mørke, som gennem årene har suget så meget gammel viden og magi til sig, at det har fået sit eget liv. Det vil strække sig og indkapsle Rana i et forsøg på at slå ham ihjel. Ranas lys svækkes for til sidst at slukkes helt. Selvom han ikke kan redde lysets sjælehær, lykkes det Solen at gå i dvale snarere end at dø. Uden flere fjender at bekæmpe tilslutter mørkets hær sig det mørke, der har indhyllet verden.

Overbevist om sin endegyldige sejr vil Nyx krone sig som sejrherren, der gjorde det umulige ved at dræbte alle tings øverste fader. Mørket kommer til at vare i 10.000 år. De 5 gamle guder samt Nimm og Eriel dør, da de ikke kan leve uden solens lys. Kun støvet og et fortabt gold landskab ligger tilbage. Tilfreds med sig selv og fuldførelsen af sit livsværk og uden andet at tage sig til, vil Nyx døse hen, mens solen langsomt vågner til live igen. En enkelt tynd solstråle finder vej gennem det ellers uigennemtrængelige mørke. Den rammer det visnede gamle verdenstræ, der lige så stille vågner. Med det vågner Cineal også, idet hun jo havde taget bolig i træet. Til sin overraskelse ser hun ærke-mageren, der har fundet skjul for mørkevæsnerne ved træets stamme. Deres blikke mødes og de ender med at blive så tæt knyttet, at de få år senere får datteren Duantia. Langsomt vil både Rana og verdenstræet styrkes, mens Nyx's mørke fordrives. Verden dækkes af tætte skove med kun få lysninger imellem og dyrelivet, og de gamle guders skabninger genopstår.

Men selvom naturen vil vinde frem under Nyx' fravær, har verden lidt store tab. Yderst få overlevede ødelæggelserne og mørket. Næsten al viden er gået tabt og selv de fleste af de gamle guder er borte. Som en Fønix ud af asken vil der komme en ny og stærkere tro med fokus på Natur, Magt og Mirakler. Kun ganske få modsætter sig den eneste anerkendte verdensreligion, der skal frelse verden og genskabe dens undere og magi. Verden kommer til at blive domineret af feudalsamfund, hvor den nye religion er den ypperste magt. Tilbage står nu for de resterende guder, nye som gamle, at varetage deres ansvar for Keski-Ajån og dens skabninger.

CHAPTER 1.1.1

CHARACTER CREATION



Campaign

Title of the campaign (*ask the Storyteller*).

Name

The first name of your character (*yes, only the first name*). If you need help finding a good name try one of the many Name Generators online: <http://www.mitbrilandimages.com/utilities/MedievalNames.php>

Player

Your own first name (*yes, only the first name*).

Storyteller

The first name of the Storyteller (*yes, only the first name*).

Race (read chapter 1.1.2)

Dwarf (+1 Stamina, -1 Dexterity),

Elf (+1 Dexterity, -1 Strength),

Gnome (-1 Stamina, +1 Wits),

Halfling (+1 Dexterity, -1 Strength),

Human (no bonus/weakness).

Halfbreed: Only Humans can crossbreed with the other races. Carrying Capacity, Size, Age, Height, Weight are found by adding the 2 races total of each together and divide by 2. They get the same bonus/weakness as the other race. Because they are a halfbreed -an abomination, they also get -1 Appearance, and the flaws: Sterile and Group Enmity from the other race.

Class (read chapter 1.1.3)

The profession path chosen by your character – each class has its own bonuses and weaknesses. Each character class has the possibility to start with either a single weapon or armor (max value 500 silver coins) in addition to their normal starting equipment, but only if approved by the Storyteller.

Alchemist/Cleric/Mage/Wizard (+2 Mental -1 Physical),

Bard (-1 Physical, +2 Social),

Darkseeker/Necromancer/Sorcerer (+2 Mental -1 Social),

Praetorian (+2 Physical, -1 Social),

Priest/Shaman/Wild Magus/Witch (+2 Mental -1 Physical),

Ranger/Rogue (+1 Physical, +1 Social, -1 Mental),

Warlord/Witch Hunter (+1 Physical, +1 Mental, -1 Social),

Warrior/Paladin (+2 Physical, -1 Mental).

Religion (read chapter 1.1.4)

Though there are other Gods and Goddesses in Keski-Ajån, few have heard of them. Players are limited to worshiping only these well-known deities. Each elemental deity grants you +1 Initiative for its own element, but you have -1 Initiative for all other elements. Nimm grants you +1 Initiative for Defensive and Nyx +1 for Offensive spells, but you have -1 Initiative for all spelltypes other than their preferred one.

Lustro (Fire),

Lacus (Water),

Tellus (Earth),

Aerius (Air),

Divus (Spirit),

Cineal (Nature),

Nimm (Day/Light),

Nyx (Night/Darkness).

Attributes (read chapter 1.2.1)

Minimum 1 dot and maximum 5 dots at character creation incl. racial/class bonus/weakness. An average humanoid has at least two dots in each. Remember to add any bonus and penalties for class and race. 15 dots to distribute. Freebie cost is 7 per dot at character creation, Experience cost is 16 x level.

Physical (Strength, Dexterity, Stamina),

Social (Charisma, Manipulation, Appearance),

Mental (Perception, Intelligence, Wits).

Abilities (read chapter 1.3.1)

No higher than 3 dots without Storyteller's approval, 27 dots to distribute.

Freebie cost is 5 per dot. Experience cost is 12 x level.

Talents: Alertness, Athletics, Brawl, Dodge, Empathy, Performance, Intimidation, Leadership, Legerdemain, Subterfuge,

Skills: Animal Ken, Appraisal, Archery, Botany, Crafts, Etiquette, Melee, Ride, Stealth, Survival,

Knowledges: Academics, Arcane, Chemistry, Hearth Lore, Heraldry, Investigation, Law, Medicine, Politics, Theology.

Specializations: A specialization is a unique ability based upon a combination of either 2 Abilities or 1 Ability + 1 Attribute. It is only allowed to make same type of combination twice. The limit is 10 different specializations and a maximum of 12 dots overall.

Advantages (read chapter 1.4.1)

Backgrounds:

A Background is a special trait used to represent elements of a character's history. They establish a character's social status, history, and education.

Available Backgrounds: Age, Allies, Battlecraft, Contacts, Dark, Influence, Light, Mentor, Resources, Spellcraft, Status, Stealthcraft. 5 dots to distribute. Freebie cost 2 per dot. Experience cost is 6 x level and requires a teacher/mentor.

Disciplines:

Disciplines are the subjects of any craft that you learned through your studies at the academy or with a mentor.

The maximum level in a discipline (circle) is equal to double the corresponding craft.

Earth, Fire, Air, Water, Spirit (Prerequisites = Background: Spellcraft)

Alchemy (Prerequisites = Background: Spellcraft and Class: Alchemist)

Nature (Max. circle 2) (Prerequisites = Background: Spellcraft and Class: Witch/Shaman)

Bludgeoning, Piercing, Slashing, Ranged, Unarmed (Prerequisites = Background: Battlecraft)

Backstabbing, Disable Device, Pick Pockets, Clandestine (Prerequisites = Background: Stealthcraft)

3 dots to distribute. Freebie cost 2 per dot. Experience cost is 6 x level and requires a teacher/mentor.

Initiative:

Base score: Dexterity + Wits + 1d10 + Modifiers.

Roll initiative. The character with the highest Initiative resolve her action. A character always has the option to delay their action to any time later in the order of Initiative.

Modifiers: Offensive (Dexterity penalty + Specializations), Defensive (Discipline Circle/2 rounded down + Specializations), Magic/Spellcraft (+1 Initiative for element of religion, -1 Initiative for other elements), +1 per dot in combat-related Specializations (maximum +4 distributed).

Life

Virtues:

The moral essence of our personality, giving our lives purpose and lead us on the right path towards the final destiny.

Conscience: How to know what is "right" and what is "wrong"

Self-Control: How to manage your emotions and feelings

Courage: How to stand up to fear or daunting adversity.

No restrictions, 7 dots to distribute, Freebie cost 2 per dot, Experience cost is 6 x level.

Road:

Alignment: Evil (1-4) Neutral (5-6) Good (7-10)

Conscience + Self-Control -2 = Base Value

Class and Religion restrictions may occur. Freebie cost 1 per dot up/down. Experience cost is 4 per dot up/down. If a character perform an exceptional evil or good deed it can be required to roll a Road Check, the level of a characters Road sets the amount of dice, and the defined goal (either by the storyteller or by the character itself) sets the difficulty (Evil: 2-4, Neutral: 5-6, Good: 7-9). If your Road ever reach either 1 or 10 you will instantly die and be carried to Aaziltèren in Otherland to fight in the armies for Good and Evil.

Willpower:

Equal to your Courage score. If your Willpower ever get below 1 your Health level will fall to Dying, if you get below -6, you will die. No restrictions, Freebie cost is 1 per dot. Experience cost is 4 per dot. You can spend 1 Willpower for an automatically success in a skill check roll. You can regain 1 Willpower every time you roll more than two 10's in a skill check roll, but only out of combat.

Manapool:

Intelligence + Wits + Spellcraft.

The small amount of godly life-energy, that everyone possesses, not only spellcasters. Those not trained in the art of magic just don't know how to use it. If your Manapool ever get below 1 your Health level will fall to Dying, if you get below -6, you will die.

Absorb/Spellsave:

Mental = Wits + Spellcraft

Physical = Stamina/2 (rounded down) + Armor class for hit location.

If a Spellsave roll is successful it will Negate/Partial/Half Damage dependent on spell

If an Absorb roll is successful, each success removes a die from the Damage dice pool (always retaining at least one die)

Difficulty: 7

Health:

1d10 (best out of 3 rolls) + Stamina + highest craft bonus (3 x Battlecraft, 2 x Stealthcraft, 1 x Spellcraft) = Base Hitpoints. Additional Base Hitpoints cost either 1 Freebie or 4 Experience for each point, but it is recommended to start using the Freebies to improve your craft further, before using them on Hitpoints. Base score of each health level is (Base Hitpoints/6) +1 (rounded). You then add (Physical/2 rounded up) to the 1st health level, and (Stamina/2 rounded up) to the 2nd health level. Your Total Hitpoints is the sum of all levels, excluding Death. On your character sheet, these numbers go into the column on the left. On the right, you enter the range of Hitpoints for each health level. Because you need to have at least 1 damage to bring you to Bruised status, you need to -1 to the first range.

The Hit Location Hitpoints are based upon these calculations. 1st health level equals Body hitpoints (C), 2nd health level equals Arms and Legs hitpoints (D, E, H, I), 3rd health level equals Hands and Feet hitpoints (F, G, J, K) and finally 4th health level equals Head hitpoints (A, B). If one of the mentioned body parts are hit with a damage at least same as its hitpoints in one blow (after Absorb roll) it is crippled and the target can't use it for 1d10 combat rounds. Though if a character is struck on the head (A, B) with a damage at least same as its hitpoints +2 (because of the skull AC) in one blow (after Absorb roll), it is knocked unconscious for 1d10 combat rounds. If the damage of the blow exceeds at least the double as its hitpoints, the body part get crushed or even cut off (depending on the type of damage), and can only be healed by magic.

Example: Your character rolls a 10 with 1d10, has 5 stamina and 2 in Battlecraft = $10 + 5 + (2 \times 3) = 21$ in Base Hitpoints and a total of 39 hitpoints with 8 points placed on the first health level. A single point of damage will bring you to 38 hitpoints and Bruised status. Once you have taken 9 points of damage and reach 30 hitpoints you will proceed to the second health level (Hurt), and you will now have a die less for all your rolls until healed. If you have more than one craft (i.e. 4 in Stealthcraft ($4 \times 2 = 8$) and 2 in Battlecraft (Bonus: $3 \times 2 = 6$) use the one giving you the greatest bonus.

Health

Base Hitpoints: 21

	Dice	Score	Range
Bruised (C)		8	38-31
Hurt (D, E, H, I)	-1	6	30-25
Injured (F, G, J, K)	-2	5	24-20
Wounded (A, B)	-4	5	19-15
Mauled	-6	5	14-10
Crippled	-11	5	9-5
Incapacitated		5	4-0
Dying		-7	-1-6

Total Hitpoints: 39 / -2 (37)

↑
damage
Level: Bruised

If you become incapacitated, you are defenseless against any attack. You also risk bleeding to death, as you will take 1 hitpoint of damage per turn until someone attends your wounds. Any character reaching -7 hitpoints dies. Hitpoints can be regained through undisturbed rest: 1 hitpoint after 6 hours, 10 Hitpoints after 24 hours (not cumulative).

Combat (read chapter 2.1.0)

Weapons (Type, Initiative, Damage, Size, Range, Quality, Special)

Armor and Helmets (Type, Class, Penalty, Size, Absorb, Cover, Quality, Special)

Ammunition (Type, Count, Total)

To Hit Chart (Dexterity, Melee, Archery, Brawl)

Damage Chart (Strength, Bludgeoning, Slashing, Piercing)

Ammunition Chart (Difficulty, Damage, Absorb, Range)

Shield & Parry (Type, Difficulty, vs. Melee, Vs. Missile, Special)

Merits & Flaws (read chapter 2.2.0)

Merits and Flaws are mainly a device meant to help with background story and to help flesh out a character. They can be selected only during character creation and are purchased using freebie points. Each Merit has its own point cost, while each Flaw has a point value which adds to the amount of freebie points a player can spend during the creation process. No character may have more than seven points' worth in both Merits and Flaws. To keep a balance between Merits and Flaws, a player need to have equal numbers of each and/or equal score of each. A player may not choose any Merit or Flaw higher than 3 pts. without Storyteller's approval. Merits and Flaws are divided into several categories: physical, mental, and so on. The physical category describes Merits or Flaws that deal with a character's physical make-up or abilities, while the Mental category addresses intellectual abilities or patterns of behavior. The Supernatural category are only for special gifted characters, and they all require permission by the Storyteller to obtain, and a character are only allowed to have one Merit or Flaw from this category at any time.

Possessions (read chapter 3.1.0)

Gear:

Description = The name and description of items you own

Weight = The weight of the items you own

Gear (Carried) = The equipment you wear, and other carried possessions, incl. weapons and armor.

Gear (Owned) = The gear left behind at a haven or another place.

Total Weight = Total weight of the items you own

Valuables:

The contents and weight of your purse and any other valuable items (coins, gems etc.) you bring with you.

Copper coins (-15 g. each), Silver coins (-25 g. each), Gold coins (-40 g. each)

10 Copper coins = 1 Silver Coin. There exist 2 kind of Gold coins: Alchymist gold (Fake gold) and Dwarf gold (very rare), the value is about 1000 silver coins for Dwarf Gold and 10 Silver coins for Alchymist gold.

Encumbrance:

Determination of how much the total weight character's equipment and valuables slow him or her down. Add each level of Encumbrance to Difficulty of any roll based on Physical Attributes. Because of their small size, Halflings and Gnomes are not as agile as other races. To determine how much weight they can carry the capacities above are divided by 2 for Gnomes and by 1,5 for Halflings.

Carrying Capacity: Based on the Strength of the character.

- 1 dots You can bench press or carry 20 kg. on your back,
- 2 dots You can bench press or carry 50 kg. on your back,
- 3 dots You can bench press or carry 125 kg. on your back,
- 4 dots You can bench press or carry 200 kg. on your back,
- 5 dots You can bench press or carry 325 kg. on your back.

Light (Level 1): Carrying Capacity x 1,25

Medium (Level 2): Carrying Capacity x 1,50

Heavily (Level 3): Carrying Capacity x 1,75

Maximum (Level 4): Carrying Capacity x 2,00

Background (read chapter 4.1.0)**Age:**

How old are you (at character creation)?

Minimum age, studying...

... at an Academy: Studytime + Maturity.

...with a Mentor: Studytime + Maturity/2.

Elf = avg. 240 yr (Maturity: 40 yr)

Gnome = avg. 75 yr (Maturity: 13 yr)

Human = avg. 60 yr (Maturity: 10 yr)

Dwarf = avg. 270 yr (Maturity: 45 yr)

Halfling = avg. 90 yr (Maturity: 15 yr)

Birth:

When were you born? (Game starts at 10th January 40 a.e. and there are precisely 30 days in each month)

Eyes:

What color and shape does your eyes have?

Family:

Do you have a prestigious family or clan name?

Hair:

What natural color and cut does your hair have?

Height:

Elf = Physical + avg. 213 cm

Gnome = Physical + avg. 63 cm

Human = Physical + avg. 170 cm

Dwarf = Physical + avg. 112 cm

Halfling = Physical + avg. 85 cm

Origin:

Where were you born?

AardeSal (Earth, Halflings, Hills/Fields)

Awyrddinâs (Air, Gnomes, Islands/Jungle)

Urhíria (Water, Elves, Forests/Wetlands)

Urbo Fajro (Fire, Dwarves, Mountains/Tundra)

Vaimlinn (Spirit, Humans, Deserts/Plains/Swamps)

Asphyxion (Capital continent and city)

Note: The climate and culture in the countries around the world are based upon the elements of the academy and the main population groups located there. However, the Capital city/country Asphyxion though has an ever-changing climate based upon the mood and alignment of the kings Grand Wizard who is cursed with the Road Insanity flaw!

Sex:

Same gender as the player!

Skin:

How does your skin look like?

Studytime:

How long have you been studying your Disciplines before you went adventuring?

1. circle One year of studying this discipline
2. circle Two years of studying this discipline
3. circle Four years of studying this discipline
4. circle Eight years of studying this discipline
5. circle Sixteen years of studying this discipline
6. circle Thirty-two years of studying this discipline
7. circle Sixty-four years of studying this discipline
8. circle Ninety-six years of studying this discipline

If you have specialized in any Attributes or Abilities, each Specialization is prolonging your study time by additional two years. Should you wish to change or study additional Disciplines, simply add the years together, i.e. studying up to circle two in Fire and circle four in Water adds up to a total of ten years of study time. If you get enough experience while adventuring, you are still able to obtain more Discipline circles, but the spells of that circle is only available through the five options mentioned in chapter 5.

Title:

Do you have any career or family title?

Weight:

Minimum weight (can never get below avg./2):

Dwarf = $(10 \times \text{Strength} - 10 \times \text{Dexterity}) + \text{avg. } 85 \text{ kg}$

Elf = $(10 \times \text{Strength} - 10 \times \text{Dexterity}) + \text{avg. } 85 \text{ kg}$

Gnome = $(10 \times \text{Strength} - 10 \times \text{Dexterity})/2 + \text{avg. } 18 \text{ kg}$

Halfling = $(10 \times \text{Strength} - 10 \times \text{Dexterity})/1,5 + \text{avg. } 34 \text{ kg}$

Human = $(10 \times \text{Strength} - 10 \times \text{Dexterity}) + \text{avg. } 68 \text{ kg}$

History:

Your background story, describing the major events in your life and career. Consider the following topics, and try not to spend more than 15 minutes creating your character's history:

- How old were you when you started your career?
- When did you leave your home to study?
- Where did you study?
- What was unique about your childhood and time at study?
- Do your parents still live, and what do/did they do for a living?
- How much did you know about magic and magical beings before you left your home?
- Do you have any siblings?
- Why did you choose your profession?
- Do you like/dislike anything or anyone?

The whole essence of this list is to give you a hint of what is expected for you to know after these 15 minutes not longer, because then your history is getting too complex and long. It is essential that – at the very least – you write a resume of the above-mentioned questions as a contiguous history on the character sheet, but you are welcome to add a longer version as an appendix! Optionally, for a good background story, the Storyteller can reward the character with either (1d100 x 1d10) additional silver coins to purchase starting Equipment or with 5 to 50 experience points.

Description:

How do you look? (Remember you have only one set of clothes unless you have bought it at character-creation)

Moments of Truth:

What events lead to who you are today?

Goals & Plots:

Does your character have any dreams, purpose or goals for their life?

Derangements:

Special features or handicaps (scars, tattoos, aging, etc.). Why/where, do you have them?

Personality (read chapter 4.1.2):

What kind of person are you?

Nature is the real personality of your character, the so-called internal archetype, sometimes hidden from the public.

Demeanor is the shown personality of your character, the so-called external archetype as the public see you.



Experience & Freebies:

Experience is earned through gameplay in the chronicle, while freebies are points to distribute at character creation. Freebies are ONLY for character creation. Each dot purchased costs the same, so going from dot level 1 to dot level 3 would in an ability would cost 2 x 5 freebies=10 freebies. This is listed as Freebie cost below. Improving skills with experience generally works in a slightly different way. When increasing dot level later on, the cost increases depending on level. For example, purchasing the first dot level in an ability would cost 12 XP, while the second level costs 24 XP. Total cost of going from dot level 0 to dot level 2 would be 12 XP+24 XP=36 XP. You can calculate the price from the XP cost listed below. However, for Specialization, Road, Willpower and Hitpoints, XP cost works similar to freebies, each purchase costing the same.

Type	Freebies	Experience
Attributes	7	16x
Abilities	5	12x
Specializations	5	6
Backgrounds	2	6x
Disciplines	2	6x
Virtues	2	6x
Road	1	4
Willpower	1	4
Hitpoints	1	4

Coterie Information

Here you have the possibility to write down name, race, player and thoughts about the other characters during gameplay.



Spellbook (read chapter 5.1.0)

All spells require a combination of verbal and somatic components to transform godly energy into magic. This can be a time-consuming task, depending on the complexity of the spell. Bards play music and sing in order to cast a spell. If the caster is under an effect, which prevents her from moving her hands or speak, she cannot cast a spell. A deafened caster or a caster who loses her concentration risks misspeaking, which causes the spell to fail or have an unintended effect. Even if it fails, the Mana spent on casting the spell is still lost. Magical bonuses can't stack, no matter the source (item, spell or potion). The highest one always applies, unless the spell description says otherwise!

Mana cost: 1 Mana per discipline (circle) used for the spell.

Mana regain: Undisturbed rest allows you to regain Mana: 1 point after 3 hours and all Mana after 24 hours.

Mana recycling: When you cast a spell, the Mana spent can be recycled until you have cast this particular spell a number of times equal to your Stamina. If you fall asleep or lose conscience, you lose all of your additional castings.

Casting Time: 1 Combat Round (memorization) + 1 Combat Round per discipline (circle) used for the spell.

Spell Range: "Line of sight" equals the maximum range of a longbow (185 m). "Melee Range" indicates the caster must hit the target with the weapon used to transfer the spell effect. "Touch" indicates you need to touch the target's skin to transfer the spell effect.

Max. number of starting spells: You can either focus on a single Spell Discipline or learn multiple Spell Disciplines. If you focus on one, you choose 3 spells per circle. It is possible to substitute the higher circle spells granted this way with lower circle spells, but not the other way around. If you choose to learn multiple Spell Disciplines, you get one randomly picked spell per circle in each Discipline (1d10/2 rounded up for the number of the spell) and can additionally choose a single spell from one of the Disciplines/Circles learned. If you roll same number twice it means you learned one spell less. Additionally can spells at circle 4 or higher *only* be taught at the academy representing the specific element, or by a traveling Grandmaster!

If the player wants to learn new spells during the game, there are only five options:

1. You can get a new spell designed by contacting an Alchemist, who will spend time researching it.
2. You can ask a wizard to search for particular type of spell through his access to ancient spellbooks. However, this process can take months or even years for many of these rare spells.
3. You can ask a traveling mage to exchange his/her knowledge about spells with you.
4. You can buy spells written as scrolls at an Academy or Monastery.
5. You may be lucky to stumble upon long forgotten magic in the form of books and scrolls during your adventures, though such items are rare.

All of these options are very expensive!

For easy overview of all known spells, please refer to the Spells chart appendix.



CHAPTER 1.1.2

RACES



Dwarves

Dwarves are a stoic but stern race, fortified in cities carved from the hearts of mountains and the tundra around Urbo Fajro. The dwarves have acquired a reputation as dour and humorless craftsmen of the earth, with hearts of stone. It could be said that dwarven history shapes the dark disposition of many dwarves, for they reside in high mountains and dangerous realms below the earth. Dwarves are a short and stocky race, and stand about a 60 cm shorter than most humans, with wide, compact bodies that account for their burly appearance. Male and female dwarves pride themselves on the length of their facial hair and men often decorate their beards with a variety of clasps and intricate braids. A clean-shaven male dwarf is a sure sign of madness, or worse—no one familiar with dwarven traditions trusts a beardless dwarf. Dwarves throughout the world are characterized by their passion for architecture as well as stone- and metal-based craftsmanship. Dwarves generally distrust and shun half-races. They find halflings, elves, and gnomes to be too frail, flighty, or arrogant to be worthy of proper respect. It is with humans that dwarves share the strongest link, for humans' industrious nature and hearty appetites come closest to matching those of the dwarven ideal. Dwarves are driven by honor and tradition and have a strong sense of friendship and justice. Those who win their trust understand that, while they work hard, they play even harder—especially when good ale is involved. Most dwarves follow the path of neutral or good alignment. Dwarves often leave the confines of their redoubts to seek glory for their clans, to find wealth with which to enrich the fortress-homes of their birth, or to reclaim fallen dwarven citadels from racial enemies. Dwarven warfare is characterized by tunnel fighting and melee combat, and as such most dwarves tend toward classes such as fighters or rangers. Most dwarves are followers of Lustro, the God of Fire and the God who created them. Dwarves prefer sturdy weapons like battle axes, battle picks and warhammers, most often forged by either themselves or one in their family or clan.



Elves

The long-lived elves are children of the natural world, and the main part of the elven population is located in the forests and swamps around Urhíría. Elves value their privacy and traditions, and while they are often slow to make friends, at both the personal and national levels, once an outsider is accepted as a comrade, such alliances can last for generations. Elves have a curious attachment to their surroundings, perhaps as a result of their incredibly long lifespan or some deeper, more mystical reason. Elves who dwell in a region for long find themselves physically adapting to match their surroundings, most noticeably taking on coloration reflecting the local environment. Those elves that spend their lives among the short-lived races, on the other hand, often develop a skewed perception of mortality and become morose, the result of watching wave after wave of companions age and die before their eyes. Although generally taller than humans, elves possess a graceful, fragile physique that is accentuated by their long, pointed ears. Their eyes are wide and almond-shaped, filled with large, vibrantly colored pupils. While elven clothing often plays off the beauty of the natural world, those elves that live in cities tend to bedeck themselves in the latest fashion, though some also tend to try blend in with common people. Many elves feel a bond with nature and strive to live in harmony with the natural world. Most, however, find manipulating earth and stone to be distasteful, and prefer instead to indulge in the finer arts, with their inborn patience making them particularly suited to wizardry. Elves tend to treat other races with distrust and suspicion. They are prone to writing them off as rash and impulsive, yet they are excellent judges of character. An elf might not want a dwarf neighbor, but would be the first to acknowledge that dwarf's skill at forging. They regard gnomes as strange (and sometimes dangerous) curiosities, and halflings with a measure of pity, for these small folk seem to the elves to be adrift, without a traditional home. Elves are fascinated with humans, as evidenced by the number of half-elves in the world, even if they usually disown such offspring. Elves are sensitive creatures. This manifests itself in their appreciation of kindness and beauty as well as in their capricious nature. Very few elves tend to the path of neutral alignment. Many elves embark on adventures out of a desire to explore the world, leaving their secluded forest realms to reclaim forgotten elven magic or search out lost kingdoms established millennia ago by their forefathers. For those raised among humans, the ephemeral and unfettered life of an adventurer holds natural appeal. Elves generally eschew melee because of their frailty, preferring instead to pursue classes such as wizards and rangers. Elves prefer using their bows, but if forced in to melee they usually wield long swords and rapiers. Lots of elves are followers of the Goddess of water: Lacus, the creator of the Elven race.



Gnomes

Gnomes trace their lineage back to the mysterious beginning of time. A time where colors were brighter, the wildlands were wilder and emotions more primal. The main population of gnomes lives in the jungle wilderness at the small islands called Awyrddinâs. The gnomes have never completely abandoned their roots. As a result, gnomes are widely regarded by other races as alien and strange. Gnomes are one of the smallest of the common races, generally standing just over 60 cm in height. Their hair tends toward vibrant colors such as the fiery orange of autumn leaves or the verdant green of forests at springtime. Similarly, their flesh tones range from earthy browns to mossy green, frequently with little regard for heredity. Gnomes possess highly mutable facial characteristics, and many have overly large mouths and eyes, an effect which can be both disturbing and stunning, depending on the individual. Unlike most races, gnomes do not generally organize themselves within classic societal structures. Whimsical creatures at heart, they typically travel alone or with temporary companions, ever seeking new and more exciting experiences. They rarely form enduring relationships among themselves or with members of other races, instead pursuing crafts, professions or collections with a passion that borders on zealotry. Gnomes have difficulty interacting with the other races, on both emotional and physical levels. Gnome humor is hard to translate and often comes across as malicious or senseless to other races, while gnomes in turn tend to think of the taller races as dull and lumbering giants. They get along well with halflings and humans, but are overly fond of playing jokes on dwarves and half-races, whom most gnomes feel need to lighten up. They respect elves, but often grow frustrated with the comparatively slow pace at which members of the long-lived race make decisions. To the gnomes, action is always better than inaction, and many gnomes carry several highly involved projects with them at all times to keep themselves entertained during rest periods. Although gnomes are impulsive tricksters, with sometimes inscrutable motives and equally confusing methods, their hearts are generally in the right place. They are prone to powerful fits of emotion, and find themselves most at peace within the natural world. Gnomes' propensity for wanderlust makes them natural adventurers. They often become wanderers to experience new aspects of life, for nothing is as novel as the uncounted dangers facing adventurers. Gnomes make up for their weakness with a proclivity for sorcery, shamanism or bardic music. Gnomes are restricted to use small weapons like Daggers, Slings and Clubs. They often use improvised versions of these weapons. Occasionally these experimental versions will be deadlier than usual, but usually they have unintended side-effects making them overall about as effective as the standard version of the weapon. A lot of gnomes follow the God of the Air element, Aerius, because they feel honored to be the ones created by him.



Halflings

Optimistic and cheerful by nature, blessed with uncanny luck and driven by a powerful wanderlust, halflings make up for their short stature with an abundance of bravado and curiosity. At once excitable and easy-going, halflings like to keep an even temper and a steady eye on opportunity, and are not as prone as some of the more volatile races to violent or emotional outbursts. Halflings rise to a humble height of 85 cm. They prefer to walk barefoot, leading to the bottoms of their feet being roughly calloused. Tufts of thick, curly hair warm the tops of their broad, tanned feet. Their skin tends toward a rich almond color and their hair toward light shades of brown. A halflings ears are pointed, but proportionately not much larger than those of a human. Halflings possess a strong sense of house and home, often spending above their means to enhance the comforts of home life. Yet they are also blessed with wanderlust and curiosity. Therefore, halflings often leave the hills and fields of AardeSal upon reaching adulthood, seeking adventure and new experiences. When they return and settle down, their stories are passed down to the younger halflings over a cozy fire. The same curiosity often a halflings good sense, leading to poor decisions and narrow escapes. Halflings are natural born opportunists. Unable to physically defend themselves from the rigors of the world, they know when to bend with the wind and when to hide away. Often, they dwell at the knees of their human cousins in human cities, eking out livings as they can from the scraps of larger societies. Others prefer the nomadic life on the road, traveling the world and experiencing all it has to offer. Even in the jaws of catastrophe, a halfling almost never loses his sense of humor. A typical halfling prides himself on his ability to go unnoticed by other races—it is this trait that allows so many halflings to excel at thievery and trickery. Most halflings, knowing full well the stereotyped view other races take of them as a result; go out of their way to be forthcoming and friendly to the bigger races when they're not trying to go unnoticed. They get along fairly well with gnomes, although most halflings regard these eccentric creatures with a hefty dose of caution. Halflings coexist well with humans as a general rule, but since some of the more aggressive human societies value halflings as slaves, halflings try not to grow too complacent when dealing with them. Halflings respect elves and dwarves, but these races generally live in remote regions far from the comforts of civilization that halflings enjoy, thus limiting opportunities for interaction. Halflings are loyal to their friends and families, but since they dwell in a world dominated by races twice as large as themselves, they've come to grips with the fact that sometimes they'll need to scarp and scrounge for survival. Most halflings are neutral as a result. Their inherent luck coupled with their insatiable wanderlust makes halflings ideal for lives of adventure. Other such vagabonds tend to put up with the curious race in hopes that some of their mystical luck will rub off. Obviously, Halflings can't use the largest weapons, and their favorite weapons are slings, staff-slings, knives and short swords. Earthbound as they are, they tend to follow Tellus, the Earth-Goddess, who created them at the beginning of time.



Humans

Humans possess exceptional drive and a great capacity to endure and expand, and as such are currently the dominant race in the world. They have a capacity for great evil and boundless good and their physical characteristics also vary greatly. The continent Vaimlinn was founded and is mainly populated by humans. The capital city Asphyxion has also a large human population. Due to the presence of the King's Grand Wizard, the climate is ever-changing, making them accustomed to a bit of everything. Human society comprises a multitude of attitudes and lifestyles. Their citizens carve a name for themselves with the strength of their sword arms and the power of their spells. They generally tend to congregate in sprawling cities around the world, but others assemble into vast barbaric hordes. Humanity is characterized by its heterogeneity and its cultural diversity. However, the oldest human cultures have a history measured in centuries, a short time span compared to elves and dwarves. They also have the widest range in gods and religion, lacking other races' ties to tradition. Often, they turn to anyone offering them glory or protection. However, among commoners you will find many followers of Divus, God of Spirit. The God who created them perfect as they are. Humanity's diversity also has resulted in a near-infinite set of names. Humans differ widely in their views towards other races. Some have an easy time getting along with them, while others have plenty of prejudice. They look upon dwarves as miserly drunkards, elves as swaggers, halflings as craven thieves, gnomes as twisted maniacs, and half-races as embarrassments. In many cases, this leads to violence and war, yet humans are also swift to forgive and forge alliances with races who do not try to match or exceed them in violence. Human curiosity and ambition often leads them to leave their homes to explore the world or join mighty, conquering armies. Others pursue adventuring careers simply for the thrill of danger. With their diverse backgrounds, great flexibility and ingenuity, they can fill any role within an adventuring party.



CHAPTER 1.1.3

CLASSES



Alchemist

Required Backgrounds: Spellcraft 1+ and Stealthcraft 1+

Starting equipment: Scholar's Outfit

Mentor/Academy: Academy

Bonus/Weakness: +2 Mental -1 Physical

Road: Neutral

Disciplines: Earth, Fire, Water, Air, Spirit, Disable Device, Alchemy

Difficulty: Special (depends on discipline level)

Resources: Starts with maximum 10d10 silver pieces for buying gear.

Description: Whether secreted away in a smoky basement laboratory or gleefully experimenting in a well-respected school of magic, the alchemist is often regarded as being just as unstable, unpredictable and dangerous as the concoctions he brews or the spells he creates. While some content themselves with sedentary lives as merchants, providing gold, scrolls and potions, the true alchemist answers a deeper calling. Unlike the typical spellcaster, the alchemist specializes in transferring his magic power into his creations in the laboratory. Many also experiment with poison, explosives and unusual types of magic. Additionally, alchemists can be hired to identify magical objects or decrypt writings.

Bard

Required Backgrounds: Spellcraft 1-2 and Stealthcraft 1+

Starting equipment: Entertainer's Outfit

Mentor/Academy: Mentor

Bonus/Weakness: +2 Social, -1 Physical

Road: Good/Evil

Disciplines: Spirit, Disable Device, Backstabbing, Pick Pockets, Clandestine

Difficulty: 7

Resources: Starts with maximum 7d10 silver pieces for buying gear.

Description: Wandering entertainers and artists of the realm, traveling from city to city. During their travels, they play songs of merriment as well as collecting and sharing stories and information. In that last respect, Bards are very important: Few people travel far, and for some places Bards are the only source of outside information. Thus, they are often warmly greeted and usually stay free of charge at any place they frequent. Some bards are taught a multitude of things, from swordplay, to stealth, to lesser magic. Bards practice a unique form of magic by using their considerable musical talents to weave spells. These spells usually take the form of charming magic. They will wear only leather armor or less as protection and can only use one-handed weapons, as they disdain heavy, slow weapons. This character class is limited to a maximum of circle 2 in the Spellcraft Background.



Cleric

Required Backgrounds: Spellcraft 1+ and Battlecraft 1+

Starting equipment: Monk's Outfit or Cleric's Vestments

Mentor/Academy: Academy

Bonus/Weakness: +2 Mental -1 Physical

Road: Good

Disciplines: Earth, Fire, Water, Air, Spirit, Bludgeoning (only the Spellcraft Discipline of own deity allowed)

Difficulty: 7

Resources: Starts with maximum 10d10 silver pieces for buying gear.

Description: Clerics are traveling martial Priests of Divine Spirit. While Priests prefer using spells, Clerics prefer to fight, and they are quite good at it, too. Like Priests, they do not enjoy bloodshed (although a little maiming is just fine), and will only use blunt weapons. They will wear any armor in the fight against their foes, and quite a few wear the heaviest armor they can get. Clerics are an effective class, and have a strong survival rate due to their good armor and healing spells. They are a valuable addition to any party.

Darkseeker

Required Backgrounds: Spellcraft 1+ and Battlecraft 1+

Starting equipment: Monk's Outfit or Artisan's Outfit

Mentor/Academy: Academy

Bonus/Weakness: +2 Mental -1 Social

Road: Evil

Disciplines: Earth, Fire, Water, Air, Spirit, Bludgeoning (only the Spellcraft Discipline of own deity allowed)

Difficulty: 7

Resources: Starts with maximum 10d10 silver pieces for buying gear.

Description: Darkseekers embody the virtue of their deities and are notably intolerant of Priests. They invoke the power of Demonic Spirit to cast their spells. There is a constant risk of being possessed by a demonic creature when tampering with such magic. However, Demons are rather picky, choosing only spellcasters they deem worthy. Darkseekers possessed by a Demon lose control of themselves. Some fanatics actually see this as a step towards becoming a deity. Darkseekers are universally shunned for the pleasure they take in using human sacrifice in their magical practices. Darkseekers wear only robes and use only blunt weapons, because they do not want the victims to bleed to death too fast.



Mage/Wizard

Required Backgrounds: Spellcraft 1+

Starting equipment: Scholar's Outfit or Artisan's Outfit

Mentor/Academy: Academy

Bonus/Weakness: +2 Mental -1 Physical

Road: Good

Disciplines: Earth, Fire, Water, Air

Difficulty: 7

Resources: Starts with maximum 10d10 silver pieces for buying gear.

Description: There are many kinds of elemental spellcasters: Wizards, Mages, Sorcerers and Necromancers are some classic examples. Mages are the adventuring counterpart of the Wizards, who rarely venture forth from their respective towers or domains; hence they are not very well suited to adventuring. They spend their time at home, studying scrolls and books and occasionally pass on their knowledge to an apprentice. Some Wizards work together with the Alchemists creating new spells or improving old ones. Most elemental spellcasters you meet in cities will be one of the other spellcaster classes. These people are quite powerful, and wield a potent magical arsenal. Mages have at their command mostly combat and defense spells, as they are either adventurers, searching for fortune, or are the emissaries of other Wizards, who need them to search out lost artifacts, spell components or ancient writings. Either way, they are formidable and unpredictable foes. Mages and Wizards use only staves (including the staff-sling) and daggers in combat, as they need as much mobility as possible. For the same reason, they will only wear robes, and thus rely on their magic for protection.

Necromancer

Required Backgrounds: Spellcraft 1+

Starting equipment: Scholar's Outfit or Traveler's Outfit

Mentor/Academy: Mentor

Bonus/Weakness: +2 Mental -1 Social

Road: Neutral/Evil

Disciplines: Earth, Spirit

Difficulty: 7

Resources: Starts with maximum 10d10 silver pieces for buying gear.

Description: Necromancers are a special branch of sorcerers, using their abilities to gain absolute control over their enemies' bodies, minds and souls. They are limited to the schools of Spirit and Earth. Their trademark ability is raising the fallen. Necromancers are also effective with spells involving disease, poison, fear and pain. Necromancy is primarily practiced by humans (and to a lesser extent half-races), while the other humanoid races tend rarely choose this path. A Necromancer is not quintessentially "evil", though most necromancers display traits of insanity. In the distant past, necromancers were welcome in any village or town. They were honored as shepherds of the dead, aiding transition to the other side. Their ability to communicate with the dead also earned them respect.



Paladin

Required Backgrounds: Battlecraft 1+ and Spellcraft 4

Starting equipment: Traveler's Outfit or Explorer's Outfit

Mentor/Academy: Academy

Bonus/Weakness: +2 Physical, -1 Mental

Road: Good

Disciplines: Spirit, Bludgeoning, Slashing, Piercing

Difficulty: 7

Resources: Starts with maximum 5d10 silver pieces for buying gear.

Description: Holy warriors and protectors of the followers of Divine Spirit. Dedicated to fighting for their deity, they are serious fighters with minor priestly powers. They can use any weapon or armor, but prefer swords. Most Paladins will actively help anyone in need, even risking their own lives to save the ones they aid. This character class is limited to a maximum of circle 4 in the Spellcraft Background.

Praetorian

Required Backgrounds: Battlecraft 1+ and Spellcraft 4

Starting equipment: Traveler's Outfit or Explorer's Outfit

Mentor/Academy: Academy

Bonus/Weakness: +2 Physical, -1 Social

Road: Evil

Disciplines: Spirit, Bludgeoning, Slashing, Piercing

Difficulty: 7

Resources: Starts with maximum 5d10 silver pieces for buying gear.

Description: Holy warriors and protectors of the followers of Demonic Spirit. Dedicated to fighting for their deity, they are serious fighters with minor priestly powers. They can use any weapon or armor, but prefer swords. Most Praetorians will not actively help anyone in need, unless they follow the same path of Demonic Spirit, of course. They further their deity's will by slaying all people not of their own faith, so be wary when meeting a stranger offering help. This character class is limited to a maximum of circle 4 in the Spellcraft Background.

Priest

Required Backgrounds: Spellcraft 1+

Starting equipment: Cleric's Vestments

Mentor/Academy: Academy

Bonus/Weakness: +2 Mental -1 Physical

Road: Good

Disciplines: Spirit, Bludgeoning

Difficulty: 7

Resources: Starts with maximum 10d10 silver pieces for buying gear.

Description: Priests embody the virtue of their deities of Good. They channel the power of Divine Spirit to cast their spells and are notably intolerant of Priests of a different faith. Priests are welcome in all cities for their invaluable healing services, and for their spiritual guidance. Priests wear only robes and use blunt weapons, for good priests do not wish to kill needlessly.

Ranger

Required Backgrounds: Stealthcraft 1+ and Battlecraft 1+

Special restrictions: May not purchase Discipline: Pick Pockets during character creation.

Starting equipment: Traveler's Outfit or Explorer's Outfit

Mentor/Academy: Mentor

Bonus/Weakness: +1 Physical, +1 Social, -1 Mental

Road: Neutral / Good

Disciplines: Bludgeoning, Slashing, Piercing, Disable Device, Backstabbing, Clandestine

Difficulty: 7

Resources: Starts with maximum 7d10 silver pieces for buying gear.

Description: Hunters and protectors of the wilderness and law keepers for the counties. They will never willingly harm an animal, but will fight in self-defense if necessary. They share the same attitudes as the shamans in respect to what they believe in. Some unscrupulous Rangers use their abilities for man hunting, at which they excel. They have formidable combat abilities which, combined with their stealth, makes them powerful characters. Rangers are excellent at sneaking and can plan an ambush quite well if it is necessary. They wear only leather armor in order to preserve their stealth and mobility.



Rogue

Required Backgrounds: Stealthcraft 1+ and Battlecraft 1+

Starting equipment: Peasant's Outfit or Traveler's Outfit

Mentor/Academy: Mentor

Bonus/Weakness: +1 Physical, +1 Social, -1 Mental

Road: Any

Disciplines: Bludgeoning, Slashing, Piercing, Disable Device, Backstabbing, Pick Pockets, Clandestine

Difficulty: 7

Resources: Starts with maximum 7d10 silver pieces for buying gear.

Description: Rogues steal for different reasons, and are very good at it. Not all rogues rob for personal gain: Some are vigilantes, robbing sleazy nobles to help the poor. Others rarely use their thieving skills and are basically scouts, creeping ahead to survey enemies. Of course, most rogues rob for their own benefit, and thus it is usually good to keep an eye on all rogues in your party, even if they have given their word, they will not rob you. Rogues have a number of useful abilities. They can use any one-handed weapon, but will wear no armor greater than leather due to their need for stealth.



Shaman

Required Backgrounds: Spellcraft 1 and Battlecraft 1+

Special restrictions: May not purchase Background: Status during character creation.

Starting equipment: Peasant's Outfit

Mentor/Academy: Mentor

Bonus/Weakness: +2 Mental -1 Physical

Road: Neutral / Good

Disciplines: Nature, Bludgeoning

Difficulty: 7

Resources: Starts with maximum 3d10 silver pieces for buying gear.

Description: Shamans are the traditional protectors of the forest and nature. They are specialized in communicating with and summoning spirits of nature and worship and revere all forms of wildlife and nature. They are usually solitary folk, each keeping watch of a different part of the wilderness, but in times of need they come forth to preserve the balance of nature. Normally they are pacifists and avoid combat, but when the balance of things is in danger or nature is threatened, they will retaliate with force. Shamans command Nature-based magic, and will not hesitate to use them in the process of cleansing their lands from intruders. Shamans use only blunt weapons as they find bloodshed distasteful. They will wear only natural leather armor. The Shamans and the Rangers are very close, and they often consult each other on the ways of the world. This character class is limited to a maximum of circle 1 in the Spellcraft Background.

Sorcerer

Required Backgrounds: Spellcraft 1+

Starting equipment: Scholar's Outfit or Artisan's Outfit

Mentor/Academy: Academy

Bonus/Weakness: +2 Mental -1 Social

Road: Evil

Disciplines: Fire, Water, Air

Difficulty: 7

Resources: Starts with maximum 10d10 silver pieces for buying gear.

Description: A wizard/mage that has decided to follow the dark path of elemental magic and destruction, and therefore is limited in usage of schools.

Warlord

Required Backgrounds: Battlecraft 1+ and Spellcraft 4

Starting equipment: Traveler's Outfit or Explorer's Outfit

Mentor/Academy: Academy

Bonus/Weakness: +1 Physical, +1 Mental, -1 Social

Road: Good/Evil

Disciplines: Earth, Fire, Water, Air, Bludgeoning, Slashing, Piercing

Difficulty: 7

Resources: Starts with maximum 5d10 silver pieces for buying gear.

Description: Warlords are the front-line fighters in any magical conflict. They combine the best abilities of both the Warrior and Mage classes, but as a result are not quite as effective as either of those 'pure' classes. The Warlord class is quite a powerful one, though, when you think of what a good fighter could do with potent elemental magical spells! They eschew the heavier armor in favor of the lighter leather armor, as speed is a necessity when casting spells. They need one hand free to direct their ranged spells, so they may only use one-handed weapons or shields. This character class is limited to a maximum of circle 4 in the Spellcraft Background.

Warrior

Required Backgrounds: Battlecraft 1+

Starting equipment: Traveler's Outfit or Peasant's Outfit

Mentor/Academy: Academy

Bonus/Weakness: +2 Physical and -1 Mental

Road: Any

Disciplines: Bludgeoning, Slashing, Piercing

Difficulty: 7

Resources: Starts with maximum 5d10 silver pieces for buying gear.

Description: Warriors are the basic front-line fighters in any party. Skilled in combat, and can usually make use of some of the most powerful heavy armor and weaponry. Even though they are a basically simple class, they are quite effective and can be varied: Warriors are guardsmen, mercenaries, infantry, gladiators, and a multitude of other professions. As such, the warrior is a well-rounded physical combatant. Because of the class's reliance on heavy plate armor and expensive weaponry, the cost of Managing the Warrior's equipment is typically very high.

Wild Magus

Required Backgrounds: Spellcraft 1+

Starting equipment: Scholar's Outfit or Traveler's Outfit

Mentor/Academy: Academy

Bonus/Weakness: +2 Mental -1 Physical

Road: Any

Disciplines: Earth, Fire, Water, Air, Spirit

Difficulty: 8

Resources: Starts with maximum 10d10 silver pieces for buying gear.

Description: A Wild Magus is either a rogue mage/cleric, who decided to run away or were banned from Mage School or abbey, and is therefore cursed with a higher difficulty for spellcasting. Or an untrained person born with the gift of magic, and without any skill in controlling it. This type of class are most often hunted by Witch Hunters.



Witch Hunter

Required Backgrounds: Stealthcraft 1+ and Battlecraft 1+ and Spellcraft 1

Special restrictions: May not purchase Discipline: Pick Pockets during character creation.

Starting equipment: Traveler's Outfit or Explorer's Outfit

Mentor/Academy: Mentor

Bonus/Weakness: +1 Physical, +1 Mental, -1 Social

Road: Good

Disciplines: Spirit, Bludgeoning, Slashing, Piercing, Disable Device, Backstabbing, Clandestine

Difficulty: 7

Resources: Starts with maximum 7d10 silver pieces for buying gear.

Description: Witch Hunters are a breed of fanatic warriors who have been chosen by the highest clerical societies to exterminate and cleanse all who they believe to be followers of the dark arts: Witches, Shamans, Necromancers, Sorcerers, Wild Magus. Forever hunting, never staying one place too long, they travel around in their search for unacademic magic. They will use no magical weapons, armor or items, and will only grudgingly accept beneficial spells being cast on them. They are trained from childhood to be ferocious and efficient fighters, and will give no quarter when faced with an enemy spell-caster, due to their fanatical focus and their strong willpower. They will use any non-magical weapon, but will wear no armor heavier than scale because they favor quick, complex attacks that heavy armor will not permit. This character class is limited to a maximum of circle 1 in the Spellcraft Background, just to know how to recognize magic.

Witch

Required Backgrounds: Spellcraft 1

Special restrictions: May not purchase Background: Status during character creation.

Starting equipment: Peasant's Outfit

Mentor/Academy: Mentor

Bonus/Weakness: +2 Mental -1 Physical

Road: Neutral

Disciplines: Nature

Difficulty: 7

Resources: Starts with maximum 3d10 silver pieces for buying gear.

Description: Generally feared and misunderstood, the witch draws her magic from a pact made with nature itself. Communing with that source, the witch gains a host of spells. While many witches are recluses, living on the edge of civilization, some live within society, openly or in hiding. The blend of witches' knowledge of spells and herbalism makes them adept at filling a number of different roles, such as seer, healer, adviser or pharmacist. Some witches travel, seeking greater knowledge and better understanding of the mysterious powers that guide them. Witches tend to be female, although male witches do exist. This character class is limited to a maximum of circle 1 in the Spellcraft Background.



CHAPTER 1.1.4

RELIGION



In Keski-Ajân, the four main elements – Earth, Air, Fire, and Water – are the root of all existing matter. Divine traditions of magic also include a fifth element, which is Spirit. The shamans and witches believe in a sixth element, Nature. This element is represented by the Goddess Cineal, daughter of Tellus, Goddess of Earth and Divus, God of Spirit. There are some weak rumors about a seventh element, represented by a long forgotten God. Each of the elements has certain traits, and is linked with a direction on the compass. All Spellcraft disciplines originate from these elements and Gods. Every religion has its bonuses and weaknesses. Each God or Demigod grants you +1 Initiative for its own element, but you have -1 Initiative for all other elements. If you ever decide to change your spiritual path and start following another God or Demigod, you will be punished with a permanent Mana cost penalty of +1 for all spells bound to the element of the God or Demigod you left. You will also be punished with the flaw: Group Enmity with the group being those of your former faith. The Gods appreciate all efforts by their worshipers in promotion of their element, as long as the balance between the good and the evil is maintained. The Demigods and their Immortal Warriors are constantly fighting to tilt the balance between good and evil, allowing their fanatic followers to rule the World.

Ancient Gods

The ancient world was home to a variety of Gods, long before the modern Gods came into existence. Their memories have faded away through time, their temples and statues vanished or partly sunk into debris and their symbols and associations are almost forgotten. These deities are seldom worshiped, although some are being revived by a few new practitioners who think the Ancient Gods still have some kind of a role to play. Everything happens for a reason and the path to your fate passes several crossroads. Perhaps it's possible to meet one of them on that path, without even knowing about it. Most Gods have a direction, a color or even an element. For the ancient Gods, however, the knowledge is blurred, and because of that, no one receives any blessings or bonuses from these deities anymore.

Name: Paradox
Symbol: Mobius Loop
Color: Grey
Road: Neutral
Sex: Male
Parents: Galamninn
Association: Paradox

Name: Aitua
Symbol: Flat Palm
Color: Grey
Road: Neutral
Sex: Female
Parents: Unknown
Association: Fate

Name: Rana
Symbol: Sun
Color: Grey
Road: Neutral
Sex: Male
Parents: Galamninn
Association: Sun

Name: Mesiac
Symbol: Full Moon
Color: Grey
Road: Neutral
Sex: Female
Parents: Galamninn
Association: Moon

Name: Zilingan
Symbol: Scale
Color: Grey
Road: Neutral
Sex: Male
Parents: Unknown
Association: Balance

Name: Galamninn
Symbol: Pentagram
Color: Grey
Road: Neutral
Sex: Female
Parents: Paradox
Association: The Universe

Name: Wakati
Symbol: Hourglass
Color: Grey
Road: Neutral
Sex: Male
Parents: Mesiac / Zilingan
Association: Time

Name: Phakate
Symbol: Ankh
Color: Grey
Road: Neutral
Sex: Female
Parents: Aitua / Paradox
Association: Immortality



Gods

Fire, associated with the South, is a purifying, masculine force, connected to a strong will and energy. Fire both creates, destroys, and symbolizes the fertility of the God of Fire: Lustru. Fire can soothe or harm, and can give new life or destroy the worn-out or old ones. For color correspondences, use red and orange for Fire associations. Most followers of this element are men of action, short-tempered and despise waiting and inactivity. This God stands not only for the raw and wild fight, but also for greed, thieving, and trickery.

Water, associated with the West, is a feminine energy used for cleansing and purification. Represented by the color blue it also symbolizes sea fertility, passion, and emotion. Magic users following Lacus specialize in controlling water, it may be fluid, solid, or in form of vapor. Lacus is the Goddess of Justice and her followers find it important to stay lawful, pure and clean. Under most circumstances they are calm, but if they get mad, people better stay away. In a battle they prefer to be righteous, organized and tactical, favoring a one-on-one fight over chaotic warfare.

Earth, associated with the North and the color brown is considered the ultimate feminine element. As the Wheel of the Year turns, all the aspects of life take place in the Earth: birth, life, death, and finally rebirth. The Earth is nurturing, fertile and stable, solid and firm, full of endurance and strength. Tellus is the Goddess of love and welfare, and her followers like all things earth-based, especially nature. Magic users following Tellus specialize in controlling matters related to the element of earth.

Air is the element of the East, connected to the mind and the breath of life. If you're performing a work related to communication, wisdom or the powers of the mind, you must have faith in Aerius. He is the God of poetry and writing as well as hunting fortune, victory and success in life. Air carries away your troubles, blows away strife, and brings positive thoughts to those who are far away. Air is associated with the color yellow. A magic user following Aerius make a speciality of using air for his benefits.



Spirit is the fifth element, associated with the color purple. It has no actual direction at the compass, as it is linked to the soul contained in every living creature. Divus is the God of purity, wisdom and health. He gives the suffering and oppressed courage and something to believe in. His followers tend to be good and respected leaders and are quick to step in to help others who are in pain. They radiate strength and inner peace and try to stay calm, nice and mild no matter of the situation. A magic user following Divus specializes in healing spells and blessings.

Nature the sixth element. Shamans and witches love, honor, and respect the creator and mother of all herbal and animal life: Cineal. They believe everything is sacred, from the largest mountain to the smallest plant and animal. Everything has a purpose, and a lesson can be learned from the World and our surroundings. It is about being in touch with themselves and everything around the: We are all One. The elders play a key role in keeping this culture alive and are treated with the utmost respect. Cineal is the Goddess of untamed nature, freedom and health care.

Name: Lustru
Symbol: Flame
Color: Red/Orange
Direction: South
Road: Neutral
Sex: Male
Parents: Aitua / Rana
Association: Fire

Name: Lacus
Symbol: Water Drop
Color: Blue
Direction: West
Road: Neutral
Sex: Female
Parents: Aitua / Rana
Association: Water

Name: Tellus
Symbol: Flower
Color: Brown
Direction: North
Road: Neutral
Sex: Female
Parents: Aitua / Rana
Association: Earth

Name: Aerius
Symbol: Cloud
Color: Yellow
Direction: East
Road: Neutral
Sex: Male
Parents: Aitua / Rana
Association: Air

Name: Divus
Symbol: Human Silhouette
Color: Purple
Direction: Self
Road: Neutral
Sex: Male
Parents: Aitua / Rana
Association: Spirit

Name: Cineal
Symbol: Tree
Color: Green
Direction: Center
Road: Neutral
Sex: Female
Parents: Tellus / Divus
Association: Nature

Demigods / Immortal Warriors

Aaziltèren is a majestic, enormous valley located in Otherland, ruled by the Demigods Nyx and Nimm. Chosen by them are those that through their life strove to fanatically follow either the road of Good or Evil. Led by their kids the Immortal Warriors Erebus and Eriel, the dead join the respective armies of the alignments in an eternal fight. The overall universal balance ensures that there is never a decisive victory for either side.

Name: Nyx
Symbol: Crescent Moon
Color: Black
Road: Evil
Sex: Female
Association: Death, Night

Name: Nimm
Symbol: Sunrise
Color: White
Road: Good
Sex: Male
Association: Life, Day

Name: Erebus
Symbol: Sword
Color: Black
Road: Evil
Sex: Male
Association: War, Darkness

Name: Eriel
Symbol: Olive Branch
Color: White
Road: Good
Sex: Female
Association: Peace, Light

CHAPTER 1.2.1

ATTRIBUTES



Physical

These Traits describe how strong, dexterous, and sturdy characters are, and are the primary traits of an action-oriented character. Physical Traits concern only the strengths and weaknesses of the body.

Strength

This is a measure of your raw physical strength – your ability to lift, carry, and cause physical harm. A person with a high strength rating is usually larger than someone with a lower rating. Of course, there are exceptions. Strength is used when you attempt to lift, carry, push, heave, or break something. In melee combat, it is added to your damage Dice Pool. Strength is also used when you attempt to make any sort of jump or leap.

1 dots	Poor	You can bench press and carry 20 kg. on your back.
2 dots	Average	You can bench press and carry 50 kg. on your back.
3 dots	Athlete	You can bench press and carry 125 kg. on your back.
4 dots	Exceptional	You can bench press and carry 200 kg. on your back.
5 dots	Outstanding	You can bench press and carry 325 kg. on your back.

Dexterity

This Trait is a measure of your general physical prowess – speed, quickness, agility and ease of movement. It indicates the capacity for moving with agility and manipulating objects with accuracy and grace. Dexterity includes eye-hand coordination, fine motor manipulation, reaction speed, reflexes, and bodily grace.

1 dots	Clumsy	Ummm, do not use a crossbow or anything mechanical.
2 dots	Average	You can breathe and walk at the same time.
3 dots	Graceful	You have excellent raw athletic potential.
4 dots	Exceptional	You can juggle five knives.
5 dots	Outstanding	You can juggle five knives while blindfolded.

Stamina

Physical hardiness, including resistance to disease, and physical trauma and how fast you can recover life.

Stamina is a measure of general health and resistance to pain; it indicates how long you can continue to exert yourself as well, as how much physical punishment you can sustain. Stamina is your staying power, both physically and mentally, and one of its most important elements is the will to live. Stamina is also the used for Mana recycling – you can cast same spell as many times as you have stamina for the same Mana.

1 dots	Weak	You are frail in constitution and may be sickly.
2 dots	Average	You are moderately healthy.
3 dots	Good	You are in good shape, the result of regular exercise.
4 dots	Exceptional	You could run a marathon.
5 dots	Outstanding	You are tough enough to survive almost anything.

Social

Your Social Traits describe your appearance, charm, and familiarity with the human mind. Your Social Traits are vital in determining first impressions, leadership ability, and the nature of your interactions with others.

Charisma

Charisma is a measure of your aptitude for enticing and fascinating others. You use Charisma to win others over to you emotionally and to get them to trust you. This Trait is more a facet of charismatic personality than it is an overt manipulation of others. It is a sum of the character's bearing, charm, and power of influence. Charisma reflects your power to convince others to put their faith in you.

1 dots	Poor	Others avoid being around you.
2 dots	Average	You are likeable.
3 dots	Good	People trust and confide in you.
4 dots	Exceptional	Something draws people to you.
5 dots	Outstanding	You could lead a nation.

Manipulation

This Trait measures your aptitude for active self-expression, such as when you want to get someone else to do something. It is important when you attempt to influence another person directly. You use Manipulation to trick, fool, bluff, outmaneuver and out-talk another. While you may be effective at manipulating people whom you have just met, those who already know you are rarely fooled. Manipulation is used in all rolls where you are attempting to influence or convince another person overtly. Whether they like you or not is of no consequence (though it can affect the difficulty of what you are trying). If you fail a Manipulation action and the other person realizes what you were trying to do (you botch, for instance), she may well be angered. People are manipulated all the time and usually they ignore it. However, if it is brought to their attention, it can be a very disturbing thought. Characters with high Manipulation are not well trusted by those who know them best.

1 dots	Poor	You express yourself in as few words as possible.
2 dots	Average	Others might believe you.
3 dots	Good	You'd make a good lawyer.
4 dots	Exceptional	With sufficient effort, you could convert most people to join your faith
5 dots	Outstanding	You could sell ice to a dwarf up in the mountains.

Appearance

This Trait describes your Appearance in terms of your attractiveness and force of presence. You do not necessarily need beauty to have a high Appearance, you only need looks that somehow attract others to you. Appearance is not just your static, model beauty, it's the appeal of the way you move and talk, your animation and expressiveness. It is a measure of how interesting and attractive you seem to others. Appearance is vital in any social situation where words are not exchanged. It is more important than you might think offhand; the impressions you get of another are heavily affected by that person's looks, no matter how open-minded you are. You may not like to admit it, but it's true. More than simply being a Trait you use to make rolls, Appearance is often used by a Storyteller to roughly judge how others usually react to you when you first meet. Thus it can affect all other Social rolls you make with that person (in some cases, your rating determines the maximum number of successes from a Social action that can actually be applied, making it impossible for an ugly person to achieve anything other than minimal success).

1 dots	Poor	You tend to attract the hostility of others.
2 dots	Average	You are easily ignored, you fit in so well with the crowd.
3 dots	Good	You have a pleasing appearance and people treat you well.
4 dots	Exceptional	You could be a model, and are given respect and attention because of it.
5 dots	Outstanding	First reactions are either that of awe, intense jealousy, or complete solicitude.

Mental

The Mental Traits represent your character's total mental capacity, including such things as memory, perception, and the ability to learn and think.

Perception

This Trait indicates how aware you are of the environment around you. While sometimes this is a conscious action, such as when you are searching for something, it more often works intuitively – you simply notice something. At base, Perception is sensitivity to the world, an open-eyed quality common among children (for whom the world is a boundless and mysterious place) and seldom present among the most jaded. Perception is used to see if you have the insight to understand or be aware of a certain fact or concept. It can help indicate how alert you are to ambushes, the subtext of a politician's speech, and the subtleties of color in a painting.

1 dots	Poor	You are blind to anything but the obvious.
2 dots	Average	You are unaware of the subtler interactions that occur around you.
3 dots	Good	You are aware of moods and textures.
4 dots	Exceptional	You are constantly alert to the nuances of life.
5 dots	Outstanding	You can see a needle in a haystack.

Intelligence

Your Intelligence represents both your memory and your ability to learn and think. It is important for Abilities that require complex thought processes. Some describe it as a person's quickness of mind or judgment, but it is more than that – it is the facility for understanding, and the capacity for reasoning and evaluation. Intelligence is a rating of an individual's depth and flexibility of thought. Common sense, street savvy, and wisdom are not components of the Intelligence Attribute; these are facets of a character that are portrayed by the player. However, low Intelligence can indicate a character who lacks the capacity to understand complicated thoughts, and who is a very slow learner – he might simply see things in terms of black and white, and won't understand that things are really in shades of gray. Characters with high Intelligence, on the other hand, are sophisticated thinkers capable of decoding many different levels of an argument or a problem. They have a discerning judgment and are well able to tell the truth from lies, at least when they have the time to think things over. Intelligence caters to carefully thought-out judgments rather than snap decisions, which is the realm of Wits.

1 dots	Poor	IQ 80
2 dots	Average	IQ 100
3 dots	Bright	IQ 120
4 dots	Genius	IQ 140
5 dots	Outstanding	IQ 160

Wits

The Wits Attribute describes your ability to react quickly and correctly to new situations, as well as your overall sharpness of mind and cleverness. In the simplest of terms, it is a measure of how quickly you think. A more complex view understands Wits as shrewdness, sagacity, and capacity for understanding problems in the most basic terms. Those with low Wits are occasionally unable to take appropriate action because of surprise (like a deer caught in the headlights). Low Wits can indicate that you are more easily tricked and fooled than most people, for you are a gullible and unsophisticated student of human nature. If you have high Wits, you are able to react quickly to new situations and are seldom caught off guard by sudden changes in events. Whatever else happens, you are able to keep your Wits about you.

1 dots	Poor	Now where did that stranger who was supposed to watch your valuables go?
2 dots	Average	You think twice before going into an alley with a stranger.
3 dots	Good	After three easy wins in a double-or-nothing game with the wandering bard, you get suspicious and back out before losing a fortune.
4 dots	Exceptional	You could win a poetry competition.
5 dots	Outstanding	You think faster than a crossbow shot.

CHAPTER 1.3.1

ABILITIES



1 dots	You have learned the basics of this ability
2 dots	You have practiced this ability a few times
3 dots	You are quite competent in this ability
4 dots	Your have almost specialized in this ability
5 dots	Your have mastered this ability like a mentor

Talents

Alertness: You are alert to certain sights, sounds and changes around you.

Athletics: Your overall athletic ability and skill for using thrown items like knives, stones etc.

Brawl: Hand to hand fighting, fist fighting and some types of martial arts.

Dodge: Dodge out of the way.

Empathy: Feel for others or understand how they feel.

Performance: The ability to express artistic feats in word and performance.

Intimidation: Your ability to MAKE others do what you want them to do.

Leadership: Your ability to inspire others to do as you want them to.

Legerdemain: The ability to perform feats of manual dexterity without being noticed.

Subterfuge: Word trickery and the skill to disguise yourself.

Skills

Animal Ken: You know how to interpret animal behavior, making it easier for you to predict their actions.

Appraisal: The ability to successfully sell or evaluate goods at the market, with all that entails.

Archery: How to use, repair or build bows, crossbows and other ranged hand weapons.

Botany: The study of plants and vegetation and ability to identify them (see Chapter: Botany).

Crafts: Your ability to build, disassemble or use mechanical objects and do any kind of craftsmanship.

Etiquette: How to behave appropriately in different situations.

Melee: The ability to fight with weapons.

Ride: Travel astride a horse or other riding animal, keeping it under control in varying circumstances.

Stealth: Blending in with the surroundings and hiding in shadows.

Survival: Living off anything you need to – mostly in the wild.

Knowledges

Academics: How to read (1 dot), write (2 dots), additional written dialects or ancient languages (3+ dots)

Arcane: The deeper knowledge about the monsters and dark beings – it is a big world out there!

Chemistry: The study of matter and the ability to identify elements and simple compounds.

Hearth Lore: Folklore and gossip as opposed to the academy and told at the bonfire.

Heraldry: Knowledge of royal and noble ancestral crests, seals and symbols across cultures and continents.

Investigation: Investigation is the ability to systematically examine one's environment and analyse the results.

Law: Law is the body of knowledge about justice and its applications to practical.

Medicine: Medicine is the lore of the human body and how to treat those squishy types.

Politics: This is the deeper knowledge of what is happening in the city council and above.

Theology: The lore of the higher sciences, the study of the Gods' will in all things.

Specializations

A specialization is a unique ability based upon a combination of either 2 Abilities or 1 Ability + 1 Attribute. It is only allowed to make same type of combination twice. The limit is 10 different specializations and a maximum of 12 dots overall. Each specialization is limited to five less than the total number of dots in the abilities/attributes it depends upon. If it drops below 0, the Specialization is disabled and no bonuses are gained from it at all. Any specialization learned is permanent. A Specialization can never replace an existing die roll and two different specializations can not be combined in a single action. Each specialization prolongs your Studytime by two years. Any roll of 10 on a Specialization check gives you an additional die to roll (maximum 20 dice overall). For every two dots in a specialization, you get -1 difficulty to the roll (minimum difficulty 3). For every dot in a combat-related Specialization you get +1 initiative in either Defensive or Offensive (maximum +4 distributed). There are 630 different combinations. You get up to 9 dots to distribute at character creation and excess dots are lost. Freebie cost is 5 per dot. Experience cost is 6 per dot.

NOTE: The mentioned specializations below are only a few suggestions. You are encouraged to create your own, though all specializations has to be approved by the Storyteller, no matter if they are from the book or newly created.

Acrobatics (*Athletics + Dexterity*):

A balance skill allowing you to move on narrow surfaces and uneven ground without falling.

Alchemy (*Investigation + Chemistry*):

You have some very basic knowledge of chemistry and magical lore.

Animal Handling (*Charisma + Animal Ken*):

You know how to handle and care for an animal, i.e. how to groom a horse.

Animal Tongues (*Animal Ken + Arcane*):

You can communicate with mostly any common thinking animal at some extent.

Awareness (*Alertness + Arcane*):

You are very sensitive to supernatural and magical presence.

Bestial Lore (*Survival + Wits*):

You have some knowledge about beasts and other monstrous creatures.

Blending (*Appearance + Stealth*):

You know how to use your environment to disappear into the shadows, blending into total concealment.

Blind Fighting (*Melee + Perception*):

You are able to continue fighting even when unable to see your foes.

Blood Mana (*Arcane + Stamina*):

Through deep concentration, you know how to convert your Mana into Hitpoints.

Brewing/Distilling (*Chemistry + Wits*):

You know how to manufacture of alcohol, alcoholic beverages and potions.

Canoeing (*Craft + Survival*):

You know how to maneuvering a canoe or kayak down a stream or river.

Climbing (*Strength + Athletics*):

You are skilled at advancing up, down, or across a slope, a wall, or some other steep incline at one-quarter your normal speed.

Cooking (*Wits + Survival*):

You know how to cook a decent meal from the ingredients at hand.

Demon Lore (*Arcane + Hearth Lore*):

The knowledge about dark and light demons and other creatures from Aaziltèren in Otherland.

Dirty Fighting (*Melee + Brawl*):

You know how to use dirty brawl tricks with one one hand while wielding a single weapon in the other hand.

Diving (*Stamina + Athletics*):

You are skilled at holding your breath while swimming underwater. (Prerequisite: Swimming Specialization)

Drive (*Ride + Crafts*):

You are able to drive a cart, carriage or wagon.

Evade (*Dexterity + Dodge*):

You got the ability to evade and and in some situations completely avoid an incoming physical attack.

First Aid (*Survival + Medicine*):

Allows a character to give basic medical attention to humanoids.

Herbalism/Poison Making (*Botany + Medicine*):

Knowledge of herbs and their properties, medicinal and otherwise.

Hunting (*Strength + Archery/Survival/Stealth*):

You are skilled at finding, trapping, killing and preparing animals for food or sport.

Identify (*Intelligence + Investigation*):

You have the knowledge to at some extent determine the properties, origin and functionality of artifacts and mythical items.

Insects Whisperer (*Survival + Arcane*):

You can communicate with bugs and insects.

Instruction (*Academics + Wits*):

You have a knack for imparting information and skills to others.

Juggling (*Performance + Dexterity*):

A useful talent for entertainment and diversions, maybe even a good for an income.

Linguist (*Academics + Arcane*):

You have studied every aspect of at least one ancient language, including vocabulary, grammar and pronouncing.

Meditation (*Intelligence + Arcane*):

Through deep concentration, you can double the rate at which you recover Mana.

Medium (*Arcane + Medicine*):

You can at some extent communicate with the dead, undead and ghosts.

Melee Specialist (*Dexterity + Melee*):

As a front line combatant you focus on the use of only a single type of weapon for your entire career.

Monster Tongues (*Academics + Hearth Lore*):

You have the knowledge of some monster languages.

Nature Tongue (*Botany + Arcane*):

You can communicate with any living nature spirits.

Research (*Intelligence + Academics*):

You know how to extract information from books, scrolls, and other repositories of facts and figures.

Sneaking (*Stamina + Stealth*):

You are skilled at avoiding detection, allowing you to slip past foes or strike from an unseen position.

Spearfishing (*Melee + Survival*):

You are an expert to impaling fish upon a spear either by thrust or throwing by hand.

Swimming (*Dexterity + Athletics*):

You know how to keep yourself floating and moving in the water.

Tracking (*Wits + Survival*):

The ability to recognize and follow tracks on most common surfaces.

Trapping (*Animal Ken + Survival*):

You are skilled at finding, trapping and preparing animals.



CHAPTER 1.4.1

ADVANTAGES



Backgrounds

Age:

Everyone gets older, even an adventurer. This background is free, the number of dots increasing as your character ages. Each quarter of your race's avg. max age sets the level, and each level results in 4 XP. No Attribute can ever go below 1. For any race with an avg. age of 100 or below, the aging effect doesn't appear until they reach half their race's avg. age. This means they get the first 2 dots and effects from both at the same time.

1 dots	-1 to an arbitrary Attribute group
2 dots	-2 additionally in two arbitrary Attribute groups
3 dots	-2 additionally in two Attribute groups and -3 in another Attribute group
4 dots	-3 additionally in each Attribute groups

Allies:

Close companions who support and help you, family, friends or even a small organization that owes you some loyalty and can called on for mostly anything.

1 dots	One ally of moderate influence and power
2 dots	Two allies, both of moderate power
3 dots	Three allies, one of whom is quite influential
4 dots	Five allies, one of whom is extremely influential

Contacts:

The number of information sources you possesses, friends whom you can rely on to give you accurate information in their fields of expertise for a favor in return. You should describe each major contact in some detail before the game begins. In addition to your major contacts, you also have a number of minor contacts spread throughout the city.

1 dots	One major contact
2 dots	Two major contacts
3 dots	Three major contacts
4 dots	Five major contacts

Dark:

Prerequisite: Spellcraft 4, Spellcraft Discipline 8, Road: Evil and a mentor with with the background: Dark to teach you. Any character with this background, who started as a Shaman or Witch cast all Nature spells as if they were Circle 1. Subtract the level from requirement of any curse or offensive spell, and add it to any healing or defensive spell. You also gain +1 Mana during night, and -1 Mana during day. Any follower of Dark must strive to the road of Evil, and can never change from it, if they ever do they will die as a punishment from the gods. It is only possible to obtain this Background if you become Grand Master of any of your magic Disciplines. The road-level +1 sets the maximum you can have in this Background, fx Road 7 equals Evil 1 + 1 = 2.

1 dots	You have practiced the Path of Darkness a few times
2 dots	Your have specialized in the Path of Darkness
3 dots	You have tutored and studied the Path of Darkness for years
4 dots	You could be a Grand Master in the Path of Darkness

Influence:

Your political power within local society. You have pull in the local community, whether through wealth, prestige, political office, blackmail or magical manipulation. People with high Influence can sway, and in rare cases even control, the political and social processes of local society. Influence represents the sum of your political power in your community, particularly among the police and bureaucracy.

1 dots	Moderately influential; a factor in city politics
2 dots	Well-connected; a force in state politics
3 dots	Broad personal power; a force in national politics
4 dots	Vastly influential; a factor in global politics

Light:

Prerequisite: Spellcraft 4, Spellcraft Discipline 8, Road: Good and a mentor with with the background: Light to teach you. Any character with this background, who started as a Shaman or Witch cast all Nature spells as if they were Circle 1. Subtract the level from requirement of any healing or defensive spell, and add it to any curse or offensive spell. You also gain +1 Mana during daylight, and -1 Mana during night. Any follower of Light must strive to the road of Good, and can never change from it, if they ever do they will die as a punishment from the gods. It is only possible to obtain this Background if you become Grand Master of any of your magic Disciplines. The road-level +1 sets the maximum you can have in this Background, fx Road 4 equals Good 1 + 1 = 2.

- 1 dots You have practiced the Path of Light a few times
- 2 dots Your have specialized in the Path of Light
- 3 dots You have tutored and studied the Path of Light for years
- 4 dots You could be a Grand Master in the Path of Light

Mentor:

Your mentor is an experienced person, perceived to have a greater knowledge and wisdom. True mentoring is an ongoing relationship of learning and dialogue, rather than just ad hoc help and occasional guidance. A mentor's power depends on the number of dots in this background, but her power need not be direct. The mentor may offer advice, speak to the mayor or even the king on your behalf, or warn you when you're walking into situations you don't understand. Most often the mentor is not your only tutor, but someone with a particular interest in your well-being and training. Bear in mind that this Trait isn't a "Get out of Jail Free" card. A mentor typically remains aloof, giving you useful information or advice out of camaraderie. Hence, she won't necessarily arrive like the cavalry whenever you're endangered. Your mentor might occasionally expect something in return for her patronage, which can lead to a number of interesting stories. If you prove an unworthy or troublesome apprentice, she may abandon you.

- 1 dots Respected: An academy teacher or an experienced adventurer, for instance.
- 2 dots Very influential, such as a member of the city council or captain of the city guard.
- 3 dots Master, and has a great deal of power. She may even be principal at an academy.
- 4 dots Grand Master, and is extraordinarily powerful, perhaps even a royal advisor.

Resources:

Wealth and belongings. This describes your possessions and your purchasing power. No dots in Resources are just that: You have no permanent haven and no possessions save a few clothes and possibly a weapon or pocketful of coins. You might choose to deposit it somewhere due to its heavy weight. Be certain to detail exactly where this money comes from, be it a job, trust fund or dividends in the Possessions or History part of the character sheet. It is possible to exchange haven, household, and mounts for the cash amount in stead.

- 1 dots You own a small cottage and maybe a poor horse.
You have about 100 sp in cash.
- 2 dots You own a small house and maybe a riding or draft horse.
You have about 800 sp in cash.
- 3 dots You own a large house, a good riding horse and maybe a small household.
You have about 5000 sp in cash, and maybe a single servant.
- 4 dots You own a very large house, a few good riding horses, and a great household.
You have about 50000 sp in cash, and maybe a minor household.

Status:

The characters standing in high society. You have something of a reputation and standing (earned or unearned) within the local community. Status among high society is often derived from your mentor's status and the respect due your particular line of education. Grand Masters are known for having little respect for their juniors; this Background can mitigate that somewhat. High status does not transfer to high society (and will most likely make you a notorious target for your class's rivals), and vice versa. Note: Players who want to play as Witches and Shamans may not purchase Status during character creation. Witches and Shamans are not held in high regard by the upper classes. Any status must be earned during the course of the chronicle.

1 dots	Known: a neonate
2 dots	Respected: a highly educated
3 dots	Influential: a mentor
4 dots	Powerful: a major member of the city council

Spellcraft, Battlecraft and Stealthcraft:

These crafts are prerequisites for learning any disciplines. The level in a particular craft also determines how skilled the character can become in the disciplines depending on that specific craft. To receive these backgrounds the character needs to be tutored by a mentor or be at an academy. For each dot in a craft, you are allowed a maximum of two dots in a corresponding discipline. Every class have access to these crafts, but some are limited in how many levels they can have in each. Each craft have their own bonuses, modifiers, penalties and difficulties, these are mentioned where they occurs.

1 dots	You have practiced this craft a few times
2 dots	Your have specialized in this craft
3 dots	You have tutored and studied this craft for years
4 dots	You could be a Grand Master in this craft

Disciplines

Disciplines are the subjects that you learned through your studies at the academy or with your mentor. Restrictions based on class. 3 dots to distribute, Freebie cost 2 per dot. No higher than 3 dots at character creation. Each discipline (circle) has a prerequisite craft. The level in a particular discipline depends on how skilled the character is in the required craft. Experience cost is 6 x level. To learn these disciplines (circles), a mentor or academy must tutor the character. The maximum amount of dots in a discipline (circle) is equal to double the corresponding craft. Discipline check roll: Wits + corresponding craft. (Used only to check if you have learned anything at your mentor/academy)

- Prerequisite: Spellcraft - Earth, Fire, Air, Water, Spirit
- Prerequisite: Spellcraft and Alchemist Class - Alchemy
- Prerequisite: Spellcraft and Witch/Shaman Class - Nature (Max. circle 2)
- Prerequisite: Battlecraft - Bludgeoning, Piercing, Slashing, Unarmed, Ranged ***UNDER CONSTRUCTION***
- Prerequisite: Stealthcraft - Backstabbing, Disable Device, Pick Pockets, Clandestine

1 dots	You have learned the basics of this Discipline
2 dots	You have practiced this Discipline a few times
3 dots	You are quite competent in this Discipline
4 dots	Your have specialized in this Discipline
5 dots	You could be a mentor in this Discipline
6 dots	You have tutored and studied this Discipline for years
7 dots	Your have mastered this Discipline near perfection
8 dots	You are a Grand Master in this Discipline

Air, Earth, Fire, Spirit, Water (Prerequisite: Spellcraft):

Any Grandmaster of one of these Disciplines can burn Mana to lower casting time for spells with a higher circle than 3. For each dot above circle 2 in Spellcraft, they can spend 2 extra Mana, reducing casting time by 5 seconds. Please refer to chapter 1.1.4 'Religion' for further explanation of the elements.

Alchemy (Prerequisites: Stealthcraft + Alchemist Class):

UNDER CONSTRUCTION

Backstabbing (Prerequisite: Stealthcraft):

Backstabbing is a surprise attack from behind using a piercing weapon no larger than a short sword. Roll Dexterity + Stealth, Difficulty equals the Perception + Alertness of the target. If you succeed in surprising the enemy, roll Dexterity + Melee + Backstabbing, Difficulty: 6 + Weapon Penalty + Armor Penalty – (Backstabbing Discipline/2 rounded up) to hit the target. If you succeed the attack add 1d10 per point of Backstabbing Discipline to the total damage dealt.

Bludgeoning (Prerequisite: Battlecraft):

Also called 'mass weapons' a bludgeoning weapon is a "hitting thing" pure and simple, using a combination of mass and leverage to deliver blunt impact damage to the target. It crushes and shatters bones - and unlike more refined weapons it does not necessarily need to penetrate the armor to do it. Flexible armors provide only as much protection as they have padding - rigid types are more effective unless the stroke has enough force to dent them. Blunt damage is particularly insidious because some of the injuries that it creates - internal bleeding and crushed bones for example - are nearly untreatable. However, unless it triggers a major bleed, ruptures a vital organ or shatters a bone, blunt damage can appear fairly ineffective and kill quite slowly. This is the optimal weapon type if you want to avoid bloodshed. Against inanimate objects, the fact that these weapons are massive and fairly resilient makes them reasonably effective and a passable choice for taking on furniture, doors and containers. Bludgeoning weapons are generally cheap and easy to manufacture - and some may not even appear to be weapons at first glance. This category includes weapons such as Clubs, Flails, Hammers, Knuckles, Maces, Morning Stars and Staves.

Clandestine (Prerequisite: Stealthcraft):

The rogue's intensive training makes her nimble and skilled at leaping, jumping and climbing. Rogues excel at moving about unseen and catching foes unaware. They tend to avoid head-to-head combat. Although the rogue has learned to fade from view, the risk of attracting attention increases drastically if she takes any other action besides movement (+2 diff. to Stealth against the observer's Alertness check). If the rogue initiates combat from the shadows, the first strike is considered Backstabbing (or a Critical Hit, if she is not skilled in Backstabbing), with a base difficulty +3.

- 1 dots You have learned the basics on how to hide.
- 2 dots You could win most competitions of hide and seek.
- 3 dots You can use items while sneaking and climbing.
- 4 dots You are stealthy enough to try sneaking during combat, although at a significant penalty.
- 5 dots You master the art of stealth and sneaking, gaining significant bonuses on all stealth checks.

Disable Device (Prerequisite: Stealthcraft):

The rogue or ranger is skilled at disarming traps and picking locks. Additionally, this skill lets a rogue sabotage simple mechanical devices, such as catapults, wagon wheels, and doors. Devices come in various degrees of complexity, affecting difficulty. When disarming a trap or other device, the Disable Device check is made secretly by the Storyteller. If the check succeeds, the rogue disables the device or lock. If it fails without botches, the rogue can try again. If the rogue fails with botches, something goes wrong. A trap could be sprung. If the rogue is attempting some sort of sabotage, he thinks the device is disabled, but it still works normally. A lock might jam and be permanently stuck. The rogue can also rig simple devices such as saddles or wagon wheels to work normally for a while and then fail or fall off some time later (usually after 1d10-6 (rounded up) turns of use). A rogue who beats a device by rolling one or more 10s can study the trap, figure out how it works, and bypass it without disarming it. Rogues can also disarm or unlock magic devices. A magic trap or lock generally has a difficulty of 10. See the individual spell descriptions for details. Roll Dexterity + Crafts + Disable Device at the difficulty below to determine if the action was successful, remember to add Armor Penalty to the Difficulty.

Device Quality	Time	Base Diff.
Simple	1 turn	5
Tricky	1d10/2 turns	6
Difficult	2d10/2 turns	7
Extreme	3d10/2 turns	8

Lock Quality	Time	Base Diff.
Simple	1 turn	6
Average	1d10/2 turns	7
Good	2d10/2 turns	8
Amazing	3d10/2 turns	9

If a rogue attempts to leave behind no trace of his tampering with a device, add 2 to the difficulty.
Without a set of thieves' tools or lockpicks (even if only improvised), the base difficulty for picking locks increases by 2.
A set of thieves' tools gives a -1 diff. to the dice roll. All the dice rolls are to be rounded up.

Nature (Prerequisite = Background: Spellcraft + Class: Witch/Shaman)

Please refer to chapter 1.1.4 'Religion'

Pick Pockets (Prerequisite: Stealthcraft):

The stealthy art of picking an unsuspecting target's pockets. A skilled rogue is less likely to be caught and is more likely to find valuables. The success of pick-pocketing often relies on creating a good distraction; having a partner can reduce the difficulty of pick-pocketing rolls, or characters may combine dice pools, at the Storyteller's discretion. Pick Pocketing is a roll of Dexterity + Legerdemain + Pick Pockets. Base difficulty equals 2 + Perception + Alertness of a specific target. Pick-pocketing in a group usually has a fairly high base difficulty of 7 or even 8 (people tend to keep valuables in secure places). But if the Pick Pockets is used in a group without searching for anything specific, the base difficulty is 6. In such cases, please refer to the list on next page.

- | | |
|--------|--|
| 1 dots | Beat 'em over the head and run for it. |
| 2 dots | 50 sp is a good day, but you can do better. |
| 3 dots | You could make a living off the street. |
| 4 dots | The Artful Dodger's got nothing on you. |
| 5 dots | You could steal a purse from a cityguard - while he's looking. |

The difficulty of Pick Pocket rolls should be reduced if the character and target are in a large crowd, where people are bumping into each other, but increased if it's only the character and the target alone in a room. (Even getting close to the target may require another Social roll all on its own...) Characters using Stealth to sneak up on a target should also face reduced difficulty. Note that this Trait can also be used to plant small objects on people, but such actions have a +1 difficulty rating. If the character previously failed to Pick Pockets of a particular victim or was noticed, subsequent attempts are at +1 difficulty per unsuccessful attempt. Picking pockets while being observed by a third party also has a +1 difficulty. Remember to subtract Pick Pocket Discipline/2 rounded down from the difficulty score, and add the Armor Penalty too.



Roll a d100 to find out the random outcome of a Pick Pocket attempt:

Roll	Result	Roll	Result
1	Thread	44	A handkerchief tied in a knot.
2	Broach	45	A lucky rabbit foot.
3	Sewing needle	46	A lucky four-leaf clover
4	Block of sealing wax	47	A will.
5	A silver ring (value 5 sp)	48	A die that has been tampered with. (Corners filed on one side)
6	Spare socks	49	A coin of which both sides are the same.
7	Dirt	50	Nothing.
8	Pocket Lint	51	A piece of charcoal wrapped in a piece of cloth.
9	Note/scrap of paper	52	A tiny vial tapped from a love potion, in a potion store
10	Stick	53	Something small that belongs to the player him\herself.
11	Rock	54	A squirrel's tail
12	Snack food	55	A nail file
13	A fine silvery chain	56	A toothpick (just one)
14	Fork	57	A child's 'treasure map'
15	Paintbrush hover half a few cm from the ground (useless artifact)	58	A child's toy
16	Grocery list	59	A small carving knife
17	Bird feather	60	Flint and steel
18	A musical score	61	A small bottle of ink
19	A small animal (rat or something)	62	A small piece of cheese
20	A tiny creature (pixie or smaller)	63	Multicolored marbles (1d10+3for amount)
21	A single caltrop	64	An unfinished carved wooden figure.
22	Leather gloves	65	A string for a lute
23	A pin	66	A whistle
24	A copper or silver coin	67	A simple necklace with pearls of glass
25	A pretty but worthless gem	68	An apple
26	Eye-patch	69	A chalk
27	A very small hat	70	A deck of cards
28	Monocle	71	Band-aids
29	Claw finger (like armor for your finger only it ends in a point)	72	Whetstone
30	Stale meal ration (that taste like rat stew)	73	Lump of coal
31	Colored stones (1d10+2 for amount)	74	A small stone with a carved rune
32	Animal teeth	75	An arrowhead
33	A small ring of no value	76	A small silvery ring with arcane elven inscriptions.
34	A severed finger	77	A holy symbol
35	A dried flower	78	A large key
36	Painting of a random location	79	A fishing hook with a small line attached
37	A map with markings in an undecipherable language	80	A quill
38	A letter from a loved one.	81	A small abacus
39	An incriminating letter, with your name on it.	82	A sling bullet
40	A suicide letter.	83	A half-eaten carrot
41	A piece of paper with notes to later put in a diary.	84	A small broken key
42	Notes of a poem or song.	85-100	Special items (Storyteller's decision)
43	A small rusty chain		

Piercing (Prerequisite: Battlecraft):

Piercing weapons rely on a sharp, narrow point to punch into the target. All but useless against inanimate objects, a piercing weapon relies on penetrating and destroying vital organs inside the target - properly used they can kill faster and more effectively than any other kind of weapon and even if they fail to incapacitate they can leave internal wounds that are hard to fix. Many designs are fitted with barbs so that they can inflict damage leaving as well as arriving. Badly aimed they inflict superficial wounds on non-vital tissue and annoy as much as injure. Barbed or not, piercing weapons are also prone to getting stuck in the target and needing substantial force to free. Piercing weapons include some of the cheapest weapons available. Several of them can even be manufactured from naturally occurring materials. Most ranged weapons are piercing weapons, and the category also includes weapons such as Arrows, Battle Picks, Lances, Pikes, Rapiers, Spears, Stilettos and Tridents.

Slashing (Prerequisite: Battlecraft):

Slashing or edged weapons cut things. They combine leverage and a sharp edge to cut into the targets. Used on a living target they slice through tissue, severing bones and blood vessels creating obvious, immediate damage and incapacitating - if not killing - quickly. Against inanimate objects they are only as effective as their ability to slice bits of them off. Soft targets can be cut up easily, whereas hard ones endanger the cutting edge on the blade and resist the stroke. That said the axe is - and is usually designed to be - highly effective in this role. Edged weapons tend to be relatively expensive to manufacture. A long, sharp cutting edge requires good quality metal, well forged - anything else is a poor substitute. They are also easily defeated by armor; if they cannot cleave through the material of the armor they tend to lack the mass to deliver much impact damage. This category includes weapons such as Axes, Broadswords, Scimitars and Falchions.



CHAPTER 2.1.0

COMBAT



Weaponry

The following are typical sets of equipment for fighting and defending yourself or others. At gamestart, you need to buy any weapon and armor you are not able to obtain from nature, your mentor or from your academy (i.e. leather armor, wooden club or a simple staff). The amount of weapons you can wield is limited to the number of lines on the character sheet.

Name/Type: Your character are allowed to use many other types of weapons (meat cleavers, halberds, hammers etc), than those listed. Use the traits from the weapon chart that best approximate these weapons. Note that improvised weapons automatically suffer a +1 penalty. The type of Battlecraft Discipline used for this weapon is also indicated: B = Bludgeoning, S = Slashing, P = Piercing

Init.: The number your Offensive Initiative is increased or decreased with when using this weapon.

Diff.: The number your Difficulty to hit is increased or decreased with when using this weapon.

Damage: The amount of dice used to calculate damage dealt using this weapon.

Size/Weight: Size indicates the minimum Strength needed to use the weapon effectively; a wielder with lower Strength suffers a -1 penalty on attack rolls. Weight indicates approximately how heavy the weapon is measured in kilograms (kg).

Cost: The number of dots required in the background: Resources to purchase this item at character creation, and the standard value at a market in silver pieces (sp).

Special: Any special notes according to the specific weapon, if the weapon requires two hands (2H) and are used one-handed, the Strength requirement increases by one.

Reach: The length of a weapon. The weapon essentially extends the fighter's reach that far, allowing him to use a hand-to-hand weapon against a target not standing next to him.

Range: For ranged weapons, the medium distance to which the weapon can be used without penalty. In most conditions, the weapon can be fired at a target at up to twice this distance at a +2 difficulty penalty.

Quality:

$(1 + \text{item cost}) \times (2d10/2 \text{ rounded}) + 1 \text{ pr } 10 \text{ sp used}$

Quality of armor, weapons and other wearables play a role in active combat for a character. The quality depends on craftsmanship as well as wear and tear, but it is possible to pay to get a better quality of equipment. If you do not tend to damaged equipment, it risks breaking or becoming unusable. A Durability roll may be required at the Storytellers discretion.

The Durability roll is made with a number of d10 equal to $1 + \text{item cost}$. Standard difficulty is 6. For example, a Long Sword (cost 2) would mean the roll was made with 3d10.

A roll with at least one 10 will leave the item undamaged, while a roll with no successes means the item breaks. Otherwise, the Quality score drops by 1, after this stage it also drops 1 per regular failure and 2 for each 1 rolled.

Until a damaged item is repaired, the player must make a new Durability roll after each combat to see if the item breaks. For each of these rolls the difficulty increases by 1, and upon reaching 10 or dropping to Quality score 0, the item automatically breaks.

Repair cost is 10% of standard purchase price; Crafts skill checks are as normal. A magical one requires hiring both a weaponsmith or armorer and a spellcaster with the prerequisites for the item. Artifacts are sufficiently powerful to ignore the Durability rules.

<i>Melee Weapons</i>						
Name/Type	Init.	Diff.	Damage	Size/Weight	Cost	Special
Bastard Sword (S)	-1	0	STR+4	3 / 2,7	3 (5000 sp)	2H
Battle Axe (S)	-2	+1	STR+5	4 / 5,4	3 (5000 sp)	2H, 9's count as 10's
Battle Pick (P/B)	0	0	STR+2	2 / 2,7	2 (800 sp)	
Brass Knuckles (B)	0	0	STR+1	1 / 0,5	1 (100 sp)	Brawl Skill is used instead of Melee skill
Broadsword (S)	0	0	STR+3	2 / 2,1	2 (800 sp)	
Cestus (P)	0	0	STR+2	2 / 0,5	2 (800 sp)	Brawl Skill is used instead of Melee skill
Chain (B)	0	0	STR+1	1 / 4,5	1 (100 sp)	Reach: 2 m.
Club (B)	0	0	STR+1	1 / 1,4	0	
Dagger (P)	+1	0	STR+1	1 / 0,6	0	
Falchion (S)	+1	+1	STR+2	1 / 3,6	4 (50000 sp)	
Flail (B)	0	+1	STR+2	1 / 2,3	2 (800 sp)	
Garrote	+1	+2	STR+3	1 / 0,1	0	Cannot be used for parrying
Great Sword (S)	-2	+1	STR+5	4 / 3,6	3 (5000 sp)	2H, 9's count as 10's, Reach: 1,5 m.
Hand Axe (S)	0	0	STR+2	2 / 1,4	1 (100 sp)	
Knife (S)	+1	0	STR-1	1 / 0,4	0	
Knife, Seax (S)	+1	0	STR+2	1 / 0,5	1 (100 sp)	
Knife, Skinning (S)	0	0	STR-2	1 / 0,2	0	
Lance (P)	0	+1	STR+6	3 / 4,5	3 (5000 sp)	Reach: 3 m. Only mounted usage
Large Axe (S)	0	+1	STR+3	3 / 2,7	2 (800 sp)	Reach: 1,5 m.
Long Sword (S/P)	0	0	STR+3	2 / 1,8	2 (800 sp)	
Mace (B)	0	0	STR+3	2 / 1,8	2 (800 sp)	
Mace, Heavy (B)	-1	0	STR+4	3 / 3,6	3 (5000 sp)	+1 die to disarm
Morning Star (P/B)	-1	+1	STR+3	3 / 2,7	3 (5000 sp)	+1 die to disarm
Pike (P)	-2	0	STR+2	2 / 4,5	2 (800 sp)	2H, +2 damage vs. mounted, Reach: 4 m.
Polearm (P)	-1	0	STR+2	2 / 5,4	2 (800 sp)	2H, Reach: 2 m.
Rapier (P)	+1	0	STR+2	2 / 0,9	2 (800 sp)	
Scimitar (S)	+1	0	STR+3	2 / 1,8	4 (50000 sp)	
Short Sword (P)	0	0	STR+2	2 / 0,9	1 (100 sp)	
Spear (P)	0	0	STR+3	2 / 2,7	1 (100 sp)	2H, +1 diff. if thrown, Reach: 2 m.
Staff (B)	0	0	STR+2	1 / 1,8	0	2H
Stiletto (P)	+1	0	STR+1	1 / 0,1	1 (100 sp)	+1 damage to backstabbing
Trident (P)	0	+1	STR+3	2 / 1,8	2 (800 sp)	Reach: 1,5 m.
Warhammer (B)	0	+1	STR+4	3 / 2,3	3 (5000 sp)	2H, 9's count as 10's
Whip (B)	-1	+1	STR+1	1 / 0,9	2 (800 sp)	Reach: 5 m; +2 dice to Disarm

Bastard Sword: A “hand-and-a-half” sword popular with most warriors. It can be used one-handed or two-handed; if used one-handed, use the damage statistics for the Long Sword.

Battle Axe: A two-handed dual-bladed axe. It requires a great deal of technique and muscle to use. The favorite weapon of dwarven warriors.

Battle Pick: A piercing weapon resembling a dagger set at a 90-degree angle to a shaft. It is sometimes known as a “crowbill”.

Brass Knuckles: Four thick metal rings attached to a metal bar or handle of some sort, designed to be worn around the fingers of a fist so as to increase punching power. If used on its own, use the damage listed; if used with a Punch Maneuver, add +1 to the maneuver’s damage, which becomes Kill damage.

Broadsword: Any of a wide variety of one-edged, often slightly curved, swords used around the world.

Cestus: A heavy gauntlet with spikes or knobs projecting from it at all angles. In game terms, it works the same as brass knuckles.

Chain: Like brass knuckles, it is a favored weapon of thugs and other street scum.

Club: Any of thousands of different smashing weapons used around the world. In some cases spikes are added to a club, increasing its damage by 1. A successful blow delivered to the head (-3 penalty to hit) forces the target to make a Stamina roll. If it succeeds, only normal damage is done. If it fails, the target is knocked unconscious for a number of turns equal to the damage done.

Dagger: Use these statistics for most short fighting blades (20 – 50 cm). At the Storyteller’s discretion, longer, larger daggers may be the equivalent of a short sword in terms of damage (see Knife, Seax).

Falchion: A short, heavy sword with an outward-curving edge, good for chopping, slashing, or thrusting. Often wielded by pirates.

Flail: A wooden or metal handle with two or more weights made of blunt metal balls attached via chains or hinges. If a Block maneuver is used against one, roll a Disarm check with -1 to difficulty for the flail-user. The opponent gets a -2 Initiative penalty the next round if disarmed.

Garrote: A garrote can be made out of many different materials, including ropes, guitar strings and cloth, and are used to strangle someone from behind. If the target takes one or more Health Levels of damage from the initial attack, he is considered to be choking. The consequence of this is that he can’t speak, cry out or absorb the damage until he is free. The initial damage from a garrote is Stun damage. After the victim falls unconscious, he gets killed if the hold is maintained.

Great Sword: A large, straight, double-edged sword (commonly called a claymore) that must be wielded with two hands.

Hand Axe: A single-bladed, one-handed axe. Unsurprisingly, this weapon is frequently used by woodsmen and rangers.

Knife: A small (about 15 cm) single-edged blade, usually used as cutlery or woodworking tool, but sometimes pressed into service as a concealable weapon. Most people always carry one as their everyday tool.

Knife, Skinning: A knife with a short curved blade, designed as a hunting tool. It cannot be used as an effective weapon, but with its great sharpness, it can easily skin a caught prey.

Knife, Seax: Commonly known as a scramasax, it is used both as a tool and a weapon. Carried horizontally at the back of the belt. With its 45 cm long single-edged blade, it will provide both slashing and thrusting power in battle, while also handling heavy-duty chores around the home and camp. It is akin to short swords, with a more simplified design, suitable for a poor warrior.

Lance: A horseman’s polearm – essentially a big, thick spear. It is too heavy and long to use in normal combat; it can only be used for charges on horseback.

Large Axe: A single-bladed axe, used either one-handed or two-handed (with a bonus of +1 to damage).

Long Sword: Knights would rarely travel without their sword. Hugely symbolic and used in cut-and-thrust defense combat, they are straight, double-edged weapons with a blade at around 80 to 110 cm. They are typically used with a shield.

Mace: A metal club with flanges at the top, designed to crack through better armor than a sword. Sometimes there is a spiked ball in place of the flanges, changing the damage dealt from Bludgeoning (B) to Piercing (P). This type of mace is most often used by horsemen.

Mace, Heavy: A heavy mace has a larger head and a longer handle than a normal (light) mace, designed to effectively deliver very powerful blows. This type of mace is only usable by footmen.

Morningstar: Also known as a military flail. A wooden or metal handle with a weight made of a spiked metal ball connected to it by a chain. Works just like a flail with respect to Block and Initiative.

Pike: This weapon has a wooden shaft, or staff, between 3 and 4 meters long, mounted with a steel head resembling a spear or sharp spike. With its increased length it is used as a versatile weapon to combat enemies on horseback effectively, but it is far too unwieldy to use in close combat.

Polearm: Use these statistics for any of a wide variety of weapons consisting of a long shaft with a blade or tine at the end. Some examples include the awl pike, bardiche, corbin, bill, fauchard, glaive, guisarme, halberd, partisan and voulge.

Rapier: Any type of slim, light sword used for fencing, including foils and sabers. If the rapier comes equipped with a hilt guard to protect the wielder's hand, it adds +1 die to when used to parry. Rapiers are particularly good at penetrating weak spots in the opponent's armor, and the target wearing the armor therefore have 1 less die to absorb the damage if the rapier penetrate the armor.

Scimitar: A slender, curved, single-edged sword developed by the elves. Use this weapon's statistics for similar slender swords that curve forward.

Short Sword: This covers a variety of double-edged, single-hand swords with a straight blade and a length between 30 and 60 cm.

Spear: Similar to the polearm, this weapon is essentially a shaft with a dagger attached to the end. It can be used hand-to-hand or can be thrown at a +1 difficulty. The spear-wielder gains a +1 Defense bonus when fighting unarmed targets, due to his weapon's superior reach allowing him to keep a greater distance from a foe.

Staff: A wooden shaft, usually 1-2 m. long, wielded with two hands. It is a common weapon across the world; the most popular version is the standard quarterstaff. Commonly used by monks, clerics and mages.

Stiletto: A slim steel dagger designed to punch through armor easily. For the most part, a stiletto is really just a glorified icepick, but it does what it's meant to do very well. Reduce the Armor Rating of any armor an opponent is wearing by half (rounded down) if he is attacked with a stiletto.

Trident: A short, spear like weapon with three pointed tines used for stabbing.

Warhammer: A hammer, often with a long handle with a heavy metal head attached to a wooden shaft. The best forged hammers are crafted by dwarves.

Whip: Typically a 5,5 m. long leather bullwhip, commonly used by torturers, slave drivers etc. It is a very versatile weapon, allowing a skilled user to attack a foe up to 4,5 m. away. It can also be used to disarm a target (+2 Penalty). It may be wrapped around an opponent's feet and used to yank them out from under him (DEX + Melee, diff. 7, to accomplish this; opponent resists by rolling DEX).

<i>Ranged Weapons</i>							
Name/Type	Init.	Diff.	Damage	Size/Weight	Range	Cost	Special
Axe, Throwing (S)	0	0	STR+2	2 / 0,9	10 m	1 (100 sp)	
Bow, Long (P)	0	+1	(2xSTR)+2	3 / 1,4	100 m	2 (800 sp)	2 CR to draw and shoot
Bow, Short (P)	0	0	STR+1	2 / 0,9	70 m	1 (100 sp)	2 CR to draw and shoot
Crossbow, Hand (P)	0	0	3	1 / 0,9	25 m	2 (800 sp)	1 CR to reload
Crossbow, Heavy (P)	-1	0	7	2 / 3,6	50 m	4 (50000 sp)	6 CR to reload
Javelin (P)	0	0	STR+2	2 / 0,9	40 m	2 (800 sp)	
Knife, Throwing (P)	+1	0	STR+1	1 / 0,5	15 m	1 (100 sp)	
Sling (B)	+1	0	STR	1 / 0,1	30 m	0 (2 sp)	
Sling, Staff (B)	0	+1	STR+1	2 / 1,5	60 m	0 (2 sp)	3 CR to reload
War Dart (P)	+1	0	STR+1	1 / 0,2	10 m	1 (100 sp)	

For bows it is not common to walk around with it stringed, it takes 3 Combat Rounds to ready it before usage.

Axe, Throwing: A small, often dual-headed axe intended for throwing.

Bow, Long: Any of the larger bows used around the world, often pronounced 'strength-bows'. The user should note that the damage a bow does depends as much on the arrow as the strength or the bow. If a character uses either hunting- or war-arrowheads attached to the usual flight-arrow, he may get a damage bonus, and even penetrate an armor, but with less accuracy.

Bow, Short: Any of the smaller bows used around the world. Short bows are often composite (made of more than one material, for strength and flexibility, or made with special profiles (curved, re-curved, four-curved and so on) to improve their durability. If a character uses either hunting- or war-arrowheads attached to the usual flight-arrow, he may get a damage bonus, and even penetrate an armor, but with less accuracy.

Crossbow, Hand: Unlike a bow, a crossbow can be carried loaded. It is also easier to aim precisely with it. This is the light, single-hand version. It has a limited range and more modest damage potential than bows and heavy crossbows.

Crossbow, Heavy: This type of crossbow has a slightly greater range than the longbow. However, the reloading process is slow and can put the crossbowman at a disadvantage compared to the archer.

Javelin: A light spear designed primarily for throwing. Used in hand-to-hand combat it gets a -1 penalty to damage.

Knife, Throwing: Any knife that is aerodynamically shaped to be thrown. A throwing knife is poor in melee (-1 dagger damage).

Sling: Two cords attached to a pouch. A sling bullet (usually made of lead) or sling stone is placed in the pouch and the entire weapon whirled around to build up force. At the right moment, one of the cords is released, throwing the missile at the opponent.

Sling, Staff: Two cords attached to a pouch and then attached to a staff, for added force and increased range. Loading a sling staff is an action that requires two hands, lasts 3 combat rounds and provokes attacks of opportunity. A sling staff can be used as a simple weapon that deals bludgeoning damage equal to that of a club of its size. (See Sling for further details).

War Dart: Darts are missile weapons, designed to fly such that a sharp, often weighted point will strike first. They can be distinguished from javelins by fletching (i.e. feathers on the tail) and a shaft that is shorter and/or more flexible, and from arrows by the fact that they are not of the right length to use with a normal bow.



<i>Ammunition</i>								
Name/Type	Diff.	Damage	Absorb	Range	Weight	Amount	Cost	Special
Arrow, Flight (P)	0	0	0	+30-60 m	3,60	18 pcs.	4 sp	incl. quiver
Arrow, Hunting (P)	+2	+1	-3	0	4,35	18 pcs.	10 sp	incl. quiver
Arrow, War (P)	+2	+3	-1	0	4,35	18 pcs.	13 sp	incl. quiver
Bolt (P)	0	0	0	0	4,30	9 pcs.	6 sp	incl. boltcase
Sling Bullet (B)	0	+1	0	+10 m	2,25	10 pcs.	4 sp.	incl. pouch

Arrow, Flight: These arrows have light shafts and special fletching to give them little greater range, because it has no arrowhead attached. A flight arrows range increment is 60 meters greater with longbows, 30 meter greater with short bows. Flight arrows doesn't get any damage or absorb bonus without an arrowhead.

Arrow, War: A thin arrowhead with vicious barbs attached to a Flight arrow shaft. Designed to inflict damage to anyone trying to pull the arrow out. This arrow head is best made out of iron or steel. The sharp, wide cutting surface of the War arrow cause more serious wounds and tissue damage than the hunting arrow, but is less accurate. It is therefore often used for horses and unarmored targets.

Arrow, Hunting: An arrowhead with a thin straight head attached to a Flight arrow shaft, that can more easily be pulled out of a killed creature. This arrow head is best made out of iron or steel. It has greater accuracy than a war arrow and does less damage. However, does it have a greater ability to penetrate armors than War arrows.

Bullets, Sling: Sling bullets are shaped metal balls, designed to be used with a sling or sling staff. Because of the design they gives +1 damage and are able to fly 10 m longer than a normal stone.

Armory

Armor adds its rating to a character's Absorb dice pool against damage. However, heavy armor also subtracts a number of dice from dice pools related to bodily coordination and agility (Most Dexterity and Perception-based rolls). This is reflected in the penalty listing. Most common is leather armor, worn by city guards and the like, while nobles and the elite soldiery utilize ever-more-sophisticated combinations. Attackers may make targeting rolls to hit unprotected portions of a defender and thus ignore the armor typically with a difficulty penalty at +1 or +2. Armor offers no protection to the head region unless stated in description of it. For this, you must wear a helmet. A leather cap or a light helm protects only the head, while a heavy helm also protects the neck, and the absorb bonus is only related to the hit location. The amount of armor parts you can carry is limited to the number of lines on the character sheet.

Name/Type: Your character are allowed to use many other types of armor, than those listed. Use the traits from the armor chart that best approximate their statistics.

Class: The armor is divided into several classes. The higher the class, the more damage the piece of armor will be able to absorb.

Diff.: The reduction in the character's effective Dexterity (Dex) and/or Perception (Per) attribute caused by wearing the armor. Due to lack of movement and ability to discover what is going on around you.

Size/Weight: Size indicates the minimum Strength needed to wear the armor piece effectively; a wielder with lower Strength suffers a -1 penalty on all rolls related to movement. Weight indicates approximately how heavy the armor is measured in kilograms (kg).

Absorb: The numbers of dice added to the wearer's Absorb dicepool when attacked. Most armor has different ratings for absorbing physical damage depending on the type of weapon used (Bludgeoning, Slashing, Piercing, Magical).

Cover: Each body part is represented by its own letter. This is used to indicate where the character is hit and to specify which areas an armor protects.

Cost: The number of dots required in the background: Resources to purchase this item at character creation, and the standard value at a market in silver pieces (sp).

Penalty: For shields and other parrying weapons, the difficulty of Dexterity (Dex) + Melee rolls to attempt to parry incoming attacks with the item.

Vs. Melee / vs. Missile: The value added to the difficulty of respectively Melee/Brawl and Missile attacks against the character when using passive defense with the item.

Special: Any special notes according to the specific armor, if the armor requires two hands (2H) and are used one-handed, the Strength requirement increases by one.

Quality:

$(1 + \text{item cost}) \times (2d10/2 \text{ rounded}) + 1 \text{ pr } 10 \text{ sp used}$

Quality of armor, weapons and other wearables play a role in active combat for a character. The quality depends on craftsmanship as well as wear and tear, but it is possible to pay to get a better quality of equipment. If you do not tend to damaged equipment, it risks breaking or becoming unusable. A Durability roll may be required at the Storytellers discretion.

The Durability roll is made with a number of d10 equal to 1 + item cost. Standard difficulty is 6. For example, a Long Sword (cost 2) would mean the roll was made with 3d10.

A roll with at least one 10 will leave the item undamaged, while a roll with no successes means the item breaks. Otherwise, the Quality score drops by 1, after this stage it also drops 1 per regular failure and 2 for each 1 rolled.

Until a damaged item is repaired, the player must make a new Durability roll after each combat to see if the item breaks. For each of these rolls the difficulty increases by 1, and upon reaching 10 or dropping to Quality score 0, the item automatically breaks.

Repair cost is 10% of standard purchase price; Crafts skill checks are as normal. A magical one requires hiring both a weaponsmith or armorer and a spellcaster with the prerequisites for the item. Artifacts are sufficiently powerful to ignore the Durability rules.

<i>Armor & Helms</i>						
Armor Type	Class	Penalty	Size/Weight	Absorb	Cover	Cost
Padded	1	-	1 / 4,5	P: 1 B: 1 S: 1	A, C, L	1 (50)
Quilted Cloth	2	-	1 / 6,8	P: 2 B: 1 S: 1	C, L	3 (100)
Leather	2	-1 dex	2 / 6,8	P: 2 B: 2 S: 2	C, (D), (E), (F), (G), (J), (K), L	1 (150)
Studded Leather	3	-1 dex / -1 per	2 / 9,1	P: 3 B: 3 S: 3	C, (D), (E), (F), (G), (J), (K), L	2 (250)
Hide	3	-2 dex / -2 per	3 / 11,3	P: 1 B: 3 S: 3	C, (D), (E), (F), (G), (J), (K), L	2 (200)
Chainmail	5	-2 dex / -3 per	3 / 18,1	P: 2 B: 5 S: 5	A, C, D, E, L	2 (1500)
Scale	4	-2 dex / -2 per	3 / 13,6	P: 4 B: 4 S: 2	A, C, D, E, L	3 (500)
Breastplate	6	-2 dex / -2 per	3 / 13,6	P: 4 B: 5 S: 6	C, (D), (E), (F), (G), (J), (K), L	3 (2000)
Full Plate	7	-4 dex / -4 per	4 / 22,7	P: 4 B: 5 S: 7	A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J, K, L	4 (15000)
Knight's Armor	8	-4 dex / -4 per	4 / 27,0	P: 5 B: 6 S: 8	A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J, K, L	4 (50000)
Leather Cap	2	-	1 / 0,9	P: 2 B: 2 S: 2	A	1 (100)
Light Helm	3	-1 per	1 / 1,4	P: 4 B: 5 S: 6	A, B	2 (150)
Heavy Helm	4	-4 per	2 / 1,8	P: 5 B: 6 S: 8	A, B	2 (800)

(X) = For most types of body armor, you can purchase separate armor pieces covering arms, feet and hands. Each of those set costs and weighs 25% (rounded up) of the equivalent body armor.

Padded: More than simple clothing, padded armor combines heavy, quilted cloth, skin and layers of densely packed stuffing to create a cheap and basic protection, sewed onto some canvas clothing with a hood. It is typically worn by those not intending to face lethal combat or those who wish their maneuverability to be impacted as little as possible. It is also commonly used by thieves and poor people, as a cheap alternative to leather armor.

Quilted Cloth: This enhanced form of padded armor has internal layers specifically designed to trap arrows, bolts, darts, thrown daggers, and other small ranged piercing weapons. When these kinds of weapons strike you, they tend to become snagged in these layers and fail to harm you. Wearing quilted cloth armor gives you a significant better armor class against attacks of this kind. The special layers of the armor have no effect on other kinds of weapons.

Leather: Made of multiple overlapping pieces of leather, boiled to increase their natural toughness and then deliberately stitched together. Although not as sturdy as metal armor, the flexibility it allows wearers makes it among the most widely used types of armor. The padding worn under heavier armor counts as if it was a leather armor when worn alone.

Studded Leather: An improved form of leather armor, it is reinforced with dozens of metal protuberances. While these rounded studs offer little defense individually, in the numbers they are arrayed in upon such armor, they help catch lethal edges and channel them away from vital spots. The rigidity caused by the additional metal does, however, result in less mobility than is afforded by a suit of normal leather armor.

Hide: Made from the tanned skin of particularly thick-hided beasts, stitched with either multiple overlapping layers of crude leather or exterior pieces of leather stuffed with padding or fur. Damage to the armor is typically repaired by re-stitching gashes or adding new pieces of hide, giving the most heavily used suits a distinctively patchwork quality.

Scale: Consisting of many individual small armor scales (plates) made of metal of various shapes attached to each other and to a backing of cloth or leather in overlapping rows. Like Chainmail, Scale Armor is particularly effective against piercing weapons. But a scale armor is has a more flexible in it's arrangement of scales in an attempt to avoid hindering the wearer's mobility, but at the expense of omitting additional protective layers of armor.

Breastplate: As its name indicates, a breastplate is a piece of armor that protects the wearer's torso. A breastplate is fashioned from a single sheet of metal, and covers the front and back of the wearer's torso from shoulder to waist. It is quite effective against slashing weapons, but vulnerable to piercing weapons which penetrate it with ease. Despite its sturdiness, its inflexibility and open sides make it inferior to complete suits of metal armor, but still an improvement over most non-metal armors. It is usually worn over a leather padding and with a heavy metal helmet.

Chainmail: Protects the wearer with a complete mesh of chain links that cover the torso, neck and arms, and extends below the waist. Multiple interconnected pieces offer additional protection over vital areas. Usually worn over a layer of quilted or leather padding. Chain- and ringmail is most effective against piercing weapons, because the tips have difficulty penetrating the armor.

Full Plate: This metal suit comprises multiple pieces of interconnected and overlaying metal plates, incorporating the benefits of numerous types of lesser armor. A complete suit of full plate (or plate mail, as it is often called) includes gauntlets, heavy leather boots, a visored helmet, and a thick layer of padding that is worn underneath the armor. Each suit of full plate must be individually fitted to its owner by a master armor smith, although a captured suit can be resized to fit a new owner at a very expensive cost.

Knight's Armor: Like Full Plate, Knight's Armor comprises metal plate worn over leather padding at the torso, complemented by bulky gauntlets and leg-guards. It is usually worn with a heavy helmet. This type of armor are heavy, weighing about 27 kilos. It is therefore very hard to move around wearing it. Most knights may also be helped up on their horses by means of a hoist. A Knight's Armor can only be purchased as a custom-build piece of work, and therefore they are very expensive.

Leather Cap: A light and flexible skullcap, made of hardened leather. Protecting the wearer's head and neck from attack. It is almost as resilient to slashing as metal, but offers less protecting against piercing and bludgeoning. Often worn underneath another type of helmet for better comfort.

Light Helm: A metal skullcap protecting the wearer's head and optionally the neck from attack. May include a nose-guard but otherwise the face is open. Usually worn with chain armor.

Heavy Helm: A full helm protecting the head, neck and face of the wearer. Vision is through a narrow slit or eyeholes. Usually worn with Breastplate, Full Plate or Knight's Armor.

<i>Shields & Parrying Weapons</i>						
Type	Diff.	vs. Melee	vs. Missile	Cost	Weight	Special
Buckler	6	0	0	(2) 500	2,3	
Small Shield	4	0	0	2 (300-800)	2,5	
Footman's Shield	6	+1	+1	3 (900-2000)	20,4	May not be used on horseback
Cavalry Shield	6	+1	+1	3 (3000)	5,7	+2 diff. when used by footmen
Small Weapon	4 + Size	0	0	Varies	Varies	Size 1 or 2
Normal Weapon	4 + Size	+1	0	Varies	Varies	Size 3 or 4

Made from wood, leather and metal, shields provide added protection against the rigors of combat. Unlike armor, which warriors wear at most times, shields are generally used only in times of unrest. They cannot be concealed, though most have a leather strap that allows them to be slung on the wearer's back. For some of the shields, the price and durability are variable depending on if it is made of steel or wood.

Buckler: A very small, round shield held by a handle or worn on the forearm, 15 to 45 cm in diameter. It is generally used as a companion weapon in hand-to-hand combat; it offers poor protection against missile weapons (e.g., arrows) but is useful in deflecting the blow of an opponent's sword or mace. You can use a bow or crossbow without penalty while carrying it. You can't make a shield bash with a buckler.

Small Shield: Usually round and made of wood, either painted or covered with a leather skin, small shields cover only a small part of the body (thus provide no significant passive defense), but they are ideal for parrying. A small shield's weight lets you carry other items in that hand, although you cannot use weapons with it.

Footman's Shield: The larger bulk of the footman's shield (or Tower Shield, as it is often called) protects more of the wielder's body but at the cost of maneuverability and the ease of parrying. This massive shield is nearly as tall as its user. You cannot bash with a Footman's Shield, nor can you use your shield hand for anything else.

Cavalry Shield: Long and thin, usually kite shaped. Cavalry shields are designed for use on horseback. It is roughly from a horse as effective as a footman's shield is on the ground.

Steps Of Combat

1. Initiative:

Roll initiative: $1d10 + \text{DEX} + \text{WITS} + \text{Modifiers} - \text{Armor penalty (DEX)}$. Everyone declares their actions. The character with the highest initiative performs her action first and the character with the lowest initiative declares his action first. Actions can be delayed to any time later in the order of initiative.

Battlecraft/Stealthcraft (Backstabbing) = $(\text{Discipline}/2 \text{ rounded down}) + \text{Weapon Initiative}$
(Bludgeoning, Slashing, Piercing, Backstabbing)

Spellcraft = +1 for using element/spelltype of religion or -1 for using other elements/spelltypes
(Spirit, Nature, Fire, Water, Earth, Air)

2. Perform Action / To Hit:

There is quite a few situational combat rules and a possibility for the player to split the To Hit dice pool to do more than one action per combat round. You do not have to attack during combat. Instead, you can perform other actions in the usual order of Initiative. Please refer rules below.

Battlecraft/Stealthcraft (Backstabbing)

To Hit: $\text{DEX} + \text{Melee, Archery or Brawl} = \text{Amount of dice}$.

Difficulty: $6 + \text{Weapon Difficulty} - (\text{Specialization}/2 \text{ rounded down})$ (Minimum Difficulty 3)

For Backstabbing, add the AC value of your item with the highest AC to the Difficulty

Critical Fumble/Hit: See below.

Spellcraft

Spellcasting: $\text{INT} + \text{Spellcraft Discipline} = \text{Amount of dice}$

To Hit: Spellcraft + Spellcasting successes

Difficulty: $4 + \text{Circle}/2 \text{ rounded up} + \text{armor penalty}$ (+1 for each point above 3 for any body armor)

Critical Fumble/Hit: $\text{STA} + \text{Spellcraft Discipline} = \text{Amount of dice}$

Critical Difficulty: $\text{Spellcraft} + 3 + \text{armor penalty}$ (+1 for each point above 3 for any body armor)

Critical Fumble/Critical Hit:

Any roll between 2 and 9 counts as usual. If she rolls a 10, she may score a Critical Hit, while a roll of 1 risks causing a Critical Fumble. A 10 and a 1 will cancel each other out. After this stage, if there are any 1s remaining, each of them remove two success rolls. If there is one or more 1s remaining and the total number of successes reaches 1 or below, it is a Critical Fumble. But if there is more than one 10s remaining, it is a Critical Hit. Additionally, each remaining 10 counts as 2 successes. A spellcaster loses the Mana used and forgets how to cast this particular spell until she has rested for at least 6 hours. If the Critical Fumble roll succeeds, she has only lost the Mana used for casting the spell. For each remaining Critical Hit or Critical Fumble, a side effect might happen, at the Storyteller's discretion.

3. Damage:

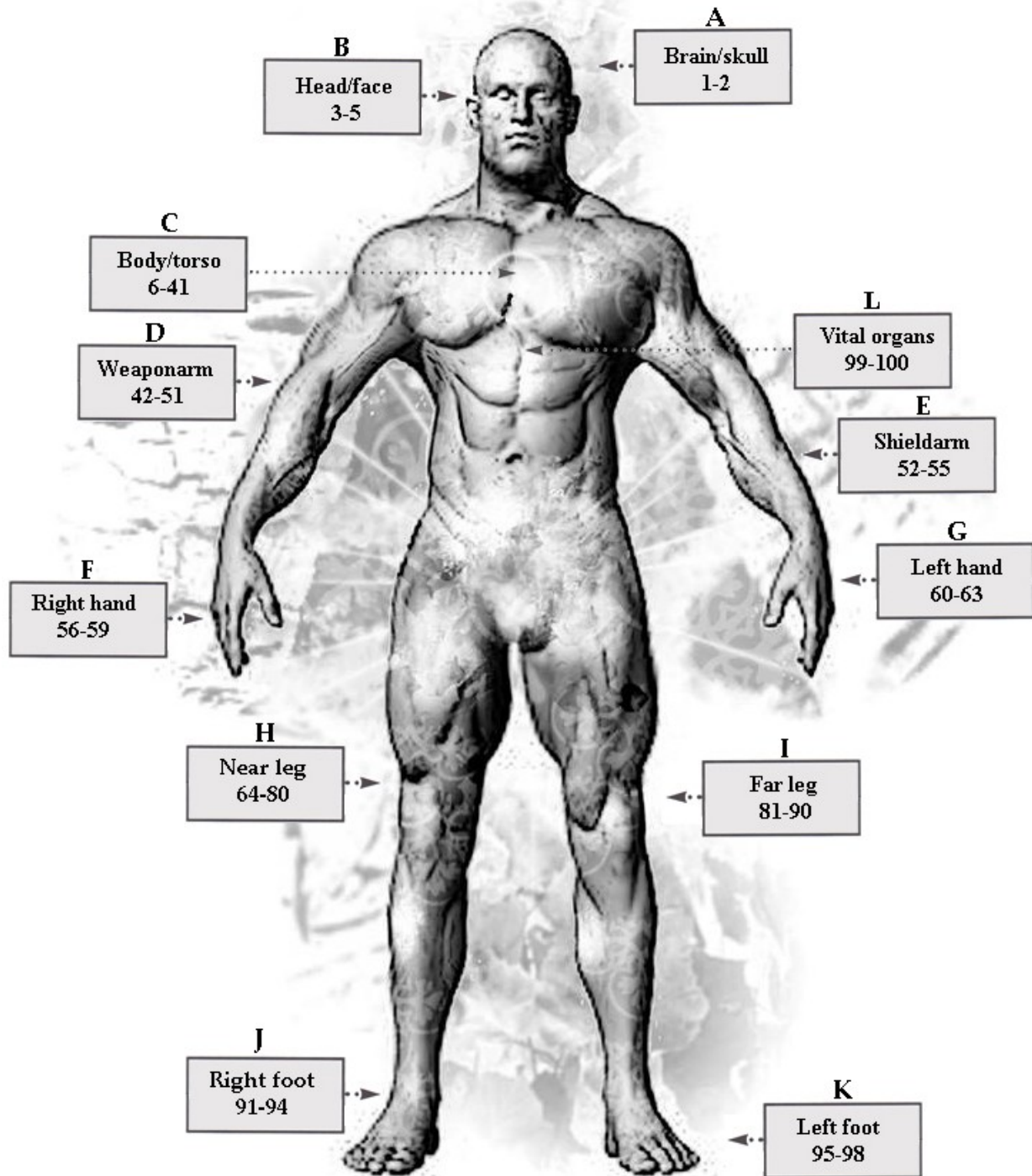
Roll a d100 to determine where the target is hit using the Hit Location table. If the result is logically impossible either divide or multiply the result by 2.

Battlecraft: STR + Weapon Damage + Battlecraft Discipline + To Hit Successes - the target's Absorb successes = Amount of dice (always retaining at least one die).

Spellcraft: Dependent on the spell - Spellsave or Absorb successes.

Stealthcraft: STR + Weapon Damage + Piercing Discipline + Backstabbing Discipline + To Hit Successes - the target's Absorb successes = Amount of dice (always retaining at least one die).

Difficulty: 7



1. **Defense:**

Parry (Physical only):

DEX + Melee = Amount of dice to remove from To Hit dice pool

Difficulty: Shields = 4-8 (dependent of type/usage) / Weapons = 5-8 (dependent of size)

Dodge (Physical only):

DEX + Dodge = Amount of dice to remove from To Hit dice pool

Difficulty: 7 - (Specialization/2 rounded)

Absorb/Spellsave:

We use Physical and Mental for determining the type of damage dealt.

Physical: STA/2 (rounded down) + Armor Class = Amount of dice to remove from Damage dice pool
(always retaining at least one die)

Mental: Wits + Spellcraft = Negate/Partial/Half Damage dependent on spell

Difficulty: 7 - (Specialization/2 rounded)



Splitted Dice Pool

The player may opt to split the hit dice pool to do more than one action per combat round. The player must announce if she is doing this at the beginning of her Combat Round. The dice pool may be split to do multiple actions, although the same action cannot be repeated during a Combat Round; an attack and a dodge, an attack and a move, etc.

Dice pool splitting works like this: The player declares the total number of extra actions she wishes her character to attempt. Each action takes 2 seconds determined in Action Rounds, this limit the character to have a maximum of 5 actions per Combat Round. She then subtracts a number of dice from her original dice pool: 1 extra action costs 1 dice, 2 extra actions cost 1 + 2 extra dices, etc. If subtracting from the dice pool would take the player below 1 dice, any additional actions cannot be attempted. If she decide to abort an action, the dice will still be lost.

Example: Rowena wishes to split her die pool into three actions: one attack with her knife, a move to another target and a dodge, in that order. Her melee die pool is 7. Since she is taking three actions this round, she can roll 4 dice for her attack, as she has spent 3 dice on the actions. She ends up not needing to use the dodge, but since she was still reserving the action, the loss of dice on her rolls stands. (*However, she could try to do something else, but it will be limited to only one of each kind of action overall.*)

Situational Combat Rules

- Aiming: -1 diff. per Combat Round up to a -3 maximum. (+2 diff. If target is moving)
- Snapshot: shoot 2 missiles within one Combat Round at an additional diff. penalty of +3 to hit target. (No aiming possible)
- Quickshot: Load and shoot within one Combat Round at an additional diff. penalty of +1 to hit target. (No aiming possible)
- Wild Attack: +2 dice with Brawl or Melee attack; lose option to split dice pool.
- Concealment:
 - Barely +1 to diff. to hit (crouching behind a low fence);
 - Partially +2 to diff. to hit (hiding behind a wagon, but with upper body exposed);
 - Substantially +3 to diff. to hit (crouching fully behind a wagon, or poking up out of a foxhole);
 - Completely N/A (completely protected by an intervening barrier, all shots hit the cover automatically)
- Drawing a Weapon: Requires one action (splitted dice pool).
- Firing from Concealment: Shooters own concealment quality get reduced by 1 as a penalty to fire back (so, no modifier, -1, -2 or -3).
- Prone Target: -2 penalty to hit in ranged combat (counts as being partially concealed, but at the same time the prone target can't dodge); +2 bonus to hit when attacker is within close-combat distance.
- Specified Target: Torso +1, leg or arm +2, head or neck +3, hand or heart +4, eye or ear +5 to difficulty.
- Flanking +1 dice to hit
- Difficulties to do two different tasks at once (one with each hand) are at +1 for the weaponhand and +3 for the other.
- Whenever you try to do anything significant – swing a weapon, forge a letter, etc - with your off-hand, you will be at a +2 diff. penalty. This does not apply to things you normally do with your off-hand, like using a shield.



CHAPTER 2.2.0

MERITS & FLAWS



Merits and Flaws are special options that a Storyteller may allow their players to take. They are mainly a device meant to help with background story and to help flesh out a character, but most of them are very useful. At character creation a player may choose as many merits they can afford with 'Freebie points' and may only choose a number of flaws that award additional 'freebie points' totaling seven extra 'Freebie points'. A player may not choose a merit or flaw higher than 3 pts without Storyteller's approval. Supernatural merits and flaws require special permission by the Storyteller.

Aptitudes

Ability Aptitude (1 pts Merit): Pick a single skill, talent, or knowledge: you are a whiz at whatever this is, and get +2 dice to rolls relating to this ability.

Ability Deficit (5 pts Flaw): You are not in tune with your innate abilities, or maybe you just do not have any. You have 5 less points to spend on Talents, Skills, or Knowledges, though you can still spend Freebies on them. You cannot, however, have an ability in this category higher than 2 at the start of the game.

Ambidextrous (2 pts Merit): You are equally dexterous, or nearly so, with both hands, and use your "off" hand at no penalty. Difficulties to do two different tasks at once (one with each hand) are at +1 for both rolls, rather than +1 for the "right" hand and +3 for the other.

Culture Knack (3 pts Merit): You have a knack for fitting in wherever you are, and though you may not know them beforehand, you notice customs quickly. In appropriate situations, your social difficulties may be lowered, or you may be able to recover from a botched roll with another roll at normal difficulty.

Daredevil (3 pts Merit): You love to take risks, and are damn good at living through them. -2 difficulty on dangerous actions except combat, and you can ignore a single 1 on your roll.

Graceful (2 pts Merit): You are extremely agile and delicate in your movements. -1 difficulty on all Balance or Athletics rolls. Botches will still hurt, but it is possible to gracefully fall down, and you will die before you look clumsy.

Graceless (2 pts Flaw): You always look awkward, no matter what you are doing. +1 difficulty to all social rolls that involve making an impression.

Illiterate (1 pts Flaw): You cannot learn Academics. This may make passing yourself off as that learned mage or cleric a bit difficult.

Natural Linguist (2 pts Merit): You are good with languages and language structures. 3 dice are added to any language-related roll, and are allowed to learn one additional dialect or ancient language for each dot above 2 in Academics.

Poverty (1-3 pts Flaw): You have limited resources. 1-point halves your starting wealth, 2-point gives you 1/5 starting wealth and 3-point leaves you with no possessions or money at the start of the game, beyond the clothes you are wearing.

Speech Impediment (1 pts Flaw): 2 Point penalty to all verbal communication rolls.

Well-Travelled (3 pts Merit): You are knowledgeable of the ways of the world from your travels and studies. Once per game session, you can gain an automatic success on a non-magical roll to gain a piece of information.

Awareness

Acute Senses (1 pts Merit): One of your five senses is incredibly sharp, and detection rolls involving this sense have +2 dice to rolls relating to this sense. You must buy this merit separately for each sense.

Bad Sight (2 pts Flaw): Difficulties for sight-related rolls are at +2, and you suffer from night blindness.

Blind (6 pts Flaw): You cannot see. This obviously hinders certain perception attempts.

Color Blind (1 pts Flaw): You can see only in varying shades of grey, which may make some perception rolls more difficult (note in real life color blindness makes you unable to perceive only a certain portion of the color spectrum, but this rule makes it a little easier to handle and roleplay).

Deaf (4 pts Flaw): You cannot hear. This obviously hinders certain perception attempts.

Hearing-Impaired (1 pts Flaw): Difficulties for hearing-related rolls are at +2.

Nightsight (3 pts Merit): Your eyes adapt rapidly to the darkness. You cannot see in total dark - but if you have any light at all, you can see fairly well. You may, however be sensitive to bright light, and sudden bright light may dazzle you for a turn or two. Whenever the storyteller exacts a penalty because of darkness, except for total darkness, this penalty does not apply to you.

One Eye (2 pts Flaw): You lack peripheral vision on one side, and you are at a -2 dice difficulty for rolls related to depth perception. On the upside, you can wear a nifty eyepatch and say "Arrrrr" a lot.

Material

Hideaway (2 pts Merit): You have a little place somewhere nobody else knows about, fairly well stocked. If people actively search for it, your Storyteller will roll 2 dice at difficulty 6; at least one success indicates you have not been found. Failure gives them an idea, continual failures, at least four, will indicate that the seeker knows exactly where you live...

Hunted (3 pts Flaw): Someone is aware of, or at least suspects, you are a follower of the dark arts and believes you need to be caught, tortured and exterminated (or experimented upon, or...).

Local Ties (1-3 pts Merit): You have influence and/or contacts in an important local institution, though the more you use these ties, the weaker they may become. Samples and their point levels include ties with the following: City Guards (1), Judicial (2), Church (2), Rangers (3), Political (3), and Underworld (3).

Occult Library (2 pts Merit): You own a decent collection of works on arcane lore, and if you have access to it, can lower difficulties/add dice when trying to solve an occult mystery and/or generally learn more about the occult. Having this library does not automatically mean you are an occult expert; it just means you have convenient access to some knowledge.

Mental

Amnesia (2 pts Flaw): You have no memory of your past, or at least are missing a significant portion of it. You have the option of taking up to 5 points of extra flaws to be determined by the Storyteller (you do not get to find out about them until you are playing...).

Clear Sighted (3 pts Merit): You are not fooled by illusions, and you get a Perception +Alertness roll, difficulty = opposing power's craft +3, to see through magical illusions.

Common Sense (Free Merit): You are full of practical wisdom. Default merit for starting characters, as you may receive advice from the Storyteller regarding how to handle certain situations.

Concentration (1 pts Merit): You are very good at focusing, and modifiers regarding distracting situations can cause you to lose no more than two dice, or have no more than a +2 difficulty.

Confused (2 pts Flaw): You have a lot of trouble focusing and/or making sense of the world around you. You can spend Willpower to temporarily overcome your confusion.

Direction Sense (3 pts Merit): You always know which way is north, and you can always retrace a path you have followed within the past month, no matter how faint or confusing it may be.

High Pain Threshold (3 pts Merit): You are susceptible to injury as anyone else, but you don't feel it as much. If you are hurt in combat, you are not stunned and do not have penalties on your next turn (exception: a head blow or critical hit will stun you). If you are tortured physically or are in high pain in other situations, you get +3 to your willpower roll to resist the pain.

Iron Will (4 pts Merit): You have much more "Willpower" than the average person. Your level of WITS is added to your dice pool, when you make a Willpower roll for any reason. Strong Will also adds your Willpower score to your Mental Spellsave roll.

Lightning Calculator (1 pts Merit): You have a natural affinity for numbers, and all relevant rolls are at -2 difficulty.

Overconfident (1 pts Flaw): You think you can do everything even though you probably cannot, and you try to prove your belief as often as possible.

Road Insanity (4 pts Flaw): You have a weak conscience about what is good and evil, and every 48 hours you need to make an alignment/road check to see how your mind leads you today. You can never be Neutral of alignment/road.

Self-Confident (5 pts Merit): When you declare that you are spending Willpower for an automatic success on a roll, you do not lose the Willpower unless you fail the roll, due to the strength of your self-confidence. This only comes into effect regarding rolls at difficulty 6 or higher.

Short-term Memory (1-3 pts Flaw): You have a lousy short-term memory, and need to make a Wits roll to remember more than standard knowledge (like your name, address, etc.), depending on the pts. in the flaw. You can spend Willpower as a last resort to try to remember.

Time Sense (1 pts Merit): You have an innate sense of time, and can with a good deal of accuracy tell what time it is without watching the sky. In performing feats where timing may be essential (such as certain combat or athletic maneuvers), difficulties may be lowered or dropped.

Weak-Willed (2 pts Flaw): You can only spend Willpower when survival is at stake or it is appropriate to your Nature (Auspice, Legacy, etc.).

Physical

Allergic (1-3 pts Flaw): You suffer from an allergy to some substance; a 1 pts. version inconveniences you and may increase difficulties in certain situations, the 3 pts. Version means you have an incapacitating or even a potentially fatal reaction to the substance.

Aging (3 pts Flaw): You can feel that age is beginning to weigh you down prematurely, and this has started to affect your physical health. Lower any one Physical attribute by one point. Characters may only have this Flaw if they are 10 % or more from their race's max avg. age.

Catlike Balance (2 pts Merit): -2 difficulty to rolls relating to balance.

Deep Sleeper (1 pts Flaw): Waking up and getting you to move is hard. (+2 difficulty to attempts to wake you), getting you to comprehend what is going on after you are up is not much easier (+1 difficulty to all rolls during the scene).

Deformity (3 pts Flaw): You have a withered limb, hunchback, or other physical defect, which causes you difficulty in movement, as well as in some social interactions. Depending on the type and circumstance, difficulties can be raised on appearance and/or dexterity rolls.

Diminished Attributes (variable pts Flaw): Take back 3 Freebies per attribute point you choose not to spend in character creation; for example, if you are creating Dippy the Wonder Twerp and only want two points to spend in Mental Attributes instead of three, get 3 Freebies.

Disfigured (2 pts Flaw): You have an injury or physical defect which makes you perfectly hideous; Appearance trait is automatically 0.

Double-Jointed (1 pts Merit): -2 difficulty on any roll involving flexibility.

Huge Size (4 pts Merit): You are not a girly-man (or woman), and may be up to 35% taller than your race's avg. height and weigh up to 35% more than your race's avg. weight. You have 3 bonus Hitpoints and +1 STA.

Lame (6 pts Flaw): You cannot move your legs and are confined to movement by wheelchair or on a mount.

Light Sleeper (1 pts Merit): You can function on very little sleep, and so are less likely to suffer penalties for losing sleep. You are also more likely to awaken quickly, and so may gain bonuses to Wits rolls when something may wake you up.

Limited Mobility (3 pts Flaw): Your legs are somehow permanently hurt or disfigured, and you suffer a -2 dice penalty to movement-related rolls.

Longevity (2 pts Merit): You live long and prosper, and do not suffer aging effects until you are at about 20% older than it is average for your race (i.e. 60-72 years for humans)

Monstrous (3 pts Flaw): You have a devilish look, maybe literally. Appearance attribute automatically set to 0. Some people may take your appearance as a sign that you are connected to some horrible yucky evil thing.

Mute (4 pts Flaw): You are physically unable to speak, and must communicate through writing or sign language (or perhaps telepathy, if you are capable of the skill and are in appropriate company).

One Arm/Leg (3 pts Flaw): Due to an unfortunate injury or birth defect, you suffer a -2 dice penalty to rolls where an action would usually require two hands/legs.

Permanent Wound (3 pts Flaw): For some reason, you have an open wound that never heals, which is causing one health level of damage permanently. If you heal the damage with magic, the wound re-opens by the next day.

Poison Resistance (2 pts Merit): You have an innate ability to resist the effects of many toxins. Roll Stamina to resist the effects of poison, level of difficulty 5 and up, depending on potency of the poison.

Slow Healing (3 pts Flaw): For some reason, your healing processes are slow, and you heal at half the speed as others. Magical healing only heals half the damage it normally would (round down).

Sterile (1 pts Flaw; may also be a Merit): You are incapable of reproducing. If you are in a society which expects you to have children, this is a flaw. You may, however, take this as a merit if you practice lots of sex magic or something in which being fertile may actually cause problems.

Psychological

Animal Bond (3 point Merit): A character can form a close bond with her animal companion. The bond will last until one of them perishes or is released from service by its owner. If the bonded companion dies or is dismissed by the character, she must attempt a Willpower roll difficulty 8, with at least 3 successes. Failure means she loses 2 Willpower permanently; success reduces the loss by one point. However, a character's Willpower point total can never go below 1 as a result of a companion's demise or dismissal. A slain or dismissed bonded companion cannot be replaced for a year and a day. During this period, the character takes a -1 penalty on all rolls based on her Mental attributes due to the broken mind link from the perished companion. To form a new bond with another animal companion she must perform a ceremony, requiring 24 uninterrupted hours of meditation in the environment where the new companion typically lives. This type of bond can be formed with certain creatures such as horses, ponies, boars, camels or dogs. Bonded animals get an INT and WITS bonus of +1. Up to 4 times per day, a character can call her companion to her side through their mind link, as a full-round action. Immediately the animal senses the call from its owner and it will do what it can to assist her.

Black and White (1 pts Flaw): You see all situations in black and white, good and evil, etc. In situations where this limited, judgmental way of thinking may hinder your reaction to something or cause you to act socially inappropriate, add a +1 difficulty to social or whatever rolls.

Code of Honor (1 pts Merit): You follow a strict personal code, and you either gain 3 extra dice to resist powerful persuasions that else would make you break your code, or the would-be persuader has to roll at a +2 difficulty.

Compulsion (1 pts Flaw): You have a specific compulsion, which may cause you problems. You have to spend a temporary Willpower point to fight the compulsion for a short time.

Compulsive Speech (aka Big Mouth) (1-2 pts Flaw): For whatever reason, you have difficulty sticking to the rule, "If you can't say anything nice, don't say it at all." 1 point makes you talkative and a bit blunt; 2 points makes you a complete prick.

Curiosity (2-3 pts Flaw): Your incredible curiosity often overrides your common sense. Resisting temptation requires a successful Wits roll, difficulty depending on the situation. 3 pts version makes you obsessed with any mystery you come across, and you will do anything to solve it, unless you succeed a Willpower roll with at least 3 successes.

Dark Secret (1 pts Flaw): There is something about you, which you do not want people to know, and it would be very bad if they did (or at least you think it would be).

Deranged (3 pts Flaw): You have a permanent, severe mental disorder. You may spend Willpower to fight it at points, but you will never get rid of it. Definitely check with your Storyteller, and possibly your fellow players, before taking this one.

Driving Goal (3 pts Flaw): You have some goal, which is at the basis of all your motivations, though it is of such depth or impossibility, it could probably never be achieved. Your obsession with your vision can temporarily be soothed by spending Willpower.

Dual-Nature (2 pts Merit): You have two purposes in life; you can choose two Natures and feel good when satisfying the requirements for either one (or both of them). These Natures should be complimentary to one another.

Flashbacks (3 pts Flaw): When under pressure and/or in the presence of something which reminds you of something unpleasant in your past, you flashback to that past event. Whilst in a flashback, everything to you is as it was then.

Hatred (3 pts Flaw): There is something out there, which you absolutely loathe, and will do anything to, destroy it. You have to succeed a Willpower roll not to go after the object of your hatred, and the appropriate character types will have to make self-control checks.

Hero Worship (1 pts Flaw): You idolize absolutely idolize someone, and disobeying them requires an effort of will (spending Willpower or succeeding a Willpower roll at 5+ difficulty). You also are at +2 difficulty to any roll that may force you to admit/realize that your hero may be on the wrong path.

Inferiority Complex (1 pts Flaw): No matter what you do, by your standards, it is just not good enough. In situations requiring you to take charge and strut your stuff, add +1 to all difficulties.

Intolerance (1 pts Flaw): You have difficulty tolerating a specific thing or type of person. +2 difficulty on rolls involving that thing.

Lifesaver (3 pts Flaw): You revere all life and will not risk killing someone at all costs. Unfortunately, in the world of Medieval Fantasy, this can sometimes be a problem.

Low Self-Image (2 pts Flaw): Suffering from a low self-esteem, you have -2 dice in situations where you don't expect to succeed, or you may have to make Willpower rolls to do something that requires self-confidence.

Loyalty (1 pts Merit): You are devoted to a person, group, or cause, and easily resist attempts to persuade you away from the object of your loyalty. You also gain a Willpower bonus (in the form of bonus dice, or increased difficulty for your opponent) to try to resist powerful forms of persuasion that challenge your loyalty.

Masochist/Sadist (1 pts Flaw): You either enjoy pain or enjoy inflicting it on others. In addition to the inconveniences this fascination may cause you, you may also be seen as sick, or even more sick people may use you for your obsession.

Nightmares (1 pts Flaw): You are constantly plagued by nightmares, which at the worst may indicate there is something nasty in your fate and at the least will make you cranky and irritable most of the time. A particularly bad night may cause you to lose -1 dice on all rolls for some time afterward.

Pacifist (5 pts Flaw): A more extreme version of Lifesaver, you refuse to do any physical harm to anyone for any reason. Particularly this would be tough on beasts... or worse, monsters.

Phobia (1 or 3 pts Flaw): You have a specific, incredibly powerful fear. The 1 pts version, you have to succeed a Willpower roll. You will refuse to approach the object of your fear if you get less than three successes, and will flee if you fail the roll. The 3 pts version, you must succeed a willpower roll or be incapacitated by your fear.

Sensation Junkie (2 pts Flaw): You are addicted to sensation, and will do anything to find new means of stimulation. You must roll Willpower to resist taking the opportunity to try a new kick, difficulty depending on the situation.

Shy (1 pts Flaw): You are not a social butterfly, to say the least. Many social rolls are at +1 difficulty, and if you are the center of attention, all rolls are at +2 difficulty.

Soft-hearted (1 pts Flaw): You cannot stand to witness suffering, and if you do, difficulties are at +2 for the next hour.

Territorial (2 pts Flaw): You are extremely attached to your haven: If forced to leave it, you will be at +1 difficulty in most rolls because you are so disoriented. If someone enters your haven without your permission, you will immediately attack him unless you succeed a Willpower roll.

Ulterior Motive (2 pts Flaw): You have more reason to be with your comrades than your like for them or for their common goals. Whether this motive is sinister or not, it is a secret for whatever reason, and if you are suspected of this motive, things will not look too good for you.

Vengeance (1 pts Flaw): You are consumed with avenging something very important to you. Your obsession can only be temporarily swayed by spending Willpower.

Social

Airhead (1 pts Flaw): Maybe you have trouble paying attention, maybe you are just clueless, maybe you just look like a moron or fool; no matter what, people do not take you seriously. Modify social rolls as is appropriate.

Craven Image (1 pts Flaw): There is something about you that makes you appear sniveling and "low." In appropriate situations, social difficulties are at +2.

Disturbing Mannerism (2 pts Flaw): You have a habit or character trait, which is peculiar, gross, or annoying. You may not even be aware of it-but *boy*, everyone else is. Difficulties of social rolls are increased at the Storyteller's discretion.

Enemy (1-5 pts Flaw): Somebody's out to hurt you or your reputation, or even kill you (or people close to you). A 1 pt. enemy is weaker or comparable to your own ability; a 5 pt. enemy could easily kick your ass into next Tuesday.

Good Old Boy/Girl (2 pts Merit): You are just a *nice* person, and people recognize and appreciate that. +1 dice on social rolls when interacting with your fellow folk.

Group Enmity (2 pts Flaw): Some group amongst your kind, i.e. another clan/tribe/kith/tradition/whatever, doesn't like you and may prevent you going places you might otherwise go or may otherwise give you hell in a variety of ways.

Inconvenient Alliance (1-3 pts Flaw): You are allied with someone, who is discomforting to you and/or your party, but cannot easily get rid of him because of a favor owed, sense of guilt, or whatever. Level of flaw reflects how controversial or dangerous this ally is.

Innocent (2 pts Merit): You have an aura of childlike innocence (whether you really are or not). -2 difficulty on rolls involving Subterfuge or Manipulation.

Isolated Upbringing (1 pts Flaw): You were raised in your class society, or were somehow otherwise sequestered away from "normal" life, so you have trouble dealing with the outside World. Dealing with any community outside the one in which you were raised adds 1 to social difficulties, or reduces your Social attributes by one.

Mistaken Identity (1 pts Flaw): People think you're someone you're not; even if that person isn't bad, it can still cause you trouble if they realize you're not who they think you are.

Mistreated Minority (1-5 pts Flaw): You belong to a group or have a trait to which the average person will react badly. This depends a lot on where the game takes place and what kind of people you run into, so check with the Storyteller before you assume you can take this. If you are playing an openly gay man in a backwoods redneck area, that may cause you problems. If you are playing an openly gay man in a game focused on the New York art scene. That probably will not be a problem.

Outsider (2 pts Flaw): Though you are not exactly infamous, you have a poor reputation amongst your kind. +2 difficulty on all social rolls when interacting with your group.

Pitiable (1 pts Merit): You have a childlike aura around you. People tend to pity and protect you (unless it goes against their nature). This can be useful, but it may also be annoying.

Probationary Member (3 pts Flaw): You are not on the greatest terms with the group (tradition, clan, tribe, etc.) you belong to and are highly suspect of various naughtiness. You may not be privy to the normal privileges of being part of your group, nor will you necessarily receive aid when you ought to, etc.

Rival (1-5 pts Flaw): Someone within your own society viciously competes against you and tries to undermine your plans; really obsessive rivals may even want you dead.

Twisted Upbringing (1 pts Flaw): Whoever taught you the ways of your people gave you an incredibly skewed version of those ways, and your faulty beliefs can get you in big trouble...

Supernatural

Bard's Tongue (1 pts Flaw): What you say tends to come true; you can't control this prophetic ability, and the compulsion to speak an uncomfortable truth is often very hard to resist, though you may attempt to do so by spending Willpower.

Beast Affinity (1-4 pts Merit): Animals are unusually drawn to you, and though you cannot speak with them, you can communicate with them on a limited level using tone of voice and body language. 1-point affinity is with one specific type of animal, 2-point is with one group, and 3-point is with all natural animals. In appropriate settings, 4 extend your affinity to supernatural animals and beasts as well.

Bound (5 pts Flaw): You owe some angel, demon, spirit, whatever, and you owe him BIG. This is a *very* bad thing!

Burning Aura (2 pts Merit): Your aura is unusually brilliant; even people who can't read auras will be inexplicably drawn to you. Some may see you as a threat or maybe a snack.

Charmed Existence (5 pts Merit): Somebody up there likes you. Ignore a single 1 on every roll you make.

Cursed (1-5 pts Flaw): You have been cursed by someone or something. The curse is specific in nature and cannot be easily dispelled. Level of the flaw reflects how bad the curse is; a 1-point curse is annoying, a 5-point curse is likely life-threatening to you and/or to the people around you, and will at least make you and them *incredibly* miserable.

Danger Sense (3 pts Merit): "Oh no! My Spider Senses are tingling!" A successful Perception + Alertness roll, difficulty depending on the situation, will give you a timely sense of foreboding before something bad happens...

Dark Fate (5 pts Flaw): You are doomed to suffer a horrible demise, or otherwise have some sort of icky unpleasant fate. You are aware of this, and it can kinda make you rather depressed...

Fae Blooded (4 pts Merit): Somehow one or more magical creatures in the past are part of your family. You have just a touch of their blood in your system and are therefore detectable by some magical beings. This also gives you a better affinity for magic and gives you -1 difficulty to any spellcasting rolls.

Faerie Affinity (3 pts Merit): There is something about you that magical creatures notice and like, and you are much more likely to be befriended, and aided by them.

Gifted Caster (1-5 pts Merit): Somehow the gods have bestowed you with the skill to ignore either the verbal or the somatic spell component required to cast spells. 1 Pt makes this possible for circle 1, 2 Pts for circle 2, 3 pts circle 3-4, 4 pts for circle 5-6, and 5 pts for circle 7-8. This Merit also permit the caster to split the dicepool for multiple actions and use a weapon while casting magic.

Green Thumb (1 pts Merit): Not only do plants thrive in your care, they almost seem to burst into bloom from your touch.

Guardian Angel (6 pts Merit): Not only does someone up there like you; they are actively watching over you, and at times may protect you from icky situations. You have a vague knowledge of the existence of this being; it is up to the Storyteller to determine what the being actually is and how much you know.

Haunted (3 pts Flaw): A ghost, wraith or another dead spirit is plaguing your existence for some reason. Maybe you are its murderer, maybe you have something it wants, or maybe it just does not like you. They can do all sorts of weird things to you, move things around, possess you and your friends, inhabit your dreams or your mount, etc...

Honeyed Tongue (2 pts Merit): You've sold gallons of snake oil and thousands of deeds to the Magic Academy, and most customers still think they're satisfied. All subterfuge attempts gain one automatic success.

Luck (3 pts Merit): You Manage to succeed in places when others fail. You can repeat three failed rolls per chapter of the chronicle, one repeat per roll, and the second roll always stands.

Medium (2 pts Merit): You have the ability to see and interact with ghosts. Sometimes, the Restless may seek you out for favors. Depending on the ghosts you meet, this could be a very good or very bad thing.

Shielded Mind (5 pts Merit): You are close to immune to any mind attacks, attackers are at +3 against you if you are aware of them and are trying to resist (and therefore spending 1 Willpower per turn of resisting). If you are not aware of the attack, the attacker's difficulty will still be raised by 1.

Natural Channel (3 pts Merit): You have a natural connection to the spirit world. Spirits are also more likely to act favorably toward you.

Offensive to Animals (1 pts Flaw): For some reason, animals fear you; or just do not like you, add 2 to your difficulty to rolls involving interacting with animals.

Otherworldly Taint (2 pts Flaw): You have a physical peculiarity (odd hair/eye color, glowing eyes, etc.) and/or just an odd aura about you, which may make you stick out. Someone who suspects you are not “normal” may make a Perception + Awareness roll, difficulty 7, to determine what you are.

Precognition (4 pts Merit): You have glimpses of the future. Though you can enter a trance and try to summon a vision, this foresight usually comes out of nowhere, and can be quite shocking in some circumstances.

Prophetic Ability (4 pts Merit): You see and understand (or try to) signs and portents sent by the “Higher Powers”, either through dreams or just a peculiar insight into everyday events. Your insights and visions are usually obscure, and it may take time and interpretation to get a grasp on their full indications.

Runic Spellweaver (10 pts Merit): (NPC Only): There are many kinds of Mages, but only few are as powerful as this arcane and isolated group of dwarves. Their origin lies long before magic was even discovered by any of the other races. Many believe that this type of spellcaster has access to types of magic no one has ever heard about. A Runic Spellweaver learns magic faster than other magic users and is one circle ahead in learning the spells (i.e. he can learn level 3 spells when others would be getting access to level 2 spells). Additionally, Mana cost is calculated as if the spell was one circle lower. This also means circle 1 spells count as Cantrips, costing no Mana. Manipulating coruscating lines of energy into mystic runes of power, they are able to cast their powerful spells. Using one or more of these casting components, they are able to channel the energy for their spells: Drawing runes somewhere using hands or fingers, saying the runes out loud or just bending the fingers forming the simplest form of runes. When the energy is summoned, they then release it to cast the spell, using one of the methods above. The spell gain most power if they combine one or more of the methods above (one circle higher), but it is also possible to cast with only one of those components with less power (normal effect). The most powerful Spellweavers have created so-called power-runes. These have more than one rune locked inside, allowing faster spellcasting. This merit automatically gives the character the merit Gifted Caster 5, the downside is that a Runic Spellweaver are disallowed specializing in the Light or Dark path of magic.

Soothing Voice (2 pts Merit): You have an entrancing voice. Add 2 dice to rolls that involve vocal charming (singing, hypnosis, preaching, etc.).

Spell Resistance (1-5 pts Merit): Spell resistance is the extraordinary ability to avoid being affected by spells. For each point in this merit a die score of 10 to hit is required for the caster to succeed affecting you by the spell. The possessor does not have to do anything special to use spell resistance. The creature need not even be aware of the threat for its spell resistance to operate. A creature can voluntarily remove its spell resistance. Unless the creature intentionally keeps it down, the spell resistance returns at the beginning of the following Combat Round.

Spirit Guide (5 pts Merit): A friendly Nature Spirit offers you advice and sometimes aid. You can combine this with the Mentor background to have the Guide be your teacher as well.



CHAPTER 3.1.0

POSSESSIONS



At character creation you get a free set of common clothes fitting your class and status in society, perhaps you even receive a simple weapon and/or armor, if your mentor wants award his/her student's good learning ability or good behavior. The character can purchase an upgraded outfit if he has sufficient funds. However, not all outfits will be available everywhere. If the used outfit is still in good condition, the character can expect to get up to 50% of the purchase price when he is replacing it. Using the Equipment Chart, you can buy any extra items you want to carry with you on your travels. However, you can only spend a maximum of 100 silver pieces, no matter how much money you start with. Remember that any item carried is to be recorded at the possessions list, inclusive weapons and armor. The Equipment Chart lists items intended to be used by human-sized creatures. The price and weight for weapons, armor and outfits are reduced for the smaller races: Dwarves gets a 25% discount, Halflings gets a 50% discount and Gnomes gets a 66% discount.

Common outfits

Peasant's Outfit (cost: 1 cp): This set of clothes consists of a loose shirt and baggy breeches, or a loose shirt and skirt or overdress. Cloth wrappings are used for shoes.

Artisan's Outfit (cost: 10 sp): This outfit includes a shirt with buttons, a skirt or pants with a drawstring, shoes, and perhaps a cap or hat. It may also include a belt or a leather or cloth apron for carrying tools.

Entertainer's Outfit (cost: 30 sp): This set of flashy, perhaps even gaudy, clothes is for entertaining. While the outfit looks whimsical, its practical design lets you tumble, dance, walk a tightrope, or just run (if the audience turns ugly).

Explorer's Outfit (cost: 100 sp): This is a full set of clothes for someone who never knows what to expect. It includes sturdy boots, a large belt-pouch, leather breeches or a skirt, a belt, a shirt (perhaps with a vest or jacket), gloves, and a cloak. Rather than a leather skirt, a leather overtunic may be worn over a cloth skirt. The clothes have plenty of pockets (especially the cloak). The outfit also includes any extra items you might need, such as a scarf or a wide-brimmed hat.

Monk's Outfit (cost: 50 sp): This simple outfit includes sandals, loose breeches, and a loose shirt, and is all bound together with sashes. The outfit is designed to give you maximum mobility, and it is made of high-quality fabric. You can hide small weapons in pockets hidden in the folds, and the sashes are strong enough to serve as short ropes.

Scholar's Outfit (cost: 50 sp): Perfect for a scholar, this outfit includes a robe, a belt, a cap, soft shoes, and possibly a cloak.

Cleric's Vestments (cost: 50 sp): These ecclesiastical clothes are for performing priestly functions, not for adventuring.

Cold Weather Outfit (cost: 80 sp): A cold weather outfit includes a wool coat, linen shirt, wool cap, heavy cloak, thick pants or skirt, and boots.

Courtier's Outfit (cost: 300 sp): This outfit includes fancy, tailored clothes in whatever fashion happens to be the current style in the courts of the nobles. Anyone trying to influence nobles or courtiers while wearing street dress will have a hard time of it (+2 penalty on Charisma-based skill checks to influence such individuals). If you wear this outfit without jewelry (costing an additional 500 sp), you look like an out-of-place commoner.

Noble's Outfit (cost: 750 sp): This set of clothes is designed specifically to be expensive and to show it. Precious metals and gems are worked into the clothing. To fit into the noble crowd, every would-be noble also needs a signet ring and jewelry (worth at least 1000 sp).

Royal Outfit (cost: 2000 sp): This is just the clothing, not the royal scepter, crown, ring, and other accouterments. Royal clothes are ostentatious, with gems, gold, silk, and fur in abundance.

Equipment chart

These items are *not* special sized for smaller creatures.

Item	Price (sp)	Weight (kg)	Item	Price (sp)	Weight (kg)
Ale (per liter)	2	0,95	Iron Pot	5	0,95
Arrowheads, hunting (18 pcs.)	6	0,75	Ladder, 3 m.	0,5	9,1
Arrowheads, war (18 pcs.)	9	0,75	Lamp Oil (per flask, 8 hrs)	2,6	0,45
Arrows, flight (18 pcs.)	4	0,25	Lantern, Beacon	1500	22,7
Backpack	20	0,95	Lantern, Bullseye	120	1,4
Barrel, Small (30 litres)	60	48	Lantern, Hooded	70	0,95
Barrel, Large (120 litres)	240	192	Lock, Good	1000	0,45
Basket, Large	3	0,45	Lock, Poor	200	0,45
Basket, Small	0,5	0,05	Lockpicks, Simple***	0,5	0,25
Bell	10	0	Lockpicks, Thieves'	300	0,45
Belt Pouch, Large	10	0,45	Magnifying Glass	1000	0,05
Belt Pouch, Small	7	0,25	Merchant's Scale	20	0,45
Block And Tackle	50	2,3	Mirror, Small	100	0,05
Bolt Case (with 9 bolts)	6	4,3	Paper (per sheet)	20	0,01
Bow String (3 pcs.)	3	0,05	Papyrus (per sheet)	8	0,15
Bread	0,5	0,45	Parchment (per sheet)	10	0,85
Bucket	5	1,35	Perfume (per vial)	50	0,05
Bullets, sling (10 pcs.)	4	2,25	Piton	0,3	0,25
Caltrops (10 pcs.)	4	2,25	Rope, Hemp (per 15 m.)	10	9,1
Candle	0,1	0,05	Rope, Silk (per 15 m.)	100	3,65
Case, Map/Scroll	10	0,25	Sack, Large	2	0,25
Chain, Heavy (per 33 cm)	40	1,4	Sack, Small	0,2	0,05
Chain, Light (per 33 cm)	30	0,45	Sealing Wax (per 500 g.)	10	0,5
Chalk	0,1	0,05	Sewing Needle (10 pcs.)*	5	0,05
Cheese	4	0,95	Signet Ring/Seal	50	0,05
Chest, Large	20	11,35	Soap (Per 500 g)	5	0,5
Chest, Small	10	4,55	Tent, Large	250	9,1
Crampoms	40	0,9	Tent, Small	50	4,55
Dried rations (per day)	0,1	0,25	Torch*	0,1	0,45
Fishhooks + line (10 pcs.)*	1	0,05	Vial (clay 0,1 ltr)	3	0,1
Flint And Steel	5	0,05	Waterskin, large (3 ltr)	25	1,55
Glass Bottle	100	0,05	Waterskin, small (1 ltr)	8	0,45
Grappling Hook	8	1,85	Whetstone	0,2	0,45
Hammer, blacksmith	20	1,5	Wine (per liter)	4	0,95
Healing Potion**	20	0,3	Winter blanket	5	1,4
Hourglass	250	0,45	Writing Ink (per vial) + 1 Quill	8	0,07

** 1 chemical healing potion = 2d10 healing instantly. *** 5 simple lockpicks, each one only usable once.

CHAPTER 4.1.0

BACKGROUND



Personality

Analyst: Anything *can* be explained rationally, and you *will* explain it. You feel good when your rational/scientific method helps solve a major problem.

Architect (aka Builder): You desire to leave a legacy, tangible or intangible. This could be anything from an artistic masterpiece to a successful organization you founded to a new tradition you started... You feel good when you create something of great importance and/or lasting value.

Autist: You live inside your shell. Revealing the 'real' you could be the worst thing that could ever happen. You feel good when you manage to keep someone entirely out.

Autocrat: You must be in control in all times of all situations. You feel good when you maintain control during a situation and success is guaranteed.

Avant-Garde: You *must* be the first to know everything. Nothing is established, no gossip is spread without you having known it first. You feel good when you make an exciting discovery regarding the society in which you are involved.

Barbarian: Being civilized will only make you weak. You rely on your own barbaric sensibilities, which tell you that only a person's deeds are important. You feel good when you beat "civilized" competition through your barbaric virtues.

Benefactor: You have an abundance of wealth or other resources that you feel compelled to share. You feel good when you support someone when no one else around you can.

Bon Vivant (aka Hedonist and Reveler): Live for today, 'cos buddy, tomorrow may never happen. You feel good when you have a rock-n-rollin' time, or manage to fully express your enthusiasm for life.

Bravo: You have little tolerance for weakness, especially in yourself. You could be a proud warrior or a just plain bully. You feel good when you intimidate or physically force someone to do what you want or back down.

Bureaucrat: You follow the rules no matter what. You feel good when you solve a situation by the book, getting others around you to do so as well.

Capitalist: You are the ultimate mercenary, with a keen understanding of how to manipulate others. You feel good whenever you make a successful "sale" or barter of any commodity. Commodities need not be physical items; they may be bits of information, favors or other such intangibles.

Caregiver: You desire to take care of others, ease their pain, and heal them. You feel good whenever you successfully protect or nurture someone else.

Cavalier: You are the hero, the gallant defender of truth, justice, and all that is good. You feel good when you accomplish a significant task for the better of the group (or the world as a whole, for that matter).

Celebrant: You find that joy springs from your overriding passion. You feel good whenever you engage in whichever activity brings you the most pleasure, or convert another character to pursuing that same passion.

Chameleon: You can blend into any situation, able to pass yourself off as anything. You have no true loyalties. You feel good whenever you fool someone into thinking you are someone else for your own (or an ally's) benefit.

Child (aka Cub): Whether you are one or not age-wise, you have not grown up emotionally and prefer to let someone else take care of you. You feel good when someone helps you with no apparent gain to herself.

Competitor: There is no greater thrill than the thrill of victory and you will do anything to feel it. You feel good when you win a contest, formal or informal.

Confidant: You like and understand people and like to give advice – and you are usually good at it too. You feel good when someone confides in you on a personal level.

Conformist: You take the lead and the cues from someone else, letting others handle the responsibility. You feel good whenever the group achieves one of its goals due to your support.

Conniver: You like to manipulate your way through the sticky bits of life, preferring to let some sucker do the dirty work for you. You feel good whenever you trick someone into doing what you want.

Crackerjack: Whatever it is you do, you are the best, and people cannot help but be impressed. You feel good whenever you pull off an impressive stunt in the face of incredible odds (this may include making a roll of 4 successes or more on something).

Creep Show: You strive to shock and disgust, to intimidate and control others. You feel good whenever someone recoils from you in horror or otherwise reacts in fear.

Critic: Everything has a fault and you will find it. You feel good when you point out a significant flaw in something that would have caused disaster if overlooked.

Curmudgeon: You are irascible, cynical, and vocally so. Joy and laughter? Bah, humbug! You feel good when someone does something stupid, as you predicted.

Dabbler: The world is full of new things to learn, and you want to sample all of them. You feel good whenever you find a new enthusiasm and drop your old one completely.

Daredevil: You love taking risks and will seize any opportunity to do so. You feel good whenever you successfully do something potentially life threatening without getting yourself killed.

Dark Pioneer: You cannot change the traditions of the past, but you can be the force that drives the future. You feel good whenever you come up with a novel idea or plan that others choose to adopt.

Dark Poet: You want to share the beauty of darkness with the rest of the world. You feel good whenever you get someone else to see the world as you do, even for a moment.

Decoder: You thrive on puzzles and riddles, be they the obvious sort, found in books and games, or hidden within seemingly benign texts or even a person's face. You feel good when you solve a particularly challenging puzzle or mystery.

Defender: You serve a cause, and defending it is your highest calling. You might be a wizard, a cleric or a warrior, depending on the cause and how you feel it can best be defended. You feel good whenever you successfully defend your chosen object of loyalty from some outside threat.

Deviant: Whether it is because of your ethics, beliefs, or general view of people and society, you just plain do not fit in. You feel good whenever you blatantly defy social codes without being punished.

Director/Leader: You *always* know the best way to go about doing something, and it only makes sense that persons follow your lead. You feel good when you are able to lead a group in accomplishing a significant task.

Dreamer: You have built a haven for yourself, a little world that works the way you want. Let those who would disturb you beware, for you will defend your world at any cost. You feel good when you succeed at something by denying reality rather than accepting it, or when you defeat someone who openly questioned the way you look at the world.

Drunk Uncle: When things are going well, you are everyone's best friend. When things are going poorly, you are their worst nightmare. You feel good when your erratic nature makes a situation significantly better or worse for those you are with.

Enigma: Your actions are bizarre, uncontrolled; your erratic behavior is considered insanity by those you meet. You feel good whenever someone is completely baffled or perplexed by one of your actions that later turns out to be a fruitful endeavor.

Explorer: The world is full of wonder, and you have to see it all. You feel good when you make a significant discovery, such as finding a special place or artifact, or making a profound insight about yourself or a friend.

Eye of the Storm: Despite your calm outward appearance, you surround yourself with chaos and death. You feel good whenever you remain calm while a ruckus, riot or less violent phenomenon occurs around you.

Fanatic: You have a cause, or maybe the cause has you... You live, eat, breathe this cause (of course, if you pick this one, you have to define what that cause is). You feel good when you accomplish something that furthers your cause.

Follower: You are happy to help the leaders accomplish their goals, and stabilize the group with your support. You feel good when your group accomplishes something due to your support.

Gallant: You are flamboyant as hell, and love to be the center of attention. You feel good when you dazzle or impress another person.

Guardian: You have the strength, be it inner, physical, or both, to handle this hostile world, and desire to use that strength to protect the weaker folk around you. You feel good when you successfully shield some worthy party from great harm.

Guru: You seek enlightenment and cling to your idealism, trying to convert others. You feel good when your advice helps to inspire someone else to act in what you considered a more enlightened way, or when you reach an epiphany in your own personal philosophy.

Honest Abe: Honesty is the best policy; integrity is the greatest virtue. You are true to your values and to everyone around you – *all the time*. You feel good when you remain completely honest through a situation where it seems dishonesty would have worked better – and then it turns out your way was for the best.

Idealist: You are utterly committed to some purpose greater than your own wants and needs. You feel good any time an action in pursuit of your ideals furthers your goals and brings your ideal closer to fruition.

Jester: You are the fool, the comic, the smartass, always looking for the humor in a situation. You feel good when you lift someone's spirits/ease their pain with your humor.

Jobsworth: A bit similar to bureaucrat, you always stick to your routine. Routine is safe and efficient. You feel good when your insistence on sticking to your routine turns out for the best.

Judge (Mediator): You are an arbitrator and peacemaker, acting as a fair voice in conflictual situations. You feel good when you separate truth from lies (without supernatural aid) or successfully mediate a conflict.

Loner (aka Lone Wolf): You have your own path and no desire to share it with anyone else. You feel good when you manage to achieve a significant task without help from anyone else.

Manipulator: People fascinate you, and you love to see the many ways they react to the situation you have so carefully set up for them. You feel good when you gain some new insight about people from some "experiment" you have performed on them without their realizing it.

Martyr: You would rather suffer or even die than sacrifice your values or your friends' needs. You feel good when you do that.

Masochist: You are always trying to see just how much more traumas you can take before you collapse. You feel good when you make it through a new and interesting painful experience.

Monster: You are depraved, villainous scum. You feel good when you manage to indulge in suffering that you have produced.

Optimist: You can always see that silver lining despite that icky dark cloud looming in front of it. You feel good when your convictions that all will turn out for the best gets the group through—and it turns out you are right!

Pedagogue: You are the ultimate teacher, living to pass on your knowledge so everyone might benefit from the wisdom of your experiences. You feel good when someone really learns a great lesson from you.

Penitent: What ever it was you did, it was *bad*, and you devote all your energy to atoning for your sin. You feel good when you perform a feat that significantly alleviates your guilt or is a step in achieving the goal that will make up for your crime.

Perfectionist: Everything you do, say, are... must be without flaw. You feel good when you do something without a hint of mistake.

Plotter: Everything you do must be planned out to the last detail. You feel good when you/the group accomplishes something by following your plan to the letter.

Poltroon: Running away may be cowardly, but you are alive, aren't you? Why deal with something potentially unpleasant and possibly fatal when you can just avoid it? You feel good when you manage to escape a particularly nasty situation without having to deal with it at all.

Praise-Seeker: You absolutely crave the approval of your comrades. You feel good when you are praised genuinely for a feat you accomplished by yourself.

Predator: The fittest survive, and you are pretty damn fit. You feel good when you single-handedly hunt and kill another creature to ensure your survival.

Rebel: You will do as you will, and ultimately desire freedom from unpleasant societal bonds. You feel good when your rebellion against authority or the status quo turns out for the best.

Recruiter: It makes sense to build your side up before trying to tear theirs down. You feel good whenever you convince an outsider to join your path of life or religion; this could be a member of another religion or path, or just an independent thinker.

Renunciate: For some reason, you want to leave your past far, far behind you; though as hard as you try to forget it, the past will forever haunt you. You feel good when you shake aside someone/something that reminds you of your past, and do so without consequences.

Revolutionary: You hold freedom dearly and desire justice, and will do whatever is necessary to hold on to these precious liberties. Unlike the Rebel, your urge is not to resist ALL authority, but rather to fight corruption in the system where you find it. You feel good when you are questioning or resisting leadership or the status quo turns out to be best for you, your party or those you are trying to protect.

Rogue: Screw the world! You do what you need to look out for yourself and get done what has to get done. If someone else suffers in the process, that is just too bad. You feel good when your self-centered methods gain you something of significant value.

Sadist: You exist to inflict pain and suffering. Killing is too easy – they have to know pain. You feel good whenever you inflict pain on someone for no other reason than your own pleasure.

Sage: Knowledge is your treasure and your joy, and you enjoy both learning as well as teaching others your wisdom. You feel good when you help someone through your vast knowledge or uncover an obscure piece of lore.

Scientist: Diligent, rational examination can reveal all the secrets of the gods. You feel good any time a logical, systematic approach to a problem helps you solve it, or information gathered logically is of use in another, similar situation.

Sensualist: Sensation is your addiction, and you will do anything to experience a new one. You feel good when you experience a new, exciting sensation and live to tell about it.

Show-Off: You need approval and praise and will do anything to get it. You feel good when your antics earn you that praise you so crave.

Sociopath: All inferior beings should be eradicated. You have no remorse or compassion. You feel good whenever you are the greatest contributor to a body count after everything has settled down. This includes times when you are the only killer, and could result from mass execution just as easily as from combat.

Soldier: You have been given your orders, and you take pride in accomplishing them well. You feel good when you achieve your orders' objectives.

Sorority Sister: You do whatever the "in" crowd does, and you do it better. You feel good whenever you choose to do something only because it is what everyone else is doing, and then end up succeeding at it to a greater degree than the others.

Stalker: The chase is all; the capture and feeding is almost anticlimactic. You feel good when you catch the object of a hunt, but only if you truly made an effort to prolong the hunt as much as possible.

Supplicant: Whatever you do, it is in the service of the god/goddess, which you honor, fear, and/or love. You feel good when you significantly advance the aims of your benefactor, remember, of course, that the deity you follow does not necessarily have to be nice.

Survivor: No matter what happens, you will pull through it somehow. You are one tough cookie, and do not understand it when others give up so easily. You feel good when you survive a difficult situation by the skin of your teeth.

Sycophant: You are the perfect yes-man, doing whatever you can to please the more powerful forces that are so they will protect you. There is no limit to the depths to which you will lower yourself in order to be accepted, and you have no pride, and therefore no way to feel any better.

Theorist: The world around you is something to try to explain, and your theories drive your purpose for being. You feel good when an observation based on your theory comes to pass. This has to be a well thought out, complex theory, not something that is already blatantly obvious.

Thrill-seeker: The stakes are just never high enough. More adrenaline, please! You feel good every time you willingly enter a life-threatening situation and then escape it.

Torturer: Pain is not a profession for you – it is a calling. You feel good whenever you extract a useful item or bit of information from someone through torture alone.

Traditionalist: Why change what has worked for ages? You are the ultimate conservative. You feel good when your old-fashioned methods prove to be the best solution.

Trickster: Your antics do more than amuse; your pranks and tricks have a point of teaching someone a lesson, or humorously but deftly reveal some wisdom. You feel good when your acts reveal wisdom that would not have been realized by more traditional means.

Visionary: You have the drive and imagination to keep aiming for the sky and beyond. You feel good when you convince others to believe in your dreams and follow your vision.

Waif: Whether you are or not, you have the appearance of being innocent and weak and you have not quite learned to act on your own without relying on others' pity. You feel good when you accomplish something important without help from anyone.

Wanderer: Settling down just is not your thing – whether you're running away from something or simply longing to see new places, the road is your home. You feel good when you complete your purpose in one place and move on, leaving no loose ends or attachments behind.

