



agone

Agone, an epic role-playing game in the Twilight Realms



Ashes of the Gods

An epic role-playing game in the Twilight Realms



Greetings Eminence,
I have been waiting for you. I knew you would come.
You had no difficulty finding your way?
Hmmm, perfect. I trust our brothers informed
you well. How could it be otherwise? Our network
spans the continent. I am an Eminence Grise,
like you. You were trained to spy upon those who wield
power in this world, as well as to counsel them.
You know the arcane secrets of power. You are able
to use them not only to the advantage of your
employers, but also your own. Now the time has come
to put those talents to work for an important
and serious cause. It is vital you learn what we've
discovered. A war has begun and it is sneaking, silent,
and treacherous. The Enemy is here, all around us.
It has infiltrated the baronies, the countryside,
and the back streets of our cities. It pulls strings,
hatches plots, and advances its pawns.
It moves in darkness. It is the Darken.
It wears a mask. It is the Masque.
If we do not act, Harmundia will be engulfed
in an eternal Night.

This book that I now entrust to you will allow you,
little by little, to understand everything.
Gathered within are the surveys, documents,
eyewitness accounts, confessions, and all other
information I have been able to glean during
my years of research.
With this book in hand, you will travel Harmundia.
You'll visit its kingdoms, you'll meet its people
— both human and seasonling — and you will brush
with many kinds of magic... all beneath the watchful
gaze of the Eternals.
You shall not be alone. Oh no. You will employ men
and women of exception, at the peak of their careers.
They are the Flame bearers, the living inheritance
of the Muses who created Harmundia — but no one
knows this, not even they themselves. We call them
the Inspired.
They alone have the power to combat the Enemy.
A rough voyage awaits you. It will place you in great
peril, and bring you much joy. And perhaps,
at the end of the journey, you will find the key
to all these mysteries. I am referring to the fate
of Agone of Roundrock. Agone. His name bleeds
like a battle, tolls like a death knoll.
It is up to you to make it ring with hope.

Credits

AGONE

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Table of contents

| | | | | | |
|---|-----|--------------------------------------|-----|---|-----|
| Introduction | 5 | Body | 112 | Obscurantism | 195 |
| The Book of Harmundia | 8 | Arts | 114 | The Cipher-sorcerer | 196 |
| Genesis | 11 | Ascendancy | 115 | History | 196 |
| The Dawn of Time | 11 | Seasons | 117 | The Foundations | 196 |
| The Zenith | 12 | Flame | 118 | The Organization | 196 |
| The Agony | 14 | Skills | 121 | The Hierachy | 197 |
| The Flamboyance | 14 | Skills Groups | 121 | The Censors | 197 |
| The Eclipse | 15 | Generic Skills list | 121 | The Ascendancy : technical aspects | 197 |
| The Twilight | 16 | Occult Skills | 127 | The Mage | 197 |
| History | 19 | Archetypes | 129 | The Dancer | 201 |
| The Flamboyant Empires | 19 | Example of character creation | 145 | Jornist spells | 203 |
| Chronology | 20 | The Book of Drama | 148 | Eclipsist spells | 205 |
| The Twilight Realms | 20 | Game mechanics | 151 | Obscurantist spells | 208 |
| Harmundia: General Information | 23 | The Basic Rules | 151 | The Magical Arts: an overview | 211 |
| The Twilight Realms | 24 | The Dice | 151 | The four Magical Arts | 211 |
| The Princely Communes | 24 | The Rolls | 151 | The Magical Arts : technical aspects | 213 |
| Lyphan | 27 | The Base | 152 | Tune Opuses | 218 |
| The Wild Reaches | 31 | The Difficulty | 152 | Shape Opuses | 222 |
| The Buccaneer Haven | 35 | Roll Modifiers | 153 | Vista Opuses | 223 |
| Bokkor | 38 | The Success Margin (SM) | 153 | Scansion Opuses | 226 |
| The Keshite Empire | 40 | Fumbles | 153 | The Book of Intrigues | 228 |
| The Widowlands | 43 | The Flame | 154 | The Darken | 231 |
| The Modehan Marches | 46 | Movement | 158 | The Darkness | 231 |
| The Mercenary Republic | 49 | Combat | 159 | System | 232 |
| Urgamand | 52 | Action and Reaction Definition | 159 | Sorrows | 234 |
| Janrenia | 55 | Initiative | 159 | Gifts | 237 |
| The Liturgical Province | 58 | Declaration | 160 | The Invokers | 239 |
| The Horns | 61 | Resolution | 160 | The Abyss | 240 |
| Abysm | 62 | Actions | 160 | The Demons | 241 |
| Map of the Twilight Realms | 64 | Reactions | 162 | The Masque | 246 |
| The Seasonlings | 66 | The Results | 162 | The Perfidy | 247 |
| 1 - Season of Spring | 67 | Critical Wounds | 163 | System | 248 |
| The Sprite | 67 | Advanced Combat | 166 | Sorrows | 248 |
| The Spriggan | 69 | Maneuvers | 166 | Gifts | 250 |
| The Satyr | 71 | Artful Thrusts | 168 | Corruption | 251 |
| 2 - Season of Summer | 73 | War equipment | 169 | The Powers of Corruption | 251 |
| The Ogre | 73 | Armors | 169 | Corrupted Creatures | 252 |
| The Minotaur | 75 | Weapons | 170 | The Taint | 254 |
| The Giant | 77 | Health | 175 | Tainted Arts | 254 |
| 3 - Season of Winter | 80 | Death | 175 | Tainted Opuses | 255 |
| The Black Fey | 80 | Healing | 175 | The Fallen | 258 |
| The Dwarf | 82 | First Aid | 175 | The Seasonlings of the Fall | 258 |
| The Medusa | 84 | Surgery | 176 | The Draakens | 258 |
| The Book of the Inspired | 88 | Medicine | 176 | The Morganas | 259 |
| The Role of the Inspired | 91 | Diseases | 176 | The Pixies | 260 |
| Character Creation | 97 | Poisons | 177 | The Isle of Autumn | 261 |
| Step One : Race | 98 | Plant Lore | 178 | The Art of Intrigue | 263 |
| Step Two : Origin and Profession | 98 | Falling | 178 | Roundrock | 270 |
| Step Three : Assets and Faults | 99 | Fire and Acids | 179 | Scenario | 279 |
| Step Four : Flame and Aspects | 99 | Hunger, Thirst and Asphyxia | 179 | Harmundia's Fauna | 291 |
| Step Five : attributes | 100 | Aging | 179 | Moving through Harmundia | 294 |
| Step Six : secondary attributes | 100 | Experience | 180 | Sanctuaries, Domains and Schools | 298 |
| Step Seven : choosing skills | 102 | Equipment and costs | 182 | Glossary | 301 |
| Step Eight : choosing Spells and Opus | 102 | Magic | 187 | Character's Scroll | 302 |
| Character Creation Summary | 105 | An Overview | 187 | | |
| Assets and Faults | 106 | The Enchantment of the World | 187 | | |
| Offices | 106 | The Magic of Today | 189 | | |
| Soul | 110 | The Dancer | 192 | | |
| Spirit | 111 | Definition | 192 | | |
| | | The Origins | 192 | | |
| | | The Free Dancer | 192 | | |
| | | The Captive Dancer | 193 | | |
| | | The Ascendancy: an overview | 194 | | |
| | | Jornism | 195 | | |
| | | Eclipsism | 195 | | |



GONE is the heroic fantasy role-playing game set in the Twilight Realms.

Role playing

A role-playing game is... a game. It is a leisure activity that brings people together to have fun. Unlike most board games, it is not based entirely on luck or strategy. Above all, it calls for imagination and cooperation. The basic assumption of a role-playing game is that the players actively participate in an imaginary adventure, each individual adopting a character to "act out". In general, from two to six or more players sit around a table. Presiding at the table is a rather special player usually called the gamemaster, who already knows the story that the other players are about to discover. Or rather, he knows the starting point, the main thread, and its principal elements of the story. For it is the players, through their decisions and their actions, who will be the main actors – carrying the story forward, and doubtless causing changes.

Maybe you have a favorite novel, or a comic-book story or a film, and you have imagined yourself in the hero's shoes, in the same universe, faced with the same situations and confronting the same adversaries. Didn't you ever wonder: If I'd been Luke Skywalker what would I have done to stop Vader from killing Obi-Wan? Or if I'd been Frodo, could I have discovered a better way to escape from the black riders of Mordor? And what if I'd been Gandalf?

Role-playing games allow you to do just that. The story told by the gamemaster is a pretext, allowing you to enjoy extraordinary adventures with your friends, without even walking out your front door.

Now you can take on the identity of another individual, perhaps one you've dreamed of, or maybe one that just sounds fun. You will make up their name, their occupations, and their past. What are his or her attributes? Is he strong, clever or mysterious? Does she live quietly with her family in a beautiful mansion or roam the country like a vagabond, taking each day as it comes?

The choices made will affect the actions your character is likely to make within the context of the story. If she is strong, she won't hesitate attacking that band of brigands who just burst into the inn – whereas if she's clever, perhaps she'll sneak out that open window and take their horses.

So the gamemaster's story will change, and for the better! That's the way the game works. It is an interactive scenario. A role-playing game will also supply you with a description of its universe, the places and creatures that make up its world, and a set of playing rules. Since these rules are concerned with simulating action and effect, they are often called game mechanics. In reality, who can say for sure that you're going to be able to knock that brigand flat with one well-aimed blow, or if his friends are going to have no problems ganging-up and immobilizing you? What if that window is locked? You can't sneak out, so what are you going to do?

I have been on a very long journey... I have a tale to tell you. Let me see... where should I begin?

Years of ceaseless travel have taken me across the many landscapes of Harmundia. Her deep forests, her enclosed valleys, her windswept riverbanks and her gigantic cities! I have followed the sprite caravans, I have seen the giants in combat and I have placed my very life in peril by taking lodgings in the Black Tower of a medusa...

I have glimpsed a unicorn!

And I have escaped the dragon's breath! Oft-times I believed myself dead. Yet, through all these ordeals, I never gave up hope.

I was certain that one day I would find a confidante to whom I could leave this work; a man or a woman, a master, a higher being, someone who could be entrusted with the findings of my quest.

The life's work of an Eminence Grise consigned to a book.

That life's work is what you now hold in your hands. The mice have nibbled at it in the darkness of my resting places.

It has been drenched by rain. It has been lost a dozen times in the Modehan forests and in the ravines of the Horns. It has been found again, ripped and torn; the pages scattered, re-assembled and always re-written, corrected, and augmented with my newest findings.

I know this heavy tome like I know my heart.

I once even re-wrote it entirely from memory after it was stolen. I now entrust it to you.

It contains all that I could learn of the Twilight Realms and of the threat that weighs so heavy upon them. It holds all that I could glean about the Muses' successors, the Inspired, and of this enemy of theirs who surges forth from the ends of time – the Masque.

It is the sole written evidence of a secret war eating at our world. It is the standard-bearer for the new heroes, the cornerstone of their sanctuary, the lectern of their schooling; it is the weapon of their combat.

Open it... and fear its revelations.





"What do you do?" is role-playing's magic phrase. It is the gamemaster's invitation to the players to decide their own paths in the story. The players describe what they would like to do. The gamemaster may then ask the players to roll dice to help evaluate the quality of their actions with regards to their character's abilities. Using the rules, he will then judge the success or failure of their actions.

And above all, the gamemaster - along with all the other players - makes sure that the game is exciting, that the fortunes of all are on an even footing, and that everybody has a good time.

Heroic Fantasy

You can roleplay within all kinds of universes. Frontier life in the Old West, science fiction and the exploration of far-off planets, horror and the struggle against demonic monsters...

You can even play at being a creature of the dark side, a vampire or an immortal. The adventure may take place within the world as it is today, or at a time in the distant past, or in a world completely different from the one we know.

AGONE offers a game world of heroic fantasy. It takes place in a universe of medieval fantasy - one of myths & legends, King Arthur's court, fairytales. It is an incredibly rich and detailed world, with countries, peoples - human and otherwise - languages, history, myths, religions, etc.

In these far-off countries, extraordinary creatures such as sprites and dragons really exist, powerful sorcerers conjure in the leafy shadows around forest-

bound megaliths, great treasures lie in inaccessible hiding-places, and brave heroes go on quests, ready to surmount obstacles and decipher symbols strewn along their rites of passage.

The keywords in heroic fantasy are : dreams, adventure, journey, escape, and wonder.

The Twilight Realms

AGONE presents a gameworld called Harmundia, a world made up of different countries, which together form the Twilight Realms. AGONE is not an ordinary role-playing game. By portraying the exploits and dangers Harmundia holds in store, you'll touch upon strong themes that are going to keep the players busy. These main themes are :

Exception : The heroes that the players embody are exceptional beings, more gifted than the other inhabitants of Harmundia. They hold lofty positions, carry out important duties, and their careers have been the proving grounds of their qualities. In their fields of specialty, they are among the best.

Art and Inspiration : The heroes are exceptional because they are in possession of something that ordinary mortals just don't have. They have a gift from the Muses, the mythical creators of this world. It is called the Flame. The Flame augments their skills and gives them access to an extraordinary kind of magic based on the fine arts : the Magical Arts. The heroes (the players) are called the "Inspired".

♣ **War and Resistance** : The Masque, a powerful and deceitful enemy, has re-emerged from the ends of time, bent on the total domination of the Twilight Realms. The Inspired represent the only hope for counter-attack, but they cannot make themselves known publicly. They are going to have to discover their strengths and abilities, and even fight, in secret, before coming together to form a covert army of resistance.

♣ **Alliance of Sword and Sorcery** : The magicians and the nobility have long opposed each other. However, since Agone of Roundrock's victory thirty years ago, they know that they must be allies. Therefore, if they ever hope to hold the threat at bay, the heroes must understand the interests of these two factions and, maybe, find a common ground. There are many magical disciplines. To begin with there are the four Magical Arts – each of which can be employed in either its Elder or Free form. Then comes the magic of Ascendancy, divided into three obediences, which consists of manipulating small creatures called Dancers in order to cast spells. Lastly, there are some dangerous individuals who go around Invoking demons.

♣ **Cosmopolitanism and Exoticism** : There are many different inhabitants of Harmundia. There are eleven countries containing some weird and dangerous regions. People often travel, and although some countries have diplomatic problems, within the major cities you will come across creatures from far and wide. The result is that you will not just meet humans, there are also nine other species of intelligent life : sprites, spriggans, ogres, satyrs, giants, minotaurs, black feys, dwarves, and medusae. These creatures have been spawned by the seasons and are therefore called seasonlings. All live side-by-side. In addition, the Harmundian outlands teem with fabulous life forms, of which the rarest – called Prodigies and Wonders – are also the most ancient and powerful.

Playing AGONE

In AGONE the player-characters are called the Inspired. They are outstanding individuals who already have great careers behind them. They were not expecting anything more from life until the instant they learned they held a gift of magic, from the time of myths – the Muses' Flame. This power allowed them to become noteworthy personalities in the Twilight Realms and experts in their chosen fields. Now they are the ultimate hope to thwart the menace of eternal Night and restore Harmony.

In AGONE, the gamemaster is called the "Eminence Grise", or EG. She knows the truth about the Inspired's adversaries, the Masque and the Darken. She knows all Harmundia's secrets and is able to direct the adventures of the Inspired. Behind the scenes of the Drama, she pulls the strings, yet remains impartial.

The stories in which the Inspired take part are called Dramas. They can be official published scenarios or com-

pletely invented by the Eminence Grise. They place the Inspired in the grips of the Masque's skullduggery, in confrontation with the demonic forces of the Darken, on the trail of lost secrets and buried treasure, in the midst of an intrigue or battle between powerful citizens, schools of magic, seasonlings etc. All the other characters that the players may meet in the Drama are called Non-player characters – or "NPCs". An NPC may be a friend or an enemy, an ally or a traitor, and is portrayed by the Eminence Grise.

The four Books of AGONE

AGONE is a compendium of information written by an eminence grise, an individual who is both spy and counselor of the powerful, and who presents you with the fruits of his investigations concerning the Inspired, the Masque and the secret war that exists between them in Harmundia.

He presents each chapter and will occasionally give you his opinion on things.

• The Book of Harmundia (EG only for Chapter 1, EG and the players for the rest)

This section describes the genesis of Harmundia, recounts the mythical tales of its origins, and explains the reasons for the war, which is only in its infancy. It recounts the history of the different realms and seasonling races, and describes them in detail.

• The Book of the Inspired (EG and players)

This section explains the Inspired. It provides rules for the creation of characters, human or seasonling, and also gives you some ready-to-play character archetypes.

• The Book of the Drama (EG and players)

This section describes general game mechanics and the rules of combat. It describes equipment and all the forms of magic. Finally a chapter explains how characters can gain experience and how the Inspired can progress.

• The Book of Intrigues (EG only)

This section reveals the enemies of the Inspired, a cursed alliance of the Darken and the Masque. It also gives numerous pointers and words of advice for the game, and finishes with a long scenario, a first Drama, with which you may begin play.

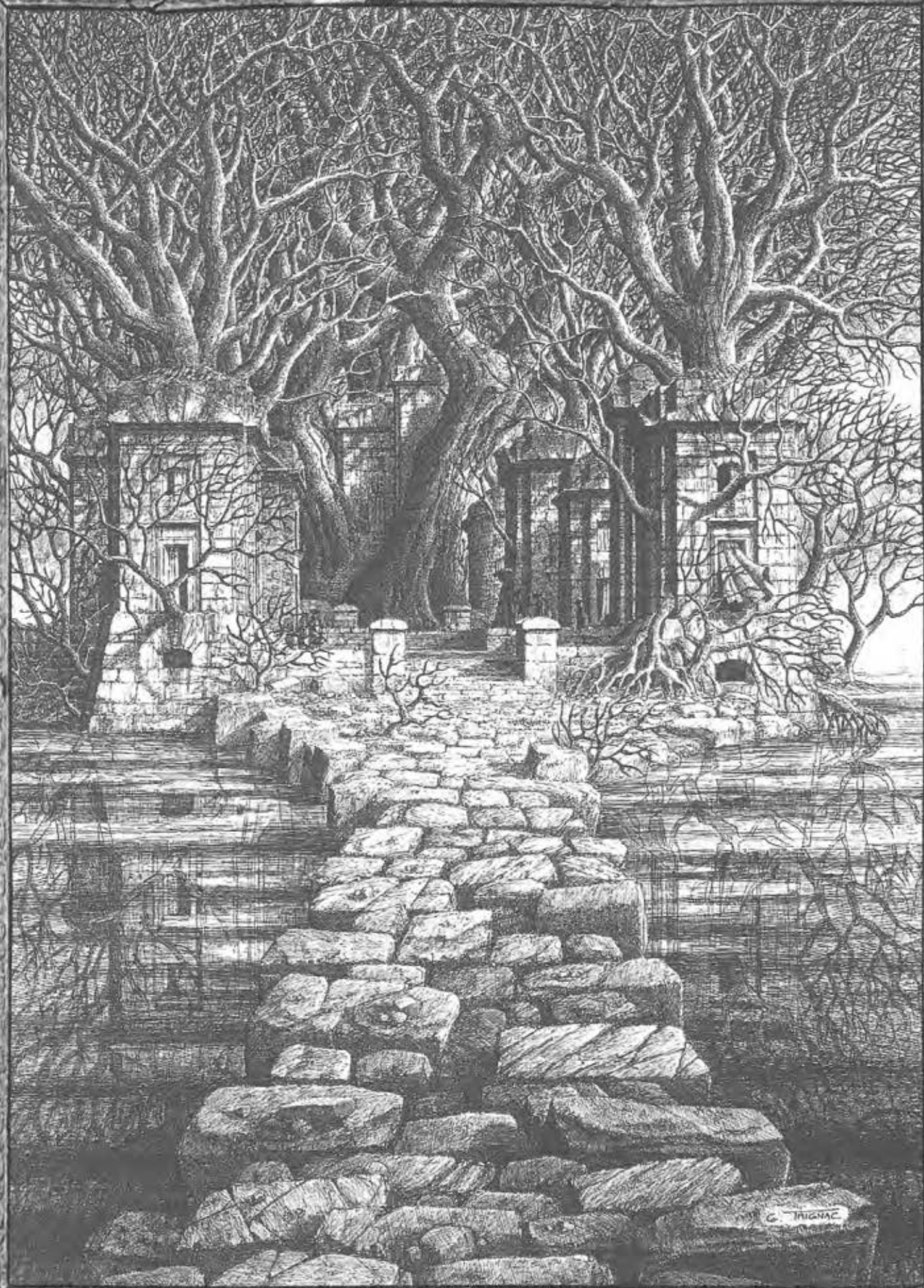
The Appendices contain a few bits of information about animals and travels, a glossary and a character sheet.

May the Muses protect you...

The Book of Harmundia



BOOK ONE



G. MIGNAC



Of course, I know, like all the others of my caste, that the immensity of Harmundia hid a thousand wonders. But what are mere writings and engravings in books, compared to the dawn sunrise as it reveals the true majesty of this land?

I have traveled the entire continent from coast to coast, crossed endless snows, and survived merciless heat, but I would never pretend to know all its secrets. This is a world that exists on many levels, you see. A realm is made up of regions; a given area is divided into different domains. A forest has its clearings, a manor its cellars, and the cities... By Chisella, such proud cities, and built by mortal hands!

Infinite is the path across this land if you wish to spend your life moving along it; infinite are the great works that the people construct, raze, and rebuild; infinite is the horizon that lies across these Twilight Realms. It is perhaps this sense of wonder that persuaded me, long ago, to volunteer my services in the fight against the Enemy, to do battle with the Night. We cannot let this world disappear, do you understand?

Oh, you will come to realize all this for yourself, soon enough. Come closer and pay attention.

I am about to relate what I have seen in Harmundia, and what I have learned concerning its origins.

One fine morning, I left the shade of the Black Tree and made my way eastwards, guided only by a flight of birds and the desire to see the towers of Lorgol with my own eyes...

1 ~ Genesis

The Dawn of Time

THE MUSES



In the beginning were the Muses. They appeared in the pit of emptiness, they broke away from the stars glittering in the void, and they drew together. There were four of them: Orfeya, Chisella, Nuence and Stanza. They were eternal and their essence was creation.

But no creation was yet born. The Muses wandered, leaving nothing but the wake of their passing. Within them slept the future – desire, life, time, enchantment – a future that had yet to awaken.

Their gazes met, and each one could read in the others' eyes the promise of a world to be created, a world that would be the realization of their most profound aspirations. For this they would have to unite. A world created by any one of them alone could only be imperfect, whereas their alliance would produce the masterpiece. Together the Muses could give birth to a world that would be both enchanted and enchanting.

HARMONY

Thus did Orfeya, Chisella, Nuence and Stanza begin the most graceful of movements, designing patterns that were ever bolder, ever more fertile. Labyrinthine shapes meandered along their diaphanous bodies and their eyes shone with the fire of the distant stars. Outlines of worlds that would never exist sparkled in Chisella's hands. Nuence fished wild colors from the depths of nothingness and brandished them before her sisters' eyes. Songs that no one could ever hear tripped

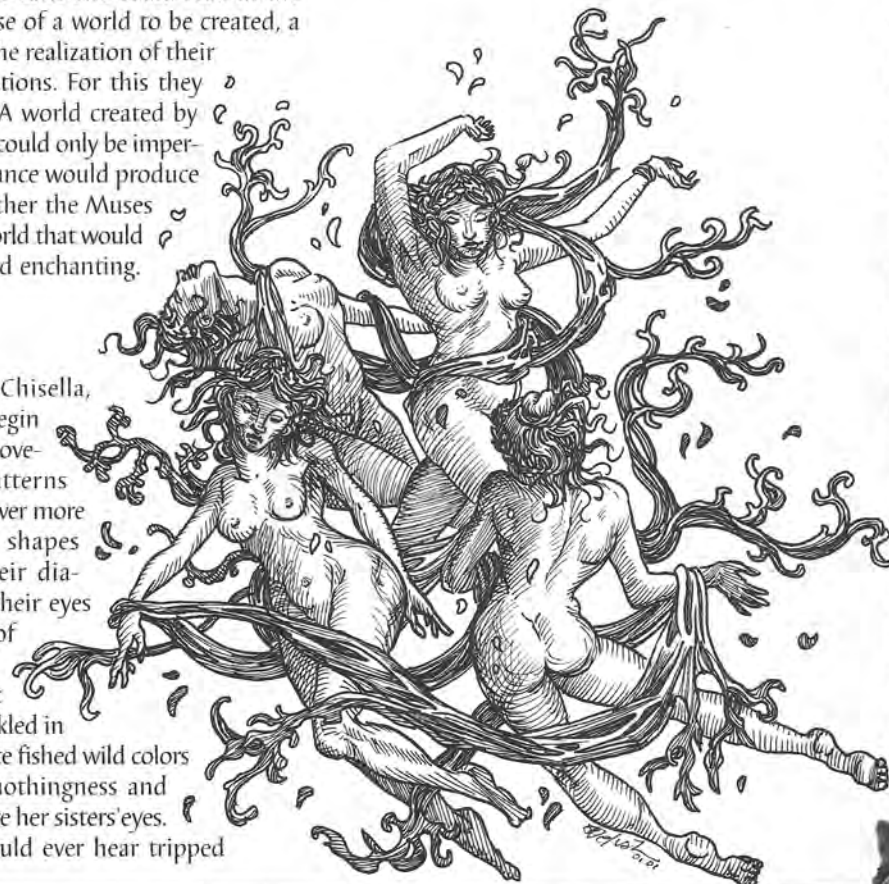
lightly on Orfeya's lips. Stanza observed and ordered the actions of the other Muses, and told their stories as events unfolded. Little by little, the contours and colors, the sounds and movement of their creation grew from the center of their dance.

The four Eternals formed Harmony. It was almost playfulness, but their game would orchestrate an entire universe.

From basic matter, rough-hewn shapes, delicate tracings, and finally, through the power of Chisella, living beings were formed to travel through the lands she had fashioned.

There were colors, spreading to infinity, changing in the starlight, and all the sparkling reflections in those colors owed Nuence their due.

There was wind in the leaves, waves crashing on rocks, and by the grace of Orfeya, sound became melody, the slightest noise transformed into wonderful music.



There was motion, the movement of matter and the actions of the living; Stanza began to relate all their stories.

This world would have a history, to be embellished if possible, and it was to be given an unforgettable legacy.

Time began to unravel and the first day dawned.

When all was finished, the Muses stopped to contemplate their work. They understood that, for the first time, their magic had begotten a waypoint in the void, an enchanted harbor in the middle of nowhere, where their future children could live and dwell. They wanted their creation to be like themselves, and they wanted its inhabitants to cultivate the same harmony that had governed their own alliance.

Thus did the Muses descend upon the land they had dragged from nothingness, and thus did they name it Harmundia.

THE QUEST FOR ULTIMATE PERFECTION

The Muses danced in their new world, rejoicing in its slightest details, and, beneath their feet, nature bloomed in all her splendor without cease. Animals and plants, living beings and inert matter, rejoiced together in a celebration of their creators, who had endowed them with their gifts.

The Muses' dance soon revealed incompleteness in their work.

They sensed that through the beauty of this universe, they were in fact seeking each other. Each one of the Muses felt the calling to join with the others, and thus establish total harmony. Through their fusion, they could attain completeness. The harmony that had allowed the creation of Harmundia could now serve the Muses themselves, absorbing them in their own dream, closing the perfect circle.

And so they met, in a pearl of splendor in the heart of Harmundia, forming around them the most fabulous site imaginable. Once in their trance, they left their bodies and embarked upon the quest for Ultimate Perfection. They followed the many paths of the world, their reflections pervaded the innermost recesses of its surface, in order to discover each other and share visions.

In their wake, they left a trail of creatures, each kind progressively closer to Perfection.

Thus appeared the mythical creatures of Harmundia: the Prodigies, powerful and imperious, who became the Muses' escorts (such as the Dragons), and the Wonders, charged with tending the enchanted places where the Muses chose to rest (such as the Sirens). These resting places were called Perfections.

When the Muses thought they had gathered together all the separate beauty of Harmundia,

they performed the ritual of Ultimate Perfection. This did not produce a fusion, but instead engendered a new Muse, endowed with the combined talents of the first four. This mixture of the shades of Chisella, Orfeya, Nuence and Stanza gave birth to a new creature; eternal like themselves but a creature apart that considered itself to be the successful result of the quest for the Ultimate Perfection.

This being rebelled against the Muses. His deepest instinct was manipulation. He decided to become the master of all the glories that had come together in the ritual, to dominate the living creatures, the Prodigies and the Wonders, and to reign over Harmundia for his own benefit.

He conceived the idea of the world as a theatre, wherein each actor was his puppet. And as his spirit was cunning, he revealed nothing to the Muses of his true nature, or of his plan. He became the Masque. The Drama had begun.

The Zenith

Had the Quest for Ultimate Perfection failed or was the Masque indeed its true incarnation?

The Muses themselves could not say. They decided to wait and see how the Masque would behave in their universe of life and magic. Like them, the Masque possessed the power to create Eternals. He decided to surround himself with other entities to help him realize his plan for domination: he brought forth the Day and the Night to set the scene for the Drama. Their parts were played by two beings: Nyx, Eternal of the Night, and Diurn, Eternal of the Day.

DIURN

The light of the sun flooded Harmundia and Diurn was born at the sun's zenith, at the point when the glare of the star was strongest. Quickly he gathered about himself a devoted following, the Glimmers. They were his alone, creatures of pure light that spread upon the surface of the world. The Muses saw something they liked in Diurn, something that made their creations magnificent in the daylight, and they were drawn to him.

NYX

Then the sun sank to the horizon, and the shadows grew, stretching out over Harmundia. Ever since then, they have never completely disappeared. They went down into the earth, where they wove into the depths and dug themselves a dark place, the Abyss, from whence they returned each night, to win more terrain.

At that time, the Masque's influence began to weigh more heavily upon Nyx, for the Masque was envious of the shadows' ability to dissemble and conceal. Driven by the Masque, Nyx changed his identity: he transformed into the Darken. Together they created the Darkness – the stuff of evil. The Darkness grew and developed in the depths of the Abyss. Then the demons appeared, born of the Darkness. Nyx, who was now the Darken, journeyed through the Abyss, creating and appointing demons of many levels.

The demons and the Glimmers, like Diurn and Nyx, were bound by their respective cycles of Day and Night. They waxed and waned periodically, according to the changes within the cycles. But because of the Darkness in the Abyss, the demons were no longer forced to disappear and were able to survive beyond the limitations of their cycle.

MANKIND

The Masque's projects, however, were not yet finished. The Drama could only be complete when life forms became available that were both intelligent and easy to manipulate.

The demons were not entirely appropriate for this role because they were born of the Darkness, the evil plasma of the Darken, so the Masque traveled Harmundia and, beneath the wary gaze of the Muses, gave shape to humankind.

Humanity was thus thrown into the heart of the Masque's project from the very start. Mankind would be the centerpiece of the Drama, the Masque's favorite toy.

JANUS

The Muses were worried by the Masque's activities, so they decided to intervene. They united, and created Janus. Janus was an Eternal whose task would be to regulate the alternation of Day and Night, and to keep an eye on the inhabitants of Harmundia, mortal or otherwise.

Janus was to become the sworn enemy of the Masque – the regulator versus the agitator. The Muses endowed Janus with immense power, which he manifested in the form of Sentences.

THE DECANS AND THE SEASONS

His first Sentence, the formulation of the Decans, was to bring order to the world, slicing time into sections and controlling the development of things. With the Muses' help, Janus entered into resonance with the stars and traced twelve Decans. Through the Decans, Janus would be able to express other Sentences periodically and watch over the Muses' work.

Harmundia had a natural reaction to this attempt at control. The Seasons awoke. Born of the chaotic

world, of life, they opposed order. They represented the freedom of nature, disorder, and faerie. Four mysterious women, each of whom possessed the attributes of her Season, embodied them: the Lady of Spring, the Lady of Summer, the Lady of Autumn and the Lady of Winter.

There was no regularity, at that time, to the succession and order of the Seasons. They traveled freely across the surface of the world. However, they did not directly rebel against Janus, and in the end, they accepted the conformity to the Decans imposed by the Master of Sentences.

THE SEASONLINGS

Within the warmth and protection of the Ladies, the children of the Seasons were born. They were Harmundia's first mortal beings to owe their birth neither to the Muses nor to the Masque. These were the seasonlings and there are as many kinds as there are Decans, that is to say twelve, three for each Season :

- ☞ Sprites, spriggans and satyrs for the Lady of Spring.
- ☞ Ogres, minotaurs and giants for the Lady of Summer.
- ☞ Pixies, draaken and morgana for the Lady of Autumn.
- ☞ Black feys, dwarves and medusae for the Lady of Winter.

The seasonlings are essentially uncontrollable, born from the freedom of the Seasons, and beyond the influence of the Muses, the Masque, Janus, the Darken, or Diurn.

THE DECAN WAR

The seasonlings turned out to be extremely turbulent, forced into competition with each other by the presence of the Decans. They began to fight between themselves, each faction struggling for the supremacy of its particular Season. Despite everything, the Seasons had no real authority over the seasonlings, and took no part in the war between their children. When the war was over, the Seasons managed to impose lasting equilibrium. One of the main consequences was the persistence of each Season during its three Decans. The seasonlings could henceforth live in lands where their preferred Season was predominant.

Meanwhile, mankind was beginning to take on more importance in Harmundia. Guided discreetly by the Masque, man moved into larger and larger territories, building cities and laying the way for future civilizations. In doing so, man upset the balance of the seasonlings' organization and forced them to gradually withdraw, wary and hostile, to their natural hideouts.

The Agony

THE WAR OF THE ETERNALS

The Masque was now supporting the Darken more and more openly, as he wished to control the demons of the Abyss and use them as weapons in his rise to power. The humans would be his pawns, the demons his army.

Janus, in his role of surveillance, reported all this to the Muses. Now they saw that they had lost mankind to the Masque, and decided that this future alliance with the demons of the Abyss would give him too much power. They called upon Janus to help them form an alliance with Diurn and rectify the imbalance.

From that moment onward, the Muses ceased to be mere spectators of their work, and they conceived a new ideal. The aim of Harmony would henceforth be Inspiration. This would be a means of re-tying the knot, linking Harmundia's life forms with their four creators. Through Inspiration, they could take humanity out from under the Masque's control. The Muses contacted Diurn and asked him for the Glimmers' help. Diurn wanted his people to thrive (just as the demons had thrived in their Darkness), so he accepted.

The Masque's reaction was far more violent than the Muses imagined. War blazed in Harmundia. On one side were Diurn's Glimmers and the humans faithful to the Muses. Confronting them were the demons and the humans controlled by the Masque. The seasonlings adopted wary neutrality, except for a few mercenary groups that made pacts with one side or the other.

The destruction was terrible: chaos left the realm of the Seasons for the first time and spread upon the world. The elements – so

patiently organized by the Muses to form Harmundia – devastated the landscape and submerged the opposing sides. Mortals fought immortals in gigantic battles, spilling blood and wasting the energies of the Day and the Darkness. The Muses took up arms themselves, sowing destruction, whilst the Masque strove to bring death to the hearts of his four elder sisters.

THE SPIRITCORE

The black alliance between the Masque and the Darken soon dominated. The Muses – weak, wounded and haggard – were in grave peril. They were in a state called the Agony. They knew they would have to leave Harmundia, even though they had created it themselves as a place of peace and beauty. They chose to make a last attempt to regain control over mankind and guarantee their future return. The ritual of the Inspiration would have a new form – brutal, rapid and final. The Muses persuaded Diurn to help them. But they tricked Diurn so that he would not understand his true participation in the ritual. They took his energy. Through this sacrifice, Diurn's substance would become the receptacle and the vector of Inspiration. With this substance, they could shape their future avatars and would be able to manifest themselves.

The Muses created the Flames.

The Flames were the result of combining the Muses' magic with Diurn's essential substance. The Flames were let forth on Harmundia in a huge explosive surge, greater than anything known since the world had begun. Their sudden appearance provoked the birth of the Spiritcore, a spiritual domain radiating out to the world and mankind. Each and every human became Inspired, endowed with a Flame whose hearth would forever be the Spiritcore.

The Masque and the forces of the Darken were knocked back by this great fire. Mankind escaped the unhealthy influence of the Master of Sham, and the demons ran yelping and squealing back to the Abyss.

At the end of this war, Diurn – as the result of his sacrifice – was reduced to a shadow of his former self, a sad man-child stripped of his original powers. Yet, being of Eternal inheritance, he did not die.

The Glimmers had paid a heavy price on the battlefield, and those remaining left Harmundia, the protective mantle of Janus guarding them from the forces of the Darken.

The Flamboyance

This was the start of the great period known as the Flamboyance. Mankind was inspired, the seasonlings lived in peace, and Harmundia was enveloped in the Muses' aura. It was a fabulous time of creation. Mortal hands created works of astounding beauty derived from the Muses and their teachings. It can be said that the Muses lived on within the hearts of the authors of these works. Today, few examples remain of this time, such as the Thousand Towers of Lorgol.

During this period, when humans died, their Flames left their bodies and were transformed into spirits called Luminaries, which returned to the Spiritcore before descending upon the world again to inspire other humans. As the rates of birth and death differed, some humans had no Flame. They were called the Dullen, but they were not cast out or despised by the Inspired, who shared their Inspiration with everyone.

Many mythical heroes appeared during these glorious times, charismatic prophets and outstanding chieftains, who can now be found in the traditions, legends and rituals of Harmundia's inhabitants. With time, people's remembrances of these beings changed, and the Luminaries were sometimes considered divine entities.

Now that the Muses had gone and the Masque had been vanquished by the Flamboyance, Janus was the last of the Eternals on front stage, the lone master of the world, and at last given his definitive mission: regulation. He decided to punish Diurn and the Darken, as accomplices in the dramatic events that had led to the war, and the puppets of the Great Manipulator, the Masque. He imprisoned them both. The Darken was consigned to the Abyss, in the company of his demons. Janus made a special hidden spherical prison for Diurn, called the Orb. The Orb's place of concealment was later to become known by members of the Borrowlight School as the Pit, the school being built upon the same site many centuries later.

Following this double imprisonment, the principles that Nyx and Diurn represented remained alive: Day and Night continued on the surface of Harmundia, and have alternated ever since. The cycle continues without need of physical embodiment by the two Eternals.

Janus did nothing more, however, against the Masque. For Janus the Masque was taboo: he was after all, a fifth Muse, and if the other Muses had not refused to recognize this he would have even sworn allegiance to him. What's more, they were like two feuding brothers, and the driving principles behind their actions were so strongly opposed that any interference by either one was out of the question, as Harmundia itself would be placed in great danger. Because of this, Janus had no real power over the Masque, who – after fleeing from crushing defeat in the Flamboyance – sought vengeance by repossessing the inspired humans.

The Eclipse

And vengeance he would soon find. He traveled Harmundia in secret, hiding behind a cape and a black

velvet mask. Not only the art of disguise, but also the capacity for true physical transformation became his as he observed and learned during his journey. He was able to change his size, his appearance, his apparent age, and he became better and better at it, until he was able to master the changeling art. He crossed all latitudes, lingering near the Perfections, spying upon the seasonlings, and discovering at last the means by which to wreak vengeance on Janus and the Muses. He managed to uncover the natural sanctuaries where the Ladies of the Seasons gently rested, and he chose one to seduce.

He set his heart on Autumn. He made her many promises: her season would last for ever once he was re-instated in power over Harmundia, and she would no longer have to make way for her three sisters in the annual cycle. The Masque's words and aura seemed close to her heart and so she accepted.

The Masque took her and ordered her to deploy all her power over the world. The sky and the leaves on the trees turned to golden brown, the wind rose and all became cold. The pact of the Decans, allowing each seasonling to live in its chosen season, was broken. Terrorized into leaving their territories, the other Ladies of the Seasons retreated.

The Masque used Autumn to place a veil over the Spiritcore and a mask over Harmundia. He lent her his cape, which stretched out over the heavens like a great curtain. This was the Eclipse.

The veil of autumn caused a break in contact between mankind and the Spiritcore. The return cycle was broken; Flames could no longer leave the dead and return to the hearts of newborns.

The Masque had succeeded in cutting off the Muses' heritage of Inspiration.

DANCERS, LUMINARIES AND GHOSTS

This interruption had huge repercussions. The Flames split into three parts, according to the three basic elements of the creation ritual: the Muses, Diurn and man. The Flames, unable to pursue the normal course of their cycle, went different ways. They gave birth to the Dancers, tiny beings made of Diurn's vital essence. These creatures can be found today, and they possess some particularly astonishing characteristics that give them a primary role in a magical discipline called Ascendancy. All Dancers in existence today, or having existed in the past, were born at the moment of the Eclipse. There have never been any others.

At that time also, Inspired humans whose Flames had evolved to the highest level were called Luminaries. Now, at the moment of their physical death, they were unable to attain the Spiritcore and were forced to wander Harmundia.

Thirdly, the Dullen – the non-inspired humans – became much more numerous, since the Flame could no longer return from the Spiritcore. These individuals could not become Luminaries. On the other hand, at the moment of death, if their lives had been exceptional and deserving of a greater memory, they could metamorphose into Ghosts, phantom-like beings made from the plasma of human memory.

The Muses, desiring to perpetuate themselves in the Flame, found that they had been fragmented, broken up and redistributed among the Flames in the hearts of the Inspired, the Wandering Luminaries, and the Spiritcore, isolated from Harmundia.

SHARD

The crystallization of the Muses' aura at this time of great rupture also established magic on Harmundia. Up until then, mortals had not used magic. In the time of the Muses, they had been endowed with the particular powers and talents the Muses wished to cede them, and they had used the Inspiration to conceive grandiose and enchanted works, called Opuses. From the moment of the Eclipse, the Muses' aura of Inspiration was suddenly freed all over the world, materializing in the form of a crystalline substance called Shard. The Remains of the Flamboyance are entirely made up of Shard, or at least contain a certain quantity.

Shard is the base matter for mortal magic.

The Twilight

Because the Muses had sacrificed Diurn, the Day was decrepit, worn-out, too weak to resist another attack like the one made by Autumn and the Masque. Ever since, Harmundia has existed in a kind of permanent twilight, a subtle autumn half-light against which the Seasons have to fight in order to survive. This was the end of the Flamboyance, the end of worldwide Inspiration. Autumn has ever since been considered an accursed season. It became "Fall", and the three races of seasonlings from her Decans were cursed. These three Fallen races – pixies, draaken and morgana – have become the agents of the Masque.

But, above all, the Masque had gained a victory and laid the way for his revenge, and his return to power. Because of the Eclipse, when the last Inspired men died, their Flames could not return to the Spiritcore: they became diluted in the planet's atmosphere or wandered in the form of a Luminary. The Flames would burn themselves out and one day the Muses might finally die.

The age of Twilight had begun.

THE PACT OF JANUS WITH THE SEASONS

Janus had to do something about the Eclipse, which was an attack on his role as regulator, and upset the balance he was supposed to maintain. This slow death of the Muses could not be allowed to take place. Equilibrium had to be re-established among the Eternals, the domination of one single Season had to be corrected, and Harmundia had to be reconciled with the Inspiration. Perfection had to be given another chance.

He paid a visit to the three Ladies of the Seasons, whom he found curled up in their shelters. He knew that it would be hard to approach them, for they had been sorely wounded by Autumn's treachery.

However, he was able to talk with them, and he suggested a treaty. A way of perpetuating the Inspiration needed to be found, to provide time to link the world back up with the Spiritcore. He asked them to help with the preservation and future transmission of the Flame. In exchange, Janus proposed a Sentence which would impose a new annual cycle of Decans: the year would have ten months, three for Winter, three for Spring, three for Summer, and one for Autumn (it being impossible for Janus to totally obliterate the Fallen Season.) In principle, any single treacherous Season that tried to have domination over the others was in contradiction of the Sentence and would have to face Janus directly.

But the Seasons were willful, and although the Sentence was accepted (after endless discussion) they proved to be more demanding than Janus had foreseen. Their main demand was for the Flame – and thus Inspiration – to become available to their seasonlings. Their reasoning was based not just on their will to protect their seasonlings against the Masque's attacks, but also on their personal desire for a continued existence through their children.

Janus bowed to their demands. The Seasons concealed themselves within a special art form called Pictureworlds, to escape any future seduction and capture by the Masque.

Janus designated nine seasonlings, one from each kind, to form the Council of Decans. Their mission: to watch over the Inspired at the time of their passing; to recover their Flame; and to pass it on to the Inspired-to-be, whether human or seasonling. Janus allowed access to the Flames and passed on knowledge of control of the Flame, its means of transport, etc.

The fact that there were now Inspired seasonlings also turned out to be a major advantage against the Masque, due to their chaotic nature. Only Janus would designate those considered apt to receive the Flame in future.

The Masque's plot was thwarted, but war began again, a new and secret struggle, between the Ins-

pired – striving to keep the Flames, in order to one day resuscitate the Muses – and the Masque, bent on possession of all mortals.

THE ARTS

The Eternals left the stage, leaving mortals to live and prosper as they pleased. People's memories of the Muses and the Masque began to fade. Memories of the Flamboyance only survived because of the heroes it had created, and because of the remains dotting Harmundia.

In some places, Dancers or Shard caused magical effects that certain people were able to understand and master. In particular, the recently Inspired – those who had inherited their Flame from the Council of Decans – did not forget their mission. They began a quest for the Muses, to uphold their memory and speed their return. They knew that the key to victory was hidden beyond the Twilight's veil – the Spiritcore.

The Inspired set to work creating the Magical Arts, whose rituals involved the release of their Flame-given powers through fine arts. Beyond this, the arts were a means of building a sort of metaphysical temple to the Muses, helping in the creation of a pantheon for the Luminaries and re-establishing the connection between the Spiritcore and Harmundia.

Unfortunately for the children of the Muses, with the passage of time, the best among them have become Luminaries, and as a result fewer and fewer Flames become available for transmission despite the fact that the threat has never gone away...

THE BORROWLIGHT TREE

The Eternals had retreated, like Janus, or run from the light, like the Masque, but they never completely left the stage. The Masque had not given up his quest for power, and his sly trickery continued everywhere.

Janus became the Seeing Eye of the Moon, all the better to keep a close watch on the world's fragile equilibrium. He foresaw that the Masque would try to kill Diurn as punishment for his treason. So he kept good watch on the Orb that imprisoned Diurn. One day though, the Masque, by a powerful throw of his dagger, managed to break the Orb. A strange alchemy occurred : Diurn's release liberated the last embers of his lost power, they tore through the bottom of the Pit and took root in the earth, joining

up with the abyssal domain of the Darken. A great black tree grew there, engorged with Darkness and yet linked with Diurn. Thus, the Borrowlight Tree was born.

Janus now worked towards generating a new age of Flamboyance that would be based on an alliance between Diurn and the Darken. He whispered to Diurn to found a school: the Borrowlight School, where the Darken would reign beneath the eyes of Diurn himself.

But from this School neither could leave, so as not to repeat the errors of the past. In this school, Diurn undertook the teaching. His students would be called "eminences grise" and they would be his spies. They would report on the actions of those who held sway in the realms, at the same time allowing Janus to control and regulate the affairs of mortals and to pronounce his Sentences.

Then, when the eminences came to be sufficiently numerous, Borrowlight trees could be sown all over Harmundia, ushering in a new era of Harmony under his command. To achieve this, Janus would need to have someone sent to the Borrowlight School, becoming Diurn's student and heir. That person would be able to leave the School, sow the seeds of the Borrowlight trees and command the eminences throughout Harmundia.

That person was Agone of Roundrock. More detail about his life and times are to be found in Chapter 2.

THE PRESENT DAY: TOWARDS ETERNAL NIGHT

The Masque is infiltrating individuals, countries, courts of the aristocracy, and corporations.

He is winning new support and his influence is spreading. When the Twilight is complete, he will have achieved his aims. The old alliance is still very much alive and the Darken will empower his return by lending him the demon hordes.

The Masque is using Nyx and the Twilight to hide his actions from mankind's eyes, to dominate Harmundia and to reign as master over all mortals.

The Masque intercepts and snuffs out the Flames that prevent him from ruling. Today only one thousand and one Flames exist.

As predicted by the eminences, war is again scorching the earth of the Twilight Realms. A treacherous war in which the participants are few, but all mortals are victims. Luckily, the Muses left heirs, carriers of the promise of a free world : You.

The stake : Flamboyance or eternal Night.

CHRONOLOGY

The Dawn of Time
 The Four Muses create Harmundia:
 Harmony
 The Quest for Ultimate Perfection
 Creation of the Perfections, Prodigies
 and Wonders
 Creation of the Masque
 The Drama begins

The Zenith
 The Masque begets the Day (Diurn),
 and the Night (Nyx)
 Diurn creates the Glimmers
 The Abyss is born
 Nyx, under the influence of the Masque,
 becomes the Darken; demons are born
 within the Darkness
 The Masque begets mankind
 The Muses create Janus
 The Seasons appear – they beget
 the seasonlings
 Janus creates the Decans
 The Decan War
 The Seasonlings Pact
 Proliferation of mankind

The Agony
 The War of the Eternals
 The Ritual of Inspiration
 The Muses create the Flames
 Sacrifice of Diurn
 Emergence of the Spiritcore
 Departure of the Glimmers

-3000 The Flamboyance
 Janus consigns the Darken to the Abyss and
 Diurn to the Orb
 Flight of the Masque

Year 1 The Eclipse
 The Masque seduces the Lady of Autumn
 in order to veil the Spiritcore
 First appearance of Dancers, Luminaries,
 and Ghosts
 The Muses break up into the Flames
 9 Janus enters into a pact with the Seasons
 The Council of Decans is formed
 Harmony is fossilized in Shard
 Retreat of the Eternals

The Twilight
 30 30 Foundation of Ascendancy
 and the Cipher-sorcerer
 300-350 Invention of the Magical Arts
 1299 Borrowlight School is founded
 Janus recruits Diurn
 1410 Agone of Roundrock arrives
 at Borrowlight School
 1450 The present day: towards Eternal Night



From Flamboyance to Twilight

he kingdoms destined to become the setting for the adventures of AGONE were begotten in the blood and tears of fratricidal power struggles. These wars split the continent's three empires into nation states called the Flamboyant Empires. Their borders fluctuated as the years passed. During the magical cataclysm that provoked the birth of the Dancers, they took the name of the "Twilight Realms". Their stories stretch over several centuries, and here we shall only cover the key events in their national history.

2 ~ History

The Flamboyant Empires

At first, Harmundia was made up of three original empires. The first two, Moden-Hen' and the Septentrion Empire both split into kingdoms during the Flamboyance. The third, Armgard, broke up during the first Age of Twilight.

MODEN-HEN'

This was not only the biggest and the wealthiest empire on the continent, but also the most fertile. Ancient legends tell of it taking several weeks for a Moden-Hen' citizen to cross its huge forests and even several months for a foreigner.

One day, a careless traveler, whispered of even today in Keshite tribal legend, discovered a sphere hewn into the bedrock of Harmundia, at the bottom of a crevasse. The legend tells of how the traveler unleashed a terrible fire into the Flamboyant Empires, a fire that had been enclosed in the sphere by the first Luminaries. Exploding from the rocky flaw that had held it prisoner, springing forth like a tornado of flame, this Primeval Fire spread through the fertile valleys of the Draaken mountains, razing everything in its path. Then, the legends speak of how this flood of fire abruptly ceased, leaving a few survivors in the heart of the Draaken mountains suddenly surrounded by an endless ocean of scorched earth: Keshe.

The central mountain range protected the southern part of the empire from this firestorm and the waves of suffocating smoke. The forest of Frabourg lost all but the last few king-trees - source of the famous Moden-Hen' craftsmanship. In the space of a century, as the Keshite tribes passed beyond what is now known as



their Heroic Age, this region turned into a microcosm of the previous Moden-Hen' Empire, becoming a confederacy of states known as the Modehan Marches.

The medusae, numerous in Moden-Hen', took refuge in the southeastern valleys of the empire.

With the help of the draaken that inhabited the surrounding mountains, they were able to protect themselves from the punishing attacks made by the Septentrion lords. They founded a country that has been contested by the other kingdoms right up to the present day – the Buccaneer Haven.

Having lost all contact with the Keshite tribes, the princes of the Septentrion city-states started to look toward primitive lands, long thought insignificant, to the north of the continent: Lyphan and the Wild Reaches. The ex-slaves that remained created the Princely Communes.

| CHRONOLOGY | |
|--|---|
| -3000 | The Flamboyance |
| -2000 | Primeval Fire/ Artem the Ardent's quest / creation of the Keshe desert |
| -1900 to -1800 | Keshite Heroic Age |
| -1700 | Creation of the Modehan Marches |
| -1500 | Creation of the Buccaneer Haven |
| -1400 | Birth of Lyphan |
| -1200 | First settlements in the Wild Reaches |
| -900 | Slave revolution: creation of the Princely Communes, Janus' pact with the seasons leads to the creation of the Decan Councils |
| 1 The Eclipse | |
| Beginning of the First Age | |
| 30 | Cipher-sorcerer founded: 1st Symposium |
| 150 | Persecution and flight of the Eclipsists |
| 300-350 | Creation of the Magical Arts |
| 990 | Death of Erkman XIX |
| 991 | Armgard Fratricide (war between the three sons of Erkman: Urgamand, Noven, and Janren) |
| 1001 | Assassination of Noven |
| 1004-1006 | Founding of the kingdoms of Urgamand and Janrenia, and of the Liturgical Province |
| Beginning of the Second Age | |
| 1007 | Opening of the Schools of Ascendancy – Rapid development and troubles |
| 1048 | 2 nd Symposium. The obediences split; Eclipsists, Jormists, Obscurantists The Great Wars; |
| 1062 | Lyphan rises against the Princely Communes |
| 1100 | Founding of the Mercenary Republic |
| 1140 | Keshite assaults against the Medusae |
| 1161 | Founding of the Widowlands |
| Beginning of the Third Age | |
| 1250 | The 3 rd Symposium, also known as the Confinement Symposium |
| 1299 | Borrowlight School founded |
| 1302-1306 | Eminences appear in the realms |
| 1410 | Death of Erdhence of Roundrock. Agone at the Borrowlight School. Destruction of the Borrowlight |
| 1413 | Urgamand war led by Agone |
| 1415 | Agone becomes First Baron of Urgamand |
| Beginning of the Fourth Age (present day) | |
| 1450 | Inspired receive warnings from the eminences following infiltration by the Masque |

The Twilight Realms

The aldermen of the School of Cipher-sorcery trace the history of the Twilight Realms back to the moment their Dancers appeared, closely followed by the first Symposium, which laid the foundations for their assembly. From this point, they have divided history into four Ages. Dating the Eclipse as Year 1, they consider this moment the point where the Flamboyant Empires lost their sparkle and became the Twilight Realms.

THE FIRST AGE

♣ Birth of an Order

The precedent-setting First Symposium of Cipher-sorcery was followed by a series of atrocities and power struggles, not only within the order itself, but also between the mages and the lords of the Twilight Realms. Even in its infancy, many state leaders and monarchs fervently sought the destruction of the Order. The mages were imprisoned and tortured, condemned to slavery, or murdered. It is of course true that this heavy reaction forced the majority of mages to flee to the high mountains of Keshe or to the Horns, but it was also a time that forged the identity of their new Order. By attempting to destroy it, the lords of the Twilight Realms had made a martyr of the Order, a symbolic bloody flag behind which stood the mages, arranged in magic circles. Thus, for more than a century, the order became clandestine, the mages meeting in secrecy to study and learn from each other's magical experiments.

♣ The Fratricides

In the west, Armgard, a medieval empire, had been slowly developing for centuries. Suddenly, emperor Erkman XIX died, leaving four children- three young men of fighting age (Urgamand, Janren and Noven) and their elder sister Tanis. Respectful of ancestral traditions, Tanis had no pretensions to the throne and left this burden to her brothers. Deciding what would be best for the empire turned out to be the most difficult choice the brothers ever had to make.

THE SEPTENTRION EMPIRE

The creation of the desert of Keshe marked the end of the Septentrion Empire. Although the burning winds that had devastated the king-tree forests of the Modehan Empire could not cross the Draaken Mountains, the break in commerce with the south of the continent led a serious upset of the Septentrion economy. The province to the north of Moden-hen' had to resort to pillaging the rich valleys further north. The city-states in these valleys quickly instituted widespread military maneuvers. The pillagers were pushed back to the coast.

They met in their father's fortress, having vowed to remain until a successor was agreed upon. They fussed for days and nights, each one trying to prove to the others his rightful place as Emperor. Not one of them was able to convince the two others of his abilities, and not one of them would concede. The meeting deteriorated into a verbal jousting match, that was to lead to the Fratricidal War, the bloodiest in all Armgard's history.

The three brothers went back to their castles and raised troops from the surrounding villages to augment their growing armies. Tanis joined Urgamand in his coastal lands.

Within a few months, the three territories were put to fire and sword. The dead lined the fields; their putrescent bodies transmitting a terrible evil into the earth. Dreadful horrors infested the soil and the men. Very rapidly, soldiers surviving the frequent skirmishing suddenly had more and more difficulty finding healthy food. One of the knights of Urgamand tired of the ceaseless battles and suggested to his suzerain lord the idea of assassinating one of his brothers. Adverse at first to the idea, Urgamand finally let himself be convinced. He decided on Noven, whose troops were busy burning the land in the area where the three brothers had spent their childhood. When the plan was set, Tanis warned Janren, who was unable to stay his brother's hand. The foul murder raised Noven to a martyr. Despite continued skirmishes and pillaging in certain border areas, the fighting diminished as the years passed. A little way back from these frontline zones, three new realms were born: Urgamand, Janrenia and the Liturgical Province, where the cult of Noven grew into a full-fledged religion.

THE SECOND AGE

☞ The Time of Mages

The Cipher-sorcerer order opened schools in the major cities of the Twilight Realms, causing a rapid and considerable growth in the use of magic. This was the time of the greatest discoveries and the worst mistakes. There were many unpleasant incidents. Inexperienced mages were at the root of numerous troubles, giving magic a



ARTEM THE ARDENT

The Preceptorial aldermen (erudite scholars trying to rescue the peasant population from widespread illiteracy) teach their disciples a history of the Twilight Realms that begins years before the creation of the Cipher-sorcerer. They refer to a mythical year during the Flamboyance when a summer seasonling attempted to seduce his Lady.

A satyr named Artem sought to find the legendary first female of his species, the Mother, who was said to be eternal. In the course of his search he encountered a great many female satyrs – eleven thousand according to legend – all of whom he questioned in order to pierce the secret of his origins. One day, as he was desperately roaming Harmundia, Artem heard of a magnificently beautiful woman, living in harmony with nature. According to the stories, the woman could make animals and plants grow and flourish, and even had the power to give life. The mortals who told these stories did not themselves believe in the existence of this woman, however Artem was immediately convinced that she was the Mother he had sought for so long. Unfortunately for this particular seasonling, he was wrong. He was about to commit an error that would be the downfall of empires across the continent. This woman did exist and she was the Lady of Summer. She caught wind of this wandering satyr and, hoping to discourage him, placed a series of ordeals in his way. It didn't work. Braving terrible danger, triumphing over every ordeal, Artem came closer and closer to the Lady, the passion of his quest manifesting in increasing bouts of insanity.

The Lady of Summer and her courtiers were astonished to find that Artem the Ardent had succeeded. The panic-stricken Lady, in her desire to repulse the satyr, released a storm of fire over all Harmundia. . . At least, it is how the satyrs explain the birth of the desert of Keshe.

bad reputation. Within the space of a few years, peasants, and the people in power, became wary of the unstable and chaotic nature of Cipher-sorcerers' spells. To resolve the complaints that rained down on the Order from all sides, a new Symposium was organized that instituted many changes to the founding charter. From that moment on, the Order shrank into itself. The mages, divided and controlled by the Censors, returned to their academies. Mystery and rumor shrouded the members of the three great obediences that would henceforth make up the Order: the Jornists, the Eclipsists, and the Obscurantists.

☞ The Great Wars

Whilst the Mages were returning to their academies, conflict was brewing in many countries. From insane all-out war down to border skirmishes, the Twilight Realms were seeking their national identities.

The Lyphanian nomads rose up against domination by the Princely Communes. Suffe-

ring from the Urgamish troubles, some areas of the Modehan Marches proclaimed independence and organized themselves into a single state based upon their principle activity, that of hiring mercenaries. The Mercenary Republic was born.

The medusae of the southeast let it be known that their country was a living museum for the ancient Arts, a paradise for all Concordists. This news caused jealousy among the Keshite tribes, who whipped themselves into a frenzy of endless attacks. In the space of a few years, the ceaseless massacres decimated the entire region. The medusae seized power, negotiated with the Keshites, called a halt to the war, and renamed the kingdom the Widowlands.

THE THIRD AGE

♣ Young Kingdoms

Two centuries gave the Mages the time both to find their identity and to build their academies in some very unpleasant places. Whilst the Cipher-sorcerer was looking weak, entire dynasties were being born in the realms, defining the frontiers of their nations with the help of mysterious eminences. The eminences came from a school where experts of all the arts taught the basics of power to only the very bravest mortals. The seasonlings of Spring, Summer and Winter made good use of this time, and were seen again in the towns and in the countryside. The absent seasonlings of Autumn were apparently definitively Fallen.

♣ Agone of Roundrock

Son of the late Erdhence of Roundrock and his wife, lady Yselle, Agone was brought up in the Roundrock domain. As a child, he was a plaything in the hands of a cruel father who desired only a son in his own image. Hoping to steel his mettle, the baron took him down the alleys of Lorgol, hunting footpads and ruffians. But over the years, Agone came to prefer Preceptorial – a guild whose goal was one of education of the peasants – to

THE GRAY PAPERS

While the Urgamish barons were learning about the destruction of the Borrowlight, and as the name of Agone of Roundrock was spread through the Twilight Realms, a cabal of Eclipsists tried to hand magic over to the people. This was heresy, a crime against the mages' long-sought status of higher excellence. The cabal's leader, a spriggan named Lerschwin, was however completely convinced that it was the only way to save the Twilight Realms from the busy tampering of the eminences, who were advising heads of state in the realms. He sincerely believed in a renaissance of all the magnificence of the Second Age. In his trickery of the other Mages of the Cipher-sorcerer, the spriggan even went so far as to steal the Gray Papers, the archives that contain details of all the eminences' intrigues. In this, he was helped by Agone.

his father's nighttime peregrinations. The day his father met death whilst out hunting, Agone was twenty years old. Called to the manor, he learned the contents of his father's last will and testament, ordering him to join the Borrowlight School. Torn between love and hate for his dead father, Agone consented. At the Borrowlight School, Agone renounced the Itinerancy and joined a conspiracy – organized by a spriggan named Lerschwin – to give magic back to the common man. By his actions, Agone caused the fall of the Borrowlight School. He followed Lerschwin to Lorgol in order to learn Dancer magic. He discovered Ascendancy and chose to foil the spriggan's plans. His path led him to the height of power in Urgamand, a kingdom threatened by its powerful neighbors, Janrenia and the Keshite Empire. Agone returned to the family manor and organized the Urgamand resistance with his sister's help. He faltered when Liturgical forces landed on the Urgamand coast. He ran to Lorgol and discovered that the real instigators of the war were the Janrenian Obscurantists. In an ultimate battle of magic, he defeated the Obscurantists and became First Baron of Urgamand. Thus began the Fourth Age of the Twilight Realms.



Harmundia: general information

♣ **Calendar and Seasons:** The seasons of winter, spring and summer come around as usual, each lasting about three months. The last month of the year, between the end of summer and the beginning of winter, is the fall. It is an accursed time. The Dullen do not know why this is so, they blame it on an ancient magical cataclysm, and the secret fear that comes with this month tends to prevent anyone from seeking any further explanation.

Ever since the Decans were established, the year has been made up of 10 months. The months are called tides, and are named after some of the Prodigies and Wonders.

- **Spring:** Nymph-tide, Dryad-tide, Troll-tide.
- **Summer:** Phoenix-tide, Wyvern-tide, Centaur-tide.
- **Fall.**
- **Winter:** Harpy-tide, Hydra-tide, and Tarrasque-tide.

Each month has thirty days written as the 1st to the 30th, e.g. "Today is the 10th day of Centaur-tide".

The seasonling Decan Councils are convened at the times of the winter solstice, the spring equinox and the summer solstice. They never take place during the accursed autumn equinox, for it is said that dark forces are abroad on that fatal night, fearsome and evil things that hunt down the Flames and create Dark Flames.

At these times, the various kingdoms, regions, tribes, cities, seasonlings, etc. have of course added a multitude of their own local and ethnic festivities, which are not indicated on ordinary calendars.

Clock-time is, as we know it, day and night each divided into twelve hours, marked by the ringing of town clocks and bells. But the Enemy's influence has been increasing since the Eclipse as he prepares for Eternal Night - dusk comes more quickly and lasts longer. The great scholars have named dawn the hour of Diurn, and dusk the hour of Nyx. Despite the fact that they do not know of the existence of these two Eternals, ancient books bear traces of their names.

♣ **Money:** The most commonly used form of money is the Mercenary Republican gold piece, and its smaller unit, the scrape. The mercenaries have succeeded in imposing their money as the universal standard. Each realm strikes its own coins, which are evaluated in terms of their equivalent with gold pieces. Pricing information can be found in the "Equipment" section. In Book Three.

♣ **Units of measure:** The usual units of measure - yards, feet, inches, gallons, etc. - are in use everywhere but are sometimes replaced by local standards that are easily converted. For example the cubit, equal to 18 inches, and the league, equal to 3 miles.

♣ **Language:** The most widespread language in the Twilight Realms is Keshite. It serves as the common language, particularly for commercial and diplomatic relations. Academics of all nations use Keshite for their scholarly exchanges. Alongside their mother tongues, the noteworthy of Harmundia have learnt to speak Keshite.

♣ **Dullen beliefs and knowledge:** The inhabitants of Harmundia know little of their world, especially if their occupations do not lead them to travel. The knowledge bestowed in this book by a few eminences is destined for the Inspired. It contains secrets that have never before been divulged, starting with the very existence of the Inspired. Therefore, as soon as the Flame is revealed to them in the game of AGONE, your characters are going to have access to rare information.

Most of the Dullen know nothing of the Eternals. They have no "gods", although some heroes of the Flamboyance have been elevated to this rank, and some cults of worship exist which are based upon more-or-less imaginary beings. The Dullen have no idea of the existence of the Flame. The Eclipse was a catastrophe of magic origin, marking a breakaway point when mortal history began, but its true nature is lost to them.

The seasonling tradition is stronger, though the Decan Councils remain very discreet, and are officially just a popular celebration. Many seasonlings find faith in their traditional folk tales of the Ladies of the Seasons.

Sometimes, Remains of the Flamboyance can be found in inhabited areas. It is said that these constructions were built by ancient civilizations, and knowledge of their true magical nature is reserved for initiates of the Cipher-sorcerer. The same thing can be said about Luminaries and Ghosts, who appear in local legends without any indication as to their true nature or role. As for Shard, only the Concordists and Mages have pierced its secret.

Apart from sirens, Prodigies and Wonders are considered to be mythical beings, and the majority of people deny their existence.

The various branches of magic, on the other hand, are in the main accepted. To understand why this is so, you only have to look at the spellbound public in front of the paintings on Forgotten Street in Lorgol. Dancers can often be seen in city streets and in the countryside, but only the very cunning can catch them.

Demons have a very different status: within the city of Abyss, the people that live alongside them feel mistrust or repulsion. Beyond that, people don't really think about them. The Abyss remains a myth and the idea of a reality where it exists and is reigned over by an entity such as the Darken, is unimaginable.

And finally, the Masque is completely unknown.



his chapter contains descriptions of all the known Twilight Realms and possible places of origin for your Inspired characters. For each country you will be given the following information:

- ☞ A guidesheet of technical data: type of government, capital city, money, language, population density and natural resources.
- ☞ Descriptions of geographical features, climate, animal and plant life, cities and towns, population, history, diplomatic affairs and magical places.
- ☞ A small boxed presentation of any faction active in that region and throughout the continent.
- ☞ A few words from one of the region's inhabitants.

3 ~ The Twilight Realms

The Princely Communes

GEOGRAPHY

☞ Relief

The Princely Communes form a rough quadrilateral surrounded by Janrenia to the west, Lyphan to the north, the sea and the Wild Reaches to the east, and Buccaneer Haven to the south.

The Princely Communes are a buffer zone between the kingdoms of the north and the central nations. In this respect, the Great Wall that separates Lyphan from the Princely Communes is particularly significant. It is a land of shining city-states, in a constant state of war and teeming with mercenaries, where law is defined by the gold in a man's hand. The Princely Communes cover a gigantic grassy plain that spreads from the borders of the Wild Reaches to the Libduk hills. It is excellent pastureland, and it opens onto the Tariander mountains by way of the Talakma, another, smaller chain of mountains that form a considerable natural barrier.

In the north, the grassy plain stretches right up to the Great Wall and to the south is the Wuhan desert, an arid region that leads to the Buccaneer Haven and the area controlled by the Draaken. To the west are the Tariander mountains and the Libduk hills and to the east a vast tundra-like plain stretches to the Eaglefin Mountains. Paved roads run across the whole country, allowing the creation of one of the densest networks of commerce and communication in all Harmundia.

☞ Climate

A dry, continental climate dominates. The torrid heat of summer turns to bitter cold in winter.

☞ Flora and Fauna

Grey wolves haunt the desert plains. Bears live in the stony caves of the low mountains. The annual cross-plain

THE PRINCELY COMMUNES

Government

Principate

Language

Kiemenite

Population

Humans 40%, ogres 20%,

dwarves 10%, medusae 10%,

satyrs 10%, minotaurs 5%,

spriggans 5%

Dancers: common

Demons: rare

Capital

Tslana

Money

The eaglet, equal to

10 gold pieces

Natural resources

Wheat and other prairie
and terrace-farmed crops, livestock.



migrations of the herds of reindeer, musk ox and bison, are the main source of nourishment for the inhabitants of the Princely Communes.

IMPORTANT CITIES AND TOWNS

♣ Abbadrah

A southern city-state, strongly influenced by Buccaneer Haven culture, possessing a great necropolis on the town-limits that never fails to attract attention. The legendary orgies of the Jade palace draw many satyrs to a life of parties in a city firmly set on the road to decadence.

♣ Tslana

Tslana is the site of the kingdom's ephemeral capital city, and is often considered to be representative of the Princely Communes as a whole. Because of its many high-quality silversmiths, it is also known as "Silvergate City".

The city's orthodox architecture strikes the eye, and it seems clear that dwarves of the Square have had a hand here. The buildings and palaces make the city shine, with their multicolored sculpted domes and gem-encrusted surfaces. The city looks like a huge feudal domain that has become the court of a rich and crazy monarch.

♣ Lakmashi

A northern city-state close to the Lyphan borders, known for its ironsmiths and the high quality weapons and armor they manufacture, based upon Wild-Reacher models. This is without a doubt the most humble city in the country, with its neglected houses and unadorned mansions. The population is devoted to soldiery and the town shows signs of increasing barbarism, a result of permanent contact with the Wild Reaches.

♣ Sasmiyana

"The Golden Queen of the East" has grown amazingly quickly to become not only the biggest port on the

Gulf of Ebony, but also one of the largest in the whole continent. Teeming with activity from morning till night, the city contains a mass of buildings from several different time periods. Astounding remains of the Flamboyance stand next to baroque mansions and carved stone towers, providing a motley background for the hurried throng of daily life in the city.

♣ Shushan, the Imperial

This is the largest city-state in the middle of the realm and Tslana's main rival for the title of capital of the Princely Communes. Like its rival, Shushan is a wealthy city, specialized in the manufacture of precious fabrics. The Shushanian weavers color their silks using imported and local dyes, creating fabrics that are highly prized by the noble families of Janrenia and Urgamand.

THE PRINCEANS

Before the Twilight, the inhabitants of Septentrion occupied the Princely Communes. While the Primeval Fire was ravaging Keshe, this area remained relatively calm. Quickly, however, refugees from other countries spread through its lands. The Septentrions enslaved them all, as they had done to all the populations of the region that were considered primitive - particularly the Lyphanians. Centuries passed before the slaves overthrew their masters. The ex-slaves took the name of Princeans through bitterness and pride. The Septentrions fled the country to escape their terrible vengeance, abandoning cities and mystical treasures. The slave peoples that remained had no understanding of the sophisticated artistry of Septentrion culture. The textbooks describing agriculture, technology and sorcery were just gibberish to the illiterate ex-slaves. The educated few, or those trusted by the Septentrions, had all been killed for collaboration. They could have inherited the Septentrion empire, but they were ignorant, pillaging vultures, looting the remains of an extinct civilization. The new empire quickly tumbled. The local warlords seized upon the ready-made fortresses and strongholds to set up their own satrapies. Some were good and kind leaders, but most turned out to be as cruel as the recently deposed Septentrions. They all clamored to rule over this fallen empire. The Lyphanians exiled themselves to the west, preferring the open country of the steppes. After a century, the little principedoms turned into city-states, each little region ruled over by its local prince, with no confederacy uniting them.

For a long time the Princely Communes' fragmented city-states tore at each other like carrion crows stripping a corpse of its flesh. Each city-state held strong to its belief that it, and it alone, was to be the rightful heir of the fallen Septentrion empire. Quite regularly, a powerful leader would appear and unite a few of the city-states, temporarily establishing the long-hoped-for single kingdom, but these kingdoms soon fell, due to the enormous problems of government caused by physical distance, and

by the slaves themselves, obsessed with independence ever since their first revolt. Once, the Princely Communes federated under the control of the Shining Star, and attempted to pacify the Eaglefin Mountains in order to open up a path to the savage Wild Reaches. Total defeat at Maechrak and the slaughter of the hired mercenary troops were to ring the death-knell of Princean hopes. Ever since, the city-states have avoided federation; their collective memory is still haunted by the vision of waves of howling, half-naked Wild-Reachers, swarming full-bore across the great plains.

♣ Diplomacy

More recently, contact with Janrenia has re-established dealings with the civilized and flourishing kingdoms to the south and to the west. Caravans to Janrenia and the main cities of other regions regularly cross the plains and the Tariander Mountains. Some negotiators have even been to Qaysaria and, with their precious jewels and

costly trinkets, hope to gain favor with the Madjid sayed. Some people in the west recommend caution, worried that too much commerce might bring the Princely Communes westwards, leading them to challenge the supremacy of the established kingdoms. The local Obscurantists would be happy to help the Princeans in such a war... for a price, of course.

Despite this, the Princeans are on good terms with Janrenia. They maintain uneasy truces with the Lyphanians and the Bucaneers, and display an open dislike for all Wild-Reachers, whom they believe to be barbaric pillagers and thieves. Some city-states do show an interest in Wild-Reacher land and resources, although most of them

clearly despise its tribes, considered primitive. Ever since the crushing defeat at Maechrak, a certain feeling has prevailed that has dampened the city-states ambitions in this respect.

SOCIETY

Over the centuries, the humans and seasonlings have come together to form a homogeneous people. Therefore it can generally be said that the Princeans are slim and of average height, with parchment-yellow skin, slanted eyes, high foreheads, and sharp-featured oval faces. Some regional variations do exist - for instance South Princeans tend to be smaller and stockier - but these distinctions are almost invisible if you are not from the Princely Communes.

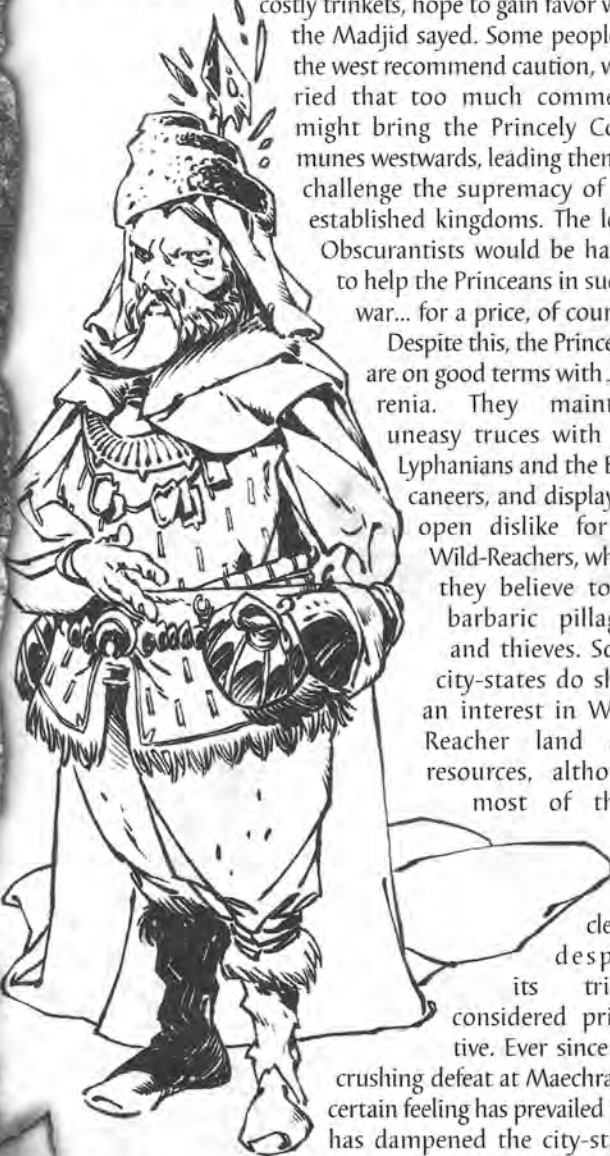
Princeans enjoy complicated social ceremonies, supposedly on a par with those of their imperial predecessors. Each member of society has his place within the structure and has to conform to a well-defined code of behavior. This does not place a block on individual initiative. The Princeans think that those who do their best to obey these codes shall be rewarded. By this logic, they deduce that the winner has right on his side. This success-based approach to thinking has given them a penchant for lies and double-dealing that would make an Urganish nobleman go pale in the face. One disconcerting aspect of these behavioral codes is the extreme politeness. Most traders find this extremely irritating, although it represents no danger - successful traders know the pitfalls hidden behind this veneer of respect, and thus tread carefully.

Each city-state is run by a Prince whose subjects include dukes, counts, wealthy merchants, army officers, priests, craftsmen and shopkeepers, soldiers and commoners, servants, beggars, foreigners, bandits and, lastly, slaves. Very rarely some city-states unite under a single Prince who then takes a title, such as "Most Serene Highness".

The Prince of the city-state decrees Princean law. He passes the laws and personally sits as judge in major criminal cases. Most Princes, however, have a court system, to judge and punish criminals for them.

These laws, in association with the codes of behavior, are there to maintain the Prince's supremacy. They are not just there to control what we might call ordinary crime. Charges of "hoarding and withholding wealth" or "attempted social advantage" are common. Fines are

"There are some wonderful brothels in Tslana where one can simply wallow in lewdness and acts of shameless debauchery. After a hard season of deer hunting, I like to spend my eaglets in the house of Courtecine, a sprig-gan woman well versed in the sublime art of love. Her girls are just magnificent and - on my honor as a satyr - they know how to drive a man insane with desire. Even the Prince, some say, pays regular visits to these alchemists of the flesh. Some also say he likes to be delicately flagellated with whips woven from the pubic hairs of young frightened virgins, wielded in alabaster hands by wanton young beauties. What I like best, if truth be told, is to just loll around in these places, comfortably stretched out on some soft gold-embroidered cushions, drinking sweet wine and having my chest stroked by delicate and expert hands."



THE SCARLET CIRCLE

This powerful fraternity connects the mages of the Princely Communes, more commonly called wizards. Just like its counterparts in the west, the Circle is strictly hierarchical. Wizards are served by those of lesser knowledge, and in turn are servants to the next level of power. At the summit of this pyramid sits the wizard Yah Pong, Prince of the city-state of Abbadrah, whose magic and demons are feared throughout the realm and far beyond.

commonplace, although mutilation and death remain the usual punishments for the more serious crimes, and those that threaten the status quo. Unlike other countries, where judges can often be influenced by a nice plump sum of money, it is very difficult to buy a judge in the Princely Communes. What does happen is that judges frequently have to submit to the political problems of their clan or faction, and can easily trample underfoot both the law and the truth in order to attain "higher" political objectives.

The Princely Communes' city-state troops are organized and well trained. Regular patrols and frontier skirmishes have hardened these soldiers. Their high morale is maintained both through solidarity in the ranks, and a rigid moral code.

The infantry, with its pikemen, is the heart of the army, but some city-states maintain small and inefficient cavalry units. Military strategy is an art, and siege-machines, mining and other blockade tactics form part of basic officer training.

Magic is tolerated and unrestricted. With regards to this, it must be said that the Cipher-sorcerer here is of the Obscurantist obedience, and willfully maintains a veil of secrecy over this region.

Speaking generally, the Princeans are an arrogant people, and the realm is marked by a very strong tendency toward decadence.

CRAFTS AND COMMERCE

The Princely Communes produce many rarities, such as fans made from peacock feathers, porcelain, and engraved jade objects. Coins of gold and other precious metals are all in use, especially for the transfer of large sums of money. Princeans find a way of obtaining anything they can't produce themselves, and they have no hesitation spending astronomical sums to acquire valuable items. There are plenty of collectors who expend quite astonishing amounts of money, gathering together baroque art collections filled with souvenirs of the Flamboyance.

MAGIC IN THE REGION

☛ The Great Wall

This is a giant wall of stone, built by Harmundia's first inhabitants, to protect their agricultural land from the mastodons and other huge creatures that roamed

the steppes long before the Flamboyance. Most of these creatures are now extinct, and nowadays the wall is mainly useful to the Princely Communes as a means of protection from Lyphanian incursions. Despite the clearly superior construction, the wall is beginning to crumble in some places. The Princeans try hard to effect repairs, but their stonemasons simply do not possess the necessary levels of skill and artistry to carry out correct reconstruction.

☛ Skull Gate

There is a passage through the Eaglefin Mountains, linking the Princely Communes to the Wild Reaches, called Kamsatra. The way is marked by a huge mammoth's skull without any tusks. It bears an inscription written in Nordik: "Skull Gate is the Gate of Death to the Uninvited." Since the defeat of Maechrak, this inscription has discouraged the wandering mercenaries that travel the plains looking for war.

Lyphan

GEOGRAPHY

☛ Relief

The Lyphanian steppe consists of a square-shaped plateau. Its western flank falls into the Glittering Sea, and its southeastern extremity is defined by an ancient construction, the Great Wall. A narrow corridor, squeezing its way through the Tariander Mountains, separates Lyphan from Janrenia. In the northeast, parallel to the coastline of the Sea of Orion, lies a mountain range of some size, the Loulan. Elsewhere, the steppe is ubiquitous. It is not completely flat, and it hides innumerable small valleys and hills, but a valley more than ten feet deep is a rarity, and a Lyphanian would consider a twenty-foot valley wall to be a cliff-face.

☛ Climate

The continental climate is dominant in this region. There are great differences in temperature between the torrid heat of summer, and winter, when heavy snows are not uncommon. The further north one heads, however, the colder it gets. The climate there is identical to that of the Wild Reaches, temperatures rarely exceeding freezing.

☛ Flora and Fauna

Horses graze on the meager steppe plants, as do the goats, sheep and cattle bred by the Lyphanians. Other animals of the steppe include aurochs, wolves, mammoths, and several small game species, such as rabbits and wild pheasants.

The steppe is situated at fairly high altitude. It is arid and covered with hardy strains of various grasses. In winter, the rains bring an astonishing variety of wild-

life to the steppe. These include *flureks* (a species of small flying snake, with a lethal bite) and *partenias* (extraordinary, fragrant flowers, with orange leaves that give off silvery reflections). In summer, the rains stop. The color of the grass gradually turns dark and dull. The animals disappear and brushfires, caused by lightning or the careless, rage out of control.

On the slopes of Mount Loulan, to the north, lives a unique subspecies of cannibal men. These creatures communicate by means of grunts and teeth-clicks but they do not use tools or know how to make fire. They usually attack by biting, but they use their hands to strangle their victims. They have been known to immobilize their victims in order to consume the living flesh. If they get hold of weapons, they may – through mimicry – attempt to use any they have already often seen. The Lyphanians prudently avoid this region, and no township is situated less than fifty leagues away.

IMPORTANT CITIES AND TOWNS

☞ Bukhrosha

The capital of Lyphan, situated in a small circular canyon. Its rivals continually question its supremacy. The entrances to the canyon are few and carefully hidden. The whole township looks like an immense encampment, with its forest of yurt tents and its ever-busy corals and paddocks. Watchtowers are regularly set up, patrolled by tireless watchmen. In a great raised hut, in the exact geometric center of Bukhrosha, sits the council of elders from all the tribes, the Galmash.

☞ Malikta

At the mouth of the Yourk river, along the coast of the Sea of Orion, sits the largest seaport on the East Coast. Malikta's glory days are gone, and the city is

nowadays a strange mix of grimy huts, thrown up willy-nilly alongside proud stone monuments. Colorful caravansaries have set up shop at the foot of the ancient ruins, and a busy trade in silk and spice puts the maritime connection to good use.

☞ Mazdak

A frontier post at the foot of the Tariander Mountains, Mazdak is the most important horse-training center in the realm. All the best horses and horse-trainers pass through here.

☞ Torgut

This port on the edge of the Glittering Sea is somewhat like Malikta. The township is a large collection of thatched huts, jammed in around a mud wall, which in turn is built around a palace of stone, clay and bamboo.

☞ Nejma

This is a small port stuck out in the eternal ice. The inhabitants all suffer from latent insanity, due to the fact that there is never any daylight. In this part of the world, the Twilight is permanent.



LYPHAN

Government

Gerontocracy

Language

Kosaki

Population

Humans 40%,
sprites 20%,
black feys 10%,
spriggans 10%,
ogres 10%,
minotaurs 5%,
medusae 5%

Dancers: common, Demons: common

Capital

Bukhrosha

Money

The sastre (equal to 5 gold pieces)

Natural resources

Wheat, buckwheat, horse breeding



THE LYPHANIANS

☞ History

When the Septentrion Empire fell, the survivors fled north, plunging through the endless steppe. There, they were enslaved by the Princeans. After a few years of repression, Septentrion culture vanished. Those who rebelled found themselves sacrificed to demons. Faced with either eternal torment or the relative calm of a life of slavery, the majority of the population chose the latter.

As time went by, they lost all trace of their origins, becoming Lyphanians, which means "Easterners" in the Septentrion tongue. Finally, the Princeans weakened, the Lyphanians slaughtered each other in a series of bloody family feuds above the ruins of the imported Princean civilization. The Lyphanians then began

to move into the unexplored territories to the north, mixing with the natives, who either paid tribute or were massacred. Lyphan slowly took shape, becoming the country we know today.

♣ Diplomacy

Shut-in by the Great Wall and separated from Janrenia by a series of narrow ravines that are impossible for horses to cross, the Lyphanians carry on their constant tribal feuding, sending their troops out over the grassy steppe. The main allies of the Lyphanians are the Wild-Reachers, even if the former rarely miss an occasion to plunder the latter's villages. They share the same love for combat, and cultivate variants of the same warrior code.

The Lyphanians detest the inhabitants of the Princely Communes, and the forces of the Enemy carefully nurture this hatred. Looking to wet their blades with Princian blood, the Wolves of the Steppe regularly attempt crossings of the Great Wall.

SOCIETY

Lyphanian society is a tribal, clan-based culture, which has grown into a motley collection of townships that are lacking in any real coordination or legitimacy.

There are hardly any mages in Lyphan, as magic is not held in respect. Lyphanians primarily trust the wisdom that comes with age. Black feys are hence sacred, and com-

"My name is Olgur. I am Lyphanian and proud of it. Bukhrosha is my clan, my tribe and my beloved township. I own six thoroughbreds, kept comfortable by my seven sons while my nine daughters keep a practiced and watchful eye on my goatherds. I am proud, aye, because my blood will flow on in the veins of my offspring, ensuring eternity for my ancestors. What's more, I can shoot an arrow better than you could probably ever hope to. I know you prefer swinging one of those straight, heavy weapons you call swords, but that's because you don't really know anything about the art of warring and raiding. Galloping over the grassy steppe on a fast war-horse! Feeling the wind in your hair! Having a proud falcon firmly perched on your wrist and sending him off to swoop down on his prey like some fearsome winged butcher! Tell the truth my friend, do you have any idea what could be better than that in a warrior's life?"

monplace, especially in Bukhrosha, where the oldest ones have seats in the Galmash, the tribal council of elders. The Lyphanians are ancestor worshippers, and consider the great accomplishments of other mortals to be worth the same amount of respect as any concept of eternal paradise.

They prefer tall, pointed, fur hats with protections for the ears, and they are also fond of sheepskin tunics, gold jewelry, and soft, supple boots with pointed and upturned toes. Lyphanian women always wear veils in the presence of men from outside their family circle.

Lyphanians are rai-

sed in the saddle. They only walk to get from their horses to their yurts and back. They are astonished by the apparent vigor of other populations, who are able to walk several leagues in a day. A life on horseback has given them a bow-legged gait that causes them to waddle uncomfortably. This lack of agility on foot should not be confused with clumsiness or weakness. A Lyphanian cavalry troop can travel thirty leagues a day, with four or five horses per man, and arrive ready to fight without a pause. When traveling, Lyphanians do not stop to change horses: the "Wolves of the Steppe" take their bow and quiver and leap from one steed to another.



♣ The Wolves of the Steppe

The Wolves of the Steppe are bold warriors. Their horsemanship, saddle-craft and mastery of weapons make an awesome combination. Leather armor is the preferred choice of many warriors. Metal is for the most glorious. All carry shields; some made of metal, but most made of thick leather stretched over a wooden frame. They fight wherever and whenever they want to. Assembled together, they form great cohorts wherein military rank is a mark of honor. These cohorts are commanded by a Kagan, or war chief, whose orders are passed on by his several Gengis, or commanders.

The Wolves of the Steppe coordinate differently according to circumstances. When concealment and surprise are necessary, flags are used in daylight, and lanterns at night, to signal instructions to their warriors. If secrecy is neither the order of the day nor important for the cohort, then the beat of the great copper drums can be heard, acting as a troop-signal and terrifying the enemy.

From time to time, the Wolves of the Steppe band together against other townships, forming a horde. This is rare however, not only because of the enormous distances involved, but also due to conflicting customs within different cohorts. In some cohorts for instance, the consumption of horsemeat is an acceptable practice, in others it is forbidden. When a great danger threatens the people of Lyphan, or if particularly juicy targets for plunder help to break down social barriers, the Kagans from the participating cohorts name an Ushi-Kagan, or supreme chief. The Wolves of the Steppe are the best horsemen in the world and masters of the art of war at full-gallop. They do not take slaves - not adult male slaves in any case - although they do sometimes steal young



EWELF

"Agone of Roundrock's sister is in charge of the Roundrock baronial estate. She was married to Arbassin, is loved by her subjects, and is appreciated for her courage, her household management, and her capacity to listen to people. An eminence in her entourage has declared her to be an upright and honest person. It is known she has had three children: two girls – one of whom died at the age of six – and a son. The latter, now fourteen, is set to become the next baron of Roundrock. This child has only spent eight years of his life in the barony, and is currently attending the Urgamand Jormist academy. According to our information, the child is inspired.

It is evident that Ewelf suffers from her husband's absences. Our eminence speaks of a form of melancholy that might ultimately lead to an unfortunate deterioration in the Domain's management. We recommend contacting the Cipher-sorcerer of Urgamand, in order to lessen Censor Arbassin's burden of dangerous undertakings, ultimately allowing him to make a definitive return to the barony.

children or take concubines from other populations. For the most part they just happily slaughter anybody who gets in their way. "We do not want to rule over a conquered people – we want to rule the prairie."

♣ The Clans

The Lyphanians are divided into a multitude of clans. Each clan is comprised of 40 to 60 homesteads, 300 to 500 horses, and 800 to 1,200 heads of livestock, and in general they can usually assemble a hundred-odd Wolves of the Steppe. A clan's main source of livelihood is its territorial zone of steppe-land, which generally forms a rough square about 40 leagues wide. These territories overlap a little, but the clans keep a respectable distance from each other to avoid draining the land's resources.

In any given region, a dozen-or-so clans will join together and form a tribe. These tribes are mostly based on blood-ties, and marriages between members of different tribes are commonplace. The tribal chieftains define the areas of pasture for each clan, and the Wolves of the Steppe assemble a cohort to pillage any towns along the caravan routes.

The Lyphanians don't have much defined territory to defend. The Lyphanian life-style is rather nomadic and makes them foreign to the territorial imperatives of other countries. There exists, however, an exception to this nomadic attitude: every Lyphanian maintains a burial ground, called a kabala, for his Kagans and Ushi-Kagans. A kabala is a secret field of funeral biers, often hidden away in the most inhospitable areas of the steppe. As a sign of respect to the dead, horses are not allowed to enter a kabala.

The social hierarchy in a Lyphanian clan is very complicated. The clan chief is usually the Elder, but it could be the Kagan. Then come, in descending order of importance, Shamans, Gengis, the Wolves of the Steppe, herd-guardians, liars, and slaves. The most important clans have

given their names to the tribes, which in turn have given name to the city-states.

CRAFTS AND COMMERCE

Lyphanian towns provide all kinds of merchandise, from arms and armor, to fabrics, jewelry and leather goods. Every town can claim one or two products as its specialty, and this expertise is exploited to establish steady trade. Numerous caravansaries mark out the trade routes, and two seaports – each one on a different seaboard – give the country a good opening for communication with the outside world.

The greatest Lyphanian specialty is, without doubt, the breeding and training of horses. Lyphanians are masters of the art and their supremacy in this matter is unchallenged.

♣ Lyphanian Weaponry

The primary Lyphanian weapon is the incurved composite bow. Glued together from wood, horn and sinew, it takes about a year to build and make ready for use. The number of men necessary to string one of these bows indicates its power. Young people use "one-man" bows, and most of the Wolves of the Steppe use "two-man" bows, which can also be strung by one man using a special harness. The mightiest archers use "three-man" bows.

Lyphanian archery is legendary. At 100 yards, a Lyphanian archer at full gallop can put an arrow in a man's body almost every time. Most of them know how to use the horse as a shield, gripping the pommel of the saddle, with their legs and leaning down, to shoot from beneath the horse's head.

The other favorite weapon of the Lyphanians is the lasso. The lasso rope is woven from horses' manes and human hair. Certain Lyphanians believe that the best rope is woven from the hair of an enemy. The lasso is used during the breaking-in and training of wild stallions, and is also used during raids when prisoners are to be taken.

THE YAEZMITE SCHOOL

Growing-up on horseback, the Lyphanians have developed astonishing abilities when it comes to training horses. Yaez was the first Lyphanian to export his know-how beyond the frontiers of his native land. He reached the proud Janrenian capital where he astounded the nobility with his horsemanship. He was immediately engaged as Master of the Royal Stables. As this office was not hereditary, he entrusted to his sons the task of keeping up the Lyphanian equestrian tradition. Thanks to their father's riches, the sons traveled throughout the Twilight Realms, setting up several schools of horsemanship. Since that time, the descendants of Yaez have returned to Lyphan, and now live in Mazdak, where they administer the comfortable revenue from their schools which are to be found all over Harmundia. The continent's elite horsemen have all spent time in these centers.

MAGIC IN THE REGION

☞ The Gorge of Ghosts

A bizarre rock formation in the heart of the Lyphanian steppe, this miniature mountain range that appears to spring from nowhere, can be traversed by a crooked fault-line that very few Lyphanians would dare enter. Local legends say ghosts from another world haunt it, and that these ghosts reside in a dark tower, engraved with mystic runes that are invisible to mortal eyes. Unwary visitors tell of terrifying whistling noises that shred the night silence, and glimmering red lights that furtively illuminate the rocks.

☞ Yelala's Oracle

Yelala is the oldest black fey in the realm. Her great age makes her an imposing source of knowledge and as a result she has developed exceptional powers of prediction.

Inside a yurt stretched with dark-tinted aurochs and mammoth skins, the way leads to a subterranean network of passages, at the end of which, in a cave lit and heated by immense fire-pans, sits Yelala. Only the Elders and a few Kagans are aware of the full extent of her powers, visiting her regularly to pay tribute in the hope of gleaning a few revelations as to their fate.

☞ The City of Mounds

In the far north – where the blizzard blows all year round and the grassy steppe has given way to a thick carpet of snow – lies the most sacred kabala in the country, a veritable hallowed-ground in the icy wastes. Here lie the remains of the most revered Ushi-Kagans. An eternal flame burns amidst the magnificently decorated funeral biers that enclose the crystallized essences of Lyphan's most valorous heroes.

The Wild Reaches

GEOGRAPHY

☞ Relief

In the north of the continent lies the Wild Reaches. It is a mountainous land, bristling with cliffs and sharp promontories. Surrounded by mountainous peaks, it is a dark country, and the sky is filled with heavy clouds for most of the year. The winters are bitterly cold. Beyond the immense forests of pine or leafy oak, the terrain is rugged, arid and rocky.

The frontier with the Princely Communes is defined by a mountain range called the Eaglefins. With their icy, snow-covered slopes, and their peaks that disappear into the rarified air of the high-altitude, they make an impressive sight, and the chain is an important natural barrier. Only the Kamsatra Pass – known as Skull Gate – on the edge of the Princely Communes, can give real access to this wild country, where the icy wastes alter-

THE WILD REACHES

Government

Tribal system

Language

Nordik

Population

Humans 35%, giants 20%, dwarves 15%, ogres 10%, sprites 10%, minotaurs 5%, satyrs 5%

Dancers: unusual

Demons: rare

Capital

None

Money

Barter is the usual means of exchange. In some villages, metal – any kind of metal – may be used.

Natural Resources

Wood, hunting, livestock, mining of tin, iron, lead, and copper



nate with arid steppe, pine forests, and snow-capped peaks. Several leagues of arctic tundra define the frontier between the Wild Reaches and Lyphan, and this has been the site of many battles between their two peoples. The tundra also forms part of the frontier with the Princely Communes, but the swamps along its edges prevent easy trade and exchange.

☞ Climate

The Wild Reaches always seem to be locked in the grip of winter and its eternal snows. There is good reason for this: for most of the year, temperatures do not climb above freezing, and it is not a good idea to fall asleep in the great outdoors, unless you wish to wake up frozen. Once night has fallen, the blizzard is almost permanent. It is only during the summer months that temperatures rise above freezing and allow nature to flower. The dominant climate is dry and cold.

☞ Flora and Fauna

Wolves are numerous and move in packs. In winter, they come down from the far north to decimate the livestock, forcing the Wild-Reachers to chase them off with surly pugnacity. White bears can be occasionally glimpsed up on the highest rock formations, but the most fearsome animal is the *aswald tiger*, a ferocious saber-toothed predator. A white mountain goat called the *sheer* lives on the highest slopes, and certain tribes hunt it for its skin and its strongly flavored meat. Inhabitants of the Wild Reaches respect ferocity and cunning in animals, but they kill them all the same as soon as they get the chance, either to protect their yak herds or to trade wild aurochs' furs.

The flora is typical of a country where an intense, biting cold reigns all year round. Conifers and tough-barked, leafy trees are to be found more-or-less everywhere, and their wood is used for construction and heating. A particularity of the region is the *aster*, a little flower found

growing in the most barren areas of the most unassailable mountains. By extracting the sap from its stalk, Wild-Reacher shamans concoct potions that are capable of reviving the wounded within the space of a few hours. This flower has unfortunately become a great rarity, and some healers now trade specimens for astronomical sums.

IMPORTANT CITIES AND TOWNS

The Wild Reaches are divided into clans of various importances. The Bronwith, Maewilch, Naoksa, and Twyl clans are in the south; the Bodhrann, Dietra, Galleas, Mirloviadre, and Zorranto the north; the Chamta, Lacheich and Anga clans in the west, and the clans Rorik, Chulainn, Milach and Suqgeram in the east. Each clan is settled into a strictly defined territory, dominated by the fortified village of the clan Chieftain.

Three sites are of particular interest:

Nordheim, the Roriks' capital, is the largest fortified town in the Wild Reaches with its 7,000 inhabitants.

Klanpar, stronghold of the Angas, is a troglodyte city, cut into the rock of the Eaglefin Mountains. The sole means of access is to fly in on the backs of gigantic Great Eagles, which can only be piloted by giants. It is an astonishing town, carved out by sculptors of great skill.

Bodhra, main home of the Bodhranns, is built in an area surrounded by glaciers, in the heart of a plateau where geysers spurt jets of whistling steam.

THE WILD-REACHERS

History

The Wild Reaches – where wolves and giants roam, and only the sword gives a chance of survival. It is a brutal and merciless environment. The law of survival of the fittest rules as lord and master. Men are but pawns in a game played by incomprehensible beings. But out here a warrior can stand free and alone, and cast his gaze upon the stars in a clear sky. This is a world where the reign of the beast has only just ended. The path must be beaten with a good blade and beyond is only the distant shock of swords and battleaxes, ringing the rising corpse-count. Such is the price to be paid, to survive and conquer. As long as it must be so, there will be rough, unrelenting fighters, lacking in morals and unprincipled, yet strong and brave. And they are the ones who will fight back against the Dark and against Evil; it is they who will slay serpents and chimeras, demons and gorgons.

The plateaus of the Wild Reaches have been inhabited for thousands of years, but the population is still barbarian to the bone. Wild-Reachers possess no written language, and the complete history of their people is thus unknown. These people have become one of the strongest of the Twilight Age, and yet nothing of their origins has remained in their folk memory. But there is one unique historical event, which appears, detaches itself, and crystallizes in the minds of the civilized realms: the sack of Maechrak.

Many years ago, mercenaries from the Princely Communes came through the Kamsatra Pass, to push their country's frontier all the way out to the southern plateaus of the Wild Reaches. In doing so, they forced the most southerly tribes northwards, which was perhaps too much to ask of them. The angry barbarians refused to abandon the land of their ancestors. The clans decided to kick these men from the south out of the Wild Reaches once and for all. The Bloody Spike was handed round and a horde was soon gathered around the stone dolmen in the Field of Chieftains. Thousands of howling Wild-Reachers massed in the south and razed the hastily erected frontier fort at Maechrak to the ground, completely surprising the defenders. Only a handful of invaders were spared, so that they could return home with a message: Stay away from the Wild Reaches!

Diplomacy

The Wild Reachers' main allies are the Lyphanians. These warriors share the same love of battle as the Wild-Reachers. However, members of Wild-Reacher clans continue to carry out raids on Lyphanian frontier villages, and vice-versa, but these are considered to be only virile sport, not declarations of war.

The Wild-Reachers' enemies are the inhabitants of the Princely Communes. When they go raiding the cities of these cruel people, Wild-Reachers are not indulging in some pleasant sporting pastime – they are looking to kill. Wild-Reachers cannot forgive the Communes' habit of taking their countrymen as slaves. Wild-Reachers attack the Princely Communes at the slightest sign of attempted colonization. Wild-Reachers always defend their territory, but as long as the shopkeepers stay south of the mountains, they accept their offers of trade without animosity.

"Come in... come in. I don't have much time left to finish your education. My old eyes have already begun to make my vision cloudy. Sit down here on the ground, next to me. You have helped me in my time of oldness, so let me pass on to you the mirror of my life – my sword. Aye, for it's steel that counts, son. It has power, you know. You must learn its discipline and pierce its secret... for it won't take you long to realize you can't trust anyone in this infernal world, whether man or beast... or woman. Only trust the steel, and when you're being skinned, don't go counting on any god or priest to come running to save your hide. Morkh hates a weakling. If you're weak, he'll laugh and crack you like a walnut. Morkh is a savage god and he cares not for justice, but he gave you your strength and honor the day you were born, and you don't need anything more than that. But that don't make him trustworthy neither. Trust the steel. Its secret is our people's secret. Let the priests and philosophers meditate on old Morkh. Learn the riddle of the steel and you won't need them or him. Take the sword, and perhaps, at the hour of your death, you'll be worthy of your place at Morkh's side."



THE ADAMANTINE ASTRALITE

Exclusively made up of Wild-Reacher shamans from all the clans, the Adamantine Astralite is an organization specialized in the care of the severely injured. Present in all the realms, it is only open to the rich. Lawbreakers beware! The ferocious Howlers in charge of security are very quick to cleave the unruly in two. This unusual faction relies on its potions – concocted with aster, carefully collected by members who remain back home – and its efficient distribution network. Its current growth allows it to present the Wild Reaches in a different light than that of barbarism.

SOCIETY

Strictly speaking, there is no government. The Wild Reaches are composed of several clans that all respect the Custom. It is a tribal system, dominated by its War Chieftains.

Despite mastering the art of metal smelting, they are still barbarians. Their physical force, their stubbornness, and their loyalty are legendary all over Harmundia. An Urganish citizen once said: "Wild-Reachers never follow your advice, but they always keep their promises."

Wild-Reachers live in small isolated tribal groups, raising cattle, working on their crops of oats, and stealing each other's cattle and women. This isolation causes distinct differences in the appearance of members of different tribes. The *Angas* are giants who can recognize other clan-members not only by their size, but also by their sharply chiseled features. The *Chulainns* are humans with characteristic square jaws and high foreheads. The *Twyts* are cantankerous sprites, always fighting, who all have very long noses. Some clans even accentuate their differences: the *Lacheichs* shave the sides of their heads and wear a multitude of buckles and rings in their ears, whilst the savage *Galleas* gather their hair in ponytails on the tops of their heads. All Wild-Reachers have nothing but contempt for the kind of comfort considered minimal by Southerners. They are a solemn people, and avoid bragging. "Friend or foe, the measure of a fighter is in his strength and in his heart." They are wary of magic, and do not appreciate those who use it.

♣ Social Categories

Taken as a whole, seven categories can be discerned in Wild-Reacher society.

Clan Chieftains are the undisputed deciders of clan destiny.

Few Wild-Reachers attain great age. The **Grey Hairs** are therefore highly respected, for their hair shows that they have been brave enough and cunning enough to survive. They advise the clan Chieftains.

The **Howlers** are the warriors. They are given this name because when they go into combat, they emit a terrifying war cry to fire their souls and strengthen their hearts. Coming together, they make an irregular infantry, which although lacking in any conventional military training is overflowing with so much strength and vitality that it makes an awesome enemy.

Women are well respected and their role of nurturing mother or guardian of the fireside sets them apart as individuals. They risk neither beatings nor being sold as slaves, and they espouse ideals very similar to those developed in Janrenia.

The **Youngsters** are those who have not yet killed in combat; they are generally limited to the lesser tasks, such as chopping wood or milking the wild goats.

The **Outlaws** are bandits and brigands. They rarely attack the clans, preferring to pick on the few rare travelers to be found in this tormented part of the world. They are very active around the Kamsatra Pass, and frequently make pillaging raids into the Princely Communes.

The last category is the **Perjured** – those who have transgressed the Custom. They are ostracized and have no choice other than the path of exile to avoid being cut to pieces by members of their own or other clans.

♣ The Custom

Human or seasonling, all Wild-Reachers respect the Custom and it is rarely transgressed.

By tradition, a Youngster is considered a man from the time he has killed in combat. For most Wild-Reachers, this transition takes place around the sixteenth birthday, either during an inter-clan skirmish, or during battles against the Lyphanians or citizens of the Princely Communes. From that moment on, they must respect the Custom.

The Wild-Reachers are courteous to each other and to their guests. In fact, in the Wild Reaches, rudeness is synonymous with immediate combat. "Civilized men are less respectful than savages, for they know that their impoliteness will not necessarily lead to their skull being smashed to pieces." Any Wild-Reacher worthy of the name takes a wife before his twenty-first birthday comes around. Afterwards, he stays home to look after the cattle and the clan territories.

A widow will usually marry the brother of her deceased husband, although Wild-Reachers do not practice polygamy.

All mortals are thus free to do as they see fit. Violating the Custom, however, will bring disapproval from the entire clan. If there is disagreement within the clan, clan members will not fight over an outlaw's dead body, which makes him an ideal target for ambitious youngsters.

In reality, every clan has developed its own version of the Custom, and apart from a few basic principles already cited, the only thing common to all clans is the Bloody Spike.

Whenever a clan is threatened, its Chieftain can call upon the help of all other clans throughout the Wild Reaches by sending out a blood-covered spike to each clan. If invaders are slaughtering Wild-Reachers, it is dipped in the victims' blood. If the situation is different, the clan that sends the Spike will anoint it with the blood of its own warriors. The Bloody Spike suspends all inter-clan feuding, and all the clans send Howlers to defend the clan in need. The resulting horde is practically invincible, as the defenders of Maechrak learned too late...

CRAFTS AND COMMERCE

The Wild-Reachers are a sedentary people and they export nothing of great value. Their arid lands do not make them wealthy, although some Howlers have made it rich by selling wolf furs and white bearskins. On the other hand, their famous know-how is much in demand, even well beyond the frontiers of their country. Anga clan giants and their kin, for example, have become specialists of a very particular craft: ballistics. They can build high-quality hardwood catapults and ballistae that many great strategists dream of having in their armies. Wild-Reacher blacksmiths' work is also highly prized, and blades from their forges are extremely well manufactured and incredibly shock-resistant. They pierced the secret of the steel long ago.

MAGIC IN THE REGION

☞ Ben Morkh

To the northeast lies a great mountain called Ben Morkh, also known as Mount Morkh, which is reputed to be the resting place of the hero Morkh. Chieftains from all the clans lie buried in the Field of the Dead, situated at the foot of the mountain, which has become the most sacred place in the country. A huge temple has been carved into the rock here. A colossal phoenix is grasping a heavy sculpted sword in its talons, and beneath its motionless gaze stands a gargantuan portal, guarded by twenty-four giants of stone, all wearing sparkling, detailed armor. An eternal flame burns in the doorway to a mausoleum. Only clan Chieftains and their successors may enter.

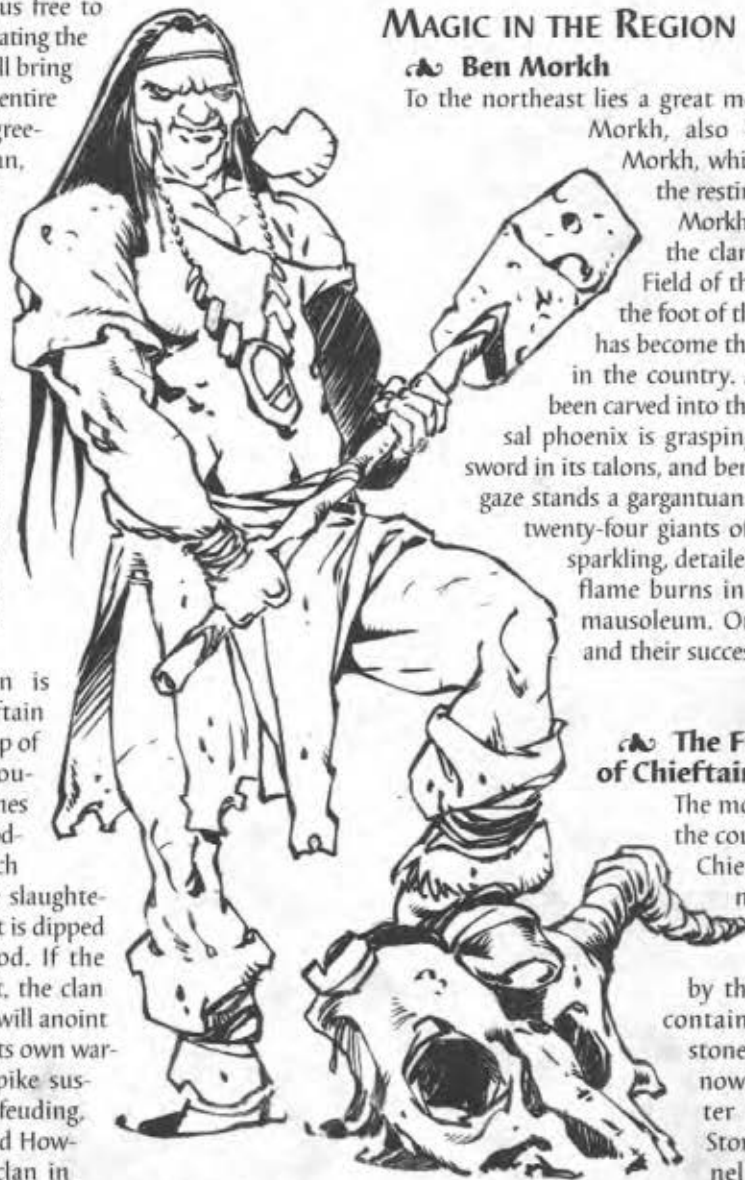
☞ The Field of Chieftains

The most famous place in the country is the Field of Chieftains. It lies to the northwest, a great rocky stretch of land surrounded by thick, dark forest. It contains many ancient stone structures of unknown origin. In its center is the Standing Stone, an austere funnel of dark rock. The legend claims that

Morkh ripped this Stone from a mountain, in a far kingdom inaccessible to mortals, and threw it at Ymir, the ice-giant who was attempting to invade the Wild Reaches at the head of a legion of demons vomited from the Abyss.

☞ Coronis

Very few know about this crystal fortress, in the heart of a glacier tucked away in the extreme north of the country, which was sculpted by glass-workers during the Flamboyance. Silent and forgotten, Coronis sleeps in crystalline confinement, patiently awaiting the day when the sacred fire will once again let it put the bellows to its forge, to build artifacts capable of shaking the primordial equilibrium of the realms.



The Buccaneer Haven

GEOGRAPHY

☛ Relief

The interior of this country is very mountainous. It is an area full of draaken and active volcanoes. Chaos reigns here against a backdrop of tortured rock formations and deep ravines. A low chain of hills – the Counterforts – creates a frontier between, on the one side, this harsh and brutal landscape, and on the other side, the coastline of the Gulf of Ebony. The Counterforts in fact create a natural barrier between draaken territory and the Buccaneer Haven. No one has yet contested the original Haven frontiers, which included draaken territory. In practice, the western frontier of the Buccaneer Haven stops at the Counterforts.

The Haven is a wide coastal band east of the Counterforts. It belongs to the Buccaneers, who also control an archipelago of numerous volcanic islands of varying sizes. These islands are riddled with small creeks, which make ideal mooring places for boats. Tortage-la-Rouge, the largest city, sits in a huge natural harbor capable of welcoming more than forty buccaneer galleons. The lowlands are arid, although water can be found, bubbling up from springs or trapped in glass-like formations of transparent lava. Moreover, excess rainwater becomes trapped inside the conduits of tubular lava that run under the sea, ensuring a nearly inexhaustible supply of drinking water.

Above the creeks and ports, steep mountain peaks reach up into omnipresent clouds. In the taverns at Tortage-la-Rouge, aged mariners murmur tales of ancient ruins, glimpsed through brief partings in the clouds, or of terrible eerie cries that float down from the high summits on nights when the moon is full. No Buccaneer will admit to living in fear of whatever may be up there behind the clouds, but the peaks remain unexplored.

It is also often possible to come across weird constructions emerging from the sea, which can be as hazardous to ships as a coral reef. These are Remains of the Flamboyance, springing from the sea like tiny islands.

☛ Climate

Mainland Buccaneer Haven is subject to a Mediterranean-type coastal climate. Temperatures are comfortable all year round, and an east wind known as the Whistle brings refreshment and cheer, and fills the sails of westward ships. The further inland one goes, the more the climate becomes hot and continental. In summer, temperatures climb rapidly to overwhelming heat, whereas in winter they swiftly drop, sometimes to freezing.

The islands of the buccaneer archipelago are tropical, with the usual vegetation of palm trees and exotic flowering plants. The high slopes are more humid, cove-

THE BUCCANEER HAVEN

Government

Indirect democracy

Language

Buccaneer lingo

Population

Humans 50%, spriggans 20%,

ogres 10%, medusae 10%,

dwarves 5%, satyrs 5%

Dancers: common

Demons: rare

Capital

Tortage-la-Rouge

Money

The pistol (equal to 10 pieces of gold)

Natural resources

Hunting, fishing, general marine produce



red as they are by a layer of white clouds, through which it is possible to see the rain falling on the highest hills.

☛ Flora and Fauna

Birds of all kinds, rodents, and *kumpai* – a kind of small goat – have proliferated across a wide band of the eastern coast, as well as on the islands. To these, the Buccaneers have added their own animals, such as the molossian hounds – a race of huge canine. Some of these dogs have escaped to form great packs that roam the country, attacking solitary animals. The plant life is typical for a humid country, and vegetation is thick and luxuriant. There are magnificent orchids, and one particular plant that grows everywhere is the *purprette*. The purple petals of this flower, finely ground, form part of a special paste used to seal breeches in ships' hulls. On land, there are no dangerous creatures.

At sea, things are very different. The sea is the domain of krakens and cetaceans of all sizes, from dolphins to blue whales. There are still many sirens here, and it is not uncommon, when sailing near solitary rock formations, to hear the strains of melodious voices.

IMPORTANT TOWNS AND CITIES

The towns have been constructed around enormous jetties, called flotillas. On the mainland, they follow along the edges of spits of land, giving rise to hotchpotch assemblies of boats and floating dwellings that teem with activity. On the islands, the flotillas have been organized in the biggest inlets. Nowadays, none of these strange floating towns can expand anymore, and Buccaneers have to purchase new sites through the *Ocean*, a complicated system of annuities run by the Helm.

It is only along the Counterforts that the Buccaneers have set up land-based installations – the stockades. These are mainly there as hunting stations, and to protect against invasion by the draaken.

☛ Tortage-la-Rouge

This little township was the first flotilla to be founded by Rigello. Mounted on stilts in the water, it has become an important port, serving as a harbor for a great number of ships. The Helm works from here. All the town's activity is based on the sea, and it is pleasant to stroll along its wooden walkways, where the prevailing odor of fish hangs in the sea air.

☛ Freefort

This is the biggest stockade in the Counterforts. Situated in the middle of a security cordon defined by the Buccaneers, its large population has developed an intense activity based on "boucaning" – the old pirate way of hunting, preparing and barbecuing smoked meat. Between its high hardwood palisades bristling with loopholes and projectile weaponry, numerous animal-hide tents and earthen dwellings used as storerooms give the impression of a temporary bivouac.

THE BUCCANEERS

☛ History

According to legend, the Buccaneer Haven was discovered by Rigello, the Urganish pirate, whilst fleeing the justice of the First Baron. Having found the Urganish defenses too powerful, he began to plunder the coastal towns of the Modehan Marches. The two powers placed a price on his head and he ran to the ocean. He followed the sea to the Gulf of Ebony, where he discovered an archipelago of inhabited islands, and an enclave of hospitable land, which he called the Buccaneer Haven. The territory had fruit trees, small game, fresh water and excellent moorings. On a small island, a few nautical miles from the mainland, Rigello set up a small encampment, which he named Tortage in tribute to the giant sea turtles that habitually came there to lay their eggs on the beach. He stayed for almost a year before returning to the mainland. He was soon up to his old tricks, and it was not long before he was back in Tortage, looking for refuge. The few men he left behind told of his exploits while escaping the Urganish and the Modehans, and very soon other captains came.

Rigello saw these other captains as rivals, challenging and killing them all, one by one. He became the undisputed boss, and the island town was thence known as Tortage-la-Rouge – "Bloody Tortage". His crimes, however, did not remain unpunished for long and his crews joined together to strip him of all his authority. A group was set-up, and appointed decision-maker for the Haven – the Helm. The Haven became a refuge for pirates of all kinds, who began to explore the area, and crossed the Counterforts. They encountered the hostile draaken and war broke out. The fighting forced the Buccaneers back to the coastal region beyond the Counterforts. Ever since, the Buccaneers have limited themselves to maritime activities. From

time to time, they organize raids on coastal towns. Many of the other realms have tried several times to push them back, but their ships always vanish. The country is extremely well organized and the Buccaneer galleons dominate the eastern seas. Today, while less dangerous than 100 years ago, the Buccaneers remain a thorn in the side of all honest ship captains on the Sea of Orion.

☛ Diplomacy

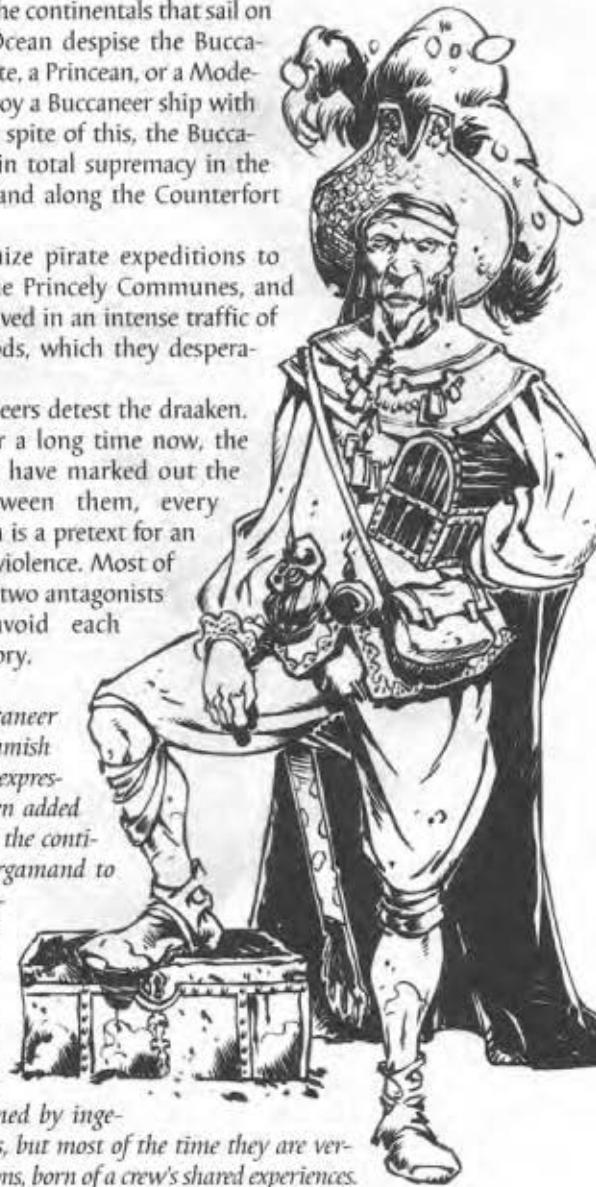
The Buccaneers will usually do their utmost to avoid Modehan and Urganish military ships. Recently, Queen Seneca of the Widowlands has sworn to clear the Buccaneers from the islands. She has ordered her shipyards to build several fast man'o'wars, in order to seek out the Buccaneers and send them to the bottom of the sea. Whether they are successful in their task, or whether they themselves end up either on the bottom or in Buccaneer hands, remains to be seen.

In general the continentals that sail on the Aurora Ocean despise the Buccaneers. A Keshite, a Princean, or a Modehan will destroy a Buccaneer ship with equal glee. In spite of this, the Buccaneers maintain total supremacy in the eastern seas and along the Counterfort hill line.

They organize pirate expeditions to Keshe and the Princely Communes, and they are involved in an intense traffic of precious woods, which they desperately need.

The Buccaneers detest the draaken. Although, for a long time now, the Counterforts have marked out the frontier between them, every confrontation is a pretext for an explosion of violence. Most of the time, the two antagonists prefer to avoid each other's territory.

Note: *Buccaneer lingo is of Urganish origin. Many expressions have been added from ports on the continent, from Urganand to Lyphan. Moreover, private codes are numerous. Sometimes these consist of numbers carefully defined by ingenious captains, but most of the time they are verbal abbreviations, born of a crew's shared experiences.*



"Truth to be told, I cry every time I see a boat leave harbor on an expedition to some distant land. Every return brings back several months worth of food and apparel, but I don't like it when my man's not around. I know the old sea-salt probably has a girl in every port, but I don't hold it against him as long as he comes back to me, safe and sound. Oh it's not easy being a worthy wife to a Buccaneer, but as long as the Helm is there to watch over our safety, I shall have no fear, nor regret my loneliness. My man is in my heart, and I send him good hope."



SOCIETY

Buccaneer society is structured on the family model. Every spit of land, whether natural or artificial, shelters a flotilla. Each flotilla is composed of several Families, and they choose the Pilot, a member of the Helm, to lead them. Every flotilla controls several ships, whose captains are sole masters aboard.

☛ The Helm

This is an association of all the Pilots. Its main role is to define the Ocean, the annuity system intrinsic to the buccaneer community. The Helm also defines the rules for voyage, and sailors who put to sea have to take out a kind of life insurance to protect their loved ones. When captains are preparing to sail, the Helm gives them specific mission orders, which must be carried out for the good of the whole community.

☛ The flotillas

This is the name given to the strange floating assemblies that stretch out, like dislocated arms, across the sea. They all have baroque names that are often in harmony with their natural surroundings: Jellyfish, Whale-bite, Seahorse, and even Singing Rock.

☛ The Families

Mortals join together in Families according to their specific activities. There are five of them, linked to the sea, and they are present on every flotilla in varying numbers: the Merchants, the Shipbuilders, the Steersmen, the Sailors, and the Fishermen. There is a sixth Family, the Edge Buccaneers, for the mainland. Faced with the draaken threat, the Buccaneers have built a host of stockades to protect their domains. The Edge Buccaneers are the protectors of their countrymen's safety. They are also remarkable hunters, and they carry out their work with great zeal.

☛ The Ships

Aboard ships, the captains, who all come from one of the five sea Families, wield power. They receive the mission orders that come from the Helm, and they ensure that the precepts laid down by the Ancestors are respected. The other levels of hierarchy are navigator and helmsman, ship's surgeon or supercargo, sailor, ship's boy, whore, and slave. The only law aboard is the law of the sword. Anyone may defy the captain at any time and try

to take his place. No holds are barred as long as you have the necessary motivation to fight and win...

☛ The Cipher-sorcerer

In the Buccaneer Haven, magic is practiced freely, but broadly speaking, the Eclipsists form the majority. Every ship has its on-board mage. Due to his knowledge of astronomy, his role is mainly to survey the heavens to keep the ship on course. For this reason, mages of the Eclipse have a strong presence here.

☛ Women

There are not many women in the Buccaneer Haven. A lot of them are captain's strumpets or courtesans from Tortage-la-Rouge's walkways. Those of faded charms run houses of ill-repute or other businesses, where they either make enough money to return to the mainland, or die of hunger.

CRAFTS AND COMMERCE

The Buccaneers mainly trade in the products of the sea. They are a long way from their old days of "boucaning", which is now left to the Edge Buccaneers. The sailors prefer to hunt the whales that abound in the warm seas, and they have also organized a lucrative trade in sirens with the city-states of the Princely Communes. At regular intervals, to keep their own legend alive, they indulge in a little piracy.

Their proficiency in shipbuilding does not need to be demonstrated. Even if the excessive deforestation of their country has caused a lack of raw materials, their ships are without question the fastest and most maneuverable. Buccaneers never deny themselves the opportunity to charge fortunes for their services as freelance shipbuilders. They are also very skilled in the manufacture of highly resistant fishnets, and ivory harpoons that are renowned for their lightness.

The Buccaneers are the best shipbuilders, and the best sailors, in Harmundia.

MAGIC IN THE REGION

☛ The Breaks

Gargantuan towers, called "breaks", stand out in the open sea near the flotillas. Due to their abundant harvest of seaweed and fish, the Buccaneers are self-sufficient. Dating from the Flamboyance, these towers are used as underwater farms, and the people that live inside them have been able to evolve amazing amphibious capacities. Some breaks are crumbling as a result of erosion, forcing the Buccaneers to turn to the mages and architects of the Square to reinforce their foundations.

☛ Black Man's Island

The Flamboyance has left its mark on the seascape throughout the whole region. Black Man's Island is sur-

THE BROTHERHOOD OF THE OCTOPUS

Under the kindly protection of the Helm, this society has set up a system of escorts available to all merchant ships that are not Urganish or Modehan. It is present in all ports, and has usually installed a network of contraband and traffic of all kinds, thanks to its connections with Buccaneers back in the Haven. The Brotherhood hands out certificates of safe passage, which in practice are rarely honored, unless the ship-owner has seen to business and paid the high price necessary to embark one of the members aboard his ship. This Buccaneer then becomes the guarantor of the ship's safety. All the members of this society have a tattooed purple octopus on their left forearms.

ely the most famous Remain, and the most representative. It is a single island, with ancient ruins strewn amongst its luxuriant vegetation. In the center of the island stands a tall ebony statue of a man blowing into a conch shell. The mages lose themselves in hypotheses as to the possible role of this odd sculpture, for they have discovered that the whole of the island was originally paved. So the island may be the top part of a stupendous structure, whose base is beneath the sea. Unfortunately, the sea is choppy and the water is murky all around the island. It is impossible to see the bottom, and any foolhardy diver should be aware of the presence here of a particularly voracious kraken...

☛ The Sainted Sheets

These are huge frescoes, painted during the Flamboyance by Inspired Vista Painters. They are found on the walls in the main residences of Family leaders. They all allow direct displacement to the Helm's palace in Tortage-la-Rouge, in record time, without need of a boat. They also make it easier to evacuate a flotilla menaced by an approaching storm.

Bokkor, the Island at the end of the world

Note: Inspired player characters may not originate from Bokkor. Seasonlings (and strangers in general) are not welcome here.

GEOGRAPHY

☛ Relief

Bokkor is a divided island, mainly covered by jungle. Once the surrounding barrier of coral reefs has been crossed, a savanna can be seen stretching to its southernmost tip. In the west a low line of hills can be seen, and above them, winged figures in the air.

☛ Climate

The island can count itself among the warmest populated countries, with daytime temperatures rising well

above 100° F during the hottest months. Spring rains turn the dried earth in the north into a muddy, filth-infested swamp. A hot tropical climate reigns over this insular area.

☛ Flora and Fauna

Animal and plant life is typical for a tropical island, and almost exactly like that found in the Buccaneer Haven. The sole exception is the presence of strange and scaly-skinned winged creatures - wyverns. The Bokkori raise and ride them. They can also carry prey (up to 200 pounds) by holding it with their talons. Wyverns are rather stupid and difficult to train. When they are in flight, they often forget the purpose of their missions, and try to land or catch prey. Wyvern riders always keep a club within reach on the saddle, to correct such errors.

IMPORTANT TOWNS AND CITIES

☛ New Bokkor

This port town is known by the Buccaneers, who think it is the island's capital. Bold and intrepid merchants come to this town to trade weapons and manufactured products for ostrich feathers full of gold dust.

☛ Old Bokkor

This town is the true capital of Bokkor. It is closed to outsiders, both for religious reasons and to protect the Winged Spirits that live there. The town bristles with high towers, lacking doors or windows, where the wyverns are cooped. As the only access to these towers is from the sky, the winged creatures are safe from any earth-bound invaders.

THE BOKKORI

☛ History

Bokkor's black-skinned warriors are the descendants of a once-powerful tribe that roamed the continental landmass, in what is now the Keshe desert. Long before

BOKKOR

Government

Monarchy

Language

Bokkori

Population

Humans 100%

Dancers: rare

Demons: rare

Capital

Old Bokkor

Money

None

Natural Resources

Gold, silver and diamond mines

the Flamboyance, the Bokkori were invaded and pushed out of their land. They fled and rallied in an island region wherein stood a ruined city now known as Old Bokkor. All races considered this an accursed region, and they left the coast clear for the Bokkori to set up home and build a new city on the ruins.

For centuries, the Bokkori fought with the giant wyverns that flew across the jungle. A tribal hero, Lumbeba, traveled to their mountain caves and stole their eggs. He raised the young wyverns, and discovered that they could be trained and saddled. This let the Bokkori spread their domination over the whole of the island, forming the kingdom as it stands today. Lumbeba was immediately carried to the throne. He had a twin brother who was devoted to him, and when he announced in a Revelation that the Bokkori would thenceforth be protected by twin brothers, no one complained. From that day forward, twin kings have governed the island of Bokkor, and they are chosen from among all the male twins in the Black Kingdom.

♣ Diplomacy

The new twin kings of Bokkor are Mbega and Tenaunir. They are both young and strong, and very popular with the citizens of Old Bokkor. However, Tenaunir has connections with some rather dislikable groups who want to seize power and set an unknown renegade with a masked face on the spiritual throne of Bokkor.

The island's position makes alliances with the other realms unlikely. The islands only more-or-less direct contact is with the Buccaneers and the seasonlings.

SOCIETY

Bokkori culture is conservative and resistant to change. Outside the two cities, people are subject to very little control in their daily lives. However, the powers of the wyverns in Old Bokkor are respected with deference, and open rebellion or acts of disobedience are most rare.

♣ The twin kings

Bokkor is governed by its twin kings. The other social classes are, in descending order: priests, wyvern riders, craftsmen, merchants and military officers, lancers, women and servants, beggars, brigands, and slaves.

Ever since Lumbeba announced his desire to mandate a twin monarchy, the Bokkori have maintained the tradition. To avoid conflict over succession, it has become the custom that, whenever one of the kings dies, the other must either kill himself or be escorted out of the kingdom. Then the priests choose a new pair of twins from among the nation's young men, and they crown them.

♣ The Winged Spirits

The Winged Spirits are equivalent to heavy cavalry of exceptional quality, with the added capability of

being used during sieges and sea battles. The rest of the army is made up of a trained and hardened light infantry, armed with lances, assegais (short spears), and shields.

TRADE AND COMMERCE

The Bokkori are self-sufficient and produce all that is necessary for their island civilization to flourish. They will only allow themselves occasional rare trades with the few bold Buccaneer captains who venture into their isolated creeks. In this way they obtain mirrors and other decorative items, popular throughout the Twilight Realms, in exchange for huge diamonds or powdered gold of unequalled purity.

ARBASSIN

"The Censor Arbassin, married to Ewelf of Roundrock, has already unmasked one of our eminences. His role within the Cipher-sorcerer was vital during the years that followed Agone's ascendancy to the throne. He must be thanked for the new training and organizational set-up of the Censors. The man seems to have an overwhelming influence on the Urganish Censors. We believe him to be quite capable of federating them. In this case, he might be tempted to take the Cipher-sorcerer in new, unexpected directions. This alarming situation has been the object of several interventions, although none have yet been fruitful.

The Censor is very elusive, and may only be approached during the few days he spends with his wife at Roundrock, or during one of his visits to his son at the Jornist academy. Should we consider putting him out? To this day, he has never gone against the principles of the Order."

MAGIC IN THE REGION

♣ The Ruins of Larsha

On the southern point of the island, a chaotic group of rocks hides a strange field of columns, pointing up to the sky like standing stones. The columns, covered in green, stinking moss, are engraved with delicate runes, and sound hollow if tapped. They look like nothing else in the land, and nobody knows where they came from, or what they are for. On stormy nights, a muted lament can be heard rising from the earth, as if some unseen pianist were playing an organ, with the columns as organ-pipes. It is not an accursed place, but it must be recognized that the Bokkori never go there. The wyverns fear this place more than anywhere else, and the Bokkori have adopted the same attitude. They are unaware that there is an immense underground cavern here, which is completely painted. By the magic of Vista, these rock-bound frescoes form an ancient Opus, capable of triggering the opening of a portal that leads directly to the Isle of Autumn, with no need to risk the perils of the sea. Only a few wise seasonlings know of its existence, and guard its secret carefully, for it may play an important role in the events that must one-day come...

THE KESHITE EMPIRE

Government

None

Language

Keshite. The desert tribes tend to consider a person unable to speak Keshite as, at best, a slave, at worst, a walking practice target.

Population

Humans 40%, spriggans 20%, ogres 5%, satyrs 10%, sprites 10%, giants 5%. Demons: very rare
Dancers: uncommon

Capital

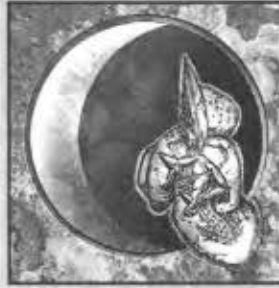
None

Money

The dirhem, equal to 5 pieces of gold

Natural Resources

Fruits, goats and sheep, sugar, silk goods, precious gems



The Keshite Empire

GEOGRAPHY

Relief

The Keshite Empire is a desolate expanse of sand, dotted with an occasional oasis of greenery. The largest oases have lakes. People meet and collect water at these crossroads, before returning to the wind-swept dunes.

Hemmed in to the southwest and northeast by the Draaken Mountains, the Keshite Desert is flanked by the Scarlet Sea to the East. In the South, where startling black towers can be seen, and the desert gives way to a rocky expanse, the Widowlands begin.

Climate

Hot. The sandy desert brings thirst to its population and the few foreign caravans that cross it. The burning winds that blow from the Scarlet Sea to the Draaken Mountains bring an unbearable heat, which dries all in its path and causes the desert to expand a little more each day. Sometimes, in summer, storms can be seen building on the horizon above the dunes, but for all their thundering, no water ever falls from the sky. In winter, the sand absorbs three weeks of rainfall before the sky regains its sparkling blue.

In the desert, it is not the passage of seasons, but the sun that regulates the temperature. The stifling heat of the day gives way to a nighttime chill worthy of any of

the northern countries' harshest winters. At the heart of the night, the average temperature is around freezing.

The Keshite Desert is also a land of mirages and sandstorms. It can come to life at any moment without warning, sweeping away unsuspecting travelers.

The mountain ranges are subject to milder weather.

Flora and Fauna

Keshite is home to many species of small reptiles, as well as various poisonous scorpions and spiders. The oases allow cattle to be bred. They are also the birthplaces of the donkeys, camels, dromedaries and few horses, that carry the Keshites across the desert. Keshite is also a land of mystery and legend, where strange animals such as onagers, aals and paranders may be found.

Onagers: These donkeys are larger and more powerful than their cousins in other parts of Harmundia. They live exclusively in the desert of Keshite. Onagers are sensitive to the positions of the sun and moon in the sky, and they bray at regular intervals, allowing the Keshite tribes to tell the time.

Aals: These black beasts, the size of horses, have rear-ends like elephants. They have sharp-edged horns on their heads, and jaws like wild boars.

Paranders: These are deer, as hairy as a monkey and as big as a bull. Their thick fur camouflages them among the rocks, making them almost invisible in the Draaken Mountains.

The desert's plant life is sparse. The rocky zones around the mountains, strewn with giant water-gorged cacti, are few. The oases have palm trees and meager pastures. Sometimes in an oasis, cereal crops are grown, or more rarely, grapevines. Keshite also produces olives, dates and sugar cane. The desert is also the home of medicinal plants, and herbs that can drive a mortal to madness.

Bang: A product derived from the poppy plant and hemp, which is inhaled, and has a soporific effect. It can be deadly if too great a quantity is absorbed.

IMPORTANT TOWNS AND CITIES

The Cities

There are no permanent towns or cities in the desert. Some tribes have settled around water sources or in the Draaken Mountains. The desert-dwelling tribes are based around two or three oases, any one of which lacks the resources to last the whole year. High and thick walls surround the mountain towns, protecting the inhabitants from the Fallen and other mountain dangers. The headmen of these tribes are called caliphs.

The ribats

These fortified areas, lost in the immensity of the desert, are usually constructed around an oasis. The real fortresses among them are called kraks, but some are more like little towns. Some are little more than caravansaries. There are also temples to the Muses and heroes



of the Flamboyance, who are honored as gods, as well as Cipher-sorcerer academies.

Qaysaria

This town of tents is only set up once a year to welcome any caravans and Keshite tribes desirous of doing business with the intrepid merchants that come there to meet them. Qaysaria is always set up by the Scarlet Sea and attracts traders from across the continent (if the Buccaneers and sirens let them get there).

THE KESHITES

History

The story of Keshe is a story of the wars and legends of the tribes that followed its desert trails since its creation. Today, political life is dominated by a feud between the Madjids and the Mountaqims. Although the Madjids have become the dominant tribe in most of Keshe, the Mountaqims are still in savage opposition of their supremacy. Unable to win the war alone, they have made unholy deals with the draaken. The Mountaqims engage in ceaseless raiding on any caravans or tribes friendly with the Madjids.

This is not the only problem caused by Fallen seasonlings. Ever since the desert's appearance, the Fallen have always liked this part of the continent. The realm has a multitude of tales about morgana, pixies and draakens playing nasty tricks on Keshites or stray travelers.

Throughout the course of history, Keshites have been the victims of repeated assault and plunder by pirates from Buccaneer Haven and the frightening inhabitants of the Bokkor archipelago.

Diplomacy

Relations between the Keshites and the other realms are by no means standardized. Indeed, any Keshite tri-

be's contacts with other peoples or realms are directed by that particular tribe's historical and traditional interests. The Keshites are merchants and warriors, leading them to be sympathetic to trade or action. Their lives are full of adventure, and only the great desert knows where the future may lead them.

SOCIETY

The Madjids

The courageous Madjid horsemen are famous among the other tribes. When difficult decisions must be made in camp, the wise men send messengers to ask these warriors for counsel. Most of the time, their "counsel" becomes part of tribal law. The Madjid tribe is today the most populous of the country. Made up of two separate subtribes that endlessly travel the desert, they meet once a year to celebrate their first victory over the Mountaqims.

The Mountaqims

Sworn enemies of the Madjids, the Mountaqim are a jealous and idle people. First of the tribes to be beaten by the Madjid, they have sought refuge in the Draaken Mountains. The Fallen seasonlings of the mountains have come back with them to the desert plain to fight at their side. No one can remember how this war between the two tribes began, but the Mountaqims know that the spirits of their ancestors will only be able to find peace when the last Madjid is dead.

This tribe rarely stays more than a month in the same place, living from plunder and services provided to other tribes and to other realms.

The Latifas

This tribe is very different to the others. Among their tents can be seen women and children, but no men. The men were all killed or abandoned in the desert by the women.

Keshite women have always had a hard time explaining their point of view to the tribesmen. One day, as the result of a stupid commercial dispute, the wives of five brothers watched with horror as the warriors of their tribe executed their families. Enraged, they murdered their husbands and fled to find other dissident women. They found them, and together captured young male Keshites and foreigners, bearing their children and slaughtering the fathers.

The Latifas desire only one thing – to be recognized. They want to be able to fight like men and negotiate with other realms as equals.

The Nazirs

This is the name the Keshites give to the warrior tribes that live in the foothills of the Draaken Mountains. These longhaired and robust people guard the mountain passes, and prevent the Fallen who live on the higher slopes from coming down to the desert. Although poor

and lacking in equipment, these mountain men are exceptional warriors, more disposed to spear fighting than hand-to-hand combat. In desperate situations, however, they show no hesitation, and use their steel axes with great skill.

♣ The merchant caravans

Caravans are the only way to cross the desert in safety, and plenty of merchants choose them as the means of trading with the Keshite tribes, in order to benefit from this country's exceptional resources. A caravan includes pack animals, and mercenaries to ensure the security of the people and goods in transport. The head of the convoy is able to speak several languages beside Keshite, and is usually an excellent warrior, mage or Scander.

♣ The Cipher-sorcerer

In ribats lost in the desert, academies of Eclipsists study mirages and the Flamboyance. Elsewhere, Jornists try to understand the movements of the Dancers during sandstorms. Unfortunately, their experiments with magic usually end up rather badly. Apparently the desert is hostile to magic. Some Keshite academies are specialized in the localization of potentially powerful mages. As a result, emissaries from the Keshite Cipher-sorcerer are sent out into the neighboring realms, and sometimes far beyond, to seek out people who have strong resonance with Dancers.

CRAFTS AND COMMERCE

The Keshites are, with the possible exception of their distant enemies, the Liturgicals, without rival in the manufacture of glass and glass objects.

Keshite military craftsmanship is rather exotic. No swords, but *qalachuurs* and *nimchas*; *sarbarabahs* replace halberds; *kasrullahs* and *dabus* instead of maces; daggers are called *khanjars*. These objects are not very different to the weaponry found in the other Twilight Realms, but they are much easier to use on horseback.

Keshite clothes are famous for their vivid colors. Some tribes have made significant technical progress in the matter of cloth dyes. Keshite tunics are often decorated with gold filaments, which hold beautiful gemstones to the material. Some of these articles are true works of art.

The Keshites also manufacture bricks that are exported to the Widowlands and many other realms of the continent. The Keshites are masters of ceramics and porcelain making, and they sell their articles to emissaries from the Widowlands, who in turn disseminate them among the continent's markets.

The fact that a lot of Keshite resources come from the sea brings them to the Buccaneers' attention. They use pearls from the sea floor, ambergris – the base matter for perfumes – and coral.

MAGIC IN THE REGION

More than any other realm, the desert of Keshe is a land of fairytales and legends, most of which can be traced back to the Flamboyance.

♣ The Valley of the Poets

More than any other populations in the Twilight Realms, the Keshites have a devoted admiration for the Muses, and especially for Stanza, the godmother of Scansion. In this arid land, poets have always been kings. In the time of the Flamboyance, the poets had the tradition of meeting four times a year, at each change of season, in a mythical valley where hunger and thirst were unknown. At nightfall, these men and women recounted tales of adventures they had been in or seen. The meeting would go on until none of the Concordists had a tale left to tell.

Since the Dancers appeared, the poets seek this hidden valley. What has happened to it? Did it ever really exist? No one has the answers and it has become another legend. A few years ago, a thirst-stricken traveler – lone survivor of a caravan that had been attacked by some barbarous tribe – claimed to have seen the valley. He also claimed to have encountered legendary beings and to have been the witness to their adventures. From that day on, many have perished in the desert while searching for this legendary Valley of the Poets.

♣ The Tombs of the Flamboyance

Some caravaners claim to have come across strange geometric lines of monuments, built with huge stones. These structures are supposed to have carved into their surface all the names of the greatest heroes in Keshite history. The stones

are said to line the main alley of a luxurious garden, which is also the playground of monstrous beasts. These people all say that they discovered the valley after passing through a sandstorm, and in the evening after visiting the garden, they fell asleep, only to awake in the desert. Not one of them has ever seen the monuments again, but they are all certain that it was not a mirage. Some, obsessed by the vision, are still out there, traveling from oasis to oasis, searching the wilderness.

"For me, the desert is an ocean of gold that I have never stopped traveling. The lilting step of my steed, the blue cloth around my head, the cool of the oasis where I rest, the stars that pepper the sky as the night enfolds me in its arms... the life and memories of a true Keshite are made of such things. To the wanderer I offer tea, and three times I let him drink, as is the custom, before sounding the worthiness of his presence among the glorious sons of the desert. If he is worthy, then perhaps I will let him look upon my daughter's eyes. If not, then may he vanish quickly into the horizon, for my saber is as sharp as my soul is righteous. Leave my country? One day, of course, when the wind commands it. Until that day, I am lord of these dunes!"



THE TRIBES

Every tent shelters a family (4 to 10 people). A group of 5 to 20 families is a camp, and every camp a clan. Keshite tribes are loose federations of several clans, led by a headman, the sayyed. In the absence of any formal state structure, they are wholly independent. Northerners tend to think of them as "kings", and it's close to the truth. The desert lifestyle leaves no room for any class system. The only weapons a Keshite can use to make his place in the desert are his strength and his honor. Every clan has its customs, which are as absolute as laws. They vary from tribe to tribe, but some values are universal: hospitality, respect for life, the sacred nature of water, and the importance of horses.

☞ The Palace of Gold and Bronze

Keshite legends tell of a castle of gold and bronze, lost in the desert, wherein lived a man capable of unifying all the tribes. This man would supposedly spring forth from the sun-baked plain on a day of great danger to this realm and others. Poets show this man in their tales as being an accomplished Concordist and a mage of exceptional talent. They also claim that his coming will be greeted by the Decans, and mark the beginning of a new era.

The Widowlands

GEOGRAPHY

☞ Relief

To the northwest, the Widowlands are barred by the southern tip of the Draaken Mountains. East of these mountains lie a series of small valleys, which are the main point of passage between the Widowlands and Keshe. Further on from these valleys are the Areza Mountains, which protect the country's northeast.

To the southwest, the Zephir Mountains connect the Gulf of Lambris coastline to the prosperous valleys that separate the realm from the Modehan Marches. The interior is irrigated by plenty of rivers, and is made up of hills and small lakes.

☞ Climate

The Widowlands are blessed with a pleasant climate. In spring, temperatures go up to an average 60° F. In summer they average 70° F and start to reach 90° F if it gets really warm. Autumn and winter are mild, and temperatures rarely descend past freezing. Snow is rare.

☞ Flora and Fauna

☞ **Lightvines:** These vines yield luminous grapes whose color varies according to the vineyard. They have given rise to the celebrated nocturnal grape-picking sessions. The medusae like to conceive their children among lightvines.

☞ **Oil of Alizio:** The marvel of this oil is to shine continuously for years. It is used in most Houses and sells well abroad.

☞ **Augurflies:** Across their big transparent wings, these butterflies can show sepia-colored scenes of someone's future. These predictions are rare. Some medusae say it is a manifestation of the Glimmers, who are the servants of Diurn...

☞ **The Zeniths:** Under the Widowlands sun, some birds literally burst into flames. They become, for a few short moments, like the phoenix whose ashes seeded the earth. A fertility symbol, the zenith is said to be a spontaneous memory of the Primeval Fire. It can affect any bird.

IMPORTANT CITIES AND TOWNS

There are ten large towns in the Widowlands. Elsewhere, the domains are made up of great manors whose ladies rule over dozens of little villages.

☞ Estezia

This is the capital, at the northernmost point of the Gulf of Lambris. A city on the water, and a sizable port, it is home to the queen and the matriarchal council. The Remains here bring back memories of the time when the medusae still held the secret of petrification. Petrified animals and stone plants fill the rooftops and some of the mansions.

☞ Teschi

In Teschi, the artist's town, the observer is sure to be amazed by the spread of colors on the buildings, the mural paintings and the music that emanates from most windows. Poets and troubadours come here looking for patronage.

☞ Sagelli and the Sisters of Mezdi

You may perhaps travel to Sagelli, built upon a gigantic stone arch above a pass used by the Keshite caravans. Unless you prefer the Sisters of Mezdi, twin cities where trompe-l'œil is



THE WIDOWLANDS

Government
Matriarchal royalty,
Queen Seneca
Language
Ophidian
Population
Humans 60%,
medusae 20%,
other seasonings 20%
Dancers: rare
Demons: uncommon
Capital
Estezia
Money
The pearl, equal to
10 gold pieces
Natural Resources
Cereals, fruit, vegetables, iron, copper,
tin, silver, and gold mines



king, where the houses, sometimes, disappear from one town and appear in the other...

THE CARMS

🐍 History

In the age of the Flamboyant Kingdoms, the Widowlands were originally just a piece of land torn from the Moden-Hen' Empire. The medusae found a shelter in the empire's southeastern valleys, and began to organize. The Widowlands did not become a country until the end of the Second Age. The medusae, diminished by the loss of their power to petrify, could only form little domains, independent from each other, and had no opportunity for unification.

While the Great Wars were tearing Harmundia apart, the Keshite tribes attacked the medusae, looking to plunder their centuries-old artistic heritage. In the course of these attacks the medusae chased the last humans from power, negotiated with the Keshites, and officially founded the Widowlands. The name "carm", of obscure origin, dates back to this time. Today, it means "medusae" and, more specifically, the medusae aristocracy that rules the Widowlands.

The Third Age began with the reign of Queen Sieta, an indomitable medusa who remained on the throne for almost half a century. Her reign was a golden age for the arts, and saw the foundation of the first Black Towers. The Sietian Era remains engraved in the medusae's collective memory. Afterwards, Queen succeeded Queen through this day, and the accession to the throne of the young Queen Seneca.

🐍 Diplomacy

Seneca's reign has shown that the people of the Widowlands might have territorial ambitions. Supported by the matriarchal council, the queen undertook the construction of a war fleet with which to fight the Buccaneers for control of the seas. From that time

onward, several of these ships cruise the Gulf of Lambris, ensuring its security. Understanding full well that war with the Buccaneers could have an effect on the slave "market", the queen also decided to battle for a few of the mountain passes that were contested with the Keshites and the Modehans. Without breaching any trade deals that link the Widowlands with these two countries, the Queen evidently wants to take plenty of prisoners, who would in due course become slaves...

SOCIETY

🐍 The medusae

🐍 The young girls

Young medusae are pampered and protected by their mothers. In a House, they hold an important position, and often have power of life and death over the House's slaves. Capricious and extremely unstable when the snakes reach maturity, young medusae are perpetual hazards for those who might provoke their anger...

🐍 The Mothers

A Mother is a medusa in charge of a House, which is a domain composed of a manor and the lands that depend upon it. Mothers administrate their lands until they become Elders or are asked by the queen to sit on the matriarchal council.

🐍 Professors

Amongst the medusae, some work to educate young girls who will become Mothers and, perhaps, Elders. These medusae spend most of their time awakening the children's curiosity, and teaching them the finer qualities of art, whether magical or Dullen. Professors often travel, selling their abilities throughout Harmundia.

🐍 Chimerians

A Chimerian is a medusa that studies drugs. It is a blanket-term covering all the drug-linked professions. A Chimerian could be an expert on snakes, or of the art of venom extraction, poison preservation, sales, manufacture, etc. All Chimerians work for the Chimera Guild, itself under the authority of the Matriarchy.

🐍 Poisoners

A Poisoner is a medusa that studies poisons. In a manner similar to that of Chimerians, the term Poisoner includes all the professions linked to poisoning, from the medusa in charge of buying slave guinea pigs, to those in charge of discovering new poisons. The title is meant to frighten but Poisoners may also manufacture antidotes to the known poisons. Lastly, they do not belong to a guild but they usually do belong to a House.

🐍 The Elders

At the prescribed age, medusae go to the Black Towers to do magical research, in particular in a branch of magic that might one day allow all medusae to regain their lost

"My mother passed on to me her office. I learned from her and I extracted the precious snake venom the way she showed me. Please believe me, this is a complex art. The medusae that come to give us the poison from their snakes are often threatened by debt. They come to earn a few pearls and they regret their plight. You must understand that when they do this they are conceding their heritage, and the snakes that have protected them for so many years are diminished, little by little... One must know how to reassure them, speaking softly, which helps to render the snakes docile. Many Poisoners wear gloves covered with sirens' scales as protection from bites and spitting. One has to be aware of the hazardous nature of this profession. One can never tell how a snake is going to react, much less its mistress..."



art of petrification. Elders are feared and respected by the other medusae. They are known to be powerful, and sometimes on the brink of madness. When they leave their Black Towers to visit a House, everybody does their utmost to make sure their stay is as pleasant as possible. The queen regularly calls on the Elders to give their advice on important national decisions.

☪ The Leaders

A hereditary Queen rules the Widowlands. She presides over a matriarchal council whose members are chosen on

merit. As a general rule, they are medusae that have particularly shone in the administration of their domains. Today Queen Seneca, a young medusa notorious for her cynicism and cruelty, leads the country.

☪ Slaves

Many humans and seasonlings are used as slaves in the Widowlands. Medusae hold the power of life and death over slaves, who come from everywhere, although most are the victims of Buccaneer ships, sold in Estezia. Modehans captured during skirmishes in the Zephyr Mountains also become slaves, just like certain Keshite merchants accused of having swindled their customers.

☪ Craftsmen and peasants

As freemen, their status is higher than that of a slave. That said, it is rare for a peasant to choose to emigrate to the Widowlands. Submitted to the will of the Mothers, peasants only just make enough to eat, and have to give the lion's share of the harvest to the House.

☪ Artists

It is often said that you have to be an artist or a medusa to live in the Widowlands. Indeed, talented artists can often find fortune and pleasure in this country. This rather special status comes from the medusae's patronage and devotion to the arts.

CRAFTS AND COMMERCE

The Widowlands are famous in four crafts: poison, drugs, art and teaching.

☪ Poison

Thanks to the multitude of ophidian species that hiss on their heads, medusae have built an economy based on poison. The Poisoners are in charge of the manufacture and distribution of their poisons, which are sold to the highest bidders throughout Harmundia. The Princely Communes and the Mercenary Republic are both excellent customers when it comes to getting a hold of the rarest and most virulent poisons. For those looking to acquire such products, it is usually enough to contact one of the Houses and gain an interview with a Poisoner. It is not possible to buy medusa poison outside the realm.

☪ Drugs

Their snakes also allow medusae to create an incomparable variety of drugs. Their effects vary, and can just as easily make the body stronger or more perceptive as provoke hallucinations. These drugs can be bought from the Chimera Guild, which has branches in all the Widowland's towns. The Guild also manufactures new drugs, which are tested using slaves as guinea pigs.

☪ Art

Art is perhaps the Widowlands' most famous stock-in-trade. The medusae's artistic sensitivity and their pronounced taste for patronage and sponsorship have turned the country into a giant museum. Each House has its artistic treasures and the town museums hold rare and enchanted works. The medusae are always buying and selling, trying to assemble the most beautiful art collections in Harmundia. Thievery is an industry here, despite the fact that the theft of an artwork is punishable by death or, at best, enslavement. Some medusae keep one or to ex-thiefs as slaves, either as "security specialists" or as a means to steal their rivals' possessions.

☪ Education

The medusae have acquired an excellent reputation in the field of education. Their savoir-faire has been exported to the point where it has become a full-fledged trade. Medusae are regularly called upon to educate youths in many universities across Harmundia. The education they propose is a mix of discipline and sensitivity, with art holding pride of place. For those who have the means, a medusa can also become a private tutor or governess.

MAGIC IN THE REGION

☪ The Paths of Art

The artists of the Widowlands are said to have created a kingdom of Pictureworlds, and artists are recruited to weave the paths of Art. There are, in fact, Pictureworlds throughout the country, allowing the medusae to travel rapidly and meet in inaccessible places. They take part in Widowlands politics. The Houses decide together which masterpieces are to be composed. Some schools of painting are just covers for a "virtual realm"

THE CHIMERA GUILD

It is not difficult to recognize the Guild's building in any Widowlands city. It is usually a tall octagonal tower with vaporous emanations coming from the top. At its foot is the local square where all the sad individuals in search of hallucinogenic vapors assemble. All these buildings are well guarded, so that no one gets in and no one gets out. Sometimes, at night, the delirious cries of slaves can be heard, as some new drug is tested on them. Buyers are received on the ground floor. If they so wish, they may descend to the underground salons and try some of the drugs...

project that aims to create a Pictureworld kingdom where the medusae will one day go to find eternal refuge...

♣ The Founding Luminaries

The practice and continued existence of the Magical Arts in the Widowlands have attracted a lot of Founding Luminaries to this part of the world. Much more numerous here than elsewhere, they hide themselves in the country's red earth, waiting for the Inspired to awaken them so that they can create a Sanctuary.

♣ The Black Towers

The Towers are responsible for various magical phenomena, whether intentional or not. It is known, for example, that strange creatures roaming the mountains (and sometimes crossing them to wander Harmundia), are born in these towers. They are all unique creatures, the result of magical errors. They die young, victims of travelers, or killed by the Elders themselves. The Black Towers, taken as a whole, form a pentagram, and if someone were to join them all with an invisible thread, a shape would be drawn that would be capable of influencing all of Harmundia. No one knows if this represents some great plan to prepare the Muses' return, or if it is a means of recuperating the secret of petrification. Other rumors say the Black Towers are just so many malignant tendrils, whose foundations reach down to the Abyss, providing demons with a route to the surface of Harmundia without the need of Invokers...

♣ The Colonnades

These strange caravans travel the roads of the Widowlands. They are homes to groups of artists who try to combine their talents. What this boils down to is an irregular mix, a desire to give birth to a single creation that reunites the arts. The Colonnades where the Magical Arts are practiced are obviously the most sought after, and the most powerful. They are the inventors of a Free Art that has begun to spread over Harmundia: Melange magic. This magic could be expressed in a Work of Shape sprinkled with a Pigment of Winter, an Attuned cittern played in a Pictureworld, the same cittern accompanied by a Scansion song, etc. The medusae pay great attention to such Colonnades.

The Modehan Marches

GEOGRAPHY

♣ Relief

The geography of the Modehan Marches is extremely diverse. Imposing mountains stand to the northwest and their streams feed long rivers that cross the country to the northern coasts. The western coastline is a mix of high cliffs, inlets and beaches. The inland is dale country, split into farmland, vast prairies, and great forests. Streams, and sometimes rivers, flow through the valleys, irrigating the crops. In the south tropical forests, white sandy beaches and lagoons can be found.

♣ Climate

Springtime is cool in most of the country. In summer, the average temperature is 68° F, and there are violent storms. In the south, the temperatures go up to 95° F, coupled with murderous storms that regularly devastate the coasts. In autumn and winter, the weather is clement. It snows in the mountains and nights are cool.

The Modehan Marches are also victim to a phenomenon called "the Reminiscences". This country's special resonance with the Muses explains these strange manifestations, which give rise to the Elementals. They are formed within a gust of windblown leaves, and build themselves out of flakes of ice or flower pollen. Ephemeral and gifted with strange powers, they roam about during the Reminiscences and seem to embody the Muses' will...

♣ Flora and Fauna

Granny to the world, the Modehan Marches has incomparable plant and animal life. Most known species live in perfect balance with the environment and the inhabitants. The luxuriant and varied plant life is typical of a continental climate.

Most species live and breed peacefully in the Modehan Marches. Animals are respected and are only hunted for basic food requirements.

♣ **King-trees:** An emblem of the Modehan Marches, the king-tree can grow to 750 feet. These gigantic trees are Remains of the Flamboyance, and are often the starting points of the great Modehan cities they still dominate today. Sacred and watched over by the Modehans, they are no longer very numerous. There are only about one hundred sizable specimens in the realm. Only the famous forest of Frabourg can boast of having ten trees in the same grove.

♣ **The efemeris:** Like Elementals, these little faeries spontaneously appear inside certain flowers. Sometimes, as the petals open, one can discover the crystalline body of an efemeral curled up inside. They die at the end of day, and are sought out by perfume makers who harvest their tears at nightfall. These tears form the basis of Harmundia's most wonderful perfumes, many of

THE MODEHAN MARCHES

Government

Council of druids

Language

Modehan

Population

Humans 55%, seasonlings 45%

Dancers: common

Demons: very rare

Capital

Arnel

Money

The crystal, equal to 5 gold pieces

Natural Resources

Cereal, livestock, silver, copper, precious gems



which have charming effects (some are love potions). The efemeras have their evil counterparts, tiny faeries born usually inside black roses, whose bite can instantly kill a man.

☛ **The paeans:** Some plants are under the magical spell of the Muses' memory – a kind of echo that resonates in the wind. A paean may be born in the breeze, in a mountain spring, in the leaves of tree, etc.

☛ **The elval:** Tiny humanoid creatures, roughly 9 or 10 inches high. Elvals have brown bodies with russet spotting. They live in the company of sprites, and make excellent familiars, their intelligence being on a par with that of monkeys. Their sly humor, their round faces, their touching looks, all hide a true gift for painting. Elvals love to be given brushes and colored paints, and they will play for hours with them. Sometimes exceptional works spring from elval artistry in this way.

☛ **Stonelings:** Little more than small red balls of fur, stonelings feed on mineral matter... They especially like mossy stone, and can usually be found in the company of architects, dwarves of the Square, and even giants. Stonelings love to levitate up onto their owner's shoulders by making use of the currents of air generated by the latter's movement. Stonelings are as intelligent as dogs.

☛ **Alcherons:** These great beasts look like big, four-horned rhinoceroses. As the centuries have passed, the Modehans have learned to domesticate them, and they are now the principal means of transport for merchant caravans heading north. Extremely sturdy and obedient, the alcheron can charge its enemy and carry the equivalent of a small house on its back...

☛ **Salanister:** These very strange animals look like big lizards and are worn around the neck. The animal closes its mouth around its master's throat, permitting him to "feel" all the emotions and movements of their surroundings. In Abysm, this practice is known as "to feel the soul of the city". Rare and mysterious creatures,

salanisters are born inside the fatty folds of the Obese, most of who now live in Abysm (see p. 62).

☛ **Swans:** Considered sacred by the Modehans, the swan holds the grace and magic of the Muses. Each year, some of their number manifest obvious signs of Inspiration. The waters through which they move become clear to the point of invisibility, whilst their plumage gives off a pale, bluish light. From the moment that a swan shows these signs, it is honored to the end of its days. Afterwards, its feathers become Artifacts, sought particularly by Scanders.

IMPORTANT TOWNS AND CITIES

The towns of the Modehan Marches are a subtle marriage of stone and plants. Based around king-trees, they are covered with gardens, vines and creepers, and even leafy woods the size of city blocks. These basic principles form the mainstay of Modehan architecture, round, rich, joyful and sprawling. People in the cities live with nature, and they like to see a vine-covered stone, or build their homes in the lower branches of a king-tree. Among the larger towns are:

☛ **Arnel**, the capital city, constructed on the west coast.

☛ **Laedys**, built inside the hollowed trunk of a dead king-tree.

☛ **Frain**, the city on the lake, built around three king-trees growing in the middle of a lake. The trees' roots form long busy jetties in the water, and link the town to the banks.

☛ **Cyniel**, city of swans and harmony, whose buildings stand on both banks of the river Larmeigne. The city takes its name from the hundreds of swans that live on the river.

☛ **Madenie**, the great harbor town, where ships cruising the Azurean Sea come to shelter.

THE MODEHANS

☛ History

Originally there was an empire: Moden Hen', the biggest and richest on the whole continent. The Primeval Fire devastated the king-tree forests, and during the Keshite tribes' age of glory, the remnants of the empire became a confederacy of states called the Modehan Marches.

Sometime around the beginning of the First Age, the Modehan Marches became a single realm. Fourteen centuries later, it is still one of the major powers of the Twilight Realms. The Primeval Fire had destroyed many king-trees, but their ashes became ensconced in the earth, ensuring the fertility of the land. Granary to the world, the Modehan Marches went through the three Ages without the slightest sign of crumbling. The Modehans opened trade routes right out to Lyphan and the Wild Reaches, weaving a trade network that today rivals the Keshites'.



SOCIETY

♣ The peasantry

The Modehans are essentially a people in harmony with nature. Peasants work the land, hunt, fish, and watch over the ecological balance of things, every day of the year. Many sprites become Modehan peasants.

♣ The merchants

The traders of the Modehan Marches enjoy a well-deserved reputation for honesty. Modehan merchants are used to a life of travel, and usually spend only two or three months a year at home. The rest of the time, they live on the road.

♣ The druids

They represent Modehan power and govern the country. A druid may be the leader of a village, a neighborhood, or a town. In the capital city of Arnel, there is a council of twenty-one druids who make decisions concerning the country as a whole.

♣ Sylds

These intelligent trees arise from the power of the land. They watch over the frontiers and the woods, and they counsel the druids. The sylds are the true strength of the Modehan Marches. Courageous and kindly, they have always defended the realm against invasion.

CRAFTS AND COMMERCE

As the world's granary, the Modehan marches engage in the mass export of perishable goods. Agricultural production is sufficiently abundant to satisfy the country's needs and to sell to all the realms in Harmundia. Beyond basic food products, the Modehan Marches are known for their

♣ Diplomacy

The trade relations established by the Modehans ensure the country's inviolability. No neighboring realm has ever seriously envisaged the invasion of a territory protected by sylds (see below) and king-trees. A serious rivalry between the Modehans and the Keshites does exist, but it usually expresses itself through trade disputes. Despite regular border incidents in the Zephir Mountains, the Modehan Marches maintain trade relations with the Widowlands. Modehans have nothing but contempt for the citizens of the Mercenary Republic. The lamantined caravans often find themselves attacked by the castellans. More and more merchants are demanding that extensive sanctions be placed on that country.

"I am a giant, it is true, but above all, I am a Modehan. I left my clan to come here, to this land. All those vineyards up the hill belong to me! I would never have been able to manage them alone. I was lucky enough to make friends 'round here: sprites that've helped me get the best from the soil. In exchange I give them the best bottles. It's only fair and it's how I see life. I only have one problem: satyrs. Nothing really bad, but I've had enough of them fooling around in my vineyards with their latest conquests. I've some solace on winter nights they play the cittern and flute for me. Believe me, you should hear them! Such talent... Anyway, to each his own. With me it's wine. Which reminds me - enough talking. Let's taste some of this!"





THE GUILD OF ACROBAT-ASSASSINS

The druids created this secret guild of assassins as part of the struggle against the Enemy. To become an acrobat-assassin, you must have lived five years in a king-tree, and be able to climb a rock face or the trunk of a tree with equal speed. Artists of heights and balance, acrobat-assassins fight using a unique arsenal of plant weapons made for them by the Druids. These include tracker insects, spiders trained to kill or spin webs above streets, shoots of ivy able to cover a high wall in a few seconds, and leaves that cut like steel. Acrobat-assassins may be human or seasonling, although the majority are sprites. Recently, the acrobat-assassins have fought alongside the Inspired. They work in shadow, but they have already allowed some Inspired to escape Perfidy. Most of their time is spent protecting future Inspired during their childhood, like guardian angels, until the Inspired is able to defend himself from the Enemy. After that time, the acrobat-assassin will regularly visit and when necessary provide mysterious help, without revealing himself to his protégé. Among the Company's Inspired, it is likely that one of them has glimpsed one of these emerald-colored figures...

high-quality wines and alcohols, as well as their solid and flexible woods, from which most of the Buccaneer Haven's ships are built. The big Modehan steeds are also highly appreciated. The alcheron is the pride of the nation, and plenty of foreigners come to buy the giant eagles that are trained in the western mountains.

Despite all this success, the merchant marine has not seen great growth. The Modehans prefer to keep their feet on dry land, and sea trade is mostly coastal.

Modehan craftsmen export a large quantity of goods, especially day-to-day articles such as pottery, textiles and paper.

MAGIC IN THE REGION

☛ The Cipher-sorcerer

The Jornists dominate the Order. Obscurantism is barely tolerated. Eclipsism is authorized. Most Modehan mages choose Jornism in order to be able to practice a form of magic that is in harmony with nature and the memory of the Muses. Up in the Arden king-tree, the High Residence sits near the rooms of the druid council. The mages participate in some of its deliberations (as advisors only) and their influence is more visible than in most other realms. The Cipher-sorcerer is also famous for its Water Library, a gigantic underground library, where the paths between the bookshelves are canals and plant membranes protect the books from the humidity.

☛ Dancers

No other realm can boast so many free Dancers living within its borders. Dancers love Modehan architecture – its roundness, and its successful marriage of mineral and plant life. The Small Hunt is highly controlled and smuggling is punished with exile or life imprisonment.

☛ Remains of the Flamboyance

The Flamboyance has left its mark on the country. The king-trees are the sublime example, but there are others. Modehan Remains dot the natural landscape. It could be a stream or a clearing in the forest, an enchanted place where efemerias grow, where the Shard is incredibly rich. Many Founding Luminaries sleep near these Remains, from which they may take the inspiration to create a Sanctuary.

The Mercenary Republic

GEOGRAPHY

☛ Relief

To the west is a coastline of cliffs, pebble beaches and wind-eroded hills. As one ventures further inland, one discovers a rocky landscape of valleys, broken up by long rivers that descend from the Draaken Mountains in the east. This mountain range stretches along the eastern side of the country, constituting a natural barrier. In the south, the long River Ormrench separates the country from the Modehan Marches.

☛ Climate

The climate is moderate in spring and summer, and temperatures rarely go past 70° F. The cool winds from the Brown Peaks and the coast, along with the numerous rivers that flow through the realm, tend to balance out the temperature. The realm suffers harsh weather during wintertime, snow is abundant and temperatures can drop to 35° F, in particular when the famous White Winds are blowing inland. These winds cross the country for a fortnight, and are capable of reaching 100 mph. Accompanied by hailstorms, they emit a strident howling noise and often force the population to remain at home. There is nothing special to be said about autumn: as elsewhere, it is a cursed time.

☛ Flora and Fauna

The poorest plant and animal life in Harmundia. War, disease and magical incidents have withheld the country's plant life from proper development. The few surviving species are able to withstand the worst extremes.

☛ **Melancholia:** This is a species of weeping willow that provokes a profound melancholy in anyone taking shelter beneath its branches. The sadness is so intense that the subject may commit suicide.

☛ **Cinderflowers:** This strange daisy-shaped flower grows on battlefields. Its name comes from its blue-gray petals that when touched lose their color and blow away in the wind like ashes. Great numbers of them grow on battlefields, sometimes covering whole acres of land.

☛ **Morcylence:** In Fall, this ordinary-seeming pine tree becomes a mortal threat to the travelers. The rumor

THE MERCENARY REPUBLIC

Government

Republic

Language

Mercerin

Population

Human 60%, seasonling 40%

Dancers: very rare

Demons: uncommon

Capital

Orkhane

Money

The gold piece
(standard reference)

Natural Resources

Stone, iron, tin



says that evil spirits, born in the heat of battle, wander through these woods and “possess” the pine needles. At dusk, the needles shoot through the forest, piercing everything in their path.

Just like the plants, the animals are as hardy as the country itself. In the absence of any agriculture, hunting and fishing are widely practiced in the Mercenary Republic. Wild boar and wolves are the main targets. Others exist, some unique and born from the sorcerers’ experiments.

♣ **The droc:** Solitary and vicious, the droc looks like a deformed dwarf with thick, straight hair. Drocs are as intelligent as wolves and move in tribes of ten to twenty individuals. They like to attack merchant caravans at nightfall, dragging one or two victims back to their lair to be devoured. Droc meat, although not tasty, is very nourishing.

♣ **Scavengers:** These black-feathered vultures gather on battlefields, and have become more and more audacious with the passing centuries. Nowadays they methodically attack the wounded, finishing them off once the fighting is over. They sharpen their beaks – twice as long as those of other vultures – on stones. They are especially fond of human eyes.

IMPORTANT CITIES AND TOWNS

In the Mercenary Republic, no village survives unless it is built close to the ramparts of a castle. The towns and the castellanies are the only inhabitable places. The capital city, Orkhane, is right in the middle of the territory. This city is constructed on a group of islands at the intersection of several rivers. Huge, wide stone bridges interconnect the islands, and sometimes the giant manatees of Darkdream beach on the riverbanks. Darkdream is the mobile city of the mages that moves along the Mercenary Republic’s rivers. This strange city is built atop nearly two hundred manatees, gigantic fresh-water creatures, each with a huddle of little houses on its back. Mages from all over Harmundia live and work here. Koffer is an impressively vertical city, built on the slopes of a mountain, where it is

said all the thieves of Harmundia come to meet. From the highest point in Koffer the country’s fourth town can be seen, the famous Redmoon, where sword-wielding mercenaries come looking for the best contracts.

A lot of castellanies are constructed on Rankchards, massive stone golems dating from the Flamboyance, now encrusted with the soil of Harmundia. The Rankchards’ bodies have solid fortresses built upon them, and these can be considered the country’s beating heart. Each one is home to a small village, a huge tavern, a counting house, and soldiers whose task is to charge a toll to anyone using the local roadway. These castellanies survey one or several routes, along which, in exchange for gold and goods, trade caravans may safely travel.

CITIZENS

♣ History

The Republic has its origins in the Great Wars that ravaged Harmundia during the Second Age. Attacked by the Urganish, several of the Modehan kingdoms split to form the Mercenary Republic. These Modehans founded a nation where gold was king. The early days were chaotic. Not one citizen was ready to recognize the authority of the castellans, who proceeded to wage a merciless war to impose their rule. A handful of castellans joined to create a single fist of iron. Among them was Death-Watch, a spriggan mercenary, who managed to unify the castellanies, and instituted an annual parliament at Orkhane, the capital. Death-Watch was succeeded by a series of mercenaries of great repute, famous even in the Wild



"They call me the 'Ooker, I've been living in this devil of a country for nigh on ten years. I lost my two legs at Darkdream and I've been going around ever since on a Keshite flying carpet. You're sitting on it... Pretty solid, eh? As for this chain, and this rope with a hook on the end, they're the tools of my trade. I'm a mercenary like everyone else 'ere, and I live off them what can't pay no more, or them what thinks a contract ain't nothing but a scrap of paper. There's nobody like me to catch one of them 'round the neck. That's why they call me the 'Ooker. Oh I works for all the good employers, me: castellans, courtesans... I'm not scared of much, except that 'orrible magic. Did you 'ears the rumor? They say there's been cases of pestemetal's disease round 'ere... That's bad for business, you mark my words... Do you know it makes your skin go as 'ard as the blade on your sword? It won't be long before you'll see 'ose poor beggars in the forges, scabbling on their hands and knees, trying to eat the metal shavings. By the way, that was a funny sound you just made with your tongue... sort of a metallic click..."



Reaches. Malthus the Blue, an Eclipsist renegade, founded Darkdream, city of mages, whilst Valrok the Hooded turned Koffer into a city of thieves. During the Third Age, many citizens participated in the battles that were going on between the new kingdoms of Harmundia. As the Fourth Age begins, the Mercenary Republic is the authority on the art of war.

♣ Diplomacy

The Mercenary Republic cannot afford to have enemies. For a long time now, the country has fought to preserve its neutral status. Besides, no one in his right mind would consider the invasion of a country mainly

made up of battle-hardened mercenaries. The citizens have no special policy other than the politics of gold. Most of them are wary of the Keshites, and hold the too-peaceful Modehans in contempt.

The castellans fight to let merchant caravans travel the country's roads, and many castellans travel to the Empire of Keshe and the Modehan Marches to sign trade agreements with the merchant guilds. The Mercenary Republic is worried about Urganand, its northern neighbor. The Janrenian invasion and the ascension of Agone of Roundrock have battle-hardened Urganand. Some barons, whose domains spread to the Ochreemont Mountains, have started fighting castellans for the control of some of the mountain passes used by travelers and caravans.

SOCIETY

♣ Castellans

Castellans command the Mercenary Republic. A castellan is elected to be leader by a mercenary fraternity. You can only become a castellan if you receive or take by force the office of a castellany. During the autumn

month, castellans travel to Orkhane to hold parliament, making decisions that affect the entire country.

♣ Mercenaries

Mercenaries constitute the majority of the population. Anyone can become a mercenary, the only condition being the possession of an authorized first contract passed through the control of the local Cipher-sorcerer.

♣ The courtesans

Many women become courtesans and join the Scarlet Caravans that travel up and down the country. These courtesans also know how to fight and hold their own against the mercenaries...

♣ The craftsmen

They manufacture all the goods necessary to the profession of mercenary. They either work in a town or for a castellan.

♣ The guides

These are the people who work in the mountains, leading travelers and caravans through the passes that lead in country. Some of them are little more than brigands, others are just smugglers, and a few are truly honest.

♣ Hawkers

Hawkers are intermediaries - agents who put mercenaries in touch with possible employers. Some have become very famous, notably among the spriggans, who make fortunes doing this.

CRAFT AND COMMERCE

The country lives off mercenary business. The population changes continually, especially during big wars. Agriculture has been pushed aside and forgotten, craftsmen concern themselves only with the instruments of the profession: thieves tools, arms and armor, artifacts and contraband Dancers. The country has a reputation for making excellent weapons. The black market is considered a necessity here, and no other country (with the possible exception of the Princely Communes) can supply such a panoply of forbidden pleasures.

But the main business comes from the mercenaries themselves - the money they bring in to the realm and the money they spend in its towns. The leisure trade is well installed: courtesans, drugs, gambling... Moreover, Modehan caravans, passing north, supply the castellans with comfortable road tax revenue. These taxes, combined with the gold they demand in exchange for protection, makes life in a castellany fairly easy all year round. The country's perishable goods also come from these caravans.

The Mercenary Republic's riches come from the wars that tear Harmundia apart. Conflicts are often followed by periods of opulence, and relative peace (not coun-

ting the internal battles between castellanies). During long periods of international peace, the country goes into slow motion.

The realm levies a tax on all contracts drawn-up between its inhabitant and foreign employers. This tax is collected by the Cipher-sorcerer, and it is used to finance public institutions, maintain roads, and build up the national treasury.

MAGIC IN THE REGION

♣ The Cipher-sorcerer

In the Mercenary Republic, Eclipsists and Obscurantists dominate the Cipher-sorcerer. The rare Jornists are in the High Residence at Darkdream, and rarely leave its walls... The Order here is faced with a lot of problems, renegade mages being the most serious. They are numerous here, and they have caused innumerable incidents in the past. The Cipher-sorcerer also fights against Dancer smuggling, and trains some of the most powerful Censors in Harmundia.

♣ Necropose

Mercenaries traditionally choose to be buried in Necropose, a vast graveyard that stretches as far as the eye can see. Some of the mausoleums there look like mansions. Necropose is run by the powerful and respected Gravediggers' Guild. Plenty of thieves try their luck by attempting to plunder the tombs, despite deadly boobytraps.

♣ The Cindersea

Surrounded by the steely peaks of the Draaken Mountains, the Cindersea is supposed to be of magical origin. Nowadays, it is viewed as a place of legend, where only the brave dare to venture. In the foothills, miserable little villages appear and die, haunted by Ghosts. On the sea itself, cruise mysterious ships with tattered sails. The rumors say dead pirates come here to expiate their crimes.

Urgamand

GEOGRAPHY

♣ Relief

On a map, this country looks like a pentagon, two sides of which are made up of the Ochremoon Mountains, the country's natural frontier with the Mercenary Republic, Keshe and Janrenia. The country's southwest coast is a long cliff-face, with an occasional inlet giving access to the sea hundreds of feet below. The northwest frontier with the Liturgical Province is a sordid swamp with waterholes infested by disease-ridden rats. Urgamand is known throughout the Twilight Realms for its wind-swept hills, farmed valleys and forests full of game.

THE CONTRACT

The mercenaries respect only one thing: the contract that links them to an employer. To create one, Cipher-sorcerer's authorization is needed, as the Order takes 10% for the realm. Only then is the contract considered valid, although there are, of course, a swarm of black-market contracts. As part of the procedure for certifying a contract, the Cipher-sorcerer often sends young Eclipsists into the city streets and other places where a signing is likely. This is in reality a trial, as they are sitting targets for all the crooks foolish enough to try their luck against a mage.

♣ Climate

Temperatures vary from 15° F in the middle of winter to 80° F or more in the summer sun. The coastal baronies benefit all year round from sea winds, which cool the hot season and add bite to the cold of autumn and winter.

♣ Flora and Fauna

During their last crusade on Urgamish soil, the Liturgicals burned most of the northern forest. Today, the kingdom is a vast cultivated plain peppered with thick forests on the Keshite border. The land becomes more and more scorched the closer one gets to the baronies of Roundrock and Emelgance. The forests of southern Urgamand are full of wild boar and wolves. They also contain pheasants, partridges, roe deer, and a few red deer.

♣ **The Urgamand bird:** This bird only lives within this country. Their wings glow in the dark, showing the way through the night for anyone that can train them.

♣ **The burntrees:** In some baronies, the woods that were burned by the Liturgicals have survived but no longer develop as they did in the past. The trunk and the branches these trees support grow the same color as a burned and dead tree.

CITIES AND BARONIES

Urgamand is divided into seventeen baronies composed of villages and medieval townships, or based around cities: Moscane, Dyonne, Andride, Rahndrame, Moughend and Lorgol.

♣ Lorgol

This port belonged to the baron of Roundrock for centuries, until Agone made it the capital of the realm. The gigantic Borrowlight tree dominates its landscape. Its roots descend into the subterranean passageways and its branches pass among the celebrated Thousand Towers.

Lorgol is famous for its multitude of inner courtyards, with their steep staircases and sloped landings. It is also known for its taverns. The disreputable inns of the Low Quarter are notorious for their wild nights. The interconnecting streets are full of marauders set on robbing the unwary and killing the bold.

☛ Moughend

This city has been home to the Urgamand section of the Square ever since the Urgamish barons accepted this dwarven fraternity on their land. Members of the brotherhood have accomplished fantastic works in this medieval town: a fortified manor, a sewer system, an astrological clock tower, and ramparts equipped with war machines. The know-how of the Moughend corporations is famous throughout the realm, leading many Urgamish here to buy manufactured goods.

☛ The Emelgance Barony

Emelgance is the oldest of the baronies. It was on the frontline during the war of 1413, and it has endured two years of very harsh Liturgical occupation. The domain's inhabitants are all ready to take up arms at the command of their knights. Like Roundrock's quagmires, the fens and vales that make up this domain are full of military constructions: ruined lookout posts and underground passages that are mostly caved-in.

☛ Roundrock Barony

This barony is described in Book Four as a ready-to-play Domain.

THE URGAMISH

☛ History

At the death of Erkman XIX – the last emperor to reign over Janrenia, Urgamand and the Liturgical Province – the Urgamish plunged their country into the blood and chaos of battle. Over the years, men sought peace and organized themselves once again into domains – the baronies. Each large township has a citadel or fortress to which the peasants from the surrounding villages rallied. The Urgamish noblemen continued to wage pointless wars until the days of the first Janrenian inva-

sion. One of the Urgamish barons managed to bring all the nobles together around a table, for the first time since the fall of Armgard. It was a difficult meeting, but the barons managed to reach some kind of agreement within a week. As a result of these negotiations, all the Urgamish troops rallied behind Aimfeld of Lorgol, the man who had brought them unity in the face of the Janrenian menace. The Urgamish won the war and ever since victory, the barons have chosen from among themselves someone to represent their interests when dealing with rulers of the other Twilight Realms: the First Baron.

☛ Diplomacy

Nowadays, people from the Keshe Empire no longer make raids on the Urgamish baronies. The ambassadors from both countries have come to an agreement concerning the taxes that are imposed on Keshite caravans traveling through Urgamand. Now that Cipher-sorcerer intrigues are no longer a menace to peace in this part of Harmundia, relations are very strained between the barons and the Liturgical Province. Successive attempts by the Liturgicals to invade and occupy the kingdom have created a deep hatred in Urgamish hearts. On the other hand, they have become very friendly with the Janrenians, now that women have placed themselves in positions of importance within the power structure of this brother kingdom. Although they do not wish to follow their example, the Urgamish appreciate the policies of Janrenia's women. As a result, they have reduced the heavy taxes that used to exist for Janrenian caravans in Urgamand.

The people of Urgamand dislike the Mercenary Republic. They do not understand how a soldier can defend a foreign country for money. For the Urgamish, the motherland is sacred. It is where you are born, and where you grow up. It is the only thing worth fighting for. This difference of opinion does not prevent them from entering into negotiations with the Republic, and its mercenaries, any time the situation calls for it – against the Liturgicals, for example, or for expeditions to the barren land of the Horns. The Urgamish are good sailors, and sometimes they venture along the Horns coastline in order to exploit the region's resources. These expeditions are risky, but bring a sizeable income to the barons that attempt them.

SOCIETY

☛ The nobility

Urgamand is divided into seventeen baronies. They are largely independant. Most of the barons are warriors, but nothing prevents them from having another occupation, be it trade or scholarly pursuits. Since the birth of the kingdom, the title of baron has been handed down from father to son, according to Urgamish law. Daughters might own land, but are banned from the succession to a barony. Barons elect the First Baron from among their own. His position is for the rest of his life.

URGAMAND

Government

The First Baron – a monarch elected by a warrior nobility (the seventeen Urgamish barons).

Feudal system

Language

Urgamish

Population

Humans 50%, sprites 15%,

spriggans 15%, ogres 10%,

dwarves 10%

Demons: rare

Dancers: uncommon

Capital

Lorgol

Money

The coin, equal to one gold piece

Natural Resources

Iron, copper, wood, farming



♣ The Knights

The Urganish barons administer their lands thanks to the kingdom's unique mounted warrior caste, the knights. These men run little domains in the barons' name and in accordance with Urganish law. They are not only the kingdom's elite army, they also serve as its tacticians and political advisors. Most of them are loyal friends of their sovereign lord.

♣ The scholars

Urganish has seen academic instruction grow with the townships. The population concentrated within the walled cities, combined with the development of trade has encouraged the evolution of a written language. The Urganish language includes an extremely precise legal vocabulary, probably the most comprehensive on the continent. Over the years, many academic professions have developed, including librarians, aldermen, accountants, and judges.

♣ The Cipher-sorcerer

Mages are outside the feudal system. They are not vassals to the barons, but they play an important role in the realm. Since Agone of Roundrock's election to the head of the kingdom, the Cipher-sorcerer has taken on a prominent position in national politics. The traditions of past centuries excluded mages from the politics, but Agone facilitated the barons' reconciliation with the mages by helping set up schools of magic, and by encouraging young nobles to learn the secrets of the Dancers.

♣ The peasantry

Urganish villages are numerous. Through their work in the valleys and prairies, their inhabitants ensure sufficient production to feed the city-dwellers, the knights, and the barons. These men and women have very few rights. Most of them neither know how to read nor write, and devote their lives to the nation's prosperity.

♣ Marauding

Urganish's bloody past has left a tradition of theft and pillaging. Most of the towns have thieves' guilds, which are sometimes powerful enough to be a threat to the local power structure. In the countryside, the situation is different. If the merchant caravans' escorts do not kill them outright, marauders are tracked down and forced out to the Mercenary Republic or to Janrenia, or even sold as slaves to the Keshite tribes.

CRAFTS AND COMMERCE

The Urganish do not have much to sell to the other realms. Indeed, they have few specialty products. Their knowledge concerning weapon fabrication, however, is well proven. Successive wars across Urganish have taught them techniques that are appreciated in other realms, notably the Mercenary Republic.

THE PRECEPTORIAL FRATERNITY

Preceptorial is a powerful brotherhood, initiated by scholars in the Liturgical Province. It follows a strict ideology. It is an association of itinerant workers who teach the peasantry to read and write, hoping to draw them out of mediocrity and blind submission to the barons. They value honor. Only the strongest minds, with the willpower to undergo the Preceptorial ordeals of vexation, deprivation and questioning, are authorized by the fraternity to teach. They go to reveal the secrets of various alphabets to the poor in the cities and in the countryside.

The itinerants obey a moral code, made up of Duties, which dictate their conduct. They are not allowed to become angry or commit crimes of violence, they may not become involved in marauding, plunder, theft, or burglary. They must undergo severe discipline to liberate their souls from these evil instincts.

The realm is also famous for the barons' artistic taste. The great numbers of colossal works in the towns, dating back to the Concordists of the Flamboyance, have instilled a great love of the arts in the hearts of the barons.

All north-bound Keshite and Modehan caravans must pass through Urganish. The former sell their silks and precious stones to the Modehan Marches, and the latter bring wood and food to the Princely Communes. The Urganish not only

benefit from this commerce, they were also the first to introduce taxation and customs. This system has been the source of numerous wars between these countries, but has allowed the realm to maintain a well-stocked treasury.

Remains of the Flamboyance in Urganish towns attract Dancers and groups of Little Hunters who sell them to the mages in the neighboring countries. The academics are very skilled in all things commercial. Their talents and knowledge of languages are often put to use by all the continent's traders.

One night in Lorgol:

"You want to know what brings an ogre like me here? Then listen well: I came to Lorgol to get rich. I'm not ashamed to say that to people's faces. How do I go about things? Simple! I've been walking up and down the Low Quarter's alleys for seven days and seven nights now, watching the careless merchants or the drunken young noblemen. They all come rolling out of the taverns of ill repute where everyone goes looking for adventure. Adventure? They find it when they meet me. I am the danger they've been dreaming of. I'm no assassin, mark you. I don't jump onto them from the roof like some vulgar cut-throat. No, I stand tall before them, ready to break their skulls with my fist. Quite often, when they've got the energy, when they haven't left their strength back in the tavern, they draw their swords and we have a bit of a fight. You think I'm cruel? One of them nearly put my eye out! Believe me, the lads that come down to this area are not soft. My task is not an easy one. That money, I deserve it. I earn it!"



MAGIC IN THE REGION

☞ The Thousand Towers

In the north side of Lorgol, the capital city, a true Remain of the Flamboyance dominates the rooftops – the Thousand Towers. These interlinked buildings are the most impressive sight of all Urgamand. At night, their stained-glass windows light up, bathing them in a mysterious glow. Some say they are an Opus, made by a Concordist trying to seduce Chisella. The Muse, jealous of his creation, is supposed to have deprived the Concordist of his body, condemning him to wander endlessly in the corridors and underground halls of the Thousand Towers.

☞ The Borrowlight School

The school was founded under a gigantic black tree rooted in a sandy spit of land defying the sea. Protected from prying eyes by seasonling magic, the school was invisible to most mortals. The teachers in this mysterious college were all stricken with incurable and magical illness, which only the dark tree could hold in check. The different schools that developed here molded the hearts and minds of the young students destined by the Psycholunes – the Borrowlight's absolute masters – to become eminences grise. When students left the school, they went to work for a lord, in Urgamand or elsewhere. Eminences were the most brilliant advisors the world had ever seen, but they were also spies, reporting all the secrets of the domains and families to the Psycholunes.

The eminences of the Borrowlight were thus a dangerous fraternity. They could identify each other by the traces that their time in the school had left on their bodies: their hair was white and their skin ashen. Shortly before the intrigues of certain heretical mages provoked the last war between Urgamand and Janrenia, Agone of Roundrock destroyed the school. The Borrowlight tree died, but Agone used a seed to create the Lorgol tree, when Lorgol became the capital of Urgamand.

As for the eminences grise, they are still at work today, thirty-five years after these events. The majority report to Agone, other work alone for the "greater good" of Harmondia. A few have even tried to kill Agone for his "crimes" against the School.

Janrenia

GEOGRAPHY

☞ Relief

Janrenia is the perfect farming territory: a gigantic valley covered with green pastureland, surrounded by a colossal range of mountains. The landscape is green and monotonous. While the north of the country opens onto the Sea of the Righteous, and the River Tanis marks the frontier with the Liturgical Province, Janrenia is

JANRENIA

Government

Constitutional monarchy

Language

Janrenian

Population

Humans 60%, medusae 15%,

black feys 10%, ogres 5%,

giants 5%, minotaurs 5%

Demons: uncommon

Dancers: common

Capital

Ranne

Money

The coin, equal to one gold piece

Natural Resources

Cattle, cereal, and vegetable crop



otherwise prisoner of the surrounding mountains. To the southwest, the Ochremoon Mountain passes are the doorways to Urgamand. To the south the country is enclosed by the peaks of the Draaken Mountains. To the east, the Tariander Mountains separate Janrenia from the Princely Communes and Lyphan.

☞ Climate

Hot summers are rare in Janrenia. Strong sea winds cool the plains. For the same reason, spring and autumn are not very different from winter. Temperatures rarely go above 60° F, much to the disappointment of the Janrenians. In winter, the snow freezes and the valley is covered by a tenacious coat of frost, which keeps temperatures around the 15° F mark.

☞ Flora and Fauna

The Janrenian valley is lacking in animal life. There are rabbits but no hares or jackrabbits; there are dogs but wolves are rare. On the other hand, the surrounding mountains are a paradise for bears, wolves and hawks.

☞ **The Draakeagle:** This bird of prey is the only bird capable of crossing the Draaken Mountains. Thanks to their powerful beaks and talons covered by rock-hard scales, they are hunters of all mountain creatures, including man.

☞ **Wolven:** These animals look like big wolves, but are much stronger and hardier. Humans or humanoids can ride the biggest like horses. Wolven move in packs of three to five.

☞ **Plant parasites:** Janrenian peasants have to protect their farmland from all sorts of plant parasites from Lyphan. The mountain regions are home to a great variety of colorful flowers.

☞ **Rainbow flowers:** These tiny flowers have leaves of different hues and a petal for every color in the rainbow. At nightfall, the petals close up.

☞ **Needletrees:** These pines have long, hard needles, used in many crafts – e.g. sewing and clockmaking – as well as for surgery. They are also used as projectiles in blowpipes.



AGONS

🐉 Peloran

A city on the crossroads, Peloran is a hub for all the country's main roadways. Over the years, a camp became first a village, then a town. The Janrenians are building a new wall, which will include some of the outlying villages. This town is home to the best hospitals of the country, and mortals from all the Twilight Realms come here for treatment. Close to Urganand and the Liturgical Province, but traditionally neutral, Peloran has treated the wounded during the wars that have blighted these nations throughout their history.

🐉 The Mountainmen Retreat

The Mountainmen, a group of anti-Lodge knights, have found a refuge in the rocky foothills of the Draaken Mountains. Here, they prepare for the day when they will re-conquer Janrenia. They number only about fifteen, with a few soldiers and peasants to take care of security and provisions. With the help of bandits and draaken, they sometimes attack villages in the Princely Communes. They have even raided border villages in Lyphan in an attempt to provoke a war between Janrenia and the Lyphanian horsemen.

IMPORTANT CITIES AND TOWNS

Janrenia only has five towns that can be called cities: Lorum, Peloran, Deadwater, Jorline and Ranne.

🐉 Ranne

Capital of Janrenia, Ranne is one of the biggest towns of the Twilight Realms. A symbol of Janrenian military know-how, it dominates the valley with its mighty walls, barbicans and metal towers that reflect the blinding light of the sun for several miles. This military architecture has earned it its nickname, "the Untakeable". The walls contain a multitude of ingenious military mechanisms.

🐉 Lorum

This large port was built at the mouth of the River Tanis, which separates Janrenia from the Liturgical Province. Since its early days, its strong position has allowed Janrenians to control the river frontier out to the sea, and hence to protect themselves from Liturgical invasion and the occasional Lyphanian raiding party.

The Janrenian navy is the undisputed master of the Glittering Sea.

🐉 Deadwater

This town without ramparts or fortifications was built on a rocky outcropping on the edge of a yawning chasm, in the heart of which lie the thick, dark waters of a series of underground lakes and caverns.

THE JANRENIANS

🐉 History

The last Janrenian invasion of Urganand, in 1413, was led by Supreme General Amrod. It was a resounding defeat. In all the villages and towns of Janrenia, women wept for their sons and husbands, who would not be returning from this absurd conflict. One of them, Elyse, convinced the other women of her district, who in turn convinced other women in the capital city, to rise up against the country's military power structure. Within a few days, a Janrenia weakened by Urganish counter-offensives was in female hands. These women laid the founding principles for a new Janrenian constitution. Historians of the Twilight Realms call this event the Women's Revolt.

Henceforth, a woman – or a man seconded by a woman – would be at the head of every village, town and even the capital city. These women call themselves mayors. They participate actively in decision-making, and meet on a national level in a parliament called the Lodge, which can proclaim Janrenia's neutrality or withdraw the nation from a war by a single vote. The Lodge is led by a Prime Minister, elected by her peers.

🐉 Diplomacy

Since the instauration of the Lodge, Janrenia has attempted to make peace treaties with all the other Twilight Realms.

Janrenia has managed to obtain the support of its old enemy Urganand, and lives in the hope of seeing one day a female First Baron. To encourage the Urganish to follow its lead in this respect, Janrenian propaganda often makes reference to Tanis, the sister of Janren and Urganand.

"I stand proud to face Howlmount, and my knife – more truly like a sword, given my size – bumps against my skinny legs as my delicate wings are lifted into the wind by the gusts that haunt the misty peaks. As day disappears behind me, coloring the sky yellow, red and orange, I study the Draaken Mountains, watching for the slightest suspect shadow. For days and for nights, my companions and I have been seeking the Mountainmen. We have descended into rock-faults so deep we could no longer hear the wind howling above our heads. We have followed the mountain passes, crossed the pastures, and even killed a few of the Fallen. And nothing... we have found nothing... not one single horseman, nor even a horse. But we shall keep searching. For the glory of the Lodge! Aye, we'll go back and retrace our journey, because we are the last noble warriors of the realm. We are the Pacifists. We are the ones who fight the warmongers, these men who rejoice at our misfortune, who we once cherished, far from the distant battlefield. We fight all Janrenians who lust for war. We may be women, but we fight as equals. A war on war so that peace may prevail!"

countries like Lyphan, the Modehan Marches or the Widowlands. Relations remain cold with these three realms. The Lodge has attracted the attention of black feys throughout Harmundia, and Elders of this Decan often take shelter in Janrenia. They benefit from the Lodge's protection.

SOCIETY

♣ The nobility

The king of Janrenia is a direct descendant of Janren, one of the sons of Erkman XIX. Janrenians see him as a living symbol and not much more. The king rules the country through an assembly of wealthy merchants and landowners, who have all been made members of the nobility for a set number of generations. Their titles come either from the king himself or from his ancestors. At the end of a noble peerage, the king may give the title again for the same duration. These titular extensions usually occur in exchange for hard cash paid

Since the Women's Revolt, the Liturgical Province is considered to be the principal enemy of Lodge policy. Janrenia maintains diplomatic relations with the Province. During the last ten years, the ambassadors managed to avoid war on six different occasions.

Since the women took power, relations with the Princely Communes have never been so friendly, and trade has been re-established. Moreover the Janrenians and the Princes of the Communes have a common enemy – the Buccaneer Haven. The two realms jointly fight any incursion by these plunderers.

The new regime has had no success with distant

to the Crown Treasury. The Prime Minister leads this assembly.

♣ The soldiers

Janrenia, like its neighbors, was built on the strength and blood of its soldiers. Up until a few years ago, the nation's warriors were financed by the Treasury, but the Women's Revolt deprived them of all privileges.

It is no longer possible to join the warrior nobility. However there are still some military families among the king's entourage, wherein the warrior tradition is handed down from father to son.

♣ The navy

The most war-hardened sailors on the Glittering Sea coast are Janrenian. They build and sail fantastic galleons to the four corners of the continent. Although sailors are not held in high esteem in Janrenia (they are seen roughly on a par with peasants or apprentices from the capital's factories), they are highly respected by their peers throughout the continent. In the past, some of the ships of the Janrenian fleet have carried siege engines that were used to participate in sieges from the sea.

♣ The Mountainmen

Janrenian experts in the art of war have assembled in the Draaken Mountains. With the help of some sea-sonlings and plunderers from the Buccaneer Haven, they prepare for an assault on their own country. They don't think they can win against the whole Janrenian nation. Their only hope is to force Janrenian women into a war. For them, a war will see the return to the true traditions of the kingdom – and it will probably end the "absurd" reign of "mere women".

♣ The people

Janrenia lives off the resources provided by its fertile soil, which has remained undamaged despite the successive wars that have ravaged the Twilight Realms. The mainly rural population lives on their crops and livestock.

Whether he lives in the city or the country, a Janrenian man is lord of his household. The Women's Revolt did not install a matriarchy but a constitutional monarchy, based on pacifist ideology. Men continue to carry out their traditional jobs: working in the fields, metal and foundry work, building and construction, etc.

♣ The Cipher-sorcerer

From its beginning, the Lodge has been hostile to the mages. The Obscurantists had manipulated Amrod, last of Janrenia's Supreme Generals. Without their subtle influence, the war would have been a lot shorter, and less bloody. The Lodge has forbidden the three obediences of the Cipher-sorcerer to open schools of magic. Although the king and most of his noblemen have mages in their service, they are forced to live and work in secret.



CRAFTS AND COMMERCE

After the war against Urgamand and the Liturgical Province, the Janrenians developed a hand for fine metalwork. They now manufacture precision timepieces and ingenious mechanisms for the richest and most powerful people in the Twilight Realms – the Princes of the Communes. The liquid that the Janrenians extract from Darkwater is undrinkable. What it does do is burst into flame when lit with a torch. It is also highly prized by scholars, who use it to make thick, waterproof bindings for books, and to create extraordinary illuminations. Janrenian-made galleons are famous throughout the Twilight Realms. Many nations would like to acquire some of these floating weapons, but for the time being the Lodge remains undecided as to whether or not to allow their sale.

Janrenians sell cattle to their neighbors. They also trade meat, dried fruit, vegetables and cereal. The Draaken Mountains are rich in metals and minerals, and the Janrenians have exploited them since the beginning of time. As in Urgamand, these metals were used for many years in the manufacture of weapons. Now however they are more often used by metal smiths, or sold as raw materials to the Urgamish and the citizens of the Princely Communes. Needles from needletrees are equally highly prized by counter-assassins from the Mercenary Republic, and marauders throughout Harmundia.

MAGIC IN THE REGION

Howlmount

Howlmount is the highest peak of the Draaken Mountains. It is not famous for its size alone, for it is a veritable mystery. At daybreak and dusk, as the surrounding mountains drape their slopes in sinister shadows, a piercing wail can be heard in the crevices and mountain passes. It is said that those who hear the cries of the Draaken Mountains lose their minds.

Since time immemorial, mages and Concordists have come to this part of the mountains to try and solve the riddle of this howling shriek. Their quest has been in vain however. Mortals still vanish among the peaks. The old people who live in these mountains warn careless travelers, sometimes recounting an ancient legend of the Flamboyance, which says that the wailing is the echo of Stanza's cry as she gave Harmundia a sound for suffering.

Lumancil

This was the name mortals gave to the Glittering Sea centuries before the Dancers appeared on Harmundia. If the seasonling tales are to be believed, in the days when the legendary heroes walked among the mortals, it was only a lake, with an ethereal palace, build on an small island.

Once a year, a rumor spreads through Janrenia – someone says that Lumancil and its dazzling palace have

TANI'S SISTERS

These women, mostly Janrenian, try to carry on the ideals born of the Women's Revolt. Their long diatribes condemn men, especially soldiers, whom they see as blood-thirsty savages. They go from town to town and from country to country, talking to mothers and daughters. They try to persuade these women that they can make a decision on their loved-ones behalf and join together to found a continental empire unlike any Harmundia has ever seen. Men who refuse to fight may also join, and they are shown to the people they visit as examples.

been seen. But whenever someone comes to question the witness, they have mysteriously disappeared.

The Liturgical Province

GEOGRAPHY

Relief

The Liturgical Province has a long coastline on the Glittering Sea, composed of vast sandy beaches stretching along the water's edge as far as the eye can see. Eastward, the River Tanis and the Glittering Sea separate the Liturgical Province from Janrenia, while in the south murky swamps and dark clumps of hedgerow form a barrier with Urgamand. The country's western flank has no natural barrier. The Liturgicals have constructed a rampart ten yards high and thirty yards thick to protect themselves from the monsters that roam the Horns – the Wall of Faith.

The heart of the country is a series of fertile valleys in the center, tree-covered hills in the east and north, and putrid swamps in the south.

Climate

The winters are long and hard in this part of the continent (14° F). The north is subject to frost, and the central forests and southern swamplands receive a thick coat of snow. Spring brings repeated showers, whereas fall tends to persistent light rain. In summer, the high sun warms the land without a suffocating heat, thanks to the wind that blows down from the Glittering Sea in the north. Trapped in the plains, it makes the heat bearable.

Flora and Fauna

The Liturgical Province is inhabited by a number of fabulous species from the Horns that lived in the country before the construction of the Wall of Faith.

Falcons: These are rare falcons, with silvery plumage, whose heads have a little crystalline corn on the top. It is extremely difficult, even after training the bird, to predict its reactions. These birds live with the unicorns in the deep and mysterious forests of the realm.

Canores: These are large dogs, with long, ochre-colored hair, a diminished sense of smell, and extra-sen-

sitive hearing. When they howl at the moon, it sounds like singing. This 'song' lures night birds, and the canores catch them in mid-flight. The Liturgicals use these dogs to guard their campsites.

Plant life in the Liturgical Province is similar to that found in Janrenia. The forests have wolves, wild boar and jackrabbits. The fertile plains are farmed by the Liturgicals, and where one does not see fields of wheat, one sees cattle and horses.

IMPORTANT TOWNS AND CITIES

The Liturgicals mainly live in gigantic cities. There are three of them: Noven, Liturgia and Tanis-Town. There are two independent city-states: Abyss and Round-City.

Noven

Built on a large hill in the heart of the Liturgical Province, the capital owes its name and its architecture to the man who, centuries ago, fought for the country's independence - Saint Noven. Indeed the whole city evokes Noven and his work, the Liturgy. Windows are covered with stained glass, crosses dominate rooftops, and each district has a church or a square with a statue of the saint. The whole city is a living memorial, an open-air cathedral where every city block is a chapel, every home an altar.



Liturgia

Built on the northernmost peninsula of the realm, this city was conceived by several genera-

tions of architects and masons as a symbol of Liturgy to all Harmundia. Contrary to Noven, considered chaotic by the Liturgicals, Liturgia continues its construction, year after year, according to exceptionally strict architectural rules. When it is finished, the city - seen from the sky - will have the form of a gigantic Cross of Noven, and the highest towers on the continent. Moreover, the Liturgicals are making it a point of honor to equip the city with all the civic conveniences imaginable, so Liturgia should soon possess sewers, drains and piped drinking water.

Round-City

Famous for being the only Liturgical temple ever constructed in the Liturgical Province by foreigners, the church of Artois sits in the heart of the City of Seven Ports. The Liturgicals are filled with pride by the monstrous bells within, which they say can be heard out in the middle of the Horns. On a day to day basis, this city houses a garrison on permanent, year-round alert, as well as a large fleet of ships that fight the Urganish for supremacy of the Indented Sea.

Abyss

This city is home to Invokers and Advocatus Diaboli. It is therefore the lair of the demons of the Abyss that the Invokers summon from the shadows, which is why the Pontiffs have abandoned it to the abyssal forces they dread so much. This city is presented in more detail on the following pages.

THE LITURGICALS

History

The story of the Liturgical Province begins with the assassination of Noven by one of his brothers. An angry mob proclaimed its leader a martyr. The knights who fought with Noven during the fratricidal wars immediately produced their leader's memoirs, which revealed that Noven had been gifted with strange magical powers. A dream had revealed to him not only his fate, but also the uprising of his people. The commoners, spurred on by these revelations, made the martyr into a saint. They flung the country into frenetic construction, building temples to the memory of Saint Noven.

In the space of a few years, the urban landscape was transformed. While the people were building churches, the knights were editing the Holy Book that contained Noven's life and the future of their society. It was during this busy time that the first Pontiff was chosen, and the country was re-baptized as the Liturgical Province.

Diplomacy

The Liturgicals have very little contact with their neighbors in Urganand and Janrenia. Their immaculate white ships are hostile to any form of trade with Janrenia and

THE LITURGICAL PROVINCE

Government

Theocracy

Language

The sacred tongue

Population

Humans 95%, morgana 1%,

other seasonlings 4%

Demons: rare

Dancers: uncommon

Capital

Noven

Money

The coin, equal to 1 gold piece

Natural Resources

Almost everything - the realm manages to be self-sufficient



countries supporting Janrenia. Like all the other powers, the Liturgical Province is not unfriendly toward the Mercenary Republic.

The Liturgicals only want two things: to annex the bordering countries in order to create a new empire under the flag of Liturgy, and to convince all the Twilight races that Saint Noven was Harmundia's messiah. The Liturgicals rarely send diplomats or ambassadors out, unless of course, the situation demands it, (i.e. a diplomatic incident, a war, or an important wedding). Because of this, they have a poor reputation and their emissaries are never well received. On the other hand, the Pontiff makes sure that there is always a representative of the cult of Saint Noven in every realm, in order for all the faithful to have a place to pray and an asylum in case of war. The same is true of the dreaded Inquisition. Every realm has agents of the Inquisition on its territory. They are veritable spies in the service of Liturgy.

This country's ideology is disliked by seasonlings, and they avoid the Liturgical Province like the plague. That being said, numerous morgana Invokers live within its frontiers. Their presence here can be traced back to the end of the Flamboyance. Today, they keep a very low profile.

SOCIETY

♣ The people

Theoretically, the Province welcomes foreigners, if they are willing to convert to the cult of Saint Noven. In practice, such converts are often seen as potential spies. Whether naturalized or a native, inhabitants of the realm must devote three years of their life to the Holy Army.

♣ The Chaplains

These are inexperienced troops, mainly made up of Liturgicals doing their military service. They are not authorized to celebrate the mysteries of the Liturgy, but in wartime they may administer the last rites to a dying believer.

As soon as a Liturgical has more than three years of military service behind him, he belongs to the Holy Army body and soul, and may receive some important benefits: free housing, high pay, etc.

♣ The Liturgical Nobility

After five years of military service, the best Liturgicals warriors become "Vicars", and they are authorized to ride on horseback. These soldier-priests may celebrate the mysteries at any time, and their word carries great weight. They are allowed to dispense justice. The Vicars are roughly equivalent to the Knights of Urganmand.

The Vicars answer to the Archbishops, who form the real Liturgical nobility. Archbishops own lands and possessions within the province or in the Horns, and are sometimes given responsibilities abroad, although this is very rare.

♣ The Prelates and the Pontiff

There are only two ways of getting to the top in the Liturgical Province. The Prelates are either warriors or strategists who have proven themselves in combat, or citizens whose fervor for Liturgy is well known. Whatever the case, to be chosen you must attract a Prelate's attention, without irking any of the others. Every Prelate receives a lifetime ministerial responsibility upon nomination. When the Pontiff - who embodies the will of Saint Noven - dies, the Prelates choose one of their number to succeed him.

♣ The Inquisitors

When a mortal goes against Liturgical law, on Liturgical Province soil or in occupied territory, he incurs the purifying wrath of the Inquisition. The Inquisitors burn blasphemers, for it is written in the Holy Writings of Liturgy that only the flames can purify an unclean soul. A lot of psalms explain how fire, and the heat and light emitted by fire, are the only valid means of combat against the demons of the Abyss, by dissipating the shadows from which they spew. As a result, Invokers are fair game for the Inquisitors of Liturgy.

♣ The Cipher-sorcerer

Despite a controversy raised by a previous Pontiff as to whether or not Dancers have a Soul, mages are treated reasonably well by Liturgicals, as long as they do not show any heretical leanings. Eclipsists are particularly appreciated by the Liturgical authorities for their help in ceremonies and rites. The Jorlists, who have always had strong opinions on demons, know that the Liturgical Province will always give them protection and asylum. Unless a Prelate or the Pontiff decrees an exception, Obscurantists suffer the same fate as Invokers.

CRAFTS AND COMMERCE

For years, the Liturgical Province has focused its efforts on building fast frigates so as to be able to dispute the Janrenian supremacy over the Glittering Sea. The Liturgicals have failed to become a major maritime power, but their ships are widely admired. The country's craftsmen have also put the sandy beaches of the coast to good use, through the development of glass making and glassblowing. Their

"I come from the Abyss, the dark entrails of Harmundia. I am a minotaur and I say the Liturgicals are right. Believe me, the subterranean world encloses horrors capable of the most abhorrent crimes. I have seen the demons and their masters, the High Devils, and I assure you they are deceitful. Those who invoke them think they can control them... the fools. Believe me, no one can do anything against them. Nothing can cause them to falter. No, nothing... except fire. Fire from the Inquisition's braziers. For this reason, I, a minotaur, a child of the Seasons, have converted to Liturgy. You are free to accuse us of fanaticism; you are free to believe that we are obsessed with invasion. But believe me, we are the only ones capable of fighting against the menace that lives in the deep, under Harmundia."



THE DEFROCKED

All the inhabitants of the Twilight Realms are secretly frightened by the Defrocked, whether they believe in their existence or not. They were used for the last time during the crusade in Urgamand, in the Roundrock barony. The Defrocked are a unicorn-riding elite unit, exclusively commanded by the Pontiff. It is composed of heretics, Obscurantists mages and Invokers who have been saved from the flames by mages acting under the Pontiff's orders. They no longer appear human. Those who claim to have faced them describe bloodthirsty things with blistered scarlet bodies, hungry for flesh. Their black unicorns, with their sawed-off horns, are as cruels as their riders.

creations have been famous throughout the Twilight Kingdoms for centuries.

The Liturgical Province is in a delicate situation concerning exportable merchandise. The Glittering Sea is controlled by Janrenia, the southern swamplands are often the scenes of skirmishes with their enemies from Urgamand, and the inhabitants of the Horns are far too hostile for any country to attempt trade with them. Nonetheless, the Mercenary Republic and some flotillas from the Buccaneer Haven regularly purchase a large number of frigates from the Liturgical Province. These ships allow them to make rapid troop movements into any country. The Liturgical Province fortunately has enough natural resources to be more or less self-sufficient. The only really negative effect of the Liturgicals' political isolation is intellectual and technical stagnation in a lot of fields. They have great difficulty catching up, because the most advanced of the Realms are their traditional enemies, Janrenia and Urgamand.

MAGIC IN THE REGION

☞ The Martyrium

The bleak home of the Defrocked is hidden from mortal eyes by Dancer magic. No one knows where they are, and no one has the slightest idea as to which tracks to follow in order to find the Martyrium, but they all fear it. Dark clouds surround it, and the stories speak of tortured demons, deformed humans, and of seasonlings sacrificed in abhorrent ceremonies. The same Prelates who deny its existence encourage the rumors.

☞ The Wall of Faith

This rampart defends the Liturgical Province against monsters from the Horns. Although its outer face just

looks like a strong wall, the inner face of the Wall of Faith has the architecture of an infinite cathedral, stretching away along the country's entire western border. The Liturgicals often take the time to contemplate it, for it hides many details, invisible at first glance: statues, graffiti, Liturgical inscriptions, finely sculpted pieces of metal inset between the stones, etc.

The interior is no less impressive. Liturgical Jornists and architects were able to capture the dawn light and imprison it in the Wall of Faith with a powerful enchantment. Whether day or night, a pilgrim entering this unlikely architecture is bathed in the colorful glow of early morning. Once their eyes become accustomed to the supernatural brightness, they see bays lined with statues of Saint Noven, and murals depicting the lives of the Pontiffs. When the sun is at its zenith, some of the halls and chapels are filled with music, which comes from the stained-glass windows representing the Inquisition fighting Invokers and their demons. The Wall of Faith contains many secret rooms, some of which are prisons holding creatures of the Abyss.

The Horns

Note: *Inspired player-characters may not come from the Horns.*

Behind the Wall of Faith begins a territory whose name is only murmured: the Horns... An immense country, that no king has ever had the courage to dominate, the Horns are like the antechamber of the Abyss, a landscape of desolation where the most dangerous monsters in all Harmundia live.

No one has yet accurately mapped the Horns. There exist, however, a few maps signed in the explorers' blood, parchment sketches of the horrors that lie beyond the Wall of Faith. Those who venture out into the Horns do so for one reason and one reason only: treasures from the time of the Flamboyant Empires. In those days, the Horns had refugees from all walks of life, from Princes fleeing the anger of their people, to bold pioneers, eager to build a village on the coast. All were trying their luck in the narrow and rocky valleys of the Horns. But no one ever saw them again...

GEOGRAPHY

Almost as if the Muses had wanted it to remain an inaccessible territory, the Horns have the most perilous coastline in Harmundia. Full of violent and unpredictable currents, this coast has smashed many a ship onto reefs that are as



sharp as steel and twice as deadly. It is highly likely that tarrasques and krakens fight each other in the watery depths. The entire coastline is hostile. The few beaches and inlets that are good for mooring are so rare that knowledge of their whereabouts is worth fortunes.

Notwithstanding, once inland one discovers a tortured landscape where ravines and dense forests fight for territory with steep mountains. Boiling rivers churn through blowholes into caverns that reach down into the earth's entrails, pestilential swamps stretch for hundreds of miles, etc.

In short, nature and the surface of the Horns seem to have combined in a quest for the destruction of anyone daring to defy them...

CREATURES

Some Prodigies and Wonders have found homes in the Horns: hydras, wyverns, harpies, and even a certain number of centaurs with their deadly poisoned arrows. The Horns have given birth to their own litter of horrors, monsters that haunt the imagination of anyone lucky enough to survive an expedition. Below are listed some of the creatures specific to the Horns. The Eminence Grise can of course create others...

☞ Ratlords

These humanoid creatures have rats' heads and skeletal bodies. They travel the Horns at the head of great packs of gray rats. Ratlords are totally controlled by one instinct: hunger. As intelligent as the rats they command, they will hunt explorers and adventurers right up to the coast or the Wall of Faith. During times of famine in the Horns, ratlords have attacked this Liturgical rampart several times. None of these assaults have been successful.

☞ The katiad

A humanoid creature, the katiad is a rare species that can be compared with nymphs, at least as far as appearances are concerned. Katiads look like beautiful human women with golden skin and big blue eyes. They are flesh-eaters. A katiad acts like a victim, begging help with tears in its eyes and trembling lips. Then it waits for night to devour its sleeping prey...

Abysm

☞ Origins

Abysm's origins are as mysterious as the city itself. Local legends claim that the city has been set on an unusual destiny ever since Nyx wove a strange connection between it and the Abyss. No further information has ever been recovered in the great libraries of the city, but everybody has their hypothesis – and fears – concerning the true nature of Abysm. The Passers' Guild and a few Invokers may know the truth, but they keep it to themselves.

☞ The Embassies

Abysm was constructed far from everything in order to give full leeway to the secret activities of Invoking and diplomacy. The tiny alleys, the complicated network of canals – everything here lends itself to intrigue. This is why the city was chosen to host the embassies of all the countries in Harmundia. Taking up at least half of the city's surface area, the embassies are the beating heart of Abysm.

☞ The Soul of Abysm

Many Abysmals make reference to the city's soul. A very few dare to spend a night in empathic contact with a salanister. No one can explain how, but these creatures are a way to touch the soul of Abysm. For a night, they become one with the city. Every emotion, every movement in the city runs through them. The morning always brings death to the experimenter. An exception does exist: ambassadors proudly wear salanisters around their necks on formal occasions.

☞ City layout

The perfectly circular city is irrigated by a huge number of salt-water canals from the sea. Abysm is divided



into three concentric circles around a gigantic central place. The first circle, the smallest, is composed of the Palace of Steel and the Palace of the Obese, as well as the various dependencies necessary to them. The second circle, called the Quarters, includes most of the Abysmal residences and businesses. Lastly, the third circle contains all the embassies.

The Passer Guild has a lot of influence. With their black gondolas, the passers are indispensable to the ambassadors. They serve as guides and help them to move around incognito.

♣ The Obese

The city has a strange aristocracy, whose functions and titles are only honorific and symbolic. Its members are called the Obese. Too fat to move by themselves, they are constantly aided in their slightest movements by a small army of courtesans and doctors who look after them. Although neurotic and prone to suicide, the Obese are revered by all Abysmals. Huge swarms of birds fly continually over their palace, covering it with tons and tons of foul-smelling guano. The Obese like this very much, for the birds seems sacred to them.

♣ The Palace of Steel

The heart of power is in the Palace of Steel. Seat of justice and security in Abysm, the Palace is feared and respected for its judgements and decrees. The Seneschal, who

creates the laws and is in charge of the local militia, lives and works here. It is also the living place of the Steel People, whose role is somewhere between spies and high-profile policemen.

♣ The Abyss

The Abyss is very, very close to Abysm. For this reason, the town is full of Invokers and demons, and they are firmly ensconced in the city. Most demons are treated as if they were "just guys" by the mortals.

♣ The Invokers

Invoking is a feared and respected profession in Abysm. Invokers boldly face the dangers of contact with demons, in order to render many services to the city's population. The most feared among them are surely the *Advocatus Diaboli*, because of their ambiguous nature – somewhere between man and demon. Nobody has ever really tried to discover the true identity of these beings, but their situation is far from clear.

♣ The Fireworks Man

Crazy legends abound about this Invokers' bogeyman. According to them, no connivance ties him to the Abyss. Why is he called Fireworks Man? Because this executioner likes to imprison his victims' souls in a rocket and send them up in a nice display of fireworks. Nobody loves colors like this guy.







Introduction

In this chapter you will find information about the nine seasonling races an Inspired can choose to play. Note that some of them have peculiarities that are translated into assets or faults in game terms. Do not forget to go through the Assets and Faults chapter when you create the character.

4 ~ The Seasonlings

COSMOPOLITANISM

In the Twilight Kingdoms, seasonlings are a part of everyday life. Strictly speaking, there is no xenophobia; a human will not flee from a giant's or medusa's path. There is no enclave for the denizen of one race; a dwarf does not always come from the mountains. Each seasonling, like each human, is a unique individual who does not necessarily share all the earmarks of his or her brethen. Hereafter you will find some generalizations that involve the majority, but bear in mind that the Eminence Grise and the Inspired can design a sprite or an ogre that breaks the mold.

It is essential to grasp the notion that on Harmundia, a giant walking a city street, a satyr wooing a woman in the town square, or a black fey telling tales in a smoky tavern are not surprising sights. Humans have long since learned to live with seasonlings.

HALF-BREEDS

The existence of different races in close contact with each other leads to the birth of children whose parents are of separate races. For some seasonlings, physical love does not always lead to procreation. Minotaurs, for instance, have no females. Only the succubii of the Abyss are able to give birth to a minotaur infant.

For others, there is no such constraint. An ogre, for example, can have children with a human woman. As a rule, the child usually carries the racial features of only one parent. So in this case the baby will be either an ogre or a human.

MALICENE

"After leaving the Brotherhood of the Minuscule to follow Agone of Roundrock, this sprite created in Lorgol a new organization he called the 'Brotherhood of the Mansards'. It has woven its web over the abandoned attics of the city's old mansions. Malicene called young sprites of the realm to create luxuriant gardens in these attics. The sprites shelter and train the Dancers they catch amidst the plants and flowers there. Malicene is the undisputed master of the Mansards, and spends most of his time on the roads from Urgamand to the Modehan Marches, where he recruits new members and studies the Dancers in the wilds. We also think Malicene might still be in touch with Agone, and so recommend that we plant an eminence inside the Brotherhood of Mansards."

Wild tales circulate about mythical half-seasonlings that share equally both parents' characteristics. If they really do exist, they are indeed very few and far between.

1 ~ Season of Spring

The Sprite

COUNTENANCE

♣ Physical appearance

Sprites are humanoid creatures that stand on average a bit over 2 cubits tall (3' 6"), and weigh about 90 pounds. Sprites like to wear their hair long and bushy. They tend to have shaggy eyebrows, delicate features, and full lips. They are known for their skillful hands, slender figures, and low resistance to disease and physical punishments. They have a life expectancy of 60 to 70 years.

♣ Personality

Sprites live in the woods. Within this environment, they appear as playful, facetious, and

at the same time serious creatures. They have a taste for revelry, but also for sacred ceremonies. They are often care-free, brash, and crafty. On the other hand, when confronted with a serious threat, they become watchful and cautious. They enjoy the company of animals, which to them are full-fledged beings. They respect and celebrate Nature, be it a lush forest of the Wild Reaches or a Keshite desert. To them, flora and fauna are holy things.

Sprites have no taste for coerced work, nor for law and order. They hate obeying others. They value the company of humans little, especially city dwellers. They dislike cities, where some of them fall prey to "stonepox", a disease that appears as a deadly languor.

♣ Racial asset

- **The Sap:** This power is the consequence of the empathic link a sprite has with one of the trees of his native forest. Most of the time, a female sprite gives birth to her child between the roots of an oak that becomes a sort of godfather, an entity the infant will be linked to until the day he dies. Those that are born otherwise are regarded as orphans. The ceremony that weaves this invisible link between tree and sprite gives birth in turn to the power of the Sap. This is a resonance that allows a sharing of life force. The sprite is able to transmit his wounds to the tree and vice versa. This is by no mean something to be done carelessly, as it involves a deep and instinctive friendship between the tree and the sprite.

In game terms, a tree can withstand up to five Serious wounds transmitted by the seasonling, giving him an unexpected resistance to damage. However, the tree heals very slowly – recovery from one such wound will take three months. Should the tree suffer more than five Serious wounds, it is struck down. The seasonling becomes an orphan and is seen as a murderer by other sprites. For the next three months, all his actions suffer a -5 modifier.

♣ Morality

Sprites view the Masque as an enemy. His manipulations to seduce the Lady of the Fall and provoke the disappearance of the other Ladies were enough for the sprites to wage an endless and merciless war on the Masque and its minions. Concerning the Darken, the sprites are more conciliatory, for they believe in its redemption, in its escape from the Masque's influence. However, Invokers and Demons that use the Darken are seen as enemies.

In regard to the Seasons, the sprite's stance is unequivocal: the return of the Ladies would mark the beginning of a new Flamboyance. A sprite would never refuse a quest involving the salvation of the Lady of Spring and the other Ladies.

♣ Views on magic

Sprites are generally practitioners of Ascendancy. Like a medusa with her serpents, a sprite can be hindered



by the link with his tree. The paths of Jornism and more rarely Eclipsism are readily available to them. A sprite will obviously favor Jornism to do magic in the service of nature. He might prefer Eclipsism if he must leave the forest to live in the cities. But it would take exceptional circumstances for a sprite ever to follow the path of Obscurantism.

Those that turn to the Magical Arts usually do so to perform the Vista of Spring. Often a Concordist possesses an enchanted painting of the tree that oversaw his birth. These small Pictureworlds keep traveling sprites company. Among the Tune instruments, the sprites have an easier access to flute or viol. Finally, very rarely does a sprite perform Shape or Scansion.

THE BREED

♣ Customs

Sprites live in the woods. Because of this, they fiercely hate spriggans (this feeling is mutual).

Because of their closeness to trees, sprite clans are called "Groves". A Grove is made up of 20 to 50 individuals, with an equal representation of both sexes. Sprites live on the trees, in small hanging houses built from organic materials. Life echoes the cycle of nature, following its munificence and its ills. Frequent festivals and feasts, usually in clearings or by brooks, mark the progress of the year. Nature is of course celebrated, but there is also the choosing of mates during the feast of the Embrace, the healing of sick trees and wounded animals during the feast of Samarante, the hoaxing of travelers during the feast of Jocose, etc. Those that keep company with sprites know how important these rituals and traditions are for them.

Those that leave the Grove, be it through banishment or for personal reasons, feel a deep and harsh solitude. It will take such sprites months or even years to get used to living away from the Grove. Repeatedly, they will attempt to return to participate in one of the festivals or to huddle between the roots of their tree.

♣ Function

When sprites leave the Grove, they tend to turn to lines of work that keep them in touch with nature. Many will stay in a village where they will give advice to make the harvest bountiful and the hunt fruitful. They are known use their talents to cure the sick with plant balms. This tends to become a common practice in some countries, where most villages shelter a cherished sprite. A sprite may also choose to become an entertainer in the court of a lord, or to join a troupe of comedians. Likewise, sprites sometimes become gardeners in the employ of a rich Modehan merchant or a Keshite caliph.

In cities, some sprites may also set up shop as herbalists or healers. Others might seek their fortune by joining a thieves' guild, and the boldest will try their skills at magic to become powerful Jornist wizards.

♣ Settlement

Sprites are quite numerous in the Wild Reaches, where the abundance of forests favors their style of existence. They are also known to frequently associate with the giants there. In Lyphan, the great plains haven't allowed the sprite to settle in significant numbers. There is however mention of a wandering Grove, whose trees sprout off the backs of slow and ponderous creatures.

THE SPRITE'S FLAW

A sprite is small. He has no hope of getting a drink in a tavern, since he doesn't even come as high as the counter. Chairs are too tall for him. He can barely see the top of the table. Too put it simply, a sprite must prepare for all kinds of hardships on a daily basis. More so, a sprite is always in danger in the world of the "tall folks". He can come to grievous harm if people do not mind their steps. Crowds are especially dangerous...

ROLE-PLAYING TIP

The attitude of a sprite is a difficult blend of gravity and playfulness. He often mocks those that are taller than he is, he jeers at human clumsiness and never balks from criticizing all things of the city. Wherever he is, he will never pass up an occasion to glorify nature, to sleep in the open, and to care for animals. This should not turn the sprite into a buffoon. Humans have learned not to irritate sprites, especially in the countryside where their magic has an influence on the crops. Finally, the link that unites the sprite with his tree should be apparent. The Grove can always call upon the sprite in times of trouble, and there is always a risk that his tree could be destroyed in a forest fire.

In the Princely Communes, sprites have been living for centuries in an incipient state of war. The Princes' hunts are a ceaseless source of fatal accidents, and there is no sprite in that realm that doesn't fiercely hate the humans. In Buccaner Haven, people are customarily mindful of sprites, as some of them are masters of the famous Branch, the conscious plant-ships whose masts are tall trees with leaves for sails. In Janrenia, sprites are cautious and live mostly in the pine forest that covers the mountainsides separating the country from Urganand. In Urganand itself, since the reign of Agone of Roundrock, sprites have become more numerous and many live in peasant villages. In the Mercenary Republic, on the contrary, most sprites have long since departed. In the Empire of Keshe, sprites are respected and often put in charge of the hanging gardens and large palm groves that break the desert's implacability. The same goes for the Widowlands, where some medusae entrust them with their great vineyards. Finally, the highest concentration of sprites is found in the Modehan Marches. They live there in harmony with nature, and train some of the greatest masters of the King-trees. It is even whispered that some sprites there are linked by the power of the Sap to the King-trees themselves...

♣ Stakes

- **The Seasons' return:** Sprites fight to find the Ladies of the Seasons and allow their return to Harmundia. They are convinced that nature will triumph over corruption when the Ladies have returned. They take pity on the Fallen, who in their eyes are only victims.

- **The Stonepox:** This strange illness, to which no cure is known, strikes some of the sprites that live, or even only stop for a night, in a city. It manifests itself by a progressive languor that brings the victim to a state of apathy. Some think the spriggans are responsible, others that it is a mutation of the victim's body – some trace putting the sprite in touch with the soul of the city. Some go as far as thinking that the cities have a consciousness of their own and that they try to create a link similar to that of a tree with the sprite.

- **The Sap:** Some sprites think Harmundia would be a better place if all of its denizen felt the link of the Sap. That way, nobody could ignore the needs of nature. In fact, some Groves have begun to perform potentially deadly experiments to try to achieve this empathic link between a tree and a human.

City-dwellers par excellence, spriggans travel as little as possible and had rather scour their native city until it holds no more secrets from them. They like stones, the smells of the marketplace, smoky taverns, alleys under moonlight, and balconies and gargoyles that stick out over the streets. Finally, many of them enjoy luxury and like to own beautiful – or at least original – houses.

♣ Racial assets

- **The Small Hunt:** Spriggans have always been better than anybody else at approaching and catching Dancers. This practice, called the Small Hunt, gives spriggans a major function within the Cipher-sorcerer order. Those that use Ascendancy have a hard time getting along without a spriggan to get any particular kind of Dancer. The Small Hunt is a source of both wealth and power. Wealth because selling Dancers, while dangerous, is highly profitable. Power because he who hunts for himself can keep the best Dancers.

In game terms, a spriggan character beginning the game with a Dancer can choose either to start out with a second Dancer, or to add a +2 bonus to one of his Dan-

The Spriggan

COUNTENANCE

♣ Physical appearance

Spriggans are humanoid creatures that stand on average a bit over 2 and a half cubits tall (about 4', a bit taller than sprites), and weigh about 100 pounds. Spriggans are lithe and deft, but have little resistance to physical punishment. However, they resist disease better than sprites. Spriggans have oblong faces, delicate features and big eyes. They have a life expectancy of about 100 years.

♣ Personality

Spriggans are characterized by their pomposity and propensity for speech. Talkative, eloquent, and persuasive, spriggans can make others believe almost anything. Egocentric and sometime coquettish, they are always curious and find an interest in anything that can be of use to them. Smart and inconspicuous, they know how to step aside when danger threatens and how to rush forward when something is to be gained. Spriggans are seen as opportunists. People are wary of their promises, but spriggans are unavoidable for dealings in the heart of a city. They know a city's most intimate secrets better than anyone else. With their ears always open, they walk rooftops and slip through cellars, spying and noticing everything. The information they gather is worth gold, as are their hands, so apt at catching Dancers.



cer's attributes, with the option of going one point beyond the table's maximum.

- **Funambulism:** Spriggans have an exceptional sense of balance. Always out on the rooftops, they can go tightrope walking, climb drainpipes, and jump from one balcony to the next. This translates into a +10 bonus on all Athletics or Acrobatics rolls for actions involving balance.

♣ **Morality**

Spriggans strive to remain neutral whatever the circumstances. Their only enemies are those that go against their personal interests. In this regard, they do not wage war against the Masque. They see the Darken as a potential ally. Often fascinated with Invocation, spriggans have no intention to harm the Darken. They admit it would be a good thing to break the Masque's hold over it but do not consider this a priority. This neutrality, viewed by many seasonlings as a guilty negligence, also applies to the Ladies of the Seasons. Spriggans do not see how their return could be so crucial an event.

♣ **Views on magic**

Spriggans love magic. To them, it is the most beautiful of arts. Only rarely does a spriggan not practice Ascendancy, and most of those choose Eclipsism. Theoretically, they should never practice Obscurantism, as it maims and kills Dancers. Some spriggans actually conspire inside the Cipher-sorcerer to ban that practice. Jornism, finally, is much too conspicuous to be useful. If some actually turn to it, it is only because it fits their personal ends.

Among the Magical Arts, spriggans mostly devote themselves to Tune, practiced as a free Art, and to Vista, for its Pictureworld that offers a convenient hideout when in a tight spot.

THE BREED

♣ **Customs**

Spriggans do not have a tribal organization. However, they all agree to create and maintain in the heart of a city a "Beggar's Banquet". The Beggar's Banquet is a place where all the spriggans of a given city can meet to exchange information, sell, buy, or trade. The Beggar's Banquet can be visible or hidden, accessible to humans or reserved only for spriggans. Each year, those that reside in the city elect a King, whose duty will be to supervise the Beggar's Banquet. Recognizable by his carved iron wand, the King is an unavoidable figure whom the city's authority must learn to deal with.

In the capital cities, there are sometimes several Beggar's Banquets that coexist and wage a merciless war upon one another. Sometimes they specialize and become guilds of Small Hunters or even assassins.

Spriggans care a great deal about the Dancer "economy". Though some have no qualms about selling Dancers, most watch over the equilibrium, insisting that

THE SPRIGGAN'S FLAW

A spriggan has the same problem as the sprite: his smallness. He too has no hope of getting a drink in a tavern, since he doesn't even come as high as the counter. Chairs are too tall for him; he can barely see the top of the table. In short, a spriggan, like his cousin the sprite, must prepare for all kinds of hardships on a daily basis. But at least he is more resilient and used to the city, so his survival among humans is a lot less problematic.

ROLE-PLAYING TIP

In the game, a spriggan must undeniably have the soul of a city-dweller. He must love running nightly on the rooftops, acrobatics, hunting and selling Dancers, illusions, fast-talk, and magic. A bustling smooth-talker, the spriggan can be a pestering companion, but also a very useful one to have, thanks to his contacts and extensive knowledge of cities.

Dancers be catalogued inside the academies of the Cipher-sorcerer. This is an ethic based on an acute consciousness of the threat on the Dancers' survival. Most spriggans pledge themselves to either reason with the Obscurantists or fight against them, in order to achieve that fewer Dancers, if any, be sacrificed.

♣ **Function**

Theoretically, spriggans can fulfill any profession in a city. In practice, they have a predilection for certain ones. Thievery, for instance, is something they excel at. Spriggan-created thieves' guilds are among the most famous. Moreover, these guilds do not only deal in theft. They can provide resources such as maps, information, protection, magical artifacts, and Dancers.

Spriggans also make good assassins, particularly when they have had the opportunity to join an eclipsism academy. Some make great censors inside a Cipher-sorcerer.

Finally, spriggans can also be good merchants. Their eloquence, intuition, and bargaining skills can work wonders on a marketplace.

♣ **Settlement**

In most of Harmundia's realms, Spriggans live in the cities. In the north, from Lyphan to the Wild Reaches, including the Liturgical Province, they are very rare. On the other hand, in Aysm or in the cities of the Princely Communes, they wield great influence. This is also the case in the cities of Urgamand, Janrenia, the Keshite Empire, and the Mercenary Republic. In the Modehan Marches and the Widowlands, however, spriggans are not very numerous.

♣ **Stakes**

- **The Dancer:** Spriggans cannot disregard the cause of the Dancers and its implications regarding the Cipher-sorcerer. Jornist mages often meet with the guild mas-

ters to establish a Dancer census and an accurate map of their locations. The Ascendancy and its practice in the future are at stake. Should the Dancers disappear, magic would cease to exist.

- **The strife against Obscurantism:** The Dancers' salvation requires work at the core of Obscurantism. From one city to another, there are conciliators trying to reason with the Obscurantists, but also mage-killers – spriggans who believe that the Dancers' survival can only be ensured through the elimination of all Obscurantists.

- **The quest for the City-Soul:** Spriggans hope someday to uncover this ancient power of the Flamboyance – the City-Soul – the ability to see and feel through the soul of a city. This quest involves occult architecture, but also the strange disease called stonepox that smites the sprites, and the mineral insight power of the black feys. This discovery could allow the spriggans to possess

a power similar to that of the sprites with their trees. Wild tales already circulate about the King of the Beggar's Banquet of Abysm possessing this power...

The Satyr

COUNTENANCE

♣ Physical appearance

Satyrs are humanoid creatures whose height and weight are similar to a humans'. Their heads, torsos and arms are completely human, while their lower halves are like the hind legs of a ram. They have hooves of ivory, but no horns on their heads. Their legs give them an advantage in running and jumping. They are as resilient as humans, though with generally much more stamina. Their life expectancy is also about the same as that of humans.

♣ Personality

Satyrs are ambiguous beings. Courteous, eloquent, and alluring, they are known for their charisma, their manners, and their flair for diplomacy. They appreciate all company but favor that of women. Driven by a boundless sexual appetite, they loathe solitude and can't stand to sleep alone. They have optimistic dispositions, sometime bordering on carelessness, and go through life in a frenzy, possessed by their craving for new experiences, improvisations and spontaneity. They dislike rules and discipline, consider exercising their free will of the utmost importance, and will go as far as possible to avoid submitting to any kind of authority. They value their freedom above all else. They like to travel and almost never settle down in one place for more than a few months. Wanderers par excellence, they roam the paths of Harmundia in search of love, wealth and pleasure.

♣ Racial assets

- **Bucking:** With his hooves, a satyr can make a bucking special attack.
- **Sex:** Nobody can satisfy a woman better than a satyr can. An expert in caresses and master of pleasure, he can overcome any reluctance or modesty. Each town holds a woman who eagerly anticipates his return, and will do almost anything he commands. In effect, this provides him a network of influence that can range from a tavern wench to a princess.

♣ Morality

Satyrs absolutely hate the Masque. They will fight body and soul against his influence and his countless plans to turn humans into puppets. No satyr will willingly play into the Masque's hands. Towards the Darken however, satyrs



have a more neutral attitude. Demons can be of use and the Darken, like the Lady of Fall, was deceived by the Masque.

The satyrs' point of view on the Ladies of the Seasons is unequivocal. They see them as the epitome of femininity. Every satyr has had dreams of sharing one of the Ladies' beds and becoming her confidante. To them, it would be the fulfillment of the ultimate quest. In fact, satyrs would do anything to find the Ladies of the Seasons.

♣ Views on magic

Satyrs neglect Ascendancy, at least its academic aspects. They cannot stand the idea of obeying the Cipher-sorcerer's precepts, and even less of obeying wizards.

Given this, those satyrs that practice Ascendancy have learned to illegally use "unmarked" Dancers, with the help of a renegade Mage.

Satyrs favor the Magical Arts, most often as Free Arts. They place the Tune above all else. Being exceptional musicians, they often play two or three instruments. Mostly these include the Flute, Harp, and Cittern. They also excel at Scansion and Vista, but are rarely interested in Shape.

THE BREED

♣ Customs

Contrary to the popular opinion, satyrs enjoy cities as much as the outdoors. Though they might be more at ease in a forest, they fear loneliness and so prefer the hustle and bustle of a city.

There are no females among the satyrs. To reproduce, a satyr must go into the forest, perform ancestral rituals, and somehow breed with Nature. His seed gives birth to a tree inside which a new satyr grows. After a six week pregnancy inside the enchanted tree, during which the satyr father keeps watch, the new-born scratches through the bark and comes out of the tree (which dies in the process). The father educates his son until puberty. This essentially means the child follows his father on the road and learns life by his side. After puberty, they separate to recover their respective freedom.

On a daily basis, adult satyrs control their sexual cravings through the use of mandrake. Born from their seed, the flower can be used to staunch the desire that can sometime play nasty tricks on them. Satyrs smoke it, or grind it into a powder. Such a flower, while rare and expensive, can allow a satyr to refrain himself for about a month.

♣ Function

Satyrs use seduction in all aspects of life. If they want to ply a trade, they will choose one that agrees with their wanderlust: traveling perfumer, peddler, messenger, or even soldier in a campaigning army. However, satyrs rarely keep the same profession for long, and try them all out at one point or another. Arriving in a city,

THE SATYR'S FLAW

All in all, a satyr is led by his sexual needs. If he doesn't smother them with mandrake, a pretty woman can have enormous power over him and make him do almost anything for a kiss, a night of love, or the sharing of a good bottle by a romantic canal under the moon.

a satyr can decide to work in a tavern, then, after having conquered a rich woman, live at her expense until he grows weary of her.

But what they like best is the life of the artist: to sell their paintings going from one manor to another, or to play music to entertain a local lord, to organize a troupe of strolling players to perform bawdy plays with others satyrs, to become a storyteller and declaim love poetry in the town square... The most depraved can choose to make a fortune from their body by playing the flute under ladies' balconies. Being consummate sycophants, they are so adept at flattery that lords sometime hire their services for that sole purpose.

♣ Settlement

Satyrs avoid the Liturgical Province where they are hunted down like wild beasts. They are rare in Lyphan and the Wild Reaches. On the other hand, they delight in traveling through the Princely Communes, where pleasure is an art form and depravity a way of life. If they go to Buccaner Haven, it is mostly to board a ship and plunder the coast with the pirates. If they enter the Empire of Keshe, it is either to lose themselves in the arms of the courtesans or to provide the caliphs' harems with the most beautiful women in the region. They enjoy Urgamand and Janrenia but avoid the Mercenary Republic, where women get no respect unless they are whores. However, they delight in going deep into the Widowlands to seduce the medusae, and enjoy the climate and the excellent wines. The same goes for the Modehan Marches, where they admire the marvelous plants that grow in the cities.

♣ Stakes

- **Manhood:** It is a major stake for a satyr. To lose it is to die, victim of an illness called the "small death". This illness sometimes strikes the elder satyrs and those unlucky enough to have been castrated, and it seems to cause an acceleration of the aging process. Some affec-

ROLE-PLAYING TIP

Playing a satyr is not merely an exercise in ribaldry. Though the sexual cravings of a satyr are a profuse source of intrigues, you must not stop at that. It pays to think of seduction in its broader sense. The satyr is a social chameleon able to adapt to all situations and all personalities. His charisma affects men as well as women. He can earn faithful friends or harsh jealousies, tears or passionate nights. Paramount epicurean, he can grow weary of anything, and fears one thing above all else: monotony.

ted satyrs return to the forest of their birth to await their death. Others fall into a murdering madness before committing suicide or being caught and hanged.

- **The Mother:** A legend tells how she-satyrs could be born in the king-trees that date back to the Flamboyance. Rumors mention one of them, a woman of extraordinary beauty that haunts the alleys of Modehan cities. Satyrs have been looking for her for centuries.

2 ~ Season of Summer

Dancers), and are wary of black feys. They are indifferent to dwarves and amused by satyrs. They are frequently found among minotaurs and giants, whose company they appreciate.

Ogres prefer cities to the countryside for one simple reason: they offer far more opportunities for wealth. This opinion is justified by the presence of numerous guilds that often have need of an ogre's services.

An ogress' personality is similar to that of a male ogre's. When she becomes pregnant, however, her behavior changes drastically. Not only will all ogres be eager to protect her but she herself will be much more dangerous. An ogress turns into a true fury when she needs to watch over the child growing inside her. It is said there are few warriors in the world able to match a pregnant ogress.

♣ Racial assets

- **Noon Blaze:** Sensitive to the presence of the sun (which they hold to be a source of inspiration) ogres benefit from a special asset when the sun is at its zenith.

The Ogre

COUNTENANCE

♣ Physical appearance

Ogres are humanoid creatures that stand on average just above 4 cubits high (close to 7 feet), and weigh about 200 pounds. Their coarse features and protruding chins are often covered by markings that are either tattoos or battle scars. Their life expectancy is a bit longer than that of humans, but since most of them devote their lives to warfare, very few live beyond their forties. Nonetheless, ogres have a superior resistance to disease and physical punishment.

♣ Personality

Ogres are seasonlings of Summer, whimsical and aggressive. They have short tempers and react with a spontaneity they sometimes regret afterwards. Though basically individualists, they nevertheless consent to obey orders when the situation warrants it. As soldiers or mercenaries, they are not commended for their sense of discipline. They enjoy gambling, drinking, and the company of women, particularly medusae. Mostly they like to gain wealth quickly and spend it faster still. Only seldom are ogres able to take the long view in order to climb the ranks and become lords.

Ogres respect all those bigger than themselves and despise all those smaller. They dislike sprites, trade coldly with spriggans (mostly to acquire



THE OGRE'S FLAW

Playing an Ogre incurs no flaw.

Nothing is worse than fighting an ogre during that hour, whatever the season. In melee combat, ogres have an attack modifier of +3 during the Summer, +2 during the Fall and Spring, and +1 during the Winter. The effect lasts for an hour (from 11:30 to 12:30). An ogre need not actually see the sun to benefit from this power. The Noon Blaze is accompanied by a rise in the ogre's body temperature, like a sudden and strong fever. At the peak of the Noon Blaze, their temperature can go up beyond 105° F. There is never too much light for an ogre, who can never be dazzled.

- **The Fury:** This power is only usable by pregnant ogress. They enter the fury if, and only if, their child is threatened. In that case, they are subjected to such a fighting rage that they discount any wound penalties, and fall down only when they have lost twice their STA in negative hit points.

♣ Morality

Ogres know only one allegiance: the Lady of Summer, so they oppose the Fallen by all means. Beside this season heritage, ogres have no master to unite them. They serve whoever pays best. Nonetheless, while the Darken is not seen as a complete enemy, ogres tend to think twice before trusting a creature of the Masque. They usually avoid his minions.

♣ Views on magic

Ogres view Ascendancy as a means to an end. A Dancer can be useful to an Eclipsist or an Obscurantist. A Jornist ogre would be an anomaly, because ogres do not see Dancers as anything but tools, like a cittern to an Attuned. If they take care to protect their Dancers, it is only because they paid so much for them.

Ogre Concordist are rare. They usually favor the drum for Tune, disregard Scansion, might use Shape to improve their combat skills, and as for Vista, they perform only the Summer path and only as a Free Art. An ogre painting another season of Vista would be considered a traitor by all others.

THE BREED

♣ Customs

In the past, ogres adopted a tribal structure and a clannish culture that has since disappeared. What remain are the fellowships the ogres spontaneously create on the eve of a major battle, or under the guidance of a common leader. These fellowships are made up of ogres (and ogresses) that always travel together. They are known by the scarifications they share on their faces or torsos. There is no real ogre nation. Ogres are individuals first. Besides, ogres can blend into human society very easily,

as they share many physical traits with humans. An ogre is solitary by nature, someone who calls only one other his family: his mother. The mother has a crucial function as she brings up the child until he is old enough to fend for himself. During his first years, the child will live with his mother, sharing her life and learning to fight. He leaves her to roam the world by himself when he is about ten years old. It is rare for an ogress to have only one mate, so the ogre culture has no role for the father.

♣ Function

Ogres mainly concentrate on the trades of war. Excellent mercenaries, they take part in the great battles in which they often gather into an elite unit to protect important personalities. They might also become pirates in the Buccaneer Haven, or find a career as a master-at-arms.

The best of them open schools of warfare or become lords over a Domain. Only a few choose to live by magic, be it Ascendancy or the Magic Arts. There are however a few great Attuned of the drum who can crack the walls of a fortress with but a sound, Concordists of Vista who travel through Pictureworlds of Summer and can set a whole forest ablaze with their powders, powerful Obscurantists who sell their talents in countries at war, and even some Eclipsists who make a name for themselves in a city's underworld.

♣ Settlement

Ogres are numerous, much more than giants or minotaurs. Of all the seasonlings, they are the best adapted to human society. Not much difference is made nowadays between an ogre and a tall and bulky human.

Ogres are travelers who suffer when settled down permanently. Only those that have established successful career and become lords or guild masters make this choice. Generally, ogres have no ties. They wander the roads of the Realms, and never hoard their wealth.

However, ogres have some realms they favor throughout Harmundia. The Mercenary Republic is a very welcoming country for ogres, as are the Princely Communes, which hire their services and offer them many opportunities to spend their pay. They also have a strong presence in the Buccaneer Haven, where fortunes are made and lost on a daily basis. They hold a deep respect for the desert of Keshe stemming from the magical acci-

ROLE-PLAYING TIP

Typically, an ogre is like an impetuous teenager, arrogant and quarrelsome. He wants to be in all the tavern brawls and all the wars, and loves to make more noise than everybody else. Loud-mouthed and immature, he lacks stealth and subtlety. However, fighting wars has sharpened his cunning and adaptability. Indeed, an ogre at war and an ogre at peace seem like two different creatures. When he dons his armor, he becomes a fearsome seasonling, and all tremble before him. But when he spends his gold drinking in an inn, he can become vulnerable and even embarrassing.

dent from which the Keshite desert was created. Many ogres go there as pilgrims to honor the Lady of Summer.

Ogres rarely go as far north as Lyphan, where they fear the presence of the black feys, and where the odds of acquiring wealth are minimal. They rarely venture into the Wild Reaches unless hunting for a treasure a Luminary told them about. Urgamand and Janrenia are considered average countries, with nothing particularly alluring about them.

♣ Stakes

Only a few nostalgic ones try to revive the idea of an ogre nation by attempting, unsuccessfully, to unite the fellowships. What ogres mainly have in common is the quest for the Lady of Summer. All dream of being one day by her side to bask in the beauty that inspires their dreams. But only the rare Concordists of Vista actually seek the sleeping Lady by traveling through the Pictureworlds.



The Minotaur

COUNTENANCE

♣ Physical appearance

Minotaurs are humanoid creatures that stand on average 5 cubits high (about 8 feet) and weigh about 400 pounds. Though muscular, minotaurs are less nimble than ogres. Their exceptional resistance to all kinds of physical punishment makes them one of the most powerful warrior races among the seasonlings.

A minotaur's face is a cross between a bull's and a human's. Their horns are made of onyxium, an extremely resistant raw material with the color of onyx that can be found only in the Abyss. A minotaur's life expectancy is 90 years. Some have supposedly even lived for over a century, but they still dwell in the Abyss.

♣ Personality

Minotaurs are divided into two categories: those that live in the Abyss and those that fled the Abyss and became renegades.

A renegade minotaur is moved by a deep desire for freedom. By leaving the Abyss, he made a choice that is a commitment for his entire life. Because of this, he intends to make the best of his time on Harmundia's surface. He knows no master, and obeys only his own decisions. He appreciates discipline, order and exactness, and loathes chaos. Because of this, he voluntarily chooses to obey the laws of the land, but he nevertheless intends to savor all the pleasures he can derive from Harmundia's diversity. He has a curious temperament,

THE MINOTAUR'S FLAW

You have chosen to play a minotaur, a very powerful and dangerous creature, but not without drawbacks. A minotaur is very tall. An average human's head comes up to his belly. His limited AGI rating does not mean he is less deft or nimble than other seasonlings, but rather that his size hinders him in many situations. Picture him trying to run in a small tunnel, or picking a lock with his huge fingers. His horns almost always scrape the ceiling. Imagine a minotaur firmly secured to a building's main beam by the horns he himself accidentally drove in when he suddenly raised his head. And you must also consider his weight – about three times that of a human.

devoting himself body and soul to those he considers his friends or allies. If he grants his trust to someone, he will do so unwaveringly. No one has ever had cause to complain of a minotaur's unfaithfulness. Prone to vengeance, a minotaur is also "faithful" to his enemies.

Because of their origins, minotaurs begin the game with 10 Darkening points (see Book Four, Chapter 1: The Darken).

♣ Racial assets

- **Goring:** This maneuver involves a minotaur charging to gore an adversary with his horns. If successful, this attack can be very deadly. In game terms, a minotaur trying to gore his opponent always get the charge modifier to damage (see the "Charge" maneuver in the Combat section of Book Three), even if he is not actually charging.

- **Minor night vision:** Coming from the Abyss means that all minotaurs possess an improved night vision. Modifiers due to darkness are shifted one notch ("total darkness" becomes "nighttime darkness", which becomes "penumbra", which is ignored).

♣ Morality

Minotaurs have an ambiguous relationship with the Darken. They have fled the Abyss but not relinquished invocation. Whether they are Inspired or not, they see the Darken as an enemy. They know very well that demons are dangerous and treacherous. Of course the demons they invoke are constrained to be faithful. Toward the Masque, minotaurs reserve their opinion. They might work with his minions to approach the Darken. Regarding the Lady of Summer, minotaurs are cautious, and fear that her return might mean the end of the Darken, and so the end of the Demons. Those who choose to serve her have usually stopped using invocation.

♣ Views on magic

Regarding Ascendancy, minotaurs always favor Obscurantism over the other paths. To them, Eclipsism doesn't fit their character and Jornism goes against their nature. Some minotaurs develop Spells where they use their horns in the Torture.

Minotaurs seldom dabble in the Magic Arts. They don't appreciate Tune, rarely try Shape, neglect Scan-sion, but sometimes do a bit of Summer Vista.

THE BREED

♣ Customs

Like ogres, minotaurs have no proper social organization. Each minotaur builds his own vision of life on Harmundia's surface. There are however some minotaurs who were able to unite their kindred through a powerful and secret coalition called the Renegade. It is not really a structured clan but rather a shared philosophy. Those that join the Renegade are committed to helping their fellows throughout the world to find a means for minotaurs to have children on the surface (see below), and to organize expeditions into the Abyss to convince other minotaurs of their struggle's justification. The Renegade is still a relatively new organization whose members are recruited among the most accomplished minotaurs.

On Harmundia, minotaurs are few and far between, which can be explained by the way they breed. There are no minotaur females. Only male minotaurs are ever born, and only from the mating of a minotaur father with a succubus. Succubii are few in number and live in the Abyss. Nevertheless, they are the only ones able to bear a minotaur infant. The birth itself is often lethal to the mother as the baby's horns tear open her womb. Four times out of five, the mother dies from her wounds. In the Abyss, precise laws govern the reproductive process, but on the surface, renegades are condemned to extinction. Some try using invocation, but nothing can compel a succubus to sacrifice her life for those who fled the Abyss. Others try to lead expeditions into the heart of the Darken's realm to abduct a succubus, while some powerful Concordists of Vista attempt experiments on "painted" succubii in the Pictureworlds...

♣ Function

Not all minotaurs ply a true trade. Most renegades use their fighting skills sporadically to earn what they need to live on, then continue their journeys. Minotaurs are wanderers that rarely stay long in the same spot.

Those that settle down do it regretfully and for specific reasons. Their discipline is highly prized for teaching in a fighting school, for training a lord's army, or leading it to war. Very seldom will a minotaur become a lord himself, though. If it happens, it is because circumstances have led him to the throne. Humans are wary of these creatures, and minotaurs must live with the prejudices of a good part of the population. Surprisingly, more and more minotaurs are trying to build commercial empires. Their meticulousness and their faithfulness are great assets in a merchant career, and some have already made huge fortunes (out of which some give the Renegade a means to its ends).

♣ Settlement

Minotaurs are sprinkled over Harmundia's surface. In the north, they avoid the Liturgical Province, where the Inquisition treats them as creatures of the Darken. But many go to Abyss and the bravest may venture to the Horns. Some can also be found in Lyphan, often leading parties of horsemen that lay waste to the border, or in the Wild Reaches, where they are companions to

ROLE-PLAYING TIP

An Inspired can only play a renegade, a minotaur that fled the Abyss but unavoidably still carries around its stigmas. His flight might have been a harsh trial, and he experiences Harmundia through the eyes of a former guardian of the Abyss. At first, renegades are disoriented and seek the advice of those who have earned their trust. They like to learn, and are interested in everything until they are able to fend for themselves. Playing a minotaur is taking on the role of someone ambiguous, tormented, and eager for freedom.

barbarians or giants. They are well integrated in Urgamand, where many answered the call of Agone of Roundrock and put their talents in the service of the great schools. The people of Urgamand make friends easily with the enemies of the Liturges. They are fewer in Janrenia, but many try their luck in Buccaneer Haven, where their authority does wonders aboard ships. Minotaurs are uneasy in the Empire of Keshe and prefer to go further south, to the Widowlands. Medusae appreciate them very much, and are ready to pay exorbitantly to provide their daughters with a minotaur pedagogue. They certainly have no need to go west into the Modehan Marches where they are not welcomed. This leaves the Mercenary Republic, where they have great opportunities to find adventures and hoard a fortune.

♣ Stakes

- **The descent:** Some renegades are convinced their exile will have meaning once they find a way to sire children on Harmundia's surface. Even though such an event is exceptional, it has already been made possible: some succubii have agreed to sacrifice themselves by bearing a child outside of



the Abyss, and there are rumors of one-horned minotaur children (with the horn jutting out between their eyes) born inside the Pictureworlds.

- **Onyxium:** Nobody knows how this strange substance appeared. It is normally extracted from the deepest pits of the Abyss. Harmundia's denizens think it is imbued with magical properties. The minotaurs know onyxium has not yet revealed all its abilities and try actively to uncover them. One thing is certain: a horn made of onyxium is as durable as an artifact that contains a Shard. Because of this, some unscrupulous craftsmen offer a fortune to minotaur hunters who bring them horns they can use to make weapons.

- **The Renegade:** As explained above, the organization called the Renegade strives to further the ends of minotaurs exiled on Harmundia's surface.

The Giant

COUNTENANCE

♣ Physical appearance

Giants are the tallest of the seasonlings: over 8 cubits tall (12 to 14 feet) and weighing about 1200 pounds. Thickset, giants are extremely powerful and clumsy. Their bodies are outstandingly resistant to damage, to the detriment of their nimbleness and speed. However, a giant's stride cannot be matched, and charging giants have shaken many towers' foundation. There are different kinds of giants, differentiated by the environment they live in. Forest and mountain giants are the most common. A forest giant usually has green eyes and brown hair, while a mountain giant is noted for his pale blue eyes and white hair. Giants' life expectancy is about 150 years, and some of their elders are said to have come close to 200 years old.

♣ Personality

Giants are linked to nature. They are basically good, welcoming, obliging, and sometimes naive. They do not like crowds, and prefer open spaces where they can go about their business with no risk of harming anyone.

They like animals and surround themselves with them, though they see the law of natural selection as a necessity, and have no compunction about hunting or letting other do so. On the other hand, they cannot abide waste or scorn for nature. Those that spoil a forest by hunting for pleasure become enemies to the giants and must fear their vengeance. Giants can and will resort to violence when they deem it necessary. Beyond their veneer of placidity, giants are fond of their freedom and the places where they live. They can become cruel if their lands are threatened.

Giants are known for their generosity, and travelers know they can ask for their protection when in peril. They are straightforward and earnest, hate lies and

deceit, and respect old people. They will attach great value to a judgment made by the elders of any race. A black fey often wields great influence over a particular giant. To giants, size matters little, for they view high-mindedness as more important than mere height.

♣ Racial assets

- **Empathy with Nature:** A giant in his natural habitat has a privileged "contact" with Nature. Because of this, he benefits from a +2 modifier to all skills involving nature (Plant lore, Beast lore, etc.).

- **The Ramming:** This describes the charge of a giant against a building. To do this, the giant must gather enough momentum to damage the edifice. A Ramming can weaken a building, even a fortress, and will utterly destroy weaker structures, like a wooden house. In game terms, a giant can destroy any wooden structure in (20-STR) rounds, a minor stone building (house, small tower...) in (30-STR) rounds, a massive stone structure (small fortress, cliff weakened by landslide...) in (30-STR) hours. For more imposing buildings, (great fortress, huge tower, thick city walls...), the ramming effect is visible, but has no immediate effect on game play. A wall will be cracked, a tower bent, a fortress riddled with cracks and holes left by stones fallen off the wall, etc. Given enough time, the giant should even be able to demolish it over the course of a few days, and at the cost of gigantic exertions.

♣ Morality

Giants are among the more ardent and determined of the Masque's enemies. They make his life difficult by hunting down any of his minions relentlessly. Theoretically, the Masque should easily be able to fool a giant. But they have learned vigilance and rarely can a minion of the Masque deceive a giant in his natural setting. Giants have a more reserved attitude towards the Darken. They mistrust the Invokers more than the Demons themselves, who they view as tools and sometimes victims. A giant can be either a friend or an enemy to an Invoker, depending on his motives and personality.

Regarding the Ladies of the Seasons, foremost Summer, giants are devoted servants. But unlike ogres and minotaurs, giants favor a global approach, and argue for a concerted quest for the three sleeping Ladies.

♣ Views on magic

People tend to think the clumsy gestures of giants are ill adapted to the use of a Dancer. But history has proven them wrong, though it must be acknowledged that giants who practice magic are rare. Those who choose Ascendancy often do so for personal reasons. They have generally left their clan to become Wanderers (see below) and joined a school of the Cipher-sorcerer. A giant's use of a Dancer usually occurs via the path of Jörnism, very rarely Eclipsism, and absolutely never Obscurantism, as the giants' goodwill and empathy with Nature help them establish a union with their Dancers.

Rarely do giants perform Magical Arts. While their booming voices can be an asset for Scansion, they are more prone to Tune, with adapted instruments. *Most often*, they use flutes or drums, but you may come across a giant playing viol in a clearing. As for Vista, giants' uncontested specialties are big frescoes covering entire walls. They perform Vista in its three Seasons, as a Free Art and as an Elder Art.

THE BREED

♣ Customs

Giants gather in clans, and each clan is ruled by a council of elders that makes all decisions, whether they involve daily matters or exceptional situations. There is no difference in status between the sexes inside a clan. Each clan is composed of ten to fifty giants, depending on the environment, the country it is in, and alliances with neighboring powers. Each clan tries to keep the lands it possesses, though they often only occupy them after an agreement with the local lord. In that case, the lord grants them the use of a part of his Domain in return for their protection.

Each clan is symbolized by its totem, an animal that the clan strives to protect. There are rumors about a "clan of the High Dancer" whose members are all Ascendancy Mages.

Among giants, birth is considered to be an exceptional event. In fact, each female giant can procreate only once in her lifetime, begetting one to three children (the average being two, sometimes three, and seldom one). This explains why giants aren't more numerous and why some clans, lacking women to perpetuate themselves, become extinct.

THE GIANT'S FLAW

Giants are huge. Really, truly, huge. They can strike down any man with one blow. They are so powerful, they cannot even resist their own strength: a giant hit by another is almost certain to suffer at least a serious wound. There is nothing stronger than them, apart from magical creatures. (Their body could not be bigger without magic – if they were heavier, they wouldn't be able to carry their own weight.) A human stands as tall as a giant's knee!

As a result, giants are disproportionate. They have a maximum of 3 in AGI to reflect this. A giant missing a step kills the people he falls on. If he stumbles against a house, he might break all the windows and tear down a wall. When he walks, he leaves tracks a foot deep in the earth. Should he run on a road, the road must be built anew. Above all, precise manipulations (picking a lock, repairing human armor, administering first aid, etc.) are almost beyond his abilities, as his hands are as big as a man's torso. For a giant, opening a door without breaking it down is a true test of agility.

The Eminence Grise is advised to be strict in enforcing the consequences of a giant's size. A scenario set in a city, or in any enclosed space, cannot be played by a giant unless he pulls up the buildings' roofs and ceilings to see what's happening inside, or unless everything has been prepared to accommodate him.

ROLE-PLAYING TIP

Playing a giant does not necessarily mean playing a clumsy and naïve creature. Once again, you must not forget the size, a major handicap in a city or anything built on a human scale. When stopping at an inn, for example, giants will often sleep in barns or stables if the establishment is not constructed to accommodate creatures of his size (a few inns, however, boast of having rooms and a dining hall fit for giants). An Inspired will often play a Wanderer, a giant that left his clan. And a Wanderer has learned to manage in a world of small creatures. He will be a calming influence, someone whose anger is feared but whose friendship is appreciated.

Unless traveling on their lands, it is rare to meet a giant belonging to a clan, and more common to cross the path of a Wanderer.

A Wanderer is a giant who, for whatever reasons, has had to leave his clan. Like the renegade minotaurs, these giants will roam Harmundia seeking a new clan or pursuing their own goals. Whether an exile or one who has chosen to see the world and seek his fortune, a Wanderer is seen as a great companion to be had.

• Function

Giants who belong to a clan don't fill any specific role in the "human" society. A clan strives to be autonomous and assign the tasks within the clan, according to each giant's abilities. Some are hunters, others gatherers or woodcutters, others still builders or healers. This doesn't prevent members of a clan from fulfilling missions for their neighbors. These are always isolated actions, such as helping with a building site, carrying heavy merchandise, going to war upon a lord's call, woodcutting, caring for a forest, taming animals, etc. Giants are used to helping the other races, provided it is not systematic, and that the favors are returned in a spirit of goodwill.

As for Wanderers, they are called upon to play specific parts in human society. Some are found in the trades of warfare, usually in the employ of an army that has turned them into frightful war machines. Others choose to sell their skills to the highest bidder, usually for a town or an architect. Indeed, whenever a fortress, a cathedral, or any really big edifice is erected, it is not uncommon to find giants looking for employment.

A Wanderer can also become a messenger. With his great strides, he can cross long distances quickly. Besides, he is impressive enough to have nothing to fear from bandits.

Some Wanderers also turn to gardening, especially in the Modehan Marches where many of them are in charge of the great parklands and the king-trees. Some settle down and open successful herbalist shops.

Finally, some Concordist Wanderers establish painter's guilds whose skills are sought throughout Harmundia to decorate great buildings with gigantic - and magic - frescoes.

• Settlement

In the north, giants have found lands propitious to their development. They were able to settle in large numbers in Lyphan and in the Wild Reaches. The most important concentration of giant clans can be found in the Wild Reaches' great forests, where they have allied and fought with the barbarians for centuries. Like all other seasonings, giants avoid the Liturgical Province where they are treated as slaves. In the Liturgists' capital city of Novene, giants in chains are a regular sight, serving in the dignitaries' mansions or departing for the mines. They are better appreciated in the Princely Communes. Many Wanderers go there to seek their fortune, in addition to the clans living in the southern mountains of the Communes. Lower south, be it in Janrenia or the kingdom of Urganand, most giants are Wanderers, though some sparse clans survive in the mountains. The Empire of Keshe, however, has witnessed over the centuries the birth of the desert giants. Easily known by their red hair, they live in clans numbering no more than twenty, in the heart of the desert. Wanderers in Keshe usually go to one of the border cities. In the Mercenary Republic, only Wanderers try their luck. The few clans that used to live there gave up because of incessant wars, and moved up north. In the south, giants are warily tolerated in the Widowlands, as long as they are Wanderers, but no clan is allowed to settle. In the neighboring Modehan Marches, on the other hand, clans are numerous and respected, for they insure the security of the borders and the safety of the cities.

• Stakes

- **Love:** To giants, love cannot be dissociated from sexuality. Giants mate for life. This attitude is certainly linked to the fact that a giantess can never hope to have more than three children. Wanderers find it difficult to follow this precept, though most of them search for love and try not to lose themselves in multiple experiences.

- **Founding a giant's nation:** Many among the Wild Reaches clans think their country could become the cradle of a giant nation, a shelter where all of Harmundia's giants could gather in peace. Their councils of elders are now trying to unite their strength to defeat the barbarian tribes once and for all.

3 ~ Season of Winter

The Black Fey

COUNTENANCE

♣ Physical appearance

Black feys are humanoid creatures that stand on average a bit below 2 cubits high (up to 3 feet), and weigh about 80 pounds. They have small wings on their backs and their bodies seem very old and sickly. A black fey's wrinkled and grayish skin obviously makes her an old woman. In truth, their lives follow a very peculiar rhythm. Apparently, the black feys were the most exposed during the betrayal of the Lady of Fall and the disappearance of their Godmother, the Lady of Winter. Since then, black feys are prey to the curse on their Godmother. They fall asleep for scores of years, wake up for a given time, succumb to sleep again, and so forth, each having her own cycle. Black feys visibly age but never die. Some think the return of the Lady of Winter will mean the death of the crones and the coming of a unique black fey, a child who will be the new mother of her people.

♣ Personality

A black fey inspires suspicion, fear, and sometimes respect. Upon each awakening, she finds herself deprived of memory, or with only a few snatches that seem like dreams. Some actively seek their memories in the Pictureworlds of Winter (which are said to hold the dreams of their whole race).

A black fey is foremost a wielder of magic. Be it through Ascendancy or Magic Arts, magic is her only way to survive on Harmundia. Thought of as a witch, she fears the judgment of men and tries to stay in the background. She has a unique outlook on life and spends all her waking hours trying to figure out the innermost mechanisms of Harmundia, and the secret of the curse on her race.

A black fey is suspicious, but moved by a ceaseless curiosity. She sees everyone and everything as being a part of Harmundia, and thus a subject that must be studied. She likes a scholarly atmosphere, vast libraries, and the smell of old scrolls.

Because of her weaknesses, she likes to be surrounded by devoted servants or friends who care for her health and help her with mundane business. She likes to keep company with dwarves and most of all with medusae, her best allies.

♣ Racial assets

- **Mineral insight:** Every black fey is able to speak to the minerals and unlock their secrets. They can create a state of communication with matter simply by touching it. Inseparable from the Elder Art of Chisella, this mineral insight allows the expression of feelings. By manipulating a gold piece, a black fey can see who was the last person to handle it. By laying her hands on a stone, she will see a scene of the past in that place.

This communication is very difficult to establish, as it relies on strong emotions. (For example, in the case of the gold piece, it would have been necessary that it be linked to a previous owner who needed it vitally, betting it, while needing to buy food for his starving family during a famine.) The black fey "reveals" the emotion according to the following rules: she must make a roll of PER + Winter against a DIF equal to the material's resistance +5 (+ modifier(s) according to the table below).

She will get a mental picture the previous handler(s) of the object, their faces revealing the emotions stored in the object. The more intense the emotion, the clearer the details: for true love, the person might appear clad in what she wore when she felt it, with a visible background of where it happened. If the object was a token of friendship (and stored that emotion), only an unclear face might appear.

MINERAL INSIGHT

| | |
|--|---------------------|
| Very strong emotion (life or death situation, true love...) | -5 |
| Strong emotion (hate, love, jealousy, terror) | 0 |
| Mild emotion (pride, anger, fear) | +5 |
| Faint emotion (friendship, simple happiness, dislike) | +10 |
| Multiple wielders | +2 for each wielder |

- **Eternity:** Black feys have become immortal since the disappearance of the Ladies of the Seasons. This does not mean they are in any way invincible. They can die like anyone from a wound or an offensive spell, just not from old age. Also a black fey can feel at any time the need to go cataleptic, and sleep for years to commune with the Lady of Winter. This need is called the Call. In the game, an Inspired will play a black fey whose next Call will only come in $10 + 3d10$ years. This roll is of course left to the EG's discretion, who can make the Call come much sooner for any reason.

♣ Morality

Inspired or not, black feys are sworn enemies of the Masque and the Darken. To them, the Masque is treachery incarnate. He seduced the Lady of Fall and made the three other Ladies disappear. The Darken, by beco-



Views on magic

It is the nature of black feys to do magic. They have a clear stance on Ascendancy: Obscurantism is a cursed path because it exhausts Harmondia's supply of magic, and plays into the hand of the Masque by wasting Shards. Theoretically, no black fey follows Obscurantism. They view Eclipsism as the best path, being versatile and offering stealth. Jornism is seen as a noble path. By having the right to wear a gem on her forehead, a black fey improves her respectability and authority over humans and other seasonlings. As for the Magical Arts, black feys perform them all, in every aspect. They are slightly predisposed to the Winter Vista, (allowing them to pursue the memories of their former lives), Scansion (because of its time magic) and Shape.

THE BREED

Customs

Black feys are so scarce that each death of a black fey carries their race a bit closer to oblivion. Still, they strive to maintain their social existence when they meet in a city. To them, cities are the best places to study magic while remaining in the shadows. They cluster in Covens, sisterhoods composed of about half a score of them. A coven usually gathers in the slums, or some other inconspicuous quarter of the city. They like places where nobody asks questions and where they are free to come and go. A Coven is an informal association based on dialogue and common work. When they gather, they speak of magic and of the progress of their research. They may pay their respects to one of them who felt the Call and organize her sleep in a well-hidden place. They make lists of their travels in the Pictureworlds. They interpret their dreams, etc. They will always listen to a new black fey in town, who can expect invaluable help from a Coven. Nonetheless, there are rivalries, as some Covens may live a kind of cold war over some obscure point of ideology. A black fey doesn't necessarily belong to a Coven, as some favor solitude, and others prefer travel and adventure.

Function

It is rare for a black fey to ply any trade beside her magic. As a rule, they find themselves counseling dwarves or human architects with the wisdom of their Mineral Insight and their Shaper abilities. Black feys often occupy important positions inside the Cipher-sorcerer and Concordist societies. The most famous Eclipsist schools are headed by black feys, and many studios of the Elder Arts owe their reputation to a black fey. By extension, they are often sought after to administer cultural patrimonies. Sickeningly rich merchants hire them to be counseled on buying artworks, lords pay them generously to watch over their private collections, etc. When a black fey takes such a position,

UNCOVERING A MEMORY

With each Call, a black fey plunges into the sleep of forgetfulness. All the memories of their last life disappear. When a black fey recovers one or many memories of her past lives, she remembers all the events and experiences attached to that memory. She can do this only with her own memories. Coming upon a memory from another black fey, she can "read" it but not make it her own. As for magical skills, the discovery of one or many memories can lead to sudden and tremendous progression.

ming the Masque's ally, has also become an enemy. A black fey will never take sides with an Invoker, nor will she herself use invocation willingly. But black feys must confront the Masque and the Darken to study them and understand the curse on their race. Most of them are marked by these contacts (see The black fey's assets/flaw section).

THE BLACK FEY'S ASSETS/FLAW

The black fey can fly. Quite poorly, over short distances only, but still it can be of great use. In game terms, she can choose to use a round's movement to fly with a MV 9. But she can do this for no longer than three rounds in a row, and must rest her wings for twice the duration of her flight upon landing.

In addition, a black fey automatically begins the game with the fault Fallen blood, which gets her 5 points in both Darkening and Perfidy. This fault does not include points for assets. She has the same size problems as sprites and spriggans, and a questionable reputation, so bad men often intentionally ignore her and step on her.

ROLE-PLAYING TIP

Playing a black fey is a difficult endeavor. She is a frail and tortured creature, with an ongoing interest in magic, and a cursed personality. Choosing a black fey means a good part of the people will be wary of you, maybe even hate you. To take on this role is to accept the need to hide, to live under a hood, to pass for a child and to mutter somber formulas. The black fey is obviously a dark character whose survival relies solely on her magic. In the beginning, you are advised to look for an ally in a powerful character, a lord or a seasonling of Summer that can be both your friend and your bodyguard.

she does so exclusively for the opportunity to get close to artifacts and study them herself.

♣ Settlement

In the north, there are black feys in Lyphan. History has driven them to the heart of these desolate lands where they are often viewed as the soul of a tribe. Eldest among the elders, they are ignored by the other black feys that reproach them for having abandoned the struggle against their curse. In truth, these black feys hope to drive the terrible lyphanian horde to the Liturgical Province, so as to access the lore of this country, long closed to the seasonlings.

In the Wild Reaches, Janrenia, and of course the Liturgical Province, black feys are either absent or prisoners. In Urgamand, however, they benefited from the good reputation of Amertine, a black fey that was a close companion to Agone of Roundrock, but has since felt the Call. In Urgamand, Covens are many and powerful. The Princely Communes are a bit peculiar, as most black feys there are Concordists whose Arts border on perversion. The decadence of the country has made all sorts of experiments possible, and mysterious "avant-garde" Covens have existed there for a long time. Black feys are rare in Buccaneer's Haven and the Empire of Keshe, and also in the Mercenary Republic where the state of the country is not conducive to scholarly pursuits. They would rather go to the Modehan Marches (even though the vegetal influence goes against their mineral sensibilities), or even more to the Widowlands. Many black

feys go there to work for the medusae, who are learned and powerful patrons of the Arts.

♣ Stakes

- **Winter's curse:** Since the Seasons' disappearance, black feys try to understand their ailment and discover how to save their race from final extinction.

- **The struggle against the Masque and the Darken:** The black feys see a necessity to approach, study and understand the Enemy in order to unearth their secrets.

- **The quest for memories:** Those performing Vista research and travel inside the Pictureworlds to hunt down old, lost memories. Those who are able to remember their past become extremely powerful.

The Dwarf

COUNTENANCE

♣ Physical appearance

Dwarves are humanoid creatures that stand on average 3 cubits high (under 5 feet), and weigh about 280 pounds. They are squat and stout, with coarse features. They like tattoos and often wear beards. They are more resistant to damage than humans, being nearly as hardy as ogres. Dwarves are skillful, and their craftsmen are among the very best. Their life expectancy is of about 80 years (close to 100 for a female).

♣ Personality

Dwarves have a sturdy character. They are stubborn, demanding workers, scrupulous and exacting in all things. Those that live in the mountains are quick to anger, in contrast to their city brethren, who are more quiet and reserved. Dwarves' most appreciated values are friendship, fraternity, and solemnity. They like order, well-made things, and for those who have left the mountains, all forms of art. Dwarves have a much better sense of space than humans. They are able, with but a look, to visualize the state of a building and note its qualities and defects. Due to their strictness of mind, dwarves hate being surprised and can't stand improvising.

♣ Racial assets

- **The Axial verdict:** Dwarves can render an "axial verdict" upon any construction. With a trained look, they judge the intrinsic qualities of the object or building: they assess a wall's flaws, sense the solidity of a piece of pottery, etc. All dwarves, whether or not of the Square, use the Axial Verdict.

- **The Straight Path:** A fighting art taught in the mountains, and a true philosophy of war handed down for centuries among the dwarven clans. The Straight Path is based on tremendously deadly attacks that may greatly imperil the attacker should they fail. However, if the attacks succeed, they can do an impressive amount



of damage. Most dwarves are able and willing to carry an axe, a mace, or a hammer learned the Straight Path when they were children.

In game terms, they can use a special maneuver that can be learned only by dwarves (see below).

THE STRAIGHT PATH (ACTION)

An axe, a mace, or a hammer (of whatever kind) is needed.

Att.: +5. Dam.: +10

The dwarf confers a +10 modifier to his opponent until his next action. This modifier is only usable to strike him back. (If, after using the Straight Path, the round changes and the dwarf gains the initiative, then his adversary cannot strike and loses the modifier.)

♣ Morality

Dwarves have a visceral hatred of the Masque. His treachery so goes against all dwarven principles that all dwarves fight against his influence on Harmundia. As for the Darken, dwarves see it as a victim, like the Ladies of the Seasons. Demons are not to be held responsible for the betrayal of the master of the Abyss and can thus become allies. Dwarves have a cautious approach to the problem of the Seasons. Most dwarves estimate that the seasons' awakening can only be achieved through an association with the Darken. Only after removing the latter from the sway of the Masque, would Harmundia see the rebirth of the Seasons.

♣ Views on magic

Dwarves are much more involved in the Magical Arts than Ascendancy. To them, Dancers are chaotic creatures, unreliable, or even dangerous. For a dwarf, joining the Cipher-sorcerer order means renouncing his clan or the Square. Very few make this decision. Those that dare to usually follow the path of Jornism or Eclipsism.

Regarding the Magic Arts, dwarves attach the greatest value to Shape, mostly in its Elder Art form. Then comes Tune, with Drum or Cittern. Scansion and Vista are seldom performed.

THE BREED

♣ Customs

Dwarves are either of the Square or of the mountains. The latter are organized in clans of 50 to 150 individuals, with about half of each gender. Clans generally have a long and cherished history linking them to a specific mountain range, with its flora, fauna, and mining resources. The past centuries have seen the construction of reputedly impregnable fortresses on bare rocks. Armies that have to cross a pass held by dwarves pay a toll, just like merchants and other travelers. Clans involve themselves as little as possible in the affairs of humans or other seasonings. However, unless they are harassed, they will always be welcoming and keep a fire lit for a traveler lost in the mountains.

As for city dwarves, they gather under one name: the Square. This centuries-old institution is among Harmundia's most powerful corporations. It is a force kings themselves have to compromise with.

The Square has schools in most cities, where the future dwarven craftsmen and architects are trained. Controlling tremendous wealth, the Square intervenes in all domains of life: offering lodgings, maintaining hospices, owning schools that teach the Straight Path, financing the construction of fortresses and palaces, etc.

A dwarf leaving his clan, or born in a Square family, doesn't have to enter the corporation. The choice is left to him alone. If he refuses, he will have to fend for himself. If he accepts the teachings of the masters of the Square, he will gain many benefits, as much from the

THE DWARF'S FLAW

Playing a Dwarf incurs no flaw.

ROLE-PLAYING TIP

Whether you play a mountain dwarf or a Square dwarf will make a great difference in the game. A mountain dwarf is rougher, prouder and more stalwart than his city brethren. He doesn't like the noises and smells of the city and prefers the wind, the cold of winter, and long walks in the mountains. The Square dwarf has long been familiar with the human society, and is considered by most as just a small human.

teaching itself as from other amenities. A master representing the Square in a city, will do whatever he can to help the local dwarves live more easily. In exchange, every dwarf trained by the Square must return 10% of his earnings at the solstices. Note that the corporation is not all-powerful, and will generally work in cooperation with local lords.

♣ Function

The dwarves of the Square are great architects or craftsmen. Nobody can compare with the dwarves' talents in these fields. Their work also involves shared sacred secrets. Plans for a building are always burned once the construction is finished. As for crafts, dwarves tend to favor the smithy and, among the most talented, the Elder Art of Shape. Dwarves also make good locksmiths and watchmakers. The mountain dwarves, on the other hand, have no function besides the ones they fulfill for their clan as fortress guardians, hunters, or miners.

♣ Settlement

Up north, there are no dwarves, at least in Lyphan and the Wild Reaches. But clans have held the mountains to the south of the Princely Communes, and those bordering the north of the Empire of Keshe, for centuries. In the Liturgical Province, Square dwarves have taken deep roots. They're needed to maintain the glass architecture advocated by the Liturgy. In Janrenia though, dwarves aren't appreciated very much, and they prefer to settle in Urganand, where they enjoy a better reputation. Besides, clans are slowly taking control of the mountains separating Janrenia and Urganand, with the latter's approval. The only dwarves in the Mercenary Republic are exiles who left their clans or the Square for personal reasons. In the Modehan Marches, the Square is officially developing new architecture, along with the modehans, boldly binding minerals and organic plant-life. In Buccaneer Haven, the Square is behind some of the fastest and sturdiest ships. Lastly, dwarves avoid the Widowlands, where they are not welcome.

♣ Stakes

- **Occult architecture:** This name describes all building whose construction involves magic. This can be under many aspects: the use of Shard, the choice of angles according to the projected shadows to use in Invocation, the mixing of living elements with the Elder Art of Shape, etc. Occult architecture is shrouded in secrecy and used inside the Square, by Concordist architects initiated in Invocation.

- **The mountain kingdom:** Voices growing in strength and numbers among the mountain dwarves demand that the clans stand united behind a king who would gather them all so that the mountains could become a dwarven kingdom.

The Medusa

COUNTENANCE

♣ Physical appearance

A medusa is a humanoid creatures, equivalent to a human woman in height and weight, except for her hair, which is made of snakes. Medusae are always women, and differentiate themselves according to their snakes' nature. Species of snakes are highly varied and have been transmitted from mother to daughter for centuries. The species is also a factor in determining a medusa's capabilities, as a medusa child will model her behavior on that of her snakes. On her eighth birthday, a medusa knows each of them individually (and names them during a coming-of-age ceremony). In short, medusa is acutely aware of her snakes. Her spirit is permanently linked to theirs on an empathic level.

Their life expectancy is a bit greater than that of humans, being close to 80 years.

♣ Personality

A medusa's character reflects that of her snakes, but a few specifics can be drawn for the entire race. A medusa is kind, or at least seems to be. Most of them have been educated in strict and exacting schools. Cultivated and comely, a medusa feels at home in affected atmospheres, amidst polite small talk, and glamorous dealings. Indeed, she is often very attractive. Charming or ravishing, she uses all her tricks to beguile whomever she speaks with. In this regard, she is often quite narcissistic. She appreciates luxuries and loathes dirtiness or disorder. With her rigorous mind and deft hands, she can use a needle or a sword with equal precision.

A medusa dislikes the use of force. She would rather resort to words, to scheme and plot. She has become a mistress of treachery. No one can willingly trust her, merchants knowing better than most how hard it is to drive a bargain inside the Widowlands.

A medusa tends to be condescending, especially to humans, whom she considers to be nothing more than



species secrete drugs that can be useful to the medusa herself, while others have the ability to spit or bite venom. Hereafter are examples of both kinds. The Inspired can choose one from the list or design his own snakes' effect with the EG.

- *Acid spit:* The snakes can launch a mild acid (VIR 5) toward an opponent. This acid can also eat into metal or stone, which makes this type of medusa difficult to imprison. Range: 1 yard. Number of shots: 3. It can be used three times before all the snakes' venom glands are emptied. A group of snake responsible for a shot can replenish its venom in one full day. So if a medusa "spits" twice, she will only be able to do so once more until the next day, when she will retrieve her full capacity.

- *Venom spit:* The snakes spit a venom that can blind the victim. The opponent must roll 2 x AGI against a DIF 10, and the SM will be added to the difficulty to hit with the venom. If the medusa scores a hit, the target is blinded for SM rounds. If the number of rounds thus obtained is greater than the victim's STA, the blindness is permanent. Range: 1 yard. Number of shots: 4. Each group of snakes having spat needs half a day to replenish their venom glands.

- *Paralyzing bite:* The medusa can toss her hair towards an opponent, who is then subjected to a number of bites (Init. -1, Att. +3, Dam. +0, no armor). Additionally, the venom is considered to have an overall VIR (10+SM). If the ensuing Stamina test is successful, the victim suffers a -2 penalty to all physical actions. If the Stamina test fails, the victim is paralyzed.

- *Killer bite:* The medusa can attack using the same method described for the paralyzing bite. This time however, the venom has a VIR (15+SM) and deals normal damage.

- *Stimulant:* The snakes can bite their mistress to inoculate her with a toxin that makes her immune to fear.

- *Painkiller:* The snakes inject a venom that anesthetizes, reducing the modifiers caused by pain (wounds, etc.) by 4 points.

- *Soporific:* The serpents can inject a powerful sleep-inducing drug (VIR 10, SM eventually added) into the medusa or to another target (same process as with the paralyzing bites). This venom causes a -2 penalty on all

unskilled labor. She has trouble enduring men's company, but gracefully puts up with it if she can't avoid it.

♣ Racial assets

• **Snake hair:** Depending on the kind of snakes that abide on her head, each medusa has an advantage that can take the form of either a poison or a drug. Some

EXAMPLES OF MEDUSA'S HAIRS

| Weapon | Init. | Att. | Def. | Dam.+DB |
|------------|-------|------|------|---------|
| Acid | +1 | +2 | - | Special |
| Blinding | +1 | +2 | - | Special |
| Paralyzing | -1 | +3 | - | 0 |
| Killer | -1 | +3 | - | 0 |
| Soporific | -1 | +3 | - | Special |

actions (physical and mental) if the target makes a successful stamina roll, and induces sleep if the roll fails.

- **Winter heart:** A medusa cannot fall in love, as she always loves her snakes first and foremost (see also The medusa's flaw). This can also be an asset, as a medusa is therefore immune to most attempts to manipulate her through seduction...

♣ **Morality**

Medusae are probably the most ambiguous of the seasonlings. To them, the Masque remains an enemy, but they are fascinated by his powers. They devote time and energy to approach, study, and confront him so as to learn as much as possible. Toward the Darken, medusae show a thinly-veiled contempt. They find the Demons loathsome and revolting, and avoid them at all cost. Rare indeed is the medusa that chooses the path of Invocation.

Finally, medusae care much about the quests and intrigues linked to the Ladies' disappearance. They are convinced it holds the secret of the loss of their ancient power: the petrifying gaze (see Stakes, below).

♣ **Views on magic**

Medusae have a hard time using Ascendancy. Indeed, the empathy of the Dancer often conflicts with the empathy of the snakes, which may wither if their mistress becomes too attached to a Dancer. This is probably the reason why most medusae choose the path of Obscurantism. Note that a reverse effect is also possible, though it is a very rare and isolated case. Then the Dancer and the snakes are in resonance, and the medusa has every chance of becoming a great Ascendancy mage, through the path of Jornism or Eclipsism.

On the other hand, medusae have excellent dispositions toward the Magical Arts. They perform them all, with a slight preference for Shape. Educated in the love of art, medusae are esthetes who often seriously study two, and sometimes three, Magical Arts.

THE BREED

♣ **Customs**

Medusae have little respect for races other than their own. They look on humans and most other seasonlings with a barely-concealed scorn. Apart for a few who can be their allies, mortals are destined to be their slaves.

To bear children, medusae couple with humans. The child is usually put to death if he is a boy, unless he becomes a Bastard, one of the males the medusae educate to make privileged slaves, minions who will never leave them until they die. A medusa generally chooses to keep only one Bastard with her, trained as a counter-

THE MEDUSA'S FLAW

A medusa cannot fall in love. She loves only her snakes, which are often jealous and always possessive. She must care for them, cherish them, and show them they are foremost in her mind. She can never be more than a friend to anybody else unless she decides to abandon her inheritance to become human.

In that case, the serpents quickly die. If they have offensive abilities, they use them on their own mistress to try to kill her. Their attack is automatically a success with a SM of +20. If the medusa lives through it, the snakes quickly perish. If their venom is not dangerous, they simply wait to die, sometimes showing aggressiveness toward the object of their jealousy, but without much heart in it.

ROLE-PLAYING TIP

A medusa is a schemer, a woman repulsed by violence, who believes that nothing is impossible through seduction. She knows how to manipulate people by being soft and alluring, but also by being harsh and strict. However, playing a medusa is not just acting like a courtesan. The medusa must appear as a troubling character, who is hard to trust. Some succumb to her charms, others are caught in her web of intrigue, and none are sure to be safe. To play a medusa, you will probably have to elevate lying to an art form, shine by your eloquence, and always be seductive.

assassin. As for the birth of a daughter, it is an occasion for celebration. The mother will jealously protect her child until she is of age to protect herself.

Medusae are the only seasonling race to have founded a nation, the Widowlands. So there is a distinction between medusae living in this realm and the others, who have departed. The former are rulers of Domains while the latter are seen as terribly dangerous women, "preying mantises", wandering Harmundia in search of fortune.

Old age plays a significant part in a medusa's life. Towards the age of 60, a medusa decides to join a Black Tower. These onyx towers are built on mountains and shelter clans of elder medusae who spend their time studying and performing the Magic Arts. They are powerful Concordists who explore new paths of magic.

Among medusae, patronage of the arts is a virtue. All enjoy the arts, especially the Magic Arts. Medusae offer fortunes for artist to come live in the Widowlands, or even simply to work in their service. It is said that the medusae possess the greatest art collections on Harmundia.

Function

Medusae often fill roles requiring stewardship. They are perfect to administer a Domain and many lords appreciate a medusa's talent in handling their people. They are also consummate schemers. Because of this, some become spies or live by their charm in a king or prince's court. Others still find work in poisons and drugs, founding luxurious establishments that have the reputation of catering to all tastes, working in assassin's guilds, or starting merchant businesses.

Medusae are also sought to run schools. The reputation of the schools for young ladies in the Widowlands is justified. People of note often ask medusae to head their schools and educate their country's youth.

Medusae also administer vast buildings where artists come to create and sell their art. The art trade is heavily dominated by the medusae.

Lastly, some medusae become famous courtesans, able to induce pleasure with their serpents.

Settlement

There are almost no medusae living in Lyphan or the Wild Reaches. The few exceptions are either prisoners or those in the retinue of the greatest tribe leaders. No medusa would venture near the Liturgical Province, but quite a number settle in the Princely Communes. There they manipulate the princes and live in palaces filled with artworks. Those who choose the Buccaneer Haven often do so to enroll on a ship, become a pirate, and make a fortune. In Janrenia and Urgamand, they are rare. But in the Mercenary Republic, some try their luck at becoming ladies of a Domain. Others, in the Empire of Keshe, found wealthy merchant companies on the trade of drugs. Modehans have an historical reason to be wary of the medusae, who in turn avoid that realm. The Widowlands, at last, are the realm of the medusae, who have ruled there for centuries.

Stakes

The secret of the stone-

gaze: Since the disappearance of the Ladies of the Seasons, medusae have lost their ability to petrify with a look. In the Black Towers, elder medusae try to find this lost secret and search for the Ladies.

• **The petrified statues:** In the medusae's art collections, there are a great many statues that are really men and women from the Flamboyance that were victims of the stonegaze. The practice of Magic Arts (most

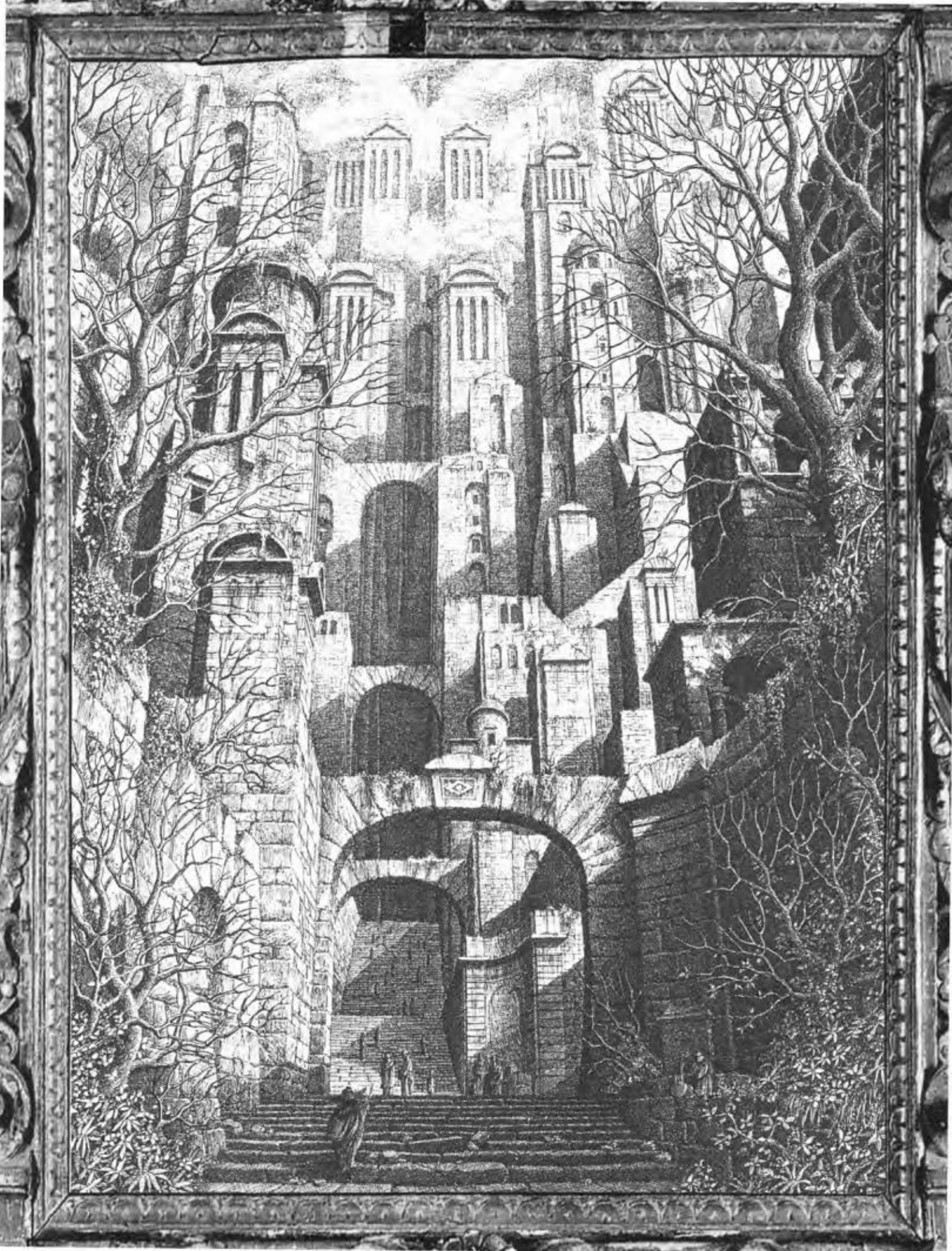


notably Shape) could enable communication with these actors of yore. Medusae know that when the secret of the stonegaze has been regained, they will be able to breath life back into the statues. And maybe create a new generation of mortals with the talents of Luminaries.

*The
Book
of
the Inspired*



BOOK TWO





They came forth as a result of the war led by Agone of Roundrock, but they have existed since the mythic time of Flamboyance. They are famous and respected; their names are known to many. Having lived long and fully, they think they are past their adventures and have earned their rest. But fate has another purpose for them. The Time of their awakening is upon us. Go quickly and warn them! You shall search for them among all people, for they are children of the Masque as well as children of the Seasons. You shall search in the hills, you shall search by the ocean. You shall search in the fields, and in the streets. They are lords, merchants, and magicians. They are the Inspired, heirs to the Muses. They are the actors of the Tragedy and the curtain is about to be drawn.



minence,

Like me in my time, you will sooner or later – and I assume that day is nigh – have to face the Inspired. As you know, it is your responsibility to guide them through the Twilight that threatens us all. But you must realize there are some truths they are not yet ready to face. That is why, to guard them from Darkness and Perfidy, I have written the pages of this book, screening some secrets it would be unwise to tell the Inspired. The existence of the Eternals and their precise implications in the dreadful times we live through are thus preserved. You can entrust this manuscript to the Inspired with complete peace of mind. In the beginning, they will need no more knowledge. I trust you to answer their questions fittingly when the time comes. I hope to have somewhat eased your task.

Congenially yours.

1 ~ The role of the Inspired

A Character of Note

Inspired, this book is made for you, and your Eminence Grise can choose to let you read it or summarize it for you. It will allow you to create your Inspired character. Whether you choose a seasonling or a human, a fierce fighter or a wise scholar, you will find here all the necessary information to fashion your hero.

The Inspired is the lead character acted out by a player, one of the heroes of AGONE, the heroic fantasy game of the Twilight Realms. Now at the peak of your career, you thought your adventurous days were over, but the danger is coming back and it all seems to start again. You have been chosen by the Muses to face the most odious threat to your world.

This process will enable you to create the hero you will play. Nonetheless bear in mind that to this hero, for he already possesses that status through the adventures he previously lived on Harmundia, this creation will come as some sort of a second birth.

To be played more accurately and to answer technical necessities of the simulation system, a character's abilities will be represented by numbers. Different sets of parameters are given ratings to express the character's aptitudes, training, and inclinations. These will allow the Eminence Grise to make tests whenever it is important to know exactly how the character is able to perform an action.

WHO ARE THE INSPIRED?

The inspired are not just mortals of Harmundia like any other: they have been given the Flame by an assembly of seasonings, the Decan Council, when they were children growing out of innocence. This gift allowed them to become important and respected during their careers, and to climb to the highest positions in their realms. They hold an Office. But they are ignorant of the Flame they carry, and its value... until the day an emissary of the Muses, a seasoning, a Concordist, or even an eminence grise reveals it to them.

Once they realize or are told about the Flame in their heart and the mission that comes with it, the Inspired tend to assemble with other hosts of the Flame, for there is strength in numbers. This group, which will also assemble the players around the table, is called the Troupe.

A Troupe may unite Inspired from the same area, a land they hold together, a university, a wandering caravan, a clan, or a diocese - in which case it is called a Domain. The Inspired are free to choose, with the Eminence Grise's approval, to play either way. They come from different horizons and meet through chance or the influence of a third party, or they belong to the same Domain and their collective destiny is linked to the place. This second possibility implies that the characters know each other, at least by name and reputation, and that their personal histories fit together. It is something to take into account while creating all the Troupe's characters.

The Eminence Grise will find more information on playing a Domain in Book Four of this volume.

PARAMETERS

Mostly, characters are made up of attributes and skills. Other factors derive from these parameters and provide more refined information about them.

You will determine a character's aptitudes, both natural (attributes) and acquired (skills), on a scale from 1 to 10 - the ratings indicating the level of their abilities - by using creation points.

Attributes indicate a character's physical and intellectual possibilities. Skills are the result of his learning and experience. For clarity, skills are associated with different kinds of activities and classified in groups (Courtly: communication and culture, Knowledge: erudition and science, Rogue: stealth and resources, Trials: physical and athletic, Occult: magical and esoteric).

THE SCROLL

These ratings are recorded in the Scroll. The Scroll is a character's sheet,

and keeps track of his identity, personality, aptitudes, and personal history. You must be careful to fill it in during the different steps of the creation process, and to jealously keep it to yourself. Others players of your Troupe will see it on the table, but some of the information it contains is probably better kept secret. It is also possible, and recommended, to keep beside the Scroll a record, chronicle, or diary in which you will jot down any additional information, keep track of your adventures and of the results of your campaigns in the Twilight Realms. The creation process of a role-playing game's character is of the utmost importance for the atmosphere of the future game sessions. This is why we advise you to share your ideas and fill out the Scroll with the Eminence Grise, who will be the only one able to balance some details with the other players' Inspired.

Creating an Inspired character can take from five minutes - if you pick one of the archetypes - to an hour - if you choose to go over the technicalities of every step of creation. The more time you put in, the happier you may be with the result, but do not hesitate to pick one of the archetypes. Modify it or



use it as a guideline to create the character you wish to play in the Twilight Realms. Of course, the chapters following this introduction are just suggestions the Eminence Grise is free to interpret, add to, subtract from, or disregard altogether.

THE PLAY

Though numbers are important in a role-playing game, they are not its essence. Ratings are used to simulate what cannot be concretely acted out. To single each character out from other Inspired's, assets and faults are added to attributes and skills.

As you prepare to enter AGONE's world, it is important to visualize your character as richly and precisely as possible. Ratings are secondary. They are only a set of tools. What really matters is the role: how you will play, or rather act, to breath life into your character and make of him or her an interesting part of the Troupe. What role will your character assume in Harmundia, before the threat of the Enemy and under the loving gaze of the Muses? You will find that at some points in the game, the Scroll will be neglected and more emphasis put on the play itself. At other times, it might be necessary to derive the character's reactions from the Scroll's information, even though they might not always seem immediately coherent. This is a matter of choice, taste, and mood.

In the end, this decision is mostly up to the Eminence Grise. It is the EG who will give you the tone and the tempo you will play to, present a given vision of Harmundia, and set the pace and mood of the chronicles. Each rule of a role-playing game is ultimately a suggestion. The Eminence Grise is inviting you. All of you. All members of the Troupe play together. Always. Even though there are bound to be differences in opinions, or even conflicts within the Troupe, they must be part of the play, to make it richer, more complex, more true, and never to break it or ruin it for anybody.

This is why each Inspired must know who he is, what he hopes for, and what means are at his disposal. Concord has its price.

SUMMARY FOR THE INSPIRED

Before getting to the technicalities of character creation, we encourage you to read what follows, so as to fully understand the specificity of the characters played in AGONE, and how they differ from those in other heroic-fantasy role-playing games.

☛ The Twilight Realms

These are the countries of Harmundia your adventures are set in. They are described in detail in Book One. The Eminence Grise is invited to read about them and give the players a general idea of each country's major distinctive features, so that players can choose their character's point of origin.

☛ The mortals

The denizens of Harmundia are called mortals. They come in two categories; humans and children of the Seasons. The latter are also called the seasonlings and are categorized into Decans. Information on each type of seasonling can be found in chapter 4 of Book One. However, as this chapter reveals many things better left unknown if you do not choose to play a seasonling of the given Decan, it is better if the players do not read all of it. Rather let the Eminence Grise read through it and give the players a general idea of each seasonling so that they can choose their character's race.

Despite all the physiological and cultural discrepancies between these races, and the wars that opposed them in the past, all now coexist peacefully and rarely confront each other over racial issues. They see themselves as Harmundia's children, as indispensable and complementary populations.

Note: The Fall and her seasonlings having been conquered by the Masque. They no longer conform to the details mentioned in this chapter. It is not possible to play one of them.

☛ The Offices

In AGONE, contrary to many other heroic-fantasy universes, the characters you play are not careless young people leaving their villages and meeting at a crossroad or in a roadside tavern. The Inspired you play are anchored to the Twilight Realms. They may know each other and live in the same country, chosen by the Eminence Grise or by the Troupe. They have already known the places where they live for years when the story begins. But beyond that, they are among the true actors of Harmundia: they have the lead parts, not only in your adventures but also in the dramatic events that shake the Twilight Realms.

So if you wish to make the most of the game, by playing in a Domain, you will probably find, gathered around your table, a baron, his wife, his master-at-arms, his chamberlain, the barony's spy-master, its librarian, or another such character whose exceptional talents have allowed him or her to live in the castle with the nobility. Of course these are just examples you are free to adapt with your Eminence Grise's agreement.

At the beginning the game, your character holds an Office you must choose and play. You can select offices from the assets in Chapter 3 of this Book. They

result in duties, great responsibilities, increased wealth, a better delineation of your hero's role, and overall a distinctive way of playing AGONE, which is suggested but definitely not compulsory.

♣ The Inspiration and the Flame

The Inspired are the most important people of the Twilight Realms. They embody the last hope of Harmundia against the Masque.

Your characters carry within themselves a supernatural gift, the Flame. They were entrusted with it when they were children, before losing their innocence. This magical force, still dormant when they become aware of its existence, will be progressively awakened during your adventures.

Flames were created by the Muses through a combination of their magic with the essence of Day. They were then enriched by the memories of their successive hosts. Flames comprise three parts – Body, Spirit, and Soul – that the Concordists describe as fitting into each other, as through part of a whole: Inspiration. So you are a bearer of the Flame, and it inspires your actions. Usually, people like you call the non-Inspired mortals the Dullen.

♣ The Genesis

In ancient times, Harmundia was the stage of fabulous events and terrible tragedies involving powerful and immortal beings called the Eternals. Some records survived the passage of time. They are filled with clues the eminences grise try their best to decipher. But these fragments leave many gaps and dark secrets untold. It is possible that some mortals have guessed what the vast majority don't know yet.

Nonetheless, here is what most great scholars have been able to gather...

In the dawn of time, the first Eternals were the four Muses, who created Harmundia. Their names were Nuence, Stanza, Orfeya, and Chisella. They fashioned the world and peopled it with creatures. But they were unsatisfied and, wishing to achieve Perfection, they tried to sublimate themselves. The ritual they enacted for this purpose failed and created a new entity, the Masque, who soon betrayed his craving for domination. That was the beginning of the Tragedy.

The Zenith is the mythical time when the Eternals, who were all-powerful on Harmundia, created descendants and servants for themselves. Barely born, humanity immediately became a resource the Muses and the Masque quarreled over. The Abyss burrowed the earth and filled itself with Demons under the guidance of the Darken, the Eternal of Night pledged himself to the Masque. The Eternal of Day, whose name has been forgotten, created knights, the Glimmers.

The Seasons appeared in reaction to the organization of the world ordered by the Eternals. They took the form of the Decans and caused the appearance of the twelve seasonling races. These creatures, who were fond of their freedom but very unruly, fought among themselves. That was the Decan War.

The Agony saw Harmundia in flames: the Muses and the Masque started an open war on each other that invol-

ved all forces living and unliving. The Muses almost died, but at the last moment they enacted the ritual of Inspiration, overthrowing the Masque and freeing the humans from his domination. Then they created the Flames to enchant the humans' hearts and disappeared from the world.

The era that follows is called the Flamboyance: it was a grand epoch in which inspired humans built Harmundia's most fabulous monuments. But the fleeing Masque found an ally in the Lady of Fall. Thanks to her, he was able to bring about the Eclipse that shadowed the world under a magical twilight that has lasted to this day.

Consequently, Dancers, Luminaries, and Ghosts started pacing the world side by side with mortals. The cycle of Flames, transmitted from the dead to the newborn, was broken. To compensate for it, Councils of seasonlings took it upon themselves to transmit the Flames to selected people, the Inspired, so that the Muses could someday come back to rule over Harmundia.

But the Masque is not gone and the Inspired have become very few...

♣ The Concord

Soul, the part of the Flame inherited from the Muses, is what gives Inspiration to the mortals. In the dawn of time, the world was in Concord, but the Muses' enemies have put an end to this golden age.

Nowadays, the Inspiration's last refuge is the Flame. Inspiration is the ability to transcend all artistic work to the point where these Opuses are awakened to Concord, the magical reality of Harmundia. But it also expresses itself in simpler ways, more mundane and base: it is the quality of the Inspired's actions, the power behind their decisions, the instincts and intuition that drive them. Inspiration is present in all the activities of those who hold the Flame, so



that Concord permeates their lives and from there, hopefully, the whole world.

Admiring and respecting the work of the Muses, the Inspired endeavor to protect it from the Masque whose influence is ceaselessly growing. They confront the Evil's minions and the Perfidious who seek to pervert, at all costs, the creations of the Muses and of the people of Harmundia.

♣ The Hope

Spirit, the part of Day contained in the Flame, allows the Inspired to fight the Darkness that invades Harmundia, leading the Twilight Realms toward eternal night.

Thanks to this gleam, the Inspired bring hope to all the countries they pass through, in the villages and fortresses they stop at. The Day enables them to find strength and courage to protect their native land, but also to brave the worst dangers during the journeys that lead them far from home.

The Inspired must save Harmundia. They are born to be heroes.

♣ The Memory

Body, the part of the Flame carried over from its previous hosts, gives the Inspired confidence that they are not struggling in vain, that others will rise to face the challenge, struggle forth and keep the Flame burning for the glory of the Muses and Harmundia.

The Inspired travel with the intimate conviction that their quests are not pointless. They know their Flame will be retrieved by the seasonlings when they die, who will in turn bestow it on other valorous heroes so that one day the Masque can be defeated. Their deeds will never be forgotten. Through the Flame, they will enter legends.

♣ The Luminaries

Indeed, the Twilight war goes on beyond physical death. Each Inspired is the host of a dormant Luminary. The Flame is to the Luminary what a seed is to a plant. It was put into the bodies of those mortals who had the means to make it bloom, so that it would make them the perfect embodiment of its three aspects (Soul, Spirit, Body): the Luminary. It is a Flame transcended by a state of magical awareness, an enchanted and unfettered being, able to free Harmundia from Perfidy and the perversions it breeds.

As you live through adventures, you will develop your Flame's aspects, under your Eminence Grise's benevolent supervision, and that will not only improve your ability to accomplish actions (in terms of game mechanics) but also allow your Flame's elevation toward Luminary status. Only transcended Flames that have become Luminaries can effectively fight the Masque. The Inspired know the Luminaries will one day wield the power to unveil the Spiritcore, to allow the free passing on of the Muses' gift, and so to re-enthrone Harmundia.

♣ The Spiritcore

The Dullen believe the Spiritcore to be the mythical land of the gods. In a sense, they are not completely wrong, but reality is a bit more complex.

First of all, there are no gods on Harmundia. The scholars mention the Eternals and say that cults have corrupted the memories they left by turning them into subjects of worship. When they gave Inspiration, and thus the Flame, to mortals, the Muses erected a spiritual domain that basked Harmundia and its denizens in its glow: the Spiritcore. In those mythical times, when the Inspired died, their Flames became disincarnate Luminaries that returned to the Spiritcore before coming back to inspire other Dullen. But the Masque was able to sever the link with the Spiritcore.

Ever since, the Flames can no longer rally this legendary realm and wander the surface of Harmundia, nor can they anchor themselves to the magical places called Sanctuaries.

♣ The Sanctuaries

Long before your Flame becomes a Luminary, you will probably find others, prisoners of their sanctuaries. They have been expecting your coming. Indeed, as long as the link between Harmundia and the mythic Spiritcore is broken, the Luminaries have nowhere to go, and have very few allies against the Masque. You are one of those allies. They have much to teach you. With them, you can make faster progress and be able to build up a resistance to the Masque. Will you be lucky enough to meet one of these Luminaries and build a Sanctuary around it?

♣ A new beginning

Your first AGONE game session will probably see the joining together of your Troupe, immediately before or after the revelation of the gift, the Flame, the seasonlings entrusted you with when you were very young. Then you will make your marks on the scenery your EG has constructed, the barony where you spent the last years with your companions, or the road you are set upon, perhaps against your will.

During the first few game sessions, you will acquaint yourself better with these areas and their occupants. You will discover the schemes being brewed and the Masque's pawns that are rooted there. You will understand that despite your character's status, and though he believed he had a firm grasp on a no longer surprising life, the Inspiration offers him new horizons to explore.

♣ The Quest

Thirsting after adventures and big thrills, like any self-respecting hero, you will no doubt follow a trail offering many ups and downs and huge rewards. From scenarios to campaigns, you will probably leave your Domain to follow the roads of the Twilight Realms and thwart the traps of Harmundia. You will pit yourself against the Darken or the Masque. And while roaming these lands of magic and perils, exploring their obscure corners and foiling attempts to manipulate you, you will learn to harness the three aspects of your Flame: the Soul, the Spirit, and the Body. One after the other, and in the order you choose, you will become a master of each sphere, each day getting closer to the mysterious nature of the Luminary.

☛ The Masque

As you have understood, there is a disquieting force lying in wait for you. What is it exactly? What is the span of its power? The Inspired know not, and fearfully mention the Eternal called the Masque.

What does he want? To destroy the Muses' heirs? To exterminate you, for you are obstacles in his plan of dominating Harmundia and enslaving its people. Your mere existence is to him an insufferable affront. He will not cease to gnaw at the Realms' defenses, their justice, their laws, their barely-won, frail peace, until he finds you and annihilates you.

One thing is certain: the threat grows. It draws nearer. Each passing day brings you terrifying rumors. People have been telling tales of Flames contaminated, sick, tortured,

or even snuffed. And of vile creatures worming their way into the lands of mortals, of unholy rituals ceaselessly giving more power to the Masque and his henchman the Darken, a powerful ally with its sinister retinue of Demons from the Abyss.

Some speak of corrupted destinies and implacable curses, others talk of incomprehensible treachery and of Inspired fallen before the devious hordes of the Enemy. But all agree the time has come to stand up and fight!

So grab your old and trusty sword, open the tomes of past lore, blow on the embers of your courage so that their glow shines anew in your eyes!

The call has sounded. Will you be able to defend your Flame at all costs?

THE GIFT OF FLAME

The child pushed away the sheets and was watching the shadows moving on the bedroom's wall. The half-opened window let in a bewitching breeze of night air. Without really waking up, the child snuck outside, climbed down the ivy-covered wall, and started running aimlessly among the tall grass at the fringe of the forest. Having walked a long, long time, guided by soft night sounds, the child came upon a clearing where a surprising gathering of motley individuals was waiting. In a ray of moonlight stood seasonlings from the Decan Council – nine of them. One was brandishing a strange crystal lantern in which a wonderful light throbbled. The sight was fantastic, and though lost in admiration, somewhere deep inside, a grave intuition was hinting that this child's destiny had just been drastically altered.

An extraordinary presence seemed to watch over the assembly, huge, stern, and more ancient than anything conceivable. A sense of eternity filled the child as the lantern-bearer drew near and softly whispered the names of the Muses.

Then he opened the lantern and nothing was ever the same again. On the morrow, the child went on with life without any memory of that night, but from then on, the way to talents, marvels, heroics, and inspiration had been opened.

When the time came, this night would be remembered...

Staging the revelation:

☛ An emissary visits one of the Inspired or rounds them up for a mysterious meeting. He could be a seasonling sent by the Decan Council, the sponsor of one of them, another Inspired, an eminence grise, or a Concordist. He could be an old friend that periodically

comes to visit, or a complete stranger using some pretence to meet them. He tells them about the basics of Genesis, explains the stakes discovered by the eminences grise, and above all reveals they unknowingly carry the Flame. He can describe – if he knows about them – the circumstances under which they received the Flame from the Decan Council when they were children. Lastly, he advises them to contact other Inspired (the other players).

☛ The Inspired begin to feel perturbations that are linked to the Masque's doings. They have visions, experience physical pains or psychological crises. Their disarray leads them to look for an explanation. They will find someone, maybe another Inspired, to explain that the time has come to use what they inherited from the Muses.

☛ The Inspired may have had a direct or indirect contact with the Masque or the Darken in the past. The Enemy has harmed them, coincidentally or on purpose, or they have met one of its minions on some mundane occasion, or the Tragedy has already entered their lives under the guise of a murder, an accident, the disappearance of someone dear to them, the theft of documents whose importance they didn't realize at the time, etc. It could be the awakening of an ancestral curse the Masque put on their family, guessing the Flame was or would be hosted there.

☛ The Masque's tampering with their lives brutally happens at the start of the game: the Inspired is victim of one of the powers described in Book Four or his existence is thrown in disarray by a strange and unpredictable occurrence. Use your imagination, your ability to improvise, and your players' acting talents. For example, the Inspired wakes up one morning with someone else's face, someone dear and close acts as if they had never even met, or a child who died a few days ago comes back as though nothing had happened.



he time has come for Harmundia's new heroes. You have decided to create your own character, an Inspired. In a few moments, he or she shall be ready to oppose the Enemy, to protect his or her people and position, or to go journeying on the roads of Harmundia. This is a key moment of the game. Take all the time and care you need to imagine the hero of your impending adventures, for some characters are played year after year, as memorable campaigns unfold. (We wish that for yours as well!) Indeed, it seems his name is already whispered about in the inns of Lorgol...

2 ~ Generic Considerations

Character creation

In AGONE, Inspired are created according to three fundamental principles.

♣ The characters created are already experienced individuals. This is one of the most essential principles of AGONE. When the game begins, the Inspired are at the peak of their lives and careers. They have seen, done, and learned so many things they might well think there is nothing left for them to discover. So it is not extraordinary for a character's main skills to be near the upper limit. This reflects the fact that AGONE allows you to play characters that have reached an outstanding level of proficiency, yet that have not yet grasped the deeper meaning of their existence.

♣ Nothing is left to chance. No player can say he did not choose his character. If you play a giant, you must be aware that you are taking on the role of a colossal creature, whose shortcomings will be as momentous as his faculties. There are no dice rolls, and no random selections involved in character generation. Everything is chosen. Bearing this in mind, the Eminence Grise is strongly advised to inform the players of her vision of the game, so that they can make the best choices in developing their character concepts.

♣ The Eminence Grise is the final authority on what is possible or impossible. Being free to create your character does not imply that there are no boundaries. That's why it is always best to submit your ideas to the EG, who will decide what can or cannot be done. For example, if most scenarios are set underground, you might be forbidden from playing a giant for practical reasons.

Basic principle

You will have at your disposal a number of creation points, divided into three groups, each marked for a given use:

- 1) Buying attributes.
- 2) Buying skills.
- 3) Buying assets.

These points exist only for character creation, and each group can only be used for its given purpose. You cannot use asset points to buy attributes, for example. If your points are not all spent, the leftover points will be lost.

After each step, you can either fill out the corresponding part of your Inspired's Scroll (the character sheet) or wait for the completion of all steps to do so.

Step one: race

The first and perhaps most essential decision you must make is whether you will play a seasonling or a human. This will impact both the character's position in Harmundia and game mechanics.

Seasonlings have appearances, behaviors, customs, powers and limitations that set them apart from humans. But generally, humans get most of the lucky breaks in life. Be it socially (they have no difficulty fitting in, contrary to for instance black feys or giants) or for more immediate benefits, notably during character creation. Having led easier lives, they are less worn out by the years and have on average higher attributes (which means more creation points to buy attributes). Having had easier access to an educational system and a network of various apprenticeships, they can be more versatile and proficient (which means they have more freedom in using their creation points for skills).

But despite all this, they are... only human. Arm-wrestling a minotaur will always remain a hopeless dream, the love of a medusa an impossible fantasy.

In order to explain the available options, your EG must carefully read the chapter on seasonlings, or you can peruse it yourself to get a basic idea.

If you have opted to play a seasonling, you have access to special abilities that you must write down in the appropriate section of your scroll. You will also be subjected to some flaws, but those will be managed by the EG (though this should not prevent you from knowing about them in order to act them out during the game).

Step two: origin and profession

Once you have determined your character's race, you may start to envision what your Inspired will be like. Before proceeding, you must define what he (or she) has been doing with his life. What is his occupation? Think a bit about your Inspired's outlook on life. What is he good at? Is he a war-



rior, a scholar, a thief, a diplomat, or a merchant? You must also consider his race - there is no known example of a giant being a watchmaker, and black feys are seldom prone to bricklaying.

Your character may also have been exposed to magic, or he may practice it himself. In that case, you have two options:

1) **The Inspired is already a Concordist, or a Mage**, in his spare time or as his career. In this case, you will have to buy occult skills and choose spells.

2) **He has not yet learned any magic** but intends to do so in the near future. In this case, it is not necessary to worry about spells yet, but he can have an interest in such matters. The EG should check in the Magic chapter in Book Three to determine what will be required for an Inspired to become a practitioner of magic during the game. Keep in mind that learning afterwards will always be much more difficult.

From what kingdom does your Inspired originate? To determine this, let the EG give you a quick survey of Harmundia's kingdoms. Bear in mind that you may agree with

the other players on a common origin. That may prove to be more convenient for the adventures the EG has in store for your Troupe. But it is not compulsory, unless you choose to create a Domain. In all cases, it is something you must discuss with your EG.

Your race and country of origin will influence your choice of skills and help sketch out your hero: a warrior from Keshe, for example, must surely be a good horse-rider, and a spriggan should be living in one of Harmundia's cities. In the same way, the choice of age, sex, height and weight will influence your Inspired, so you should take it into account during the later steps of character creation.

In AGONE, unless you buy the asset Young, the character you are creating will be in his middle years, at about half the life expectancy of his kind. See the chapter about the seasonlings to see what this means for each race. Do not concern yourself with aging roll difficulties yet.

You can also choose to wait until you know more about your character's physical and mental aptitudes, as represented by his attributes and skills, before deciding upon his career. It can be done both ways depending on whether you would rather choose his aptitudes according to the profession you have decided upon, or if you prefer to select a trade according to his abilities. Do what you feel more comfortable with. In all cases, the choice of your Inspired's line of work will not modify his attribute and skill ratings.

Step three: assets and faults

We now come to selecting assets, and possibly faults. These choices will serve to deepen your character's traits and enrich his potential for adventures. They are psychological qualities, past events, etc., that you will have to rely on to build an interesting character. Some also provide modifiers for certain die rolls in the game.

Every Inspired receives 5 creation points for buying assets. In addition, up to 10 points of faults can be chosen, which will provide an equal amount of extra points for buying assets.

The assets must include at least one Office, which reflects the fact that, with the passing years, the character became a preeminent figure of his kingdom, even if it is only by being a renowned craftsman or a rich noble. Do not forget that you are creating an Inspired, one of the very few individuals in Harmundia to possess the Flame! The EG is invited to read the list of Offices (p. 107-109) so as to best advise the players.

The remaining points can be used to buy any other assets (which may include other Offices).

Bear in mind that some assets and faults can change the age, height or weight of your character.

You can read the chapter about assets and faults, but it might be wiser to ask your EG to tell you about them, for

the game could prove to be more interesting if you do not know them all.

Step four: Flame and Aspects

The Flame is what sets an Inspired apart from a Dullen. It comprises three aspects: Body, Spirit, and Soul. Each aspect encompasses some of the character's attributes.

Found under Body are Agility, Perception, Stamina, Strength, Aim, and Melee. The Body bonus should be used for all rolls involving these primary or secondary attributes.

Found under Spirit are Intelligence, Will, and Ascendancy. The Spirit bonus should be used for all rolls involving these primary or secondary attributes.

Lastly, Soul contains Charisma, Creativity, and Art. Using the same principle as before, the Soul bonus should be used for all rolls involving these primary or secondary attributes.

Therefore each Inspired has three scores, one for each aspect of the Flame, that vary between 0 and 10. The Flame score is equal to the lowest of the three bonuses.

An Inspired character begins with 1 in each aspect, and thus 1 point in Flame.

Dark Flame is the sinister counterpart of the Flame. It is also divided into three aspects: Dark Body, Dark Spirit, and Dark Soul. The score in Dark Flame is equal to the lowest of the Dark Aspect scores. Usually, a character begins with a Dark Aspect and a Dark Flame of 0, but some faults may increase these scores (see the Assets and Faults chapter).

Every Inspired gets 1 point in Flame and 1 point in each normal Aspect of the Flame (not the Dark Aspects!). Some assets may increase these ratings.

FORTUNE

Fortune points allow the Inspired to perform exceptional endeavors. An inspired character can have, at most, as many Fortune points as twice his score in Flame. So, as the Flame score is 1 at creation, your character has 2 Fortune points.

DARKNESS AND PERFIDY

Several dangers may beset the integrity of the Inspired and their Flames.

Two types of corruption are evaluated by scores ranging from 1 to 100: Darkness shows to what extent the character is influenced by the Darken, and Perfidy measures the hold of the Masque. As to what consequences these scores entail, see the chapters about the Masque and the Darken in Book Four.

At character creation, your hero should be free of both kinds of corruption, unless you choose a fault that yields Darkening or Perfidy points.

Step five: attributes

A human character gets 80 creation points for attributes. A seasonling gets only 70 points. These points can be spent according to the table below. There is no difference between attribute and skill cost (at least during character creation). As we said before, these points can only be used to create your character. Any unspent points are lost.

ATTRIBUTE DESCRIPTION

♣ Stamina (STA)

Stamina reflects the ability to exert oneself over long periods, and to resist physical punishment.

♣ Strength (STR)

Strength represents muscular capabilities and all-around physical power.

♣ Agility (AGI)

Agility measures liveness and dexterity. It also includes reflexes, and the degree of control, grace and precision of body movements.

♣ Perception (PER)

Perception measures sensory abilities, as well as one's vivacity, quickness to react, and capacity to notice things.

♣ Will (WIL)

Will is a measure of one's mental fortitude. It includes the ability to concentrate, and to resist all kinds of influence or manipulation. One's backbone and strength of opinion also derive from Will.

♣ Intelligence (INT)

Intelligence reflects all rational abilities. It primarily involves memory, clear thinking, and the use of logic.

♣ Charisma (CHA)

Charisma is a combination of looks, presence, charm, and aura. It is the innate ability to make oneself understood and obeyed. Charisma is essential in all interpersonal relations, from first impressions to the most complex conversations.

♣ Creativity (CRE)

Creativity measures imagination and artistic abilities. It is a factor in all matters involving aesthetics, emotions, or inventiveness.

SEASONLINGS AND ATTRIBUTES

Seasonlings do not have absolute freedom in spending their creation points for attributes. For certain attributes, they must either limit themselves to a maximum value, or spend at least enough points to get a minimum value. Those values are given in the Racial attributes table.

ATTRIBUTE AND SKILL COST

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|--------|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|----|----|----|
| Rating | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| Cost | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 7 | 10 | 14 | 19 | 25 |

ATTRIBUTE VALUE SCALE

| Rating | Attribute (Body, Spirit, Soul) |
|--------|--|
| 0 | Useless. Character is severely handicapped (paralyzed, vegetable, machine). |
| 1 | Catastrophic. A major problem (muscle disease, imbecility, obtuse iconoclast). |
| 2 | Problematic. A minor problem (congenial weakness, stupidity, no sense of art). |
| 3 | Pitiful. Completely untalented (scrawny, dull-witted, tasteless). |
| 4 | Second-rate. It's not really bad, but... (weakling, not too bright, no interest in art beyond appreciating beauty). |
| 5 | Average. No particular problem. |
| 6 | Not too bad, but could be better (Sunday athlete, crossword-puzzle enthusiast, amateur artist). |
| 7 | Rather good (promising athlete, cultivated, young hope in a given art form). |
| 8 | Gifted! (professional athlete, good university teacher, accomplished artist). |
| 9 | One of the best... (really very strong, extremely knowledgeable, master of many arts). |
| 10 | THE best (Hercules, Sherlock Holmes, Leonardo da Vinci). |
| 11 | Barely conceivable (better than those mentioned above). |
| + | Monstrous. Above 11, there is no scale for comparison. A giant can lift well over 1000 lbs., a minotaur can go through a wooden wall as if it were paper. Attributes like these are so high they begin to cause problems for the character. (Nymphs and sirens are hunted for their beauty, giants must take great care not to break everything they touch, etc.) |

For some seasonlings, given attributes may go way beyond 11. Any distinction at such levels is meaningless for a human, but not for those who possess them. In their cases, the same scale of relative comparison still applies.

In this table, modifiers are not taken into account for a given minimum or maximum. For example, a sprite can buy a maximum of 7 in STA, which will drop to 5 with the modifier. So, the sturdiest sprite in the world has a STA of 5 (maximum 7, -2). On the other hand, a giant must spend enough creation points to buy at least a STR of 8, for a minimum total Strength of 16 (minimum 8, +8).

Step six: secondary attributes

The eight primary attributes are not enough to define all possibilities of character creation. When calculating secondary attributes, the Flame bonus IS NOT INCLUDED. Use only the primary attributes involved (STR, STA, etc.). In the list below, the name of each secondary attribute is

always followed by the formula. Results are always rounded down.

♣ **Melee (MEL):** $[STR + (AGI \times 2)] / 3$

The Melee attribute reflects the character's proficiency at close combat. It involves coordination and the ability to use one's strength to strike precisely yet powerfully.

Melee is considered a Body attribute.

♣ **Aim (AIM):** $(AGI + PER) / 2$

Aim represents the character's hand-eye coordination, focus, and assessment of distance. Aim is essential whenever you need to make something go in the right direction at the right distance. It is used in any situation where something is thrown (be it a knife or a bar stool) as well as with projectile weapons.

Aim is considered a Body attribute.

♣ **Ascendancy (ASC):**
INT or WIL or $(INT + WIL) / 2$

Ascendancy measures the ability to manipulate Dancers. It is equal to INT, or to WIL, or to the mean of both, depending on one's magical path.

Ascendancy is considered a Spirit attribute.

♣ **Art (ART):** $(CHA + CRE) / 2$

Art is the character's capacity to practice the Magical Arts. Black feys are a special case: as a black fey is a solitary creature and prone to magic, her ART attribute is equal to her CRE.

Art is considered a Soul attribute.

♣ **Size (SIZ):** (see the "Size" table)

Size is a global value that describes both the height and build of the character. It is determined by the character's race (and may be modified by some assets and faults).

| SIZE | |
|-----------|-----|
| Race | SIZ |
| Black fey | -2 |
| Sprite | -1 |
| Spriggan | -1 |
| Dwarf | -1 |
| Human | 0 |
| Medusa | 0 |
| Satyr | 0 |
| Ogre | 0 |
| Minotaur | +1 |
| Giant | +3 |

| MOVE | |
|---|----|
| SIZ | MV |
| -2 | 1 |
| -1 | 2 |
| 0 | 3 |
| +1 | 4 |
| +2 | 6 |
| +3 | 8 |
| Special case: When a black fey flies, her MV is 9. | |

♣ **Move (MV)** (see the "Move" table)

This secondary attribute measures a character's quickness in movement. A character can move his MV in yards in one turn without suffering any penalties. The Move attribute varies according to Size (see table).

♣ **Damage bonus (DB)**
(see the "Damage bonus" table)

An evaluation of the power behind a character's blows. DB is based on the sum of STR and SIZ.

♣ **Hit points (HP):**
HPB + $(STA \times 3) + 1D10 (C)$

Hit points measure the character's health. Each wound sustained causes a loss of hit points. To calculate a character's maximum HP, take his base hit points (HPB), which vary according to Size, and add them to three times the character's STA. This result is then increased by a closed roll of 1D10. (A closed roll is an ordinary dice roll, where 0 mean 10. We'll see what an open roll is in Book Three.)

RACIAL ATTRIBUTES TABLE

| Race | STA | STR | AGI | PER | WIL | INT | CHA | CRE | SIZ | HPB | Load Mod. | MV |
|-----------|------|------|-----|-----|-----|------|------|-----|-----|-----|-----------|-----|
| Ogre | +2m5 | +1m5 | / | / | / | / | / | / | 0 | 25 | x 7 | 3 |
| Minotaur | +4m6 | +3m7 | M8 | / | / | / | -1 | -1 | +1 | 45 | x 10 | 4 |
| Giant | +7m7 | +8m8 | M3 | / | / | -2 | -2 | / | +3 | 100 | x 20 | 8 |
| Black Fey | M5 | M5 | / | / | +1 | +2 | -2 | +3 | -2 | 10 | x 4 | 1/9 |
| Dwarf | +2m5 | / | / | / | / | / | / | +2 | -1 | 20 | x 6 | 2 |
| Medusa | / | / | +1 | / | / | +1m6 | +1m7 | +1 | 0 | 25 | x 7 | 3 |
| Sprite | -2M7 | M4 | +1 | +2 | +1 | m5 | / | / | -1 | 20 | x 6 | 2 |
| Spriggan | -2M8 | M5 | +2 | +1 | / | +1 | m5 | / | -1 | 20 | x 6 | 2 |
| Satyr | +1 | / | / | / | +1 | / | +2m6 | / | 0 | 25 | x 7 | 3 |
| Human | / | / | / | / | / | / | / | / | 0 | 25 | x 7 | 3 |

M = maximum allowed for the attribute

m = minimum allowed for the attribute

HPB is the character's base hit point score, according to race. A black fey will have a base score of 10 hit points, modified by a number derived from her stamina.

♣ **Serious wound threshold (SWT):**
HP / 3

♣ **Critical wound threshold (CWT):**
HP / 2

♣ **Load: (STR + STA) x Load mod.**

♣ Max. load: Load

♣ Half load: Load / 2

♣ Daily load: Load / 4

Max. load is the maximum weight (in pounds) a character can lift and carry over a few yards, with a -8 modifier to all physical rolls.

The Half load is the weight a character can carry over a longer distance (up to a few hundred yards before having to rest) with a -4 modifier to all physical actions.

The Daily load (a quarter of the Load) is the weight that can be carried at all times with a modifier of -2. Weights below this value do not hinder physical actions (no modifier).

It must be noted that worn items, like clothing and armor (but not weapons or backpacks) are not taken into account in the Load limits.

Step seven: choosing skills

A human character gets 120 creation points to buy skills. A seasonling gets only 100 points to spend, as all seasonlings possess 4 required skills already paid for with the remainder of their points.

In addition, all characters get three free skills: Languages (native tongue), Traditions (own realm), and Etiquette (own society) rated at 5. Creation points may of course still be spent to raise these skills to higher ratings.

SKILL VALUE SCALE

| Rating | Level of mastery |
|--------|--|
| 1 | Once tried it. Read a book about it, or had the basics explained. |
| 2 | Beginner. Almost never uses the skill. |
| 3 | Basic amateur. Practices once in a while. |
| 4 | Promising. Amateur who practices regularly. |
| 5 | Basic professional. Skill could be used to make a living. |
| 6 | Accomplished professional. Uses the skill daily. |
| 7 | Master. Knows very much, trains a lot. |
| 8 | One of the best. Could open a school for the skill. |
| 9 | Virtuoso. One of the best in the world. |
| 10 | Legendary mastery. One of the best ever. |

Creation points are spent according to the attribute and skill cost table. There is no difference between attribute and skill cost (at least during character creation). As previously stated, these points can only be used to create your character. Any unspent points are lost.

SEASONLINGS AND SKILLS

Every seasonling has three skills with a rating of 5, as well as the Season skill in the Branch of their own Season (also with a rating 5). This explains why, compared to humans, they start with fewer creation points to buy skills. Creation points may of course still be expended to raise these skills to higher ratings.

Skills are followed by the compulsory branch (eg: Weapon: horns) or the specialization in parenthesis [eg: Hunt (specialization: Dancers)]

♣ **Sprite:** Stealth, Plant lore, Astronomy, Season: Spring.

♣ **Spriggan:** Legerdemain, Locksmith, Hunt (specialization: Dancers), Season: Spring.

♣ **Satyr:** Music, Eloquence, Weapon: hooves, Season: Spring.

♣ **Ogre:** First Aid, Surgery, Gambling, Season: Summer.

♣ **Minotaur:** Alertness, Demonology, Weapon: horns, Season: Summer.

♣ **Giant:** Geography, Hunt, Weapon: thrown rock, Season: Summer.

♣ **Black fey:** Concord, Sculpture, History, Season: Winter.

♣ **Dwarf:** Concord (specialization: occult architecture), Demonology, Craft: Smith, Season: Winter.

♣ **Medusa:** Eloquence, Stewardship, Weapon: snakes, Season: Winter.

Step eight: choosing Spells and Opuses

If your Inspired is neither a Mage nor a Concordist, skip this step. The number of available Spells or Opuses is calculated as follows:

DAMAGE BONUS

| STR + SIZ | DB |
|-----------|-----|
| -1 | -6 |
| 0 | -4 |
| 1 | -2 |
| 2, 3 | -1 |
| 4, 5, 6 | 0 |
| 7, 8 | +1 |
| 9 | +2 |
| 10 | +4 |
| 11 | +6 |
| 12 | +8 |
| 13 | +10 |
| 14 | +12 |
| 15 | +15 |
| 16 | +18 |
| 17 | +21 |
| 18 | +24 |
| 19 | +27 |
| 20 | +31 |
| 21 | +35 |
| 22 | +39 |
| 23 | +45 |

HIT POINT BASIS

| SIZ | HPB |
|-----|-----|
| -2 | 10 |
| -1 | 20 |
| 0 | 25 |
| +1 | 45 |
| +2 | 75 |
| +3 | 100 |

LOAD MODIFIER

| SIZ | Load mod. |
|-----|-----------|
| -2 | x 8 |
| -1 | x 12 |
| 0 | x 14 |
| +1 | x 20 |
| +2 | x 30 |
| +3 | x 40 |

Take the Inspired's rating in the appropriate Magical Art skill (Tune, Shape, Vista, or Scansion) or in the Resonance skill, and multiply it by the relevant secondary attribute (ART for Magical Arts, ASC for Resonance).

The Threshold of each chosen Spell or Opus is subtracted from that number. So it is possible to choose many Spells or Opuses of little power (with a low Threshold) or fewer Spells or Opuses of high power.

If a Concordist practices more than one Magical Art, or is also a Mage then use the formula as many times as necessary for each occult skill and choose Spells and Opuses accordingly in each category.

N.B.: A mage cannot have more Spells than his Dancer's Memory allows (each point of the Dancer's Memory attribute is good for 5 Threshold points). If your character should have more Spells, the remaining Threshold points are lost (however, if a Mage has two or more Dancers, the Spells can be split among them).

Finishing Touches

COMBAT SECTION

To avoid losing time during fight scenes, a section of the Scroll has been arranged to summarize all necessary parameters for your weapons.

♣ **Initiative (Init.):** Add (PER + AGI) to your weapon's initiative bonus.

ARAKNIR

"Companion to Agone and responsible for the involvement of the Square during the war of 1415, Araknir chose to emulate the one he respected and probably loved: Eyhidiase the Sorceress. By 1439, the New Spark Inn had reopened in the city of Lorgol. The reputation of this establishment has grown ever since, and it is now considered unavoidable by all Eclipsists passing through Urganand's capital city. From what information we have gathered, the New Spark is also a haven to Bohedur, Araknir's brother. This dwarf is subjected to an advanced inquiry about the nature of the power he expresses through the organ. Could it be something akin to the Art of the Harpsichord, an instrument so heavily associated with taint and Discord? Having many friends both in the Cypher-sorcerer and in the Square, Araknir has been able to prevent anyone from approaching his brother. We recommend sending a female agent selected for her resemblance to Eyhidiase, whose task would be to gather all possible information on Bohedur."

♣ **Attack (Att.):** Add MEL (for melee weapons) or AIM (for thrown and projectile weapons) to your weapon skill. Also add the weapon's attack modifier (and the penalty you get if you are below the weapon's minimum attributes).

♣ **Defense (Def.):** Add MEL to your weapon skill. Also add the weapon's parrying modifier (and the modifier you get if you are below the attributes minimums).

♣ **Damage (Dam.):** Add the weapon's damages to you DB.

♣ **Size (SIZ):** Record the weapon's size and whether

SKILL LIST BY GROUPS

Complete definitions and examples of skill uses are in Chapter 4

| Courtly | Knowledge | Rogue | Trials | Occult |
|-------------|-------------------|-------------|-----------|----------------|
| Crafts* | Alphabets* | Acrobatics | Alertness | Concord |
| Diplomacy | Astronomy | Conceal | Athletics | Cypher-sorcery |
| Eloquence | Beast lore | Disguise | Climb | Dancer lore |
| Etiquette* | Cults* | Hunt | Dodge | Demonology |
| Fast Talk | Geography | Intrigue | First Aid | Magical Arts* |
| Music* | History & legends | Gambling | Ride | Tune |
| Painting | Languages* | Legerdemain | Survival | Shape |
| Poetry | Law | Locksmith | Swim | Vista |
| Sculpture | Medecine | Poisons | Weapons* | Scansion |
| Stewardship | Navigation | Stealth | | Resonance |
| Trade | Plant lore | | | Eclipsist |
| Traditions* | Seasons* | | | Jornist |
| | Strategy | | | Obscurantist |
| | Surgery | | | |

*: Skills followed by an asterisk require you to specify a branch of application. "Weapon" for example requires the specification of the type of weapon, such as "sword" or "mace". If you want to master several branches of the same skill, you will have to buy that skill as many times as you want different branches. On your Scroll, the branch(es) must be recorded on the line(s) just below the skill name.

you wield it with one or both hands.

This way, during the game, you will only have to add 1d10 to your Attack and Defense totals for attack or defense, and the SM to the Damage.

OCCULT SECTION

This section of the Scroll is intended to gather the character's ratings for Ascendancy and the magical Arts.

If you use Ascendancy, you must now create your Dancer(s). Ask your EG to tell you how to proceed (you may be given a number of creation points to distribute between the Dancer's different attributes, or the EG can ask you to roll dice for each attribute, or give you a specific Dancer).

♣ The Magical Art potentials are equal to:

For an Attuned: ART (Soul bonus included) + Tune or Music: instrument (the one with the lower rating)

For a Shaper: ART (Soul bonus included) + Shape or Sculpture (the one with the lower rating)

For a Painter: ART (Soul bonus included) + Vista or Painting (the one with the lower rating)

For a Scander: ART (Soul bonus included) + Scansion or Poetry (the one with the lower rating)

♣ The Ascendancy potential is equal to ASC (Spirit bonus included) + Resonance or Dancer lore (the one with the lower rating) + the Dancer's ASC bonus

♣ The Intuitive potential is equal to CRE (Soul bonus included) + Resonance or the Dancer's Empathy attribute (the one with the lower rating)

The skills and attributes repeated here are the same as those listed on the back of the Scroll.

OUTFITTING

You must not forget your character's equipment. During your already busy life, you have had the opportunity to acquire all the personal gear (weapons, armor, steeds, survival outfits...) you could need. For more consequential things (house, ship, castle...) consult the list of Offices. All in all, use logic. If you are a scholar, you probably wouldn't own full plate armor, while writing materials would be essential.

SPONSOR AND SPONSORSHIP SKILL

Look up what group your Inspired's highest skill belongs to. This group indicates the Season of the Inspired's sponsor, that is, the seasonling who gave you the Flame. Occult skills are not taken into account in determining the spon-

ALPHABETS AND LANGUAGES TABLE

| Elder Empire | Realm | Language | Alphabet |
|--------------|---------------------|-----------------------------|-------------|
| Septentrion | Lyphan | Kosabi | Septentrian |
| | Wild Reaches | Nordik | Septentrian |
| | Princefely Communes | Klemenite | Septentrian |
| | Empire of Keshe | Keshite | Septentrian |
| | Bokkor | Bokkori | Septentrian |
| Armgard | Urgamand | Urgamish | Armgardic |
| | Janrenia | Janrentian | Armgardic |
| | Liturgical Province | Liturgic (or Sacred Tongue) | Armgardic |
| | Buccaneer Haven | Buccaneers' Lingo | Armgardic |
| Moden'Hen | Mercenary Republic | Mercerin | Moden-Hen' |
| | Widowlands | Ophidian | Moden-Hen' |
| | Modehan Marches | Modehan | Moden-Hen' |

Note: Keshite is used as a common tongue (mostly by merchants, diplomats, and scholars) throughout the continent.

sor, unless the Inspired only possesses skills from the Occult group, in which case you may freely choose your sponsor's Season.

If you have more than one skill at your highest rating, choose among them the one you want to use.

This has no influence on game rules, but can be of interest in determining your Inspired's personal history. If your sponsor turns out to be a seasonling of the Fall, that means a Fallen from the Isle of Autumn has been admitted into the Decan Council. Let your EG find out the reason why.

♣ Courtly: Spring

♣ Trials: Summer

♣ Rogue: Fall

♣ Knowledge: Winter

PERSONAL HISTORY

What remains is the hardest part... but sometime the most rewarding and fruitful. Your character cannot only be defined by his game statistics. His life is crucial, especially in AGONE where it has already been long and busy.

Where does he come from? Who are his enemies? His friends? Who has he fought? Who has he defeated? Who defeated him?

What is his outlook on life? Would he rather use force or subtlety? Does he enjoy the company of other mortals or does he live as a hermit? Does he have a family? Who comprise it and how important is it to him? Is he ready to protect an ideal? A country? A liege? A race? Is he guided by the lure of gain, and would he rather strive for wealth or knowledge? Does he admire the beauty of nature?

All these aspects of your character's history, and how they define his personality, are for you to expand upon (and for your EG to approve). They will make no difference on the Scroll, but they are your best way to flesh out your Inspired.

There you are, Harmundia is now home to a new Inspired. Soon, someone will come to visit you and tell you about eerie things and terrible dangers. Your new life is about to begin...

Character creation summary

1. Choosing race

Human or seasonling (black fey, dwarf, sprite, spriggan, ogre, medusa, satyr, minotaur, giant)

2. Character's history

Profession, country of origin, sex, age, height, weight.

3. Choice of assets and faults

(Warning: some assets and faults may modify age, height, or weight).

4. Recording ratings in Flame and Aspects, and aspects bonus.

Fortune points = Flame x 2.

5. Buying primary attributes

♣ Human: 80 creation points

♣ Seasonling: 70 creation points

Take into account:

- modifiers due to assets and faults (if applicable).

- minimums and maximums due to seasonling race (if applicable).

6. Reckoning secondary attributes

Remember: Flame-induced bonuses not to included.

♣ Melee (MEL): $[STR + (AGI \times 2)] / 3$

♣ Aim (AIM): $(AGI + PER) / 2$

♣ Ascendancy (ASC): INT or WIL or $(INT + WIL) / 2$, depending of your magical path.

♣ Art (ART): $(CHA + CRE) / 2$ (except for black feys: ART = CRE)

♣ SIZ (see "Size" table)

♣ MV (see "Move" table)

♣ DB: STR+SIZ (see "Damage bonus" table)

♣ Hit points (HP): $HPB + (STA \times 3) + 1D10 (C)$

♣ Serious wound threshold (SWT): $HP / 3$

♣ Critical wound threshold (CWT): $HP / 2$

♣ Load: $(STR + STA) \times$ Load mod.

♣ Max. load = Load

♣ Half load = Load / 2

♣ Daily load = Load / 4

7. Buying skills

♣ Select free skills: Language: native 5, Tradition: own 5, and Etiquette: own 5

♣ Human: 120 creation points

♣ Seasonling: 100 creation points

♣ Choosing a specialty: 2 creation points

♣ For Seasonlings: Season (own) and 3 skills with ratings of 5 (see below).

• Ogre: First Aid, Surgery, Gambling

• Minotaur: Alertness, Demonology, Weapon: horns

• Giant: Geography, Hunt, Weapon: thrown rock

• Sprite: Stealth, Plant lore, Astronomy

• Spriggan: Legerdemain, Locksmith, Hunt (specialization: Dancers)

• Black fey: Concord, Sculpture, History

• Dwarf: Concord (specialization: occult architecture), Demonology, Craft: smith

• Medusa: Eloquence, Stewardship, Weapon: snakes

• Satyr: Music, Eloquence, Weapon: hooves

8. Choosing Spells and Opuses

♣ ASC x Resonance

♣ ART x Tune or Shape or Vista or Scansion

Subtract the Threshold of each Spell or Opus chosen

9. Last touches

♣ Combat

♣ Occult

• Dancer creation

• ASC Pot.: $ASC + (Resonance \text{ or } Dancer \text{ lore}) + Dancer's \text{ ASC bonus}$

• Intuitive Pot.: $CRE + (Resonance \text{ or } Dancer's \text{ Empathy})$

• Magical Art Pot.: $ART + (\text{magical Art or equivalent Courtly art skill})$

♣ Equipment

♣ Seasonling sponsor

♣ Personal history





3 ~ Assets and Faults

hat distinguishes one character from the next is not simply a difference in attribute points. Their past, sprinkled with their joys and sorrows, is first and foremost in defining who they are. To simulate these experiences and their consequences, heroes in AGONE are given specific characteristics: assets and faults. Assets are bought with creation points. Faults provide creation points that can be used to acquire more assets, but a newly created character can get no more than 10 creation points through their faults.

These traits must be chosen carefully for they are as essential to your character. They will provide guidelines for role-playing during the game. Traits that are apparently at odds can give rise to particularly interesting and enjoyable game sessions, as your acting influences how the others view your Inspired.

Below is the list of assets and faults (with their costs in parenthesis) classified by category. Some have no fixed cost (in which case it is mentioned that the cost varies). For these, the creation point ratio is explained in the main text.

This list is not meant to be comprehensive and every player can create new assets or new faults, as long as it is done with the Eminence Grise's consent and approval.

A fault cannot make any attribute drop below 1. Such faults are unavailable to that particular character.

Unless the description specifies otherwise, a given asset or fault can only be taken once by an Inspired. Obviously, opposite assets and faults are mutually exclusive. (e.g.: You cannot play a blind man with acute vision!)

Assets and faults are listed in alphabetical order by category. At the end of this chapter, a summary presents them in increasing cost order.

Offices

In most cases, the characters played in AGONE are key people in the Twilight Realms. The following assets and faults are intended to reflect this aspect of your character. To simulate the importance of offices in AGONE, 5 creation points are awarded during character creation to buy them. At least one Office must be chosen from this list. The remaining points may be used to choose other assets. Thus, you might end up with 14 points in various assets, 10 points in faults, and a 1-point Office.

Example: Bruce takes 10 points of faults for his character, Lucas the sprite, which allow him to take 10 points of assets. In addition, he is awarded 5 dedicated points that must be put toward at least one office. He takes a 3 points office. Now the 2 leftover points can be used for more assets or be discarded.

Offices can be chosen and implemented even if you do not play in a Domain. Prestigious characters with important responsibilities may meet on the road, away from their homes. If you play in a Domain, the Eminence Grise should try to balance the roles and the offices below so that the members of your troupe comprise the essential players of the Domain. Some offices must be adapted to conform to the local customs of the realm (e.g.: in Buccaneer Haven, the Lord is the Guide).

ASSETS

♣ Artful thrust (varies)

A master of arms has taught you an artful thrust (see the Combat chapter in Book Three). This asset's cost is (thrust's rarity)/4.

♣ Blackmail (varies)

You have witnessed or otherwise acquired knowledge of something some people desperately want to hide. Whatever the information is (a secret wedding, a bastard son, etc.), you have decided to profit from it: you have bargained for your silence with the interested party. You have done so smartly, obtaining money or goods, or perhaps preferential treatment if those involved were wealthy or nobles. The cost varies according to how important what you know is and the victim's position. For 1 point, you are blackmailing a rich artisan or a minor noble, or the secret is not very important. For 5 points, you might have obtained some very sensitive information about the royal family.

♣ Bourgeois (2)

Your family struggled its way out of rustic poverty by setting up shop in a village that became a town. This family business grew as the years went on, and you are now very well off. This earns you respect, but also envy, from the nobility. You sometimes go to the local lord's castle to pay the taxes that allow you to maintain your activity. You also happen to lend money to some of the Domain's preeminent characters.

♣ Caravaneer (2)

For years, you have been traveling to and fro on the roads of the Twilight kingdoms with your caravan laden with goods from all over the continent. Each time you arrive somewhere, men and women come to buy your finely worked weapons, precious fabrics, jewelry, and exotic dishes. You provide people with news about the neighboring countries and their denizens.



Like all merchants, you possess a great deal of wares. Nonetheless, you need to determine your specialties and establish with your Eminence Grise the list of items you have in stock. Your whole merchandise can have a maximum value of 1,000 gold pieces, plus an additional 200 gold pieces for each creation point you spend on this asset beyond the basic cost.

In order to possess this office, you need to have CHA or the Stewardship skill at 6 or better.

♣ Censor (5)

You are one of the judges that the Cipher-sorcerer order uses to enforce its laws. Your mission is exacting – the wizards ask you to track down those that purposefully break their rules. Few envy you, but all dread you. The members of the Cipher-sorcerer cannot forbid you from entering their abodes. You must always have a Dancer at your disposal. Should yours perish, you can demand from a Mage that he secure another for you. To take this asset, you must of course be a member of the Cipher-sorcerer yourself.

To choose this Office, you need an ASC and a Resonance skill of at least 8, as well as Dancer Lore and Law (Cipher-sorcerer) skills at a minimum of 6.

♣ Chamberlain (4)

One of your ancestors was chosen by the lord's forebears to administer their fortress. You inherited this arduous task and now perform the most important duty of the Domain. Without you, the castle would soon fall prey to chaos. The chamberlain's responsibilities are tremendous. You control the Domain's resources

and ensure the subsistence of the lord's family. You are usually in charge of protocol and often advise the lord during his neighbors' friendly visits. You are the one to decide who comes to work in the castle. The townsfolk know you and respect you. Many dream to marry one of their children to yours.

To select this office, you must have at least two among CHA, Etiquette, and Stewardship at a rating of 8 or more.

♣ Dean (4)

You are an accomplished mage and you rule over an academy, known to the unlearned as a school of magic. Hence, you should know most wizards of your order born in your kingdom. Mostly, they respect you and admire your magical skills (when they do not hate you for the hard lessons and harsh punishments you subjected them to when they were apprentices). Many mages envy your position, because you are not only the highest authority of your order (censors excepted) and can as such take part and vote during a Symposium, but you also benefit from a great standing among the nobility.

To select this Office, you must possess a EMP, Resonance and Dancer lore skills of at least 8.

♣ Famous (1)

You have performed a deed that has earned you a reputation in the neighboring lands. A lord had you come to his court where you were made welcome. People like you come and go at the castle, but you won the lord's friendship and are now a regular fixture at his court, along with the master-at-arms, the knights, or the chamberlain.

♣ Known family (1)

A relative accomplished something heroic and memorable. Everybody in the Domain knows you and respects your lineage. You are saluted in the villages, and most people know your name. The lord himself knows your face and might remember you.

♣ Lord (5)

You are a lord. Your family has been ruling its land by right of blood and arms for generations, and you must show yourself worthy of your forebears. You live in a fortress overlooking your lands and villages. All the living souls in your territory owe you respect and obedience. You owe them the peace and the respect of the other domains. It is their toiling that feeds you and yours, but if you are too demanding, then eventually they will rise up against your family. You must administer your lands with respect for your vassals if you do not want them to rise up against you.

Your earnings are not easy to appraise. You eat well enough, except when bad weather starves your people. Your wealth is not in coins of the realm but in arable land. Your domain's geography is the source of your riches, and you must discuss with your Eminence Grise how you will organize it to generate income. If your

domain does not include at least a town, you will be unable to have flourishing commerce, and so no treasury worthy of the name.

This asset can have varied aspects, such as guide in the Buccaneer Haven, or royal blood in Janrenia. The management of your domain and the responsibilities stemming from it should be adapted accordingly. *The Grey Papers*, a sourcebook describing many domains, will give you more information on such matters.

If you play in a Domain, this asset can only be bought once for a troupe, unless the lands of neighboring lords share a common history and common frontiers. In such a case, your families' relationships should be discussed with the Eminence Grise, who might have suggestions fitting his campaign. As usual, the EG has the last word on whether such a special situation is possible, and on what conditions.

♣ Master-at-arms (4)

Each Domain possesses a militia to ensure its protection, and maintain peace and order. It is led by accomplished soldiers that earned this distinction by their prowess in battle beside their lord in past wars. You are one of those warriors, and you are in charge of enforcing your liege's laws. You and your men must ensure the safety not only of the lord, but also of all his lands' population. You are the one to decide how many soldiers will be kept to protect the castle, how many will be dispatched to the towns and villages, and to the frontiers. You are the foremost military advisor, and you also stand by your lord on the battlefield.

In times of peace, the master-at-arms is the sparring partner of the lord, the man responsible for the training of the domain's soldiers, and the arms master and teacher of strategy for his lord's children.

If you play in a Domain: Although there is usually only one master-at-arms per Domain, he sometimes gathers some trusted men around himself, the sergeants. If more than one player chooses the master-at-arms asset, then let them be the sergeants of the Domain's real master-at-arms. In that case, the asset costs one less point.

To select this Office, you must possess at least 8 in two weapon skills (discounting brawl and natural weapons) or 8 in one weapon skill and Strategy.

♣ Nobility (2)

You are a knight, a member of the nobility. In the past, a lord acknowledged the mettle of one of your forebears and granted him the right to ride a horse, to bear arms and to wear an emblazoned suit of armor. When you came of age, you renewed your family's pledge to your lord. You fulfill the function of lord yourself, in a small village belonging to your liege. In times of war, you owe obedience to the master-at-arms, who may look upon you as one of his sergeants. In times of peace, you are his equal.

To select this Office, you must possess a weapon skill (discounting brawl or natural weapons) of at least 6.

☛ Remain of the Flamboyance (varies)

You live in a building dating back to the Flamboyance. With this asset come Elder Arts opuses, most of the time in the forms of animated statues, or gargoyles, that protect the place from intruders. You are free to discuss the details with your Eminence Grise to anchor it within his campaign setting as a plausible place with a coherent history. Examples with costs are given below.

| REMAIN OF THE FLAMBOYANCE | |
|---------------------------|---|
| Cost | Remain |
| 3 | Small house protected by a gargoyle. |
| 4 | Tower whose rooms sometimes rearrange themselves. |
| 5 | Manor that can turn invisible. |

☛ Secret Hideout (2)

You discovered a place that no one knows about, or that is very difficult to reach. It might have been a cave, ruin, a forgotten secret room, etc. As the years went by, you secretly turned it into your haven. Nobody knows about it unless you decide to buy it for only 1 point. In this case, you have noticed that somebody else is using this secret hideout. Who could it be? Only your Eminence Grise knows, and you will have to find out during the game.

☛ Spy network (4)

As years went by, war and treachery convinced lords to acquire secret counselors to inform them on the activities of their neighbors and of powerful individuals living on their lands. These discreet counselors constitute networks of spies that put their intelligence in service of the Domain. Who are they? Thieves and robbers whose crimes were pardoned in exchange for their services, or resourceful men ready to do anything to avoid harsh labor. The quality of such a network depends on your ability to manage these men that dream of adventures or plunder in the service of the lord. The task is not an easy one. Often the security of the lord, his family and his possessions rely on the information you gather.

To select this Office, you must possess two Rogue skills of at least 8.

FAULTS

☛ Dark secret (2)

You are haunted by a terrible secret. Should it become known, there would be no end to your shame. It is also possible that someone would seek revenge and that your family and friends would reject you. You live daily with the anguish that your secret could be revealed. This secret can prevent you from going to some places, or even from meeting some people.

It can be a Fallen friend, a tainted Opus, a crime punishable by death, etc.

☛ Dependent (2)

You are responsible for someone who cannot live on his own (a young child, a very old relative, a cripple, etc.). You cannot go away too often or too long unless you take him along. You could also put him in the care of someone you trust, but still that would not appease you. Your mind would be beset day and night by anxiety.

☛ Ill repute (1)

There are rumors circulating about you (that need not be true) that lead everyone to distrust you. People in the area have no inclination to be kind to you. You would find it difficult to get out of trouble should it come knocking at your door. The Eminence Grise may rule that this reputation also applies in neighboring kingdoms.

Examples: Womanizer, betrayer, murderer, Invoker, etc.

☛ Indebted (1)

You owe an important amount of money to someone who is determined to settle the score. This debt may well require you to perform a favor or carry out a mission. It may also be a debt of honor.

Whatever the case, your debtor constantly demands what you owe. As early as your first game session, your debtor will do everything in his power to ensure that you repay quickly. If you take this fault with an additional point, your debtor is the head of a criminal organization, and will not hesitate to send mercenaries on your trail or threaten you directly. He could even try to kill you.

☛ Landless (2)

You must possess the assets Nobility or Lord to select this fault. You have lost your land, or your family has not had any for at least a generation. The sole purpose of your existence will be to acquire a new land or to fight to reclaim yours.

☛ Lost love (1)

You were passionately in love with someone who is now gone. Now you have lost your taste for life. If your love is dead, interactions with members of the opposite sex have become very difficult for you as you barely notice them anymore. If your love is still alive, in which case s/he has probably been abducted, your only objective it to be reunited.

☛ Orphan (2)

You lost your parents while you were very young, and you were raised in another family. Despite your adoptive parents' best efforts, the other children made sure you felt the difference, and even today you are a bit of a loner. If you had to get an education all by yourself, you lose 10 creation points to buy skills.

☛ Presumed dead (varies)

You are supposed to be dead! Whether you went to war in a desolate and dangerous land, or whether your

ship was lost at sea, people from your native area think you are dead. If you didn't have any family, they have already divided up your belongings (1 point). Otherwise, your place has been taken (2 points). Your wife or husband may have already remarried (3 points). If you possessed lands, they have been annexed by a neighboring lord, or a distant relative has taken over your position (4 points).

♣ **Savage (3)**

You have grown up alone in the wilds, with animals as your only companions. For the major part of your life, you have never spoken to anybody and you have ignored everything pertaining to the Twilight Realms' inhabitants. Since your arrival in society, you have learned enough words and figures of speech to have the independence of a young child. During character creation, you cannot buy any Courtly or Occult skill.

♣ **Shamed family (2)**

Everyone can make mistakes, but in the Twilight Realms, some mistakes can put you into serious trouble. Your own family made such a mistake and has remained famous for it. You and yours are the subject of people's jeering, or even of their irrational hatred. You are often mocked or mistreated, as you pay for one of your ancestor's crimes. Maybe you will try to clear your family name? In that case, the Eminence Grise will make sure that your road is an arduous one.

♣ **Stranger (1)**

You come from a distant land and do not share the nationality and culture of the other Inspired of your Troupe. Even if they appreciate your company, some of them will be wary of you. The denizens of this country dislike doing business with you. The farther your native kingdom is, the wilder the rumors about you are. It is difficult for you to trade, or to buy some things without paying an excessive price.

This fault is easily coupled with "Vagrant".

♣ **Vagrant (2)**

You have nowhere to go, and the people you meet know neither who you are nor why you wander in the Twilight kingdoms. You possess nothing beyond the clothes you wear, not even a weapon or a piece of armor. You have no money.

This fault is frequently associated with "Stranger".

Soul

ASSETS

♣ **Attractive (1)**

People of all sexes and races are attracted to you (with the exception of the seasonlings whose race includes

only one gender). They find you irresistible and feel a need to enjoy your company. Some may go out of their way to attract your attention or try to seduce you.

You benefit from a +1 modifier on all rolls related to social situations.

♣ **Instincts for Perfection (5)**

You have an instinctive relationship to things and beings. You usually act on your feelings, without taking the trouble to think or analyze a situation, yet things go right for you. It sometimes seems like the Muses had taken you along when they designed creation.

You begin the game with a +1 modifier to your Soul.

♣ **Presence (3)**

With but a look, you are able to make people listen to you, to sway or convince them, to inspire respect, or to instill fear.

You benefit from a +1 modifier to your CHA. This attribute's maximum is raised by 1 point.

♣ **Resourceful (1)**

You are always teeming with ideas. Your life finds meaning only through your inventiveness, that expresses itself daily in opuses, contraptions, or ingenious and practical solutions with limited materials.

You get a +1 modifier on all rolls related to one of the following skills: Sculpture, Painting, Music, Poetry, or Craft. You can buy this asset up to three times, provided you choose a different sphere of expertise each time.

♣ **Sensitive (3)**

Your soul is attuned to the world around you. You view the world as the ultimate opus. You perceive every detail as a source of inspiration that you can adapt to your own creations.

You benefit from a +1 modifier to your CRE. This attribute's maximum is raised by 1 point.

FAULTS

♣ **Blasé (2)**

Nothing surprises you anymore. As the years went by, you found it increasingly difficult to invent anything new. You are now convinced that every new idea or creation is just a poor copy of what has been done already.

You suffer from a -1 modifier to your CRE.

♣ **Disfigured (2)**

You were disfigured in a battle or an accident. People around you find it difficult to look straight at you, and you always feel the pity or the horror caused by your appearance. This fault can also be the result of a disease.

♣ **Forgotten by the Muses (4)**

You spend too much time thinking things over, and are never able to make a decision in time. As a result, you often miss your opportunities, and others beat you to

making use of your original ideas. This frequently annoys those around you, who rightly feel that your attitude betrays a lack of enthusiasm, or argumentativeness.

You have a +1 modifier to your Dark Soul.

♣ Misshapen (5)

You were born misshapen. Whether one of your arms or legs is shorter than the other, or that you are a hunchback, or that you lack some of your fingers, your physical defect usually repulses those around you.

You suffer from a modifier of -1 to your CHA. In addition, this fault also impairs one of your primary Body attributes (AGI, STR, STA, PER). Your Eminence Grise will determine which of the four will suffer a -1 modifier.

♣ Unpleasant (2)

You can't help but be offensive. You just have to point out the shortcomings of those around you, to mock and ridicule them. It is not so much that you are a twisted individual who likes to torment people, but rather that you do not think much before speaking your mind.

You suffer from a -1 modifier to your CHA.

Spirit

ASSETS

♣ Beneficial mistakes (5)

You learn from your mistakes better than anyone else. Each failure or blunder teaches you something. Many might think you benefit from the experience of past life.

Add +1 to your Spirit.

This asset cannot be chosen along with the fault "Simpleton".

♣ Clear Thinker (2)

You have a great capacity to focus your mind. Where others need quiet to attend to a task requiring all their mental faculties, you can tackle it easily in the worst circumstances.

You benefit from a +1 modifier to all rolls for actions that require concentration: a minute activity, a mind game, an arduous calculus problem, etc.

♣ Common sense (3)

You have an unmatched judgment. You can always find the most sensible approach to any circumstance. Your friends often turn to you when they have a problem they are unable to deal with.

You benefit from a modifier of +1 to your INT. This attribute's maximum is raised by 1 point.

♣ Eidetic memory (3)

Your memory is astounding. It automatically stores every detail of what happens to you. You can quote

whole pages of books you read once, you remember past conversation with a baffling accuracy, and you can memorize entire volumes of poetry.

As your character never forgets anything, you can ask the EG to remind you of all the details of past scenes.

♣ Iron will (2)

You are determined, and it is difficult to fool or manipulate you. It is also very hard to obtain information you are unwilling to impart, be it through ruse, blackmail, magic, force or even torture.

You benefit from a +1 modifier to all WIL rolls to resist attempts to manipulate or ply you, physically or mentally.

♣ Light sleeper (1)

The faintest noise wakes you up, and you are never fast asleep. You can wake up at will with a WIL roll at a Difficulty of 15.

♣ Natural linguist (2)

You have always shown a gift for languages. You were talking before every other child of your age, and while others were toiling on the mysteries of the multiplication tables, you were already able to speak in a foreign tongue.

Your Inspired begins the game with two additional language skills (rating 5), and additional language skills are acquired in half the time, and at half the experience point cost.

♣ Self-assured (3)

You are very sure of your choices. When you have an opinion, or when you start doing something, you are utterly sure of being right. This confidence allows you to go through hardships relatively unscathed and to achieve great things.

You benefit from a +1 modifier to your WIL. This attribute's maximum is raised by 1 point.

FAULTS

♣ Absent-minded (2)

You never listen to anything you're told. People tend to think you are terminally scatterbrained, or worse, that you despise them. It is perfectly possible that someone who meets you for the first time ends up thinking you are deaf.

The EG is invited to never remind you of what has gone before, or to give you imprecise recollections. You suffer a -1 modifier to all tasks that require you to pay attention.

♣ Benighted (3)

You are a bit less smart than average. Everybody realizes it and few hesitate to joke about it. You avoid intellectual efforts as much as possible. You have great difficulties grasping even the simplest abstract concepts.

You suffer a -1 modifier to your INT.

♣ Delusions (1)

You have delusions. You are convinced you possess supernatural abilities or that you are able to create Opuses well beyond your capacities. You might also be confident that you are a powerful mage and that the Cipher-sorcerer owes you a favor.

For 1 additional point, these delusions are connected to your enemies. In that case, expect the Eminence Grise to use these enemies in his campaign.

♣ Flaring temper (2)

You are notably short-tempered. People close to you have long since stopped talking about your bouts of anger. They have grown used to them and sometimes use them to manipulate you. Your enemies often use this weakness to provoke you into making mistakes.

Whenever you feel insulted, you must succeed on a WIL roll against a DIF 15 to stay calm. If you fail it, you become violent.

♣ Obsession (1)

Something obsesses you. It can be a behavior problem, like looking many times over your shoulder before entering a room, or feeling the need to wash your hands every few minutes. It can also be a subject that's always on your mind and hinders your objectivity.

♣ Paranoid (1)

There are people who mean you harm - or so you think! They might not be ready to kill you yet, but it appears they are thinking it over. You are convinced that you can unmask them. You see them behind every mundane event, which gives you cause for suspicion. A man turned when you passed him by, someone looked you in the eye, somebody's behind you since you started walking down this street, etc.

♣ Phobia (varies)

Something bothers you. Whether it is something you simply distrust or something that can provoke your wildest terror, you are indeed suffering from an irrational phobia that could put you into serious trouble.

PHOBIA

| Strength | Cost | Effect |
|----------|------|--|
| Alarm | 1 | -1 to all rolls when the phobia is triggered |
| Dread | 2 | -3 to all rolls when the phobia is triggered |
| Terror | 4 | Incapacitated when the phobia is triggered |

♣ Presumptuous (1)

You have a high opinion of yourself and a much-exaggerated idea of your capacities. This fault distorts your relationship with people who don't know you well enough, as they tend to believe you when you pretend to be a master of a subject you barely know, or to be able to accomplish easily an action with which you

actually have little chance of success. If you are a fighter, for example, you are utterly convinced that no opponent could possibly defeat you.

When you exchange technical data with the other players about your character, don't hesitate to overstate your attribute and skill levels.

♣ Simpleton (4)

Without being the proverbial village idiot, you are still a little short on brains. It's not so much that you don't have the brainpower, but rather that you never seem to use it properly. Your way of thinking is similar to a child's, and you have great difficulties with abstract problems. Some say you are guileless, and Obscurantists compare you to their Dancers.

You have a +1 modifier to your Dark Spirit.

This fault cannot be chosen along with the asset "Beneficial Mistakes".

♣ Soft hearted (2)

You cannot stand the suffering of other. You are unable to give a deathblow to a human or a seasonling. If you strike a killing blow in a fight, you are sure to lose many nights' sleep over it. This fault will compel you to avoid violent situations and convince your comrades to do the same.

♣ Soft spot (varies)

You have a soft spot for something or someone. It can be a dish, a place, or a person (1 point). If you are unable to live without it, this fault is worth 2 points. For instance, you may be in love with someone, and always favor his or her survival over yours in dangerous situations. If it is only a passing fancy, it is worth only 1 point.

Body

ASSETS

♣ Acute sense(s) (varies)

One or many of your senses are overdeveloped. This asset's effects vary according to the sense(s) you choose.

You benefit from a +1 modifier to all PER rolls involving an acute sense. An acute sense of taste may allow you to detect some poisons (roll PER against a DIF 20).

ACUTE SENSES

| Number of senses | Cost |
|------------------|------|
| 1 | 1 |
| 2 | 2 |
| 3 | 4 |
| 4 | 6 |
| 5 | 8 |

♣ **Ambidextrous (5)**

Your character can use either hand with the same amount of strength and precision, even in combat. Moreover, he is able to use two objects simultaneously, one in each hand, with only a -5 penalty to both rolls. For example, if he has two weapons, he can either attack twice OR parry twice with a -5 modifier to both rolls.

♣ **Deftness (3)**

Your agility is legendary. You have an uncanny control of your muscles, and your friends say that you move with catlike grace. You may also be an expert at trickery or pick pocketing, or perhaps you are able to do contortions.

You benefit from a +1 modifier to your AGI. This attribute's maximum is raised by 1 point.

♣ **Force of nature (3)**

You are a robust fellow, one of those the seasonlings call a "force of nature". You are seldom sick, and when it happens you recover faster than anybody else.

You benefit from a +1 modifier to your STA. This attribute's maximum is raised by 1 point.

♣ **Huge (5)**

For a member of your race, you are notably taller and stronger than the average.

Your SIZ goes up by 1 point, and you benefit from a +1 modifier to your STR. This asset is forbidden if you play a giant. The only known huge giant on Harmundia lives in Abyss.

♣ **Immunity (1 or 2)**

You are singularly resistant to one toxin of your choice (alcohol, drug, poison, etc.) The Eminence Grise may demand that you specify the type or the origin of the toxin (for example, a specific poison).

All your STA rolls to resist this toxin get a +2 or +4 modifier, depending on the cost of the asset.

♣ **Lightning reflexes (2)**

You always pay attention to your surroundings, and react to the unexpected with the quickness of a wild animal.

You benefit from a +3 modifier to your initiative.

♣ **Little need for sleep (5)**

Your body needs only four hours of sound and continuous rest daily. This allows you to practice more activities than your companions. Your learning times are reduced by half, provided you can train while the others are asleep. For a black fey, this asset costs 7 points and doubles the number of years before the Call.

♣ **Saddle sleeper (1)**

You are able to sleep almost anywhere, at any time. As soon as you close your eyes, you fall into a deep recuperative slumber, yet it's still easy to wake you up. This allows you to manage your daily sleep very efficiently.

♣ **Second wind (2)**

Although you might not be a remarkably vigorous individual, you have learned to save your breath. This gives you an unexpected edge that can help you to get out of tight spots.

The period before it is necessary for STA rolls to resist exertion or suffocation is doubled. (so you only roll for suffocation after STA x 2 rounds).

♣ **Spartan (2)**

You eat and drink less than the average for your race. The duration before it is necessary to make STA rolls involving thirst or hunger is doubled.

♣ **Touch of Summer (5)**

Your sponsor is a seasonling of Summer who endowed you with the blessing of his season's Lady.

You benefit from a +1 modifier to Body.

This asset cannot be chosen along with the fault "Touch of the Darken".

♣ **Very small (1)**

You are uncommonly small.

Your SIZ goes down one point. A black fey cannot take this asset.

♣ **Young (5)**

Unlike the other Inspired played in AGONE, you are still in the full vigor of youth.

You benefit from a +1 modifier to both STA and STR. These attributes' maximums are unaffected. Double the cost of all Offices.

FAULTS

♣ **Arthritis (2)**

Your articulations are painful. You find it difficult to do precise work with your hands or to move quickly without suffering. You receive a -1 modifier to your AGI.

♣ **Disabled sense(s) (varies)**

One or many of your senses are defective. This fault's effects vary according to the sense(s) you choose.

You suffer from a -1 modifier to all PER rolls involving a disabled sense.

| DISABLED SENSES | |
|------------------|---------------|
| Number of senses | Points Gained |
| 1 | 1 |
| 2 | 2 |
| 3 | 3 |
| 4 | 5 |
| 5 | 7 |

♣ **Frail (2)**

Since you were born, you caught the worst afflictions. Some of your friends have only known you sick. Should

there be a plague over the country, you would surely be among the firsts to contract the disease.

You suffer from a -1 modifier to your STA.

♣ **Heavy sleeper (1)**

You can't wake up until you have slept enough, and you sleep so soundly that church bells could be rung beside your bed without disturbing you. A blessing for would-be assassins coming to cut your throat during the night!

♣ **Lame (2)**

Handicapped from birth or by an injury, you cannot move fast. You suffer a -2 modifier to your initiative. Your MV is halved.

♣ **Leper (4)**

You have contracted leprosy. Everybody avoids you for fear of catching this horrible disease. Your decomposing skin gives off a terrible stench. All your wounds are susceptible to gangrene. Fortunately, you are not contagious.

Attempts to use the First aid skill on you are always made against a DIF 5 higher than normal.

♣ **Missing limb (3)**

You have lost one of your limbs during a battle or an accident. Whatever the case, you must live with the consequences. If you are missing a leg, you move very slowly (MV divided by 3). If you are missing an arm, you cannot use anything requiring both hands.

♣ **Obesity (5)**

Your life has been a succession of feasts and banquets. Your plumpness grew as the meals went by, and you are now completely unable to exert yourself.

You suffer a -1 modifier to two Body attributes of your choice.

♣ **Old-timer (4)**

Time has caught up with you. You no longer possess the strength you used to, and your companions tend to think you do not pull your weight any longer. A human with this fault would be between 50 and 60. Adapt this for seasonings according to their life expectancy (see Chapter 5 of Book One).

You suffer from a -1 modifier to both STA and STR, but the costs of all Offices are reduced by 2 points (never below 1 point).

♣ **Puny (2)**

Nature gave you a fragile bone structure and weak muscles. You are unable to carry heavy weights, to break down a door or to bend bars.

You suffer a -1 modifier to your STR.

♣ **Sleepyhead (2)**

You really do need your full 10 hours of sleep daily. If you don't get enough rest, you suffer a -1 modifier to

all of your Body attributes and all skill rolls involving Body attributes.

♣ **Touch of the Darken (4)**

Your body never behaves exactly as you would wish it to, and sometimes seems to rebel against your will.

You have a +1 modifier in Dark Body.

This fault cannot be chosen along with the asset "Touch of Summer".

Arts

ASSETS

♣ **Complete artist (3)**

You like to express yourself globally and so you do not privilege one art form over another.

All Courty artistic skills are considered to be similar for you. You benefit from a +1 modifier to all rolls involving arts (but not for the Magical Arts).

♣ **Keen (3)**

You are particularly inspired, one of the Free Art visionaries. You often think of combinations that allow you to conceive unusual Opuses. Because of this, your works are noticed by the older Concordists, who see you as a worthy successor.

You benefit from a +1 modifier to the secondary attribute ART.

♣ **Masterpiece (5)**

You own a unique piece of Elder Art, a true masterpiece that is an inspiration to your own artistic talents. Speak with your Eminence Grise to obtain more information on this rare antique and the Opus it contains. This Masterpiece may hold up to 50 Threshold points of latent magical opuses. It will be possible to learn them during the game.

♣ **Sensitive to the Sirens' song (1)**

You feel the beauty and melancholy of the Sirens' song. As such, you are less prone than most mortals to become the Masque's victim. You succeed on all Perfidy rolls when you hear the sirens' song, and you have a +2 modifier to resist the Masque's corruption in other circumstances.

♣ **Talented (2)**

You have a special gift for one of the Courty artistic skills. Note that this asset only indirectly influences a Concordist's Magical Art skills.

♣ **Work of art (1)**

You possess an Opus that gives you an insight into the Free Arts. It holds a latent magical Art effect that it is possible to learn with a Threshold no higher than 15 (see

TALENTED

| Art | Talent |
|-----------|------------------------------|
| Sculpture | Sense of shapes and volumes |
| Poetry | Sense of the right word |
| Music | Natural musician |
| Painting | Sense of contrast and colors |

You get a +1 bonus in the appropriate skill

the rules on learning Opuses in Book Three, Chapter 2). This Opus can be linked to any one Art form.

It is possible to take this advantage twice.

FAULTS

♣ Hostile master (1)

Your mentor dislikes you or resents you for something. He makes your life difficult as much as he can. He won't hesitate to make you look like a poor artist. Whether he is justified or not in doing so is something you must decide with your Eminence Grise.

♣ Insensitive (1)

You experience great difficulties with one of the Courty artistic skills. You get a -1 modifier in the appropriate skill.

INSENSITIVE

| Art | Problem |
|-----------|--------------------------|
| Sculpture | Bad sense of proportions |
| Poetry | Poor rhymesier |
| Music | No ear for music |
| Painting | Bad taste |

♣ Lack of inspiration (2)

You are too unimaginative to take advantage of sudden inspirations. You are too methodical a Concordist and find it very difficult to perform Free Arts. Every attempt to achieve a Free Art Opus will have a final Threshold modifier of +10 (after you have applied others modifiers and multipliers).

♣ Neglectful master (3)

Your master never took the trouble to teach you all your art's technicalities. He was not your enemy, but he never really saw you as his disciple. Maybe you were imposed on him? Maybe he resented you for something? It is also possible that he was well disposed towards you but such a poor pedagogue he was unable to transmit his knowledge correctly. Your point costs to progress in this art are 30% higher than normal.

♣ Ravaged (2)

The beauty of the Muses' creations eludes you. No matter how you try, you cannot grasp the beauty of the nature around you. You suffer from a -1 modifier to your ART.

♣ Tainted Opus (3)

You possess a tainted Opus. Ask your Eminence Grise to explain the consequences of this Opus on your learning. However, be aware that tainted Opuses are dominated by the Masque.

Ascendancy

Most assets and faults from this category are only accessible to members of the Cipher-sorcerer. No particular trait rating is necessary to become a member, but you must choose one of its three orders; Jornist, Eclis-pist or Obscurantist and pledge allegiance to it. The academy of magic where you have been taught the subtleties of Dancers and their sparks is run by worthy members of the chosen order.

ASSETS

♣ Cipher prestige (2)

Your dazzling studies in the schools of Cipher-sorcery are famous. You quickly demonstrated a great ability to handle Dancers, and soon started experimenting to create spells of your own by making your Dancer try out new and daring figures. Design with your Eminence Grise a spell your character has created (basing it on those already existing). This spell is known by your Dancer and added to the list of available spells.

This asset allows you to accede to the Office of Dean (see Office & Society assets) by paying three points instead of the normal four, provided you meet the Office's requirements.

♣ Dancer empathy (5)

Much to the displeasure of your peers in the Cipher-sorcerer, Dancers seem to enjoy your company. They almost always let you approach and use them. Though you could use this talent for criminal purposes, its main advantages are to allow you to train your Dancers and use them for intuitive magic more efficiently (treat all Dancers as having an Empathy 2 point higher than the actual rating), and also to begin the game with two Dancers instead of one.

♣ Elusive dancer (3)

Your Dancer is very inconspicuous. His dances are so quick and precise they can be noticed only by making a PER roll. At other times, he stays hidden in the folds of your clothes and remains unseen. PER + Alertness rolls are made against a DIF 25 instead of the normal DIF 15 to notice the Dancer. (see the rule on Dancers visibility in the Magic chapter).

This asset only applies to one Dancer. If you have multiple Dancers and wish others to be elusive, you can take this asset more than once.

Gifted (5)

Magic has always fascinated and attracted you. As soon as you had the chance, you entered a school of Cipher-sorcery or found a lone mage to teach you. You knew boundless joy when you were told that you were an exceptionally apt pupil. You have an almost infallible instinct for handling Dancers. You feel what they need to perform each new spell's necessary sara-band.

You benefit from a +1 modifier to your secondary attribute ASC. This modifier is permanent, so if your attribute rating changes, don't forget to factor it into the new result.

Gifted dancer (varies)

Your Dancer is gifted with one or more exceptional attributes that give you an advantage in Ascendancy.

If you create your Dancer by allocating points, you will have at your disposal a number of additional points as given in last column of the table below.

On the other hand, if you randomly create your Dancer, one of your rolls is considered to have automatically obtained the result given in the table's second column. This advantage can be bought more than once, either to give one Dancer many exceptional attributes, or to create more than one gifted Dancer.

| GIFTED DANCER | | |
|---------------|-------------|-------------------|
| Cost | Dice result | Additional points |
| 1 | 24 | +1 |
| 3 | 28 | +2 |
| 5 | 30 | +3 |

Good schooling (varies)

You have studied magic in an academy where a choreographer taught. You and the other students at that time profited from that experience.

You get additional Threshold points to buy spells during character creation.

| GOOD SCHOOLING | |
|----------------|-----------------------------|
| Cost | Additional threshold points |
| 1 | 15 |
| 3 | 30 |
| 5 | 50 |

Multiple dancers (varies)

You have learned magic in an area where Dancers proliferate. When you left your academy, the members of your order provided you with more than one Dancer, or perhaps you obtained them yourself.

This asset cannot be taken with "Dancer empathy" during your Inspired's creation.

MULTIPLE DANCERS

| Cost | Number of Dancers |
|------|-------------------|
| 3 | +1 |
| 7 | +2 |

FAULTS

Allergic (4)

The height of absurdity for a mage is to be "allergic" to the Dancers' sparks. These sparks modify the air around Dancers in ways that irritate your skin and eyes. In the presence of magic, your skin turns red and your eyes water. Unfortunately, these sparks never disappear completely and this affects your ability to use Ascendancy.

You suffer from a -1 modifier to your secondary attribute ASC. This modifier is permanent, so if your attribute rating changes, don't forget to factor it in to the new result.

Cat lover (1)

You have an unyielding affection for cats, which unfortunately are predators of the Dancers. You have a hard time making them live together, as cats always want to "play" with Dancers.

The proximity of cats is very stressful for Dancers. It increases all spell Thresholds by 5 points and prevents Dancers from performing the most intricate and hard to remember dances (all spells with a basic Threshold of 20 or more are impossible to cast in a cat's presence).

Cipher opprobrium (1)

The Mages from your school remember you as a troublesome pupil. Maybe you were always playing pranks on other students' Dancers, or you behaved disloyally. Though the Cipher-sorcerer accepted you, the three allegiances have been warned about you. Nowadays your reputation precedes you and Mages tend to dislike you.

Dancer animosity (4)

Without anyone being able to explain why, Dancers always seem to hate you. When you are around, they hide and refuse to perform their dances. You cannot use a Dancer you haven't trained yourself and accustomed to your presence. Training a Dancer, or using one for intuitive magic, is always more difficult for you than for anybody else.

Treat all Dancers as having an Empathy 2 point lower than the actual rating.

Disciple (3)

Contrary to the rules of the Cipher-sorcerer order, you did not learn magic in one of its school but from a rogue sorcerer. Should it become known, the Censors would hunt down your mentor and his students, and kill them. Censors may already be on your trail!



♣ **Headstrong (2)**

You are a very exacting individual, and often drive your Dancers to exhaustion. This fault reduces all of your Dancers' Stamina by 1 point.

♣ **High strung (4)**

You are dangerously sensitive to magic. Magical Dances and the Dancers' sparkles can drive you mad. Each time you witness a Dance, you must make a WIL + Resonance roll (WIL only if you are not a mage) against a DIF 15. If you fail, you must flee the Dancer's vicinity as fast as possible, or lose control of your actions for the duration of the Dance. In that case, the Eminence Grise decides what you do during this spell of madness.

INEPT DANCER

| Cost | Deformity | Modifier |
|------|--------------------|---------------------|
| 1 | heavy limbs | -1 to the ASC bonus |
| 1 | traumatized Dancer | -2 to Empathy |
| 3 | missing limb | -3 to the ASC bonus |
| 4 | head wound | -5 to Memory |

♣ **Inept dancer (varies)**

Your Dancer is misshapen or scarred to the point where it constitutes a serious flaw, or he has another problem that affects his capacities. Spells are harder to cast with this Dancer as he can no longer dance so gracefully. After creating your dancer, consult the table and adapt his attributes accordingly.

Of course, this fault only applies to the Dancer you use on a daily basis. If you want to affect more than one of your Dancer's attributes, or if you have more than one Dancer and you want another to be inept, you can take this fault more than once.

♣ **Lone wolf (3)**

Dancers get on your nerves. You cannot stand to have many of them around you, for it usually makes you fly into a bout of wild rage.

This fault prevents you from keeping more than one Dancer for any length of time. Also, you will never be able to practice Choreography.

♣ **Lost dancer (4)**

Your Dancer is gone. He may have died or been captured... Whatever the reason, you begin the game with no Dancers. (If somehow you should have had more than one Dancer, taking this fault still means that you have none left.)

♣ **Side effects (1)**

Though your Dancer is perfectly normal, your magic has side effects you must decide upon

with your Eminence Grise. The most experienced mages may see you as an interesting subject for experiments.

Examples: there is a recurring sound whenever you cast a spell, or the temperature drops a few degrees wherever your magic takes effect, etc.

♣ **Stolen gem (2)**

Your master is a Gems trafficker, and your gem belonged to another Mage before. Though it has no untoward effect on your magic, it is a crime punishable by the Cipher-sorcerer's Censors. If other mages learned about it, they would no longer consider you one of them.

Seasons

ASSETS

♣ **Flamboyant attribute (6)**

Your lineage carries a touch of Flamboyance. The blood of an ancient Inspired who became a Luminary flows in your veins. The transformation of the Flame into a Luminary released strong magical energies linked to the Muses.

This magical emanation permanently transformed the blood of your ancestor and his descent. Ever since, there

FLAMBOYANT ATTRIBUTE

| Attribute | Flamboyant heritage |
|---------------------|--|
| Strength | Your DB is increased by one step (read the DB table one line below the line of your STR + SIZ result). |
| Stamina | Longevity: your life expectancy is increased by 30%. |
| Perception | You have developed an animal's special sense: night vision, sonar, etc. |
| Agility | You have an exceptional sense of balance: you cannot fail any roll to keep your balance. |
| Charisma | You are a natural leader. Groups listen to you. This makes you an ideal commander or prophet. You automatically become the natural leader of any group you belong to (within reasonable limits: you cannot rule the entire Cipher-sorcerer, for instance). |
| Creativity | Your creations have an impact on your contemporaries. They in turn become sources of inspiration. All Concordists recognize you as one of the best. |
| Will | You never give up. Your courage allowed you to perform legendary actions and resist many temptations. You always get the minimum possible when rolling for Perfidy points inflicted by creatures of the Masque. |
| Intelligence | You analyze problems at lightning speed. The plans you make are flawless. The EG should tell you when one of your projects involves a risk you hadn't thought about. |

has been a Flamboyant attribute in your family. This hereditary asset is transmitted to one person (and one only) each generation: the first-born son, the first daughter, an albino child, etc.

You benefit from a +2 modifier to any one attribute. The attribute's maximum is also increased by two points, and you get an additional benefit depending on the chosen attribute (see table).

♣ Flame giver (6)

You are one of the few seasonlings who are entrusted with dead people's Flames to pass on to future Inspired. You are welcomed by all the Decans as a wise and saintly being.

You begin the game with a +1 modifier to the Soul, Body, or Spirit aspect. Of course, this asset can only be chosen by a seasonling character.

FAULTS

♣ Back from the Abyss (1)

Some years ago you were captured by demons and taken to their underground universe. Minotaurs fleeing the Abyss have found you and saved you from the dark depths.

This fault cannot be chosen by a minotaur character as all minotaurs played in AGONE are renegades escaped from the Abyss.

You begin the game with 10 Darkening points, and the ensuing Gifts and Sorrows.

♣ Decan hatred (2)

One of the Ladies of the Seasons' children fervently hates you. Whether you have broken one of their laws or traditions, or even if they wrongly accused you of a crime against the Seasons and their servants, they are determined to hunt you down. Making amends or proving your innocence will be no easy task, and even if you manage to do it, these seasonlings will still be wary of you.

This fault has no impact on your character's capacities. Nonetheless, in AGONE seasonlings are full-fledged actors of the world and such a fault can easily become a terrible burden.

♣ Fallen blood (3)

Through an ancestral event long since forgotten, blood from a pixie, a morgana, or a draaken flows in your veins. Seasonlings fear you, for they think you are here to spy on them and bring them down. You begin the game with 5 points of Darkening and Perfidy, and the ensuing Gifts and Sorrows.

♣ Touch of the Fall (3)

The Fallen have gathered around your cradle, or they have taken an interest in you because you can be of use in their dark purposes in your area. They are poised in the shadows, waiting for the right moment to use you.

You begin the game with 10 points in Perfidy, and the ensuing Gifts and Sorrows.

Flame

ASSETS

♣ Blazing flame (3)

The Muses' presence in your Flame is uncommonly strong, and this warrants extraordinary luck.

Each time you get a "0" on an open roll, you roll two dice again instead of one, and keep only the higher of the two results.

♣ Past lives (varies)

Your Flame holds strong memories of the lives of some of its previous hosts, lives whose knowledge and skills you can access for help. You must create your Flame's previous owners' personalities with your Eminence Grise. Finding the memories of these lives can be the starting points for many scenarios. You can find many surprises expecting you, and the EG is invited to play the personalities of these "forebears" who can deny access to their memories or bargain for it. You can only hope they were quiet people and not wild criminals.

By making a WIL roll against a DIF 20, you can access these ancestors' memories. In game terms, they each have 40 creation points to buy skills. Those skills can only be used by succeeding on the WIL roll.

| PAST LIVES | |
|------------|----------------------|
| Cost | Number of past lives |
| 2 | 1 |
| 4 | 3 |
| 6 | 5 |

♣ Sanctuary (10)

When you were young, you found the entrance to a Luminary's Sanctuary. Feeling your Flame, he let you enter and began to teach you to use it. Alas, the subsequent disappearance of the Sanctuary didn't allow you to progress very far. This asset allows you to take, at no additional cost and with double effects, either "Instinct for Perfection", "Profitable mistakes", or "Touch of Summer".

FAULTS

♣ Haunted (varies)

You are sometimes assailed by voices and dreams that seem to come out of the distant past. The truth is that one of your Flame's previous hosts was seduced by the Masque and profoundly corrupted. This fault's cost can vary from 1 to 5 points.

Every time you are exposed to the Masque, the Eminence Grise secretly rolls 1D10. Negative effects happen whenever the roll comes up equal to or lower than the cost chosen for the fault. For example, if you

take "Haunted" for 5 points, there is an untoward effect every time the EG rolls a 5 or less. If you roll a 3, apply the effect listed on line 3 of the table. This fault can easily be associated with "Past Lives" (see above).

| HAUNTED | |
|----------------|---|
| Roll | Effect |
| 1 | Perfidy points earned are automatically equal to the maximum possible result of the roll. |
| 2 | You get a new Perfidy Sorrow. |
| 3 | The Perfidy points you earn are doubled. |
| 4 | You get 1 point in a Dark Aspect. |
| 5 | You get 2 points in a Dark Aspect. |

♣ **Tempted (4)**

You find the Masque seductive. Like all his servants, you feel him trying to sooth you. You cannot fool him, as his minions intuitively know you struggle against them and their master.

You begin the game with a +1 modifier to Dark Body, Dark Spirit, or Dark Soul. This is cumulative with any other Dark Aspect points obtained through another fault.

♣ **Weak flame (2)**

A Muse's presence in your Flame is extremely weak. This does not hinder your artistic sensitivity, but makes you suffer from chronic bad luck.

Each time your get a 1 on an open roll, you roll two dice again instead of one, and keep only the higher of the two results.

ASSETS AND FAULTS IN INCREASING COST ORDER

ASSETS

Offices and society Assets

- Famous (1)
- Known family (1)
- Nobility (2)
- Caravaneer (2): + 1000 gold pieces in merchandise, + 200 gold pieces for each additional point.
- Secret Hideout (2)
- Bourgeois (2)
- Dean (4)
- Master-at-Arms (4)
- Spy network (4)
- Chamberlain (4)
- Lord (5)
- Censor (5)
- Remain of Flamboyance (varies)
- Blackmail (varies)
- Artful thrust (varies)

Soul Assets

- Resourceful (1): +1 to all rolls involving one of the following: Sculpture, Painting, Music, Poetry, Crafts
- Attractive (1): +1 to all social rolls
- Sensitive (5): +1 to CRE
- Presence (3): +1 to CHA
- Instinct for Perfection (5): +1 to Soul

Spirit Assets

- Light sleeper (1)
- Clear Thinker (2): +1 to all rolls requiring a focused mind
- Natural linguist (2): 2 additional languages
- Iron will (2): +1 to all WIL resistance rolls
- Self-assured (3): +1 to WIL
- Common sense (3): +1 to INT

- Eidetic memory (3)
- Beneficial mistakes (5): +1 to Spirit

Body Assets

- Saddle sleeper (1)
- Very small (1): -1 to SIZ
- Immunity (1 or 2): +2 or +4 to resist a given toxin
- Spartan (2): duration x2 before STA rolls to resist thirst or hunger are required
- Second wind (2): duration x2 before STA rolls to resist exertion or suffocation are required
- Lightning reflexes (2): +3 to Initiative
- Force of nature (5): +1 to STA
- Deftness (3): +1 to AGI
- Ambidextrous (5): use 2 objects simultaneously (-5 to both rolls)
- Little need for sleep (5)
- Touch of Summer (5): +1 to Body
- Young (5): +1 to STA and STR
- Huge (5): +1 to SIZ and STR
- Acute sense(s) (varies): +1 to all PER rolls with the involved sense(s)

Arts Assets

- Work of art (1)
- Sensitive to the sirens' song (1): +2 or automatic success on Perfidy rolls
- Talented (2): +1 to appropriate skill
- Keen (3): +1 to ART
- Complete artist (3): +1 to all Courtly arts rolls
- Masterpiece (5)

Ascendancy Assets

- Cypher prestige (2)
- Elusive dancer (3): PER + Alertness against DIF 25 instead of 15 to notice Dancer

ASSETS AND FAULTS IN INCREASING COST ORDER

Gifted (5): +1 to EMP
 Dancer empathy (5): +2 to all Dancers' Empathy and 1 additional Dancers
 Multiple dancers (varies)
 Gifted dancer (varies)
 Good schooling (varies): 15/30/50 additional Threshold points during character creation

Seasons Assets

Flame giver (6): +1 to choice of Body, Spirit, or Soul
 Flamboyant attribute (6): +2 (and special advantage) to chosen primary attribute

Flame Assets

Blazing flame (3): if 0 on an open roll, throw two dice and keep highest
 Sanctuary (10)
 Past lives (varies): WIL roll against DIF 20: access to a past life memory and skills (40 creation points)

FAULTS

Offices and society Faults

Ill repute (1)
 Stranger (1)
 Indebted (1)
 Lost love (1)
 Shamed family (2)
 Vagrant (2)
 Landless (2)
 Dependent (2)
 Orphan (2): -10 creation points for skills
 Dark secret (2)
 Savage (3): no Courty or Occult skills available during character creation
 Presumed dead (varies)

Soul Faults

Blasé (2): -1 to CRE
 Disfigured (2)
 Unpleasant (2): -1 to CHA
 Forgotten by the Muses (4): +1 to Dark Soul
 Mishapen (5): -1 to CHA, -1 to one Body attribute

Spirit Faults

Delusions (1)
 Obsession (1)
 Paranoid (1)
 Presumptuous (1)
 Soft-hearted (2)
 Flaring temper (2)
 Absent-minded (2): -1 to all rolls requiring focus
 Benighted (3): -1 to INT
 Simpleton (4): +1 to Dark Spirit
 Soft spot (varies)
 Phobia (varies)

Body Faults

Heavy sleeper (1)
 Puny (2): -1 to STR
 Frail (2): -1 to STA
 Sleepyhead (2): if deprived of enough sleep, -1 to all Body attributes and all rolls based on Body
 Lame (2): -2 to Initiative, MV / 2
 Arthritis (2): -1 to AGI
 Missing a limb (3): MV / 3 or only one hand
 Old Timer (4): -1 to STA and STR, -2 to costs for Offices
 Leper (4): +5 to DIF for First Aid skill rolls on character
 Touch of the Darken (4): +1 to Dark Body
 Obesity (5): -1 to choice of 2 Body attributes
 Disabled sense(s) (varies): -1 to all PER rolls with the involved sense(s)

Arts Faults

Insensitive (1): -1 to appropriate skill
 Hostile master (1)
 Ravaged (2): -1 to ART
 Lack of inspiration (2): Threshold +10 for all Free Art attempts
 Tainted opus (3)
 Neglectful master (3): +1/3 to cost to improve Art

Ascendancy Faults

Cat lover (1): In presence of cat(s), +5 to all Spell Thresholds and Spells with basic Threshold 20+ are impossible
 Cipher opprobrium (1)
 Side effects (1)
 Stolen gem (2)
 Headstrong (2): -1 to all Dancers' Stamina
 Lone wolf (3)
 Disciple (3)
 Dancer animosity (4): -2 to all Dancers' Empathy
 Highly strung (4): WIL + Resonance roll against DIF 15 in presence of magic
 Lost dancer (4)
 Allergic (4): -1 to ASC
 Inept dancer (varies)

Seasons Faults

Back from the Abyss (1): +10 Darkness points
 Decan hatred (2)
 Fallen blood (3): +5 Darkness points and +5 Perfidy points
 Touch of the Fall (3): +10 Perfidy points

Flame Faults

Weak Flame (2): if 1 on an open roll, throw two dice and keep highest
 Tempted (4): +1 to Dark Body or Dark Spirit or Dark Soul
 Haunted (varies)



Skills groups

4 ~ Skills

The skills are divided into 5 groups: Trials, Rogue, Knowledge, Courty and Occult.

The Trials group is linked to Summer. It brings together all physical and sporting skills. It is associated with careers such as fighters or athletes.

The Rogue group is linked to Fall. It brings together all stealth and wangling skills. It is associated with careers such as thieves or spies.

The Knowledge group is linked to Winter. It brings together all understanding and scientific skills. It is associated with careers such as scholars and sages.

The Courty group is linked to Spring. It brings together all communication and culture skills. It is associated with careers such as wanderers or merchants.

The Occult group brings together all magic and esoteric skills.

Each character can have one (and only one) specialty related to each skill he or she has at level 5 or greater. This grants him a +1 bonus to that skill in the situation defined by the specialty.

Example: Melaine has an 8 in Fast talk with the "protest one's innocence" specialty. If she tries to convince a guard to let her into Essinburgh manor, she will use her Fast talk score of 8 for the die roll. On the other hand, if she has been caught wandering around the manor by a patrol and she tries to convince them that they have no reason to arrest her, she will be able to use her specialty; therefore her Fast talk score will be 9.

For each given skill in the list, there are a couple of examples of use, related attributes, DIFs for a typical roll (in parentheses), as well as several examples of specialties. The EG is of course free to invent other associations or specialties (using MEL instead of STR or AGI for example). The listed DIFs may be modified depending on the situation.

**: Skills followed by an asterisk require players to specify a branch of application. "Weapon" for example requires the specification of the type of weapon such as "sword" or "mace". To master several branches of the same skill, you must purchase it as many times as you want different branches.*

Generic skills list

⚔ Acrobatics

Group: Rogue

This skill allows the character to perform all kinds of acrobatic moves: somersaults, hand walking, tightrope

walking, etc. For certain moves, Athletics is used as a restrictive.

- **CRE + Acrobatics:** invent a new series of acrobatic moves (free DIF)

- **AGI + Acrobatics:** break a fall (DIF depends on height)
Specialties: jumps, tightrope walking, contortions

♣ Alertness

Group: Trials

The ability to always keep one eye open, and to not be surprised.

- **PER + Alertness:** perceive an intrusion (roll against AGI + Stealth)

♣ Alphabet*

Group: Knowledge

This skill enables one to read and write a language.

- **INT + Alphabet:** understand a text (DIF 10 to 25 depending on the nature of the text)

- **CRE + Alphabet:** perform calligraphy (DIF 15 to 25 depending on the text and the equipment)

- **AGI + Alphabet:** falsify writing from an original copy (DIF 19)

Branches: Moden-Hen', Armgardic, Septentrian.

Specialties: calligraphy, falsification, one type of text

♣ Astronomy

Group: Knowledge

It is the understanding of astral mechanics.

- **PER + Astronomy:** taking one's bearings from the stars (DIF 12 to find north with a clear sky)

- **INT + Astronomy:** identify a constellation by its name (DIF 10 to 15 depending on the constellation)

Specialties: orientation, stellar movement prevision

♣ Athletics

Group: Trials

This skill brings together all sporting activities such as jogging, running, pole jump, long jump, etc.

- **STA + Athletics:** endurance test (opposed rolls)

- **AGI + Athletics:** long jump.

Specialties: sprint, endurance, pole jump

♣ Beast lore

Group: Knowledge

It is the knowledge of animals, their behavior, and their geographical origin.

- **INT + Beast lore:** know an animal's food habits and its behavior (DIF depends on the rarity of the animal)

- **PER + Beast lore:** identify an animal (DIF depends on the rarity of the animal)

Specialties: a type of animal (birds, reptiles, insects, etc.), the fauna of a specific region

♣ Climb

Group: Trials

This skill enables one to climb all kinds of surfaces: trees, rocks, walls.

- **AGI + Climb:** climb up a tree (DIF 10 to 18)

- **STR + Climb:** climb a cliff with a rope (DIF 15)

- **STA + Climb:** hang on to a handhold for 5 minutes (DIF 17)

Specialties: walls, cliffs, trees

♣ Conceal

Group: Rogue

This skill enables a character to hide objects or hide oneself by using elements of one's surroundings.

- **INT + Conceal:** find a cache for an object in a room (free DIF against PER + Search); hiding oneself (free DIF against PER + Alertness), set up an ambush (roll against PER + Alertness)

- **AGI + Conceal:** quickly hide an object on oneself (free DIF against PER + Alertness)

Specialties: a type of object (weapons, jewelry, etc.), outdoor concealment, hiding oneself

♣ Crafts*

Group: Courty

This group of skills brings together all crafts, as well as the knowledge of the greatest

craftsmen and of the mythic creations. Cooking, masonry, and ironwork are only some of the many crafts available.

- **AGI + Crafts:** create an object (free DIF)

- **PER + Crafts:** evaluate the quality of an object (DIF 15)

- **INT + Crafts:** recognize a famous creation (DIF depends on the object)

Branches: architecture, carpentry, forge, instrument maker

Specialties: one type of creation, one type of instrument

♣ Cult*

Group: Knowledge

This group of skills encompasses the knowledge of the religious beliefs, rites and sacred texts of a given cult.

- **INT + Cult:** remember a specific detail about their rituals (DIF 22)

- **CHA + Cult:** recite a prayer recognizable by an adept (DIF 11)

Branches: depend on the region or the religion (Liturgic, Morkh, etc.)

Specialties: theology, ceremonies, important members of the cult

♣ Diplomacy

Group: Courty

Diplomacy is the understanding of political struggles, and of treaties and agreements. It also represents the extent of a character's connections. In this case, Intrigue can be used as a restrictive.

- **CHA + Diplomacy:** bring an idealist to reason (roll against WIL + Fast talk), use a connection (DIF depends on connection)



- **INT + Diplomacy:** discover the true reason for a conflict (DIF 19)

Specialties: a type of relationship (family, religion, politics, etc.), international problems

♣ **Disguise**

Group: Rogue

Disguise is the art of changing one's appearance, way of walking and voice in order to pretend to be another person, or to conceal one's true identity.

- **INT + Disguise:** not being recognized at first sight (DIF 18)

- **PER + Disguise:** look like a specific person (DIF 20 to 28 depending on the equipment and the resemblance)

- **CRE + Disguise:** make a suit unrecognizable (a uniform for example) without ruining it (DIF 21)

Specialties: make-up, voice modification, costumes

♣ **Dodge**

Group: Trials

Dodge is the ability to dodge hits and get away from danger.

- **AGI + Dodge:** dodge a melee attack.

- **PER + Dodge:** quickly take cover (DIF 13 in a forest, DIF 23 in a plain), dodge a ranged attack (DIF depends on distance and type of attack)

Specialties: against a type of weapon (swords, throwing weapons, etc.)

♣ **Eloquence**

Group: Courtly

Eloquence is the art of speech, from rhetoric to scansion. This skill is required for orations.

- **INT + Eloquence:** prepare a well-organized speech (DIF 18, grants a bonus when performing the speech)

- **CHA + Eloquence:** perform a convincing speech (free DIF)

Specialties: stir a collective emotion (hate, calm, order, fear, etc.), address one type of audience (soldiers, adepts, nobility, etc.)

♣ Etiquette*

Group: Courtly

This skill provides the ability to adapt oneself to a social class, to know its traditions, rites and rules of politeness. Etiquette can be as useful in a palace as on the docks.

- INT + Etiquette: know their title (baron, censor, archbishop, etc.) when talking to an important person (DIF 15)

- CHA + Etiquette: adapt vocabulary and attitude (DIF 18), establish a new relationship (DIF depends on the person, Intrigue can be used as a restrictive)

Branches: urban, rural, nobility, rogue, merchant, mercenary, scholar

Specialties: titles, slang, negotiation

♣ First aid

Group: Trials

This skill provides the character with the ability to heal wounds summarily. It is the mastery of basic medicine.

- AGI + First aid: heal a wound (DIF depends on the wound)

- INT + First aid: determine the severity of a wound (DIF 15), nurse a wounded person (DIF depends on the person and the wound)

Specialties: on battlefields, improvised equipment, long-term healing

♣ Gambling

Group: Rogue

This skill entails the mastery of all sorts of games (dice, cards, etc.) and also of bets and probabilities.

- PER + Gambling: evaluate the level of an opponent (roll against CHA + Gambling)

- INT + Gambling: know the rules of a game (DIF 13 to 18 depending on the game)

- AGI + Gambling: cheating (roll against PER + Gambling)

Specialties: cheating in a type of game (dice, cards, etc.), rules

♣ Geography

Group: Knowledge

This skill is the knowledge of all kingdoms and of Harmundia, of their politics and of international relations. Traditions can be used as a restrictive for local matters.

- INT + Geography: know the name of a town (DIF 11 for a capital, 16 for a city and 25 for a village)

- CRE + Geography: draw a rough map of a well-known region (DIF 21)

- PER + Geography: recognize a specific geographical site (DIF 14 to 24 depending on the site)

Specialties: a kingdom, politics, trade

♣ History & legends

Group: Knowledge

This is the knowledge of past events and myths. For

regional matters, the skill Tradition for a specific region or a kingdom can be used as a restrictive. Cipher-sorcery can be used as a restrictive for matters concerning that order.

- INT + History & legends: remember an important event (DIF depends on event)

Specialties: a kingdom, a theme (war, art, magic, etc.)

♣ Hunt

Group: Rogue

This skill brings together all hunting activities: setting traps, reading trails, detecting prey.

- INT + Hunt: identify an animal by its tracks (DIF 10 to 20 depending on the animal; Beast lore can be used as a restrictive)

- AGI + Hunt: set up a trap (DIF 15 for a snare, DIF 20 for a covered pit)

- PER + Hunt: follow a trail (DIF 13 in snow or sand, DIF 17 in a forest, DIF 22 in a rocky mountain; DIF can be modified depending on the size of the tracks)

- CHA + Hunt: train an animal (DIF depends on the type of animal)

Specialties: trails, traps, a type of animal, a type of landscape

♣ Intrigue

Group: Rogue

This skill is the characters' ability to use a set of connections. The use of Intrigue often implies the use of much money, therefore Trade can be used as a restrictive. This skill can be used to put up a set of connections, to use it or to determine the character's influential power.

- INT + Intrigue: to collect information on a specific person's background (DIF 14 to 21); to hire an agent for a dirty job (DIF 16 to scare a peasant, DIF 26 to murder a wealthy merchant)

- CHA + Intrigue: to convince someone to take a bribe (roll against WIL + Trade)

Specialties: corruption, relations, rumors

♣ Languages*

Group: Knowledge

This is the ability to understand and speak a language.

- PER + Languages: identify an accent (DIF 12 for the kingdom, DIF 15 for the exact region and DIF 18 for the social class)

- CHA + Languages: to introduce oneself (name, title, occupation, etc.) (DIF 11)

- INT + Languages: know traditional civilities (DIF 15, "Traditions" can be used as a restrictive)

Branches: nordik, buccaneer lingo, keshite, ophidian, liturgic, urgamish. See the Language table p. 104.

Specialties: a type of vocabulary (erudite, trade, military, slang, etc.), an accent

♣ Law

Group: Knowledge

This is the knowledge of law, of legislative mechanics

and therefore of the ways to evade them. For local matters, "Traditions" can be used as a restrictive as well as "Intrigue" when looking for a corrupt lawyer.

- **INT + Law:** know the mechanics of a judicial system (DIF 16)

- **CHA + Law:** intimidate someone by using the law (roll against WIL + Law)

Specialties: a type of crime, a kingdom

♣ Legerdemain

Group: Rogue

This is the mastery of prestidigitation and object manipulation.

- **PER + Legerdemain:** identify the secrets of a prestidigitator (roll against AGI + Legerdemain)

- **AGI + Legerdemain:** pick a purse (roll against PER + Alertness)

Specialties: a type of object (cards, coins, etc.), a type of show

♣ Locksmith

Group: Rogue

Locksmith skill allows the mastery of small mechanisms, mainly locks.

- **INT + Locksmith:** build a lock (free DIF)

- **AGI + Locksmith:** pick a lock (DIF depends on lock)

Specialties: basic locks, trapped locks

♣ Medicine

Group: Knowledge

Medicine is the knowledge of anatomy and of the art of curing diseases.

- **PER + Medicine:** identify the cause of death by examining a body (DIF 10 to 20)

- **INT + Medicine:** look after a sick person, diagnose a disease

Specialties: anatomy, autopsy, diagnosis, remedies, local diseases

♣ Music*

Group: Courtly

This skill allows the character to perform music, to read music, to compose, and to know the history of music.

- **PER + Music:** identify the origin of an Opus (DIF 12 to 24)

- **INT + Music:** know the background and the creations of a musician (DIF 14 for a very famous artist, DIF 19 for an important artist, DIF 26 for an unknown artist)

- **CRE + Music:** compose an Opus (free DIF)

Branches: cittern, viol, harp, flute, drum, harpsichord

Specialties: a type of music, a composer, the history of an instrument, composition

♣ Navigation

Group: Knowledge

Navigation is the ability to steer a vessel. It is also the knowledge of the sea, and the ability to read sea maps.

- **INT + Navigation:** use a sextant (DIF 14)

- **CHA + Navigation:** command a crew and get the best out of it (roll against WIL)

- **PER + Navigation:** foresee the trajectory of other vessels (DIF 16)

Specialties: orientation, naval combat, meteorological problems

♣ Painting

Group: Courtly

This skill enables the creation of pictorial art. A character with this skill knows how to obtain colors from pigments, and is schooled in art history.

- **PER + Painting:** identify the origin of a graphic creation (DIF 12 to 24)

- **INT + Painting:** know the background and the creations of an artist (DIF 14 for a very famous artist, DIF 19 for an important artist, and DIF 26 for an unknown artist)

- **CRE + Painting:** create a painting (free DIF)

Specialties: a type of graphic art (frescoes, paintings, etc.), a painter

♣ Plant lore

Group: Knowledge

Plant lore is the knowledge of plants and of their attributes, including their medicinal qualities and the processes for making plant-based cures.

- **INT + Plant lore:** identify a plant (DIF plant rarity)

- **PER + Plant lore:** find useful plants (DIF depends on region)

- **AGI + Plant lore:** make a remedy with plants (free DIF)

Specialties: plant hunting, a type of cure (cataplasms, decoctions, etc.)

♣ Poetry

Group: Courtly

This skill enables poem and prose writing, and provides knowledge of the history of literature. When reading a text, Alphabet is used as a restrictive.

- **PER + Poetry:** identify the origin of a text or poem (DIF 12 to 24)

- **INT + Poetry:** know the background and the texts of a writer (DIF 14 for a very famous writer, DIF 19 for an important writer and DIF 26 for an unknown writer)

- **CRE + Poetry:** create a text or poem (free DIF)

Specialties: a type of creation (text, poem, etc.), a poet or an author, rare books

♣ Poisons

Group: Rogue

This skill represents a character's knowledge of poisons, of the ways of acquiring poisons, and of administering and resisting them. For plant-based poisons, Plant lore can be used as a restrictive.

- **PER + Poisons:** identify a poison (DIF poison rarity)

- **INT + Poisons:** know how to obtain a poison (DIF poison rarity)

Specialties: a type of effect (lethal, paralyzing, etc.), antidotes

♣ Ride

Group: Trials

This skill enables one to ride and control an animal's movements, and also to harness and take care of a mount.

- **CHA + Ride:** jump over an obstacle with a mount (DIF 16 to 25 depending on the obstacle)

- **AGI + Ride:** execute an equestrian acrobatic (free DIF, 20 minimum)

- **INT + Ride:** know the needs (rest, food, water, wounds) of a mount (DIF 17)

- **PER + Ride:** evaluate the quality of a mount (DIF 16 in a normal situation, DIF 22 if the merchant is an adept swindler)

Specialties: a type of mount, combat riding, obstacle jumping

♣ Sculpture

Group: Courtly

This skill enables one to create sculptures, to choose good materials, and to know the greatest sculptors as well as the history of sculpture.

- **PER + Sculpture:** identify the origin of a sculpture (DIF 12 to 24)

- **INT + Sculpture:** know the background and sculptures of an artist (DIF 14 for a very famous artist, DIF 19 for an important artist, and DIF 26 for an unknown artist)

- **CRE + Sculpture:** create a sculpture (free DIF)

Specialties: a type of sculpture, a sculptor, a type of material

♣ Search

Group: Rogue

This skill represents the ability of the character to find hidden objects (on a body, in a room, on a wall, etc.).

- **PER + Search:** find a false bottom in a drawer (DIF 17)

- **CRE + Search:** discover a strange detail in a work of art (DIF 15)

Specialties: a type of search (clothes, furniture, etc.), hidden doors

♣ Seasons*

Group: Knowledge

This skill encompasses the knowledge of all the attributes of the Seasons (seasonlings, magic, symbols, etc.).

- **PER + Season:** identify an effect of the magic of the Seasons (DIF 15)

- **INT + Season:** know a seasonling myth (DIF 18, History & legends can be used as a restrictive)

Branches: Spring, Summer, Fall and Winter,

Specialties: a type of Seasonling, a Lady, Season mythology

♣ Stealth

Group: Rogue

Stealth is the art of concealed movement (it has an association with movement and camouflage that is quite apart from "Conceal", which affects a motionless person).

- **AGI + Stealth:** evade surveillance (roll against PER + Alertness)

Specialties: a type of landscape (urban, forest, etc.), shadowing

♣ Surgery

Group: Knowledge

Surgery is the art of performing operations, of sewing and cauterizing wounds, and stopping hemorrhages. Surgery is more effective than "First aid", but requires more time and equipment.

- **INT + Surgery:** determine the necessary operation (DIF 12)

- **AGI + Surgery:** operate on a wound (DIF depends on wound)

Specialties: amputation, ritual scarification, operating with makeshift equipment

♣ Survival

Group: Trials

Survival is the knowledge of natural environments, and the ability to use its resources for one's vital needs.

- **INT + Survival:** make a fire with no lighting materials (DIF 14 with dry wood, DIF 19 with green wood, DIF 26 under rain)

- **PER + Survival:** find food in one's surroundings (DIF 13 in a forest, DIF 25 in a desert)

Specialties: a type of landscape, finding water, natural dangers

♣ Stewardship

Group: Courtly

Stewardship is the ability to rule and manage a domain in order to organize a profitable structure.

- **INT + Stewardship:** study the accountancy of a domain (DIF 16 to 21 depending on the size of the domain)

- **CHA + Stewardship:** being obeyed by one's administrators without question (roll against WIL + Stewardship)

Specialties: one type of resource, accountancy, work organization

♣ Swim

Group: Trials

This is the ability to move in water.

- **STR + Swim:** speed swimming (opposed rolls)

- **STA + Swim:** endurance swimming (opposed rolls)

- **AGI + Swim:** dive from 10 ft. (DIF 14)

Specialties: diving, apnea

♣ Trade

Group: Courtly

This is the key business skill: buying at the lowest price and selling at the highest, bartering and haggling. It is also the ability to estimate the value of an object.

- INT + Trade: estimate the price of an object (DIF 14 for common goods, DIF 23 for luxury goods)
- CHA + Trade: haggle over an object with someone (roll against WIL + Trade)

Specialties: a type of good, estimation, selling

♣ Traditions*

Group: Courtly

This skill encompasses the knowledge of the culture and customs of a given civilization or kingdom. It also represents the bonds the character has with that culture and its people.

- INT + Traditions: recognize a typical aspect (cooking, songs, clothes, etc.) (DIF 14)
- Branches: Princely Communes, Lyphan, Wild Reaches, Bokkor, Empire of Keshe, Widowlands, Mercenary Republic, Urganand, Janrenia, Liturgical Province.
- Specialties: hospitality rules, gastronomy

♣ Weapons*

Group: Trials

This skill allows a character to wield a weapon in combat, (attack as well as defense).

- MEL + Weapon: hit or parry (see combat rules)
- INT + Weapon: know the origin of a weapon (DIF 10 for a common weapon, 20 for a culturally specific weapon), know of a master of arms able to teach an artful thrust (DIF depends on the thrust, see combat rules)
- Branches: sword, mace, axe, rapier, two-handed sword, Ogre mallet (see weapon list p. 171)

Specialties: one's own weapon, improvised weapons, maneuvers

Occult skills

♣ Cipher lore

Cipher lore is the knowledge of the Cipher-sorcerer and its organization. This skill evaluates the character's set of connections within the Cipher-sorcerer. It also allows the character to read and write Cryptic (a dead language used by Mages and some scholars). It is as useful for a character that is part of the organization as one that is not.

- CHA + Cipher-sorcerer: set up a plot within the order (DIF 20 to 30), make a new contact (DIF depends of the contact). Intrigue can be used as a restrictive.

- INT + Cipher-sorcerer: recognize a mage's duty from his insignias (DIF 15)

- PER + Cipher-sorcerer: exhumation of a text of law from a library (DIF 17)

Specialties: Cipher history, Ciphred laws, set of connections, Cryptic

♣ Concord

This skill evaluates the understanding of the magical mechanisms of Harmundia, its occult geography, its supernatural analogies, its cosmology.

- PER + Concord: identify a supernatural phenomenon (DIF 20)
- INT + Concord: remember a mythic event (DIF depends on the event, "History & legends" can be used as a restrictive)

- CHA + Concord: approach a Wonder or a Prodigy (DIF depends on the creature)

Specialties: occult architecture, a Muse in particular, a Wonder, a Prodigy

♣ Dancer lore

Dancer lore is the knowledge of Dancers, of their habits and tastes. This skill does not enable the use of Ascendancy, but it is required for all those who hunt, buy and own Dancers.

- PER + Dancer lore: identify a deformity or strange behavior (DIF 20)
- CHA + Dancer lore: earn the acceptance of a Dancer (DIF 20, DIF 25 if it is not branded)
- INT + Dancer lore: know the habits of Dancers (DIF 15)

Specialties: behavior, deformities

♣ Demonology

Demonology is the knowledge of the Darken and its servants, the Demons (see The Darken in Book Four).

Specialties: a type of Demon, contracts, demonic hierarchy

♣ Magical Arts*

Branches: Tune, Vista, Scansion and Shape

Specialties: one specific Opus, emergency Opus execution

♣ Resonance*

This skill represents the ability to use a Dancer to perform Ascendant magic.

Branches: Jormist Resonance, Eclipsist Resonance, Obscurantist Resonance.

Specialties: one specific Dancer, non-branded Dancers.



5 ~ Archetypes

ear friend, I have met many hosts of the Flame during my travels, and I have attempted in the following pages to give you an illustrative sample. You will find here an array of ready-to-play characters taking into account all the particularities of Harmundia. They are all Inspired, so do not forget to allow them to use their Flame bonuses when rolling dice. (Those bonuses are already factored into the summarized rolls for combat and in the magical potentials.)

These characters have been adjusted without the possible additional assets and faults. Let your Inspired choose some if he or she wishes, while making sure not to unbalance the characters. The same goes for the choice of Spells and Opuses for practitioners of Ascendancy and Magical arts. You can have your Inspired select the archetype they want and play it as it is, or you can allow them to use as the archetypes as templates to guide their own creation processes.

These archetypes sometimes have a precise origin. There may be a mention of their country, for example. This does not mean you cannot adapt them to your campaign and change this. It is usually only there to give you a colorful and picturesque survey of Harmundia's denizens.

Never forget these are only examples intended to give you a general idea.

Your Inspired should make any changes they feel right to turn these Archetypes into living characters.

Playing a Domain: If one of your players chooses a character with an important position inside a Domain, you will have to determine what Domain they are set in. It could be simpler and more efficient to use Roundrock, which is described at the end of this book, but you are free to invent another and design it in any way you choose.

♣ List of Archetypes

1. Baron
2. Librarian
3. Executioner
4. Caravaneer
5. Censor
6. Shaman
7. Dancer Huntress
8. Chieftain
9. Advisor
10. Privateer
11. Courtesan
12. Wanderer
13. Blacksmith
14. Mercenary
15. Troubadour
16. Thief

“By the sacred blood of my forebears, since I took up my family's rightful title eighteen years ago, I have exercised my office without fail, and never has anyone presumed before to ask me anything of the sort. Explain to me then, bird of ill omen, why it is that I should leave my fair Domain to wander the roads in your company.”

Baron

You are the epitome of the law, and it is your duty to enforce it in your barony. You like to think you rule your subjects with the proverbial iron hand in a velvet glove. It has been long since last you had to take up the sword to enforce one of your edicts, but you still enjoy dispensing justice in the great audience chamber bedecked with your colors. The sight of the black and red doublet covering your broad shoulders is known throughout your lands, and your vassals tremble when you thoughtfully finger your red moustache. After years of practicing your office, you are indisputably an admirable lord. Draped in your great cloak, you roam your lands as often as you can, and hunt with fervor and passion. You enforce feudal law with no particular pleasure, striving to be fair and just.



Archetype

Origin : Urganand
Race : Human

Age : 41 years
Height : 5' 11" (SIZ 0)
Weight : 194 lbs.
MV : 3

ATTRIBUTES

Flame : 01
Dark Flame : 00

Body : 01
Dark Body : 00
Body bonus : +1
AGility : 8
PERception : 7
STAMina : 7
STRength : 9

Spirit : 01
Dark Spirit : 00
Spirit bonus : +1
INTElligence : 6
WILL : 6

Soul : 01
Dark Soul : 00
Soul bonus : +1
CHARisma : 6
CREativity : 5

SECONDARY ATTRIBUTES

MEL : 8
AIM : 7
ASC : -
ART : -
HP : 54
SWT : 18
CWT : 27
DB : +2
Fortune points : 02

Max. Load : 210
Half Load : 105
Daily Load : 52

SKILLS

Courtly : Diplomacy 5,
Eloquence 5, Etiquette : nobility 5,
Traditions : Urganand 8,
Knowledge : Alphabet :
Armgardic 5, Language :
Urganish 6, Language : Keshite 4,
Law 8, Strategy 7,
Occult : Cipher-sorcerer 4,
Rogue : Hunt 6,
Trials : Alertness 6, Athletics 5,
Dodge 8, Ride 7, Weapon : sword 8,
Weapon : shield 6.

OFFICE & SOCIETY ASSET

Lord (5)

COMBAT

Melee attack : Sword : 18 + 1d10
Ranged attack : -
Melee defense
Dodge :
17 - armor penalty + 1d10
Parry :
sword : 18 + 1d10 ; shield : 19 + 1d10
Ranged defense :
(17 - armor penalty) / 2

WEAPON

Sword : +1 / +1 / +1 / +4 / 0
Shield : -3 / +0 / +4 / +1(C) / 0

ARMOR

Plate
Vest only : Penalty -5, Prot. 7
Partial : Penalty -10, Prot. 13
Complete : Penalty -14,
Protection 14

ANIMAL COMPANION

Warhorse
STA 12, STR 12, AGI 3, PER 7
MEL 7, ASC -, ART -
SIZ +1 / MV 6 / DB +10
HP 82 / SWT 27 / CWT 41

Skills : Athletics 7
Weapon : Hooves 6 / Trample 6

Eclipsist Librarian

SCANDER

“ You know, I believe I have never heard of such doings myself. Come, let us check in Jysaniar’s Encyclopedia. It might hold entries that are relevant and will cast a new light on this. ”

Your form, clad in its thick frieze coat, is known throughout the region. You are fully aware that you are a vessel of knowledge. You hope to always push back illiteracy and support learning, and you advocate ceaselessly the virtues of reading. You are the one to turn to when confronted by ignorance. With your iron skullcap on your head, you like to settle for long hours of uninterrupted work in the study where your Dancer so likes to sprawl on an antique lectern. There you have the leisure to unroll the scrolls you bought from passing merchants. The only noise that disturbs the quietness of your contemplation is the soft chiming of your own arm-rings.

Archetype



Origin : Urganmand
Race : Human

Age : 37 years
Height : 5' 4"
(SIZ 0)
Weight : 128 lbs.
MV : 3

ATTRIBUTES
Flame : 01
Dark Flame : 00

Body : 01
Dark Body : 00
Body bonus : -1
AGility : 6
PERception : 5
STamina : 5
STrength : 5

Spirit : 01
Dark Spirit : 00
Spirit bonus : +1

INtelligence : 9
WILL : 9

Soul : 01
Dark Soul : 00
Soul bonus : +1
CHARisma : 7
CREativity : 7

SECONDARY ATTRIBUTES

MEL : 5
AIM : 5
ASC : 9
ART : 7
HP : 46
SWT : 15
CWT : 23
DB : 0
Fortune points : 02

Max. Load : 140
Half Load : 70
Daily Load : 35

SKILLS

Courtly : Etiquette : nobility 5, Painting 4, Poetry 7, Stewardship 5, Traditions : Urganmand 5.

Knowledge : Alphabet : Armgardic 6, Alphabet : Septentrian 5, Geography 5, History 6, Language : Urganish 6, Language : Keshite 5, Language : Liturgic 5, Law 4, Occult : Cipher-sorcerer 6, Concord 6, Dancer lore 6, Resonance : Eclipsist 6, Scansion 7, Trials : Alertness 3, Athletics 3, Dodge 6, Ride 5, Weapon : Dagger 5.

OFFICE & SOCIETY ASSET Librarian (2)

COMBAT

Melee attack : 13 + 1d10
Ranged attack : -
Melee defense
Dodge : 13 + 1d10
Parry : 11 + 1d10
Ranged defense : 6

WEAPON

Dagger : 0 / +2 / 0 / +1 / -1

ARMOR

Heavy clothing
Vest only : Penalty 0, Prot. 1
Partial : Penalty 0, Protection 1
Complete : Penalty 0, Prot. 2

MAGIC

ART : 7, Scansion : 7, Poetry : 7
Magical Art Pot. : 15

ASC : 9, Resonance : 6, Dancer lore : 6
ASC Pot. : 20

DANCER

Memory : 18
ASC bonus : +3
Empathy : 6
Stamina : 4

Minotaur Executioner

“ You keep behaving like that, you low-born scum, and I'll make your head roll like a marble. And then your friends and family will do no more than mourn your sorry soul, unless they want to share your fate. ”

Despite the large metal helmet covering your face, your two horns make you easily recognizable as a minotaur. Clad in intricate plated armor that covers you from head to toe, you enjoy boldly wandering the city streets. You wield the great double-handed axe and the bastard sword with equal skill. Very few would ever dare tackle an adversary such as you. Solid and stubborn, you are not well liked by the population but your reputation lets you carry out your fearsome work in a leisurely manner. Silent and alone, you pace the wide cobblestone streets of your city, never replying to the strained greetings from the leading citizens that cross your path. Sometimes, when jeered at by mischievous youngsters, you drive them away by placing a huge hand on the impressive hilt of your axe, with its ebony-back pommel. You are feared and despised in silence. Misfortune befalls the disrespectful. The odor of blood fills your muzzle.



Archetype

Origin : Janrenia
Race : Minotaur

Age : 39 years
Height : 8' 3" (SIZ +1)
Weight : 379 lbs.
MV : 4

ATTRIBUTES

Flame : 01
Dark Flame : 00

Body : 01
Dark Body : 01
Body bonus : +1
AGility : 8
PERception : 4
STamina : 10
STRength : 13

Spirit : 01
Dark Spirit : 01
Spirit bonus : +1
INtelligence : 5
WILL : 5

Soul : 01
Dark Soul : 00
Soul bonus : +1
CHARisma : 4
CREativity : 4

SECONDARY ATTRIBUTES

MEL : 10
AIM : 6
ASC : -
ART : -
HP : 82
SWT : 27
CWT : 41
DB : +12
Fortune points : 02
Darkening points : 10
Sorrow :

Trickster
Max. Load : 480
Half Load : 240
Daily Load : 120

SKILLS

Courtly : Etiquette : Urban 5, Etiquette : rogue 2, Traditions : Janrenia 5,
Knowledge : Language : Keshite 5, Language : Janrenian 5, Law 6, Season : Summer 5, Strategy 5, Surgery 5,
Occult : Demonology 5,
Rogue : Gambling 3,
Trials : Alertness 8, Athletics 7, Climb 5, Dodge 8, First aid 4, Survival 6, Weapon : Horns 7, Weapon : Double Axe 9.

SEASONLINGS SPECIAL ASSETS

Goring, Minor night-vision

OFFICE & SOCIETY ASSET

Executioner (2)

COMBAT

Melee attack :
Horns : 19 + 1d10 ;
Double axe : 20 + 1d10
Ranged attack : -
Melee defense :
Dodge :
17 - armor penalty - 1d10
Parry :
Horns : 16 + 1d10 ;
Double axe : 17 + 1d10
Ranged defense :
(17 - armor penalty) / 2

WEAPON

Horns : -1 / +1 / 0 / +3 / -
Double Axe : +1 / 0 / -1 / +8 / +1

ARMOR

Chain mail (Size +1)
Vest only : Penalty -4, Prot. 7
Partial : Penalty -8, Prot. 13
Complete : Penalty -12, Prot. 14

Sprite Caravaneer

**FROM
KESHE**

“Ten pieces of gold! I only ask for ten miserable ounces! Is that not a sweet enough price for this elegant mare that will be the pride of your stables? ...Sultan, I am no knave and even less a fool. I know I could never swindle a man such as you. That is why I agree to lower my price to eight pieces. Do we have a deal? Wonderful! My servants will see to the delivery of your purchase. Let us now drink to celebrate our business.”

Your tongue is the only weapon you have mastered to perfection, for your battle is one of commerce and profit, and one you fight with a great competence. You prefer to surround yourself with a few mercenaries to ensure your protection and leave you free to devote yourself entirely to matters of trade. You usually carry a small whip, more as a symbol of your position than a weapon. As your business is going well, you are easy-going and good-natured. You never hesitate to ostentatiously spend your money, sometimes spending outrageous amounts to put up new trading posts—always expanding your network—or to refit your luxurious residence in the heart of the city. You always make sure to carry out your side of bargains, and host lavish parties, which are the talk of the town, to curry favors with the high and mighty. You have a gift for mockery, and earning your displeasure can make your victim a permanent laughingstock. Nevertheless, you are amiable and a pleasant traveling companion.



Archetype

Origin : Empire of Keshe
Race : Sprite

Age : 36 years
Height : 3' 8" (SIZ -1)
Weight : 104 lbs.
MV : 2

ATTRIBUTES

Flame : 01
Dark Flame : 00

Body : 01
Dark Body : 00
Body bonus : +1
AGility : 9
PERception : 9
STamina : 5
STRength : 4

Spirit : 01
Dark Spirit : 00
Spirit bonus : +1
INTElligence : 7
WILL : 7

Soul : 01
Dark Soul : 00
Soul bonus : +1
CHARisma : 7
CREativity : 5

SECONDARY ATTRIBUTES

MEL : 6
AIM : 9
ASC : -
ART : -
HP : 42
SWT : 14
CWT : 21
DB : -1

Fortune points : 02

Max. Load : 108
Half Load : 54
Daily Load : 27

SKILLS

Courtly : Etiquette : Merchants 5, Fast talk 7, Painting 5, Stewardship 7, Trade 9, Traditions : Keshe 5.
Knowledge : Alphabet : Septentrian 5, Astronomy 5, Beast lore 5, Geography 5, Language : Keshite 5, Language : Urgamish 4, Plant lore 5.
Season : Spring 5.
Rogue : Disguise 5, Gambling 3, Intrigue 5, Stealth 5.
Trials : Alertness 5, Dodge 8.
Weapon : Whip 5.

SEASONLINGS SPECIAL ASSETS

The Sap

OFFICE & SOCIETY ASSET

Caravaneer (2)

COMBAT

Melee attack : 12 + 1d10
Ranged attack : -
Melee defense
Dodge : 19 + 1d10
Parry : 12 + 1d10
Ranged defense : 9

WEAPON

Whip : -1 / 0 / 0 / -2 / -2

ARMOR

None

ANIMAL COMPANION

Camel
STA 12, STR 12, AGI 4, PER 7
MEL 7, ASC -, ART -
SIZ +1 / MV +6 / DB +10
HP 82 / SWT 27 / CWT 41
Skills : Athletics 7, Weapon : hooves (trample) 5

Obscurantist Censor

"Miserable, you would have done better to stand by the Cipher-sorcerer's edicts. Attracting its wise masters' wrath was a mistake you will now pay for with your blood. Breathe one last gasp of this sweet air and close your eyes, so you will not see the blow coming."

Cad in a complex outfit of finely reinforced black leather, you know how to remain inconspicuous. With your dancer crucified on your chest, it is indeed best to keep a low profile, and you have become an expert at doing so. Your unique aptitudes attracted the notice of the Cipher-sorcerer, and you were chosen for the position of Censor. Ever since, you have industriously upheld your office, and never known failure. With an untarnished record of successful missions, your renown is rising, and so is the fear aroused by your arrival.

Archetype

Origin : Urgamand
Race : Human

Age : 39 years
Height : 5' 5" (SIZ 6)
Weight : 121 lbs.
MV : 3

ATTRIBUTES

Flame : 01
Dark Flame : 00

Body : 01
Dark Body : 00
Body bonus : +1
AGility : 7

PERception : 7
STamina : 7
STRength : 7

Spirit : 01
Dark Spirit : 00
Spirit bonus : +1
INTelligence : 5
WILL : 10

Soul : 01
Dark Soul : 00
Soul bonus : +1
CHARisma : 5
CREativity : 5

SECONDARY ATTRIBUTES

MEL : 7
AIM : 7
ASC : 10
ART : -
HP : 53
SWT : 17
CWT : 26
DB : +1

Fortune points : 02

Max. Load : 196
Half Load : 98
Daily Load : 49

SKILLS

Courtly : Etiquette : Urban 5,
Traditions : Urgamand 5,
Knowledge : Alphabet :
Armguardic 7, Language :
Urgamish 7, Language :
Keshite 5, Law 5,
Occult : Cipher-sorcerer 7,
Concord 7, Dancer lore 7,
Resonance : Obscurantist 8,
Rogue : Acrobatics 5, Conceal 5,
Disguise 4, Hunt 5, Stealth 5,
Trials : Alertness 6, Athletics 5,
Climb 5, Dodge 5, Weapon : rapier 5.

OFFICE & SOCIETY ASSET
Censor (5)

COMBAT

Melee attack : 15 + 1d10
Ranged attack : -
Melee defense
Dodge : 13 - armor penalty +1d10
Parry : 14 + 1d10
Ranged defense :
(13 - armor penalty) / 2

WEAPON

Rapier : 2 / +2 / +1 / +3 / 0

ARMOR

Studded leather
Vest only : Penalty -1, Prot. 3
Partial : Penalty -2, Prot. 5
Complete : Penalty -4, Prot. 6

MAGIC

ASC : 10, Resonance : 8, Dancer
lore : 7
ASC Pot. : 21

DANCER

Memory : 18
ASC bonus : +3
Empathy : 5
Stamina : 5



Fornist Shaman

Archetype

Origin : Modehan Marches
Race : Human

Age : 39 years
Height : 5' 6" (SIZ 0)
Weight : 130 lbs.
MV : 3

ATTRIBUTES

Flame : 01
Dark Flame : 00

Body : 01
Dark Body : 00
Body bonus : +1
AGility : 7
PERception : 6
STamina : 7
STRength : 4

Spirit : 01
Dark Spirit : 00
Spirit bonus : +1
INTelligence : 10
WILL : 7

Soul : 01
Dark Soul : 00
Soul bonus : +1
CHARisma : 6
CREativity : 6

SECONDARY ATTRIBUTES

MEL : 5
AIM : 6
ASC : 10
ART : -
HP : 51
SWT : 17
CWT : 25
DB : 0

Fortune points : 02

Max. Load : 154
Half Load : 77
Daily Load : 38

SKILLS

Courtly : Etiquette: rural 5,
Traditions : Modehan Marches 5.
Knowledge : Astronomy 5, Beast
lore 6, Language : Modehan 5,
Language : Keshite 3, Medicine
7, Plant lore 6, Season : Spring 5,
Surgery 5.

Occult : Cipher-sorcerer 3,
Concord 7, Dancer lore 7,
Resonance : Jorvist 7.
Rogue : Conceal 4.
Trials : Alertness 5, Athletics 4,
Dodge 6, First aid 7, Swim 5,
Weapon : Mace 5.

OFFICE & SOCIETY ASSET

Famous (1)

COMBAT

Melee attack : 12 + 1d10
Ranged attack : -
Melee defense
Dodge :
14 - armor penalty - 1d10
Parry : 10 + 1d10
Ranged defense :
(14 - armor penalty) / 2

WEAPON

Mace : 0 / +1 / -1 / +4 / 0

ARMOR

Vegetal armor

Vest only :

Penalty -2,

Prot. 4

Partial :

Penalty -4, Prot. 7

Complete :

Penalty -6, Prot. 8

MAGIC

ASC : 10, Resonance : 7, Dancer
lore : 7

ASC Pot. : 22

DANCER

Memory : 18

ASC bonus : +4

Empathy : 5

Stamina : 4

ANIMAL COMPANION

Owl

STA 5, STR 1, AGI 7, PER 6

MEL 4, ASC -, ART -

SIZ -3, MV +1(grounded) / +9

(flying), DB -6

HP 26 / SWT 8 / CWT 13

Skills : Alertness

6, Dodge 6.

You are known by your white gown and you have a solid reputation. You are a kindly druid and as such have established a peaceful communion with the nature around you. Nature returns the favor by giving you knowledge that makes you a peerless fortune-teller and healer, and providing you with bounties, such as the armor of roots that protects your torso, or the ingredients to brew your appeasing and painkilling potions. The Dancer you carry in your abundant hair is the proof that you are not just anybody, and incurring your displeasure can be a fatal mistake.



“The dice are cast, Destiny is loosed.
Rejoice, for I see many good and beautiful
things on your lifepath. Oh my, what is
this? It seems the Enemy has put
his mark upon you. Get out quickly
and never come back, for you are accur-
sed! I can do nothing for you but
maybe hearten you by praying
that your carefree existence ends soon
on a last touch of happiness.”

Eclipsist Spriggan

DANCER HUNTERS

“By Oblivia's round belly, this is a happy occurrence! Thanks to you both, my cute little Dancers, I shall at last be able to take a well-deserved rest. The Small Hunt was generous tonight. Blessed be the Spring and its virtues!”

You prefer to be lightly dressed. Nevertheless, you have taken to wearing a padded leather outfit that clings to your body. One can't be too careful. With your hunting equipment hanging from your belt, you are ready to go out. Beforehand, you had the prudence to conceal one of your favorite knives in the special sheath inside your right boot, the one you can always swiftly draw from. Your face always hidden under your feathered wide-brimmed hat, you enjoy roaming the alleys and narrow streets of your city. You enjoy long nightly walks on the rooftops to carry out your favorite activity: the Small Hunt. You often return empty-handed and go drowning your sorrows in a disreputable tavern. But all in all your life is prosperous enough so you can maintain a pretty and sturdy house, a private haven of peace and quiet where you like to lounge.

Archetype

Origin : Urganmand
Race : Spriggan

Age : 36 years
Height : 4' 3" (SIZ -1)
Weight : 101 lbs.
MV : 2



ATTRIBUTES
Flame : 01
Dark Flame : 00

Body : 01
Dark Body : 00
Body bonus : +1
AGility : 10

PERception : 6
STamina : 3
STrength : 5

Spirit : 01
Dark Spirit : 00
Spirit bonus : +1
INtelligence : 9
WILL : 9

Soul : 01
Dark Soul : 00
Soul bonus : +1
CHARisma : 5
CREativity : 3

SECONDARY ATTRIBUTES

MEL : 7
AIM : 8
ASC : 9
ART : -
HP : 35
SWT : 11
CWT : 17
DB : -1

Fortune points : 02

Max. Load : 96
Half Load : 48
Daily Load : 24

SKILLS

Courtly : Etiquette : rogue 6,
Fast-talk 5, Trade 5, Traditions :
Urganmand 5,
Knowledge : Alphabet :
Armguardic 5, Astronomy 5,
Language : Urganish 5,
Language : Keshite 3,
Season : Spring 5,
Occult : Cipher-sorce-
rer 5, Concord 6, Dancer
lore 6, Resonance :
Eclipsist 6.

Rogue : Acrobatics 6, Conceal 5,
Hunt (Dancers) 7, Legerdemain 5,
Locksmith 5, Stealth 5,
Trials : Alertness 5, Athletics 6,
Climb 5, Dodge 5, Weapon :
Knife 5.

**SEASONLINGS
SPECIAL ASSETS**
Funambulism, the Small Hunt

TOFFICE & SOCIETY ASSET
Secret Hideout (2)

COMBAT
Melee attack : 14 + 1d10
Ranged attack : -
Melee defense
Dodge : 16 - armor modifier +
1d10
Parry : 12 + 1d10
Ranged defense : (16 - armor
modifier) / 2

WEAPON
Knife : -2 / +1 / -1 / +1 / -2

ARMOR
Studded Leather (Size -1)
Vest only : Penalty -1, Prot. 1
Partial : Penalty -1, Prot. 1
Complete : Penalty -2, Prot. 2

MAGIC
ASC : 9, Resonance : 6, Dancer
lore : 6
ASC Pot. : 19

DANCER
Memory : 18
ASC bonus : +3
Empathy : 5
Stamina : 7

Tribe Chieftain

"Never have I beseeched you, Morkh, for never have I known how to implore my god. Today however, your heart may rejoice, for I will fight alone against twenty. Justice doesn't matter, and neither do the rights and wrongs of men. What matters, Morkh, is that one rises against many. You love courage, Morkh, so answer my prayer and grant me my revenge. And if you do not... then may the demons take you!"

You are the chieftain of the bold Chulainn tribe. Your appearance illustrates your status. Finely wrought leather gives you effective protection, though it is mostly your skill with the two-handed sword that has made you what you are today. You respect the traditions your ancestors have taught you, but you feel the longing of a life of adventure, and you know that one day you will forsake your rights as a chieftain to go hunting for an ancient secret. You perceive this as your destiny, and being a fatalistic barbarian, you stand ready to face it, even though it will make you a traitor in the eyes of your whole clan. But this matters little compared with the exhilarating prospect of uncovering the secrets of steel, and going into battle while chanting a savage war song.

Archetype

Origin : Wild Reaches
Race : Human

Age : 37 years
Height : 6' 2" (SIZ 0)
Weight : 216 lbs.
MV : 3

ATTRIBUTES

Flame : 01
Dark Flame : 00

Body : 01
Dark Body : 00
Body bonus : +1
AGility : 8

PERception : 7
STAmIna : 8
STRength : 10

Spirit : 01
Dark Spirit : 00
Spirit bonus : +1
INTelligence : 5
WILL : 5

Soul : 01
Dark Soul : 00
Soul bonus : +1
CHARisma : 5
CREativity : 2

SECONDARY ATTRIBUTES

MEL : 9
AIM : 7
ASC : -
ART : -
HP : 55
SWT : 18
CWT : 27
DB : +4

Fortune points : 02

Max. Load : 252
Half Load : 126
Daily Load : 63

SKILLS

Courtly : Etiquette : tribal 5,
Traditions : Wild Reaches 5.
Knowledge : Astronomy 4,
Cult : Morkh 3, Plant lore 3,
Language : Nordik 5, Language :
Keshite 2, Strategy 5.
Rogue : Gambling 3, Hunt 6,
Trials : Alertness 5, Athletics 7,
Swim 5, Climb 8, Dodge 7, Ride
6, Survival 7, Weapon : Brawl 6,
Weapon : Two-handed Sword 10.

OFFICE & SOCIETY ASSET

Chieftain (5)

COMBAT

Melee attack : 20 + 1d10
Ranged attack : -
Melee defense
Dodge :
16 - armor penalty + 1d10
Parry : 19 + 1d10
Ranged defense : (16 - armor
penalty) / 2

WEAPON

Two-handed sword : +1 / 0 / -1
/ +7 / +1

ARMOR

Studded leather
Vest only : Penalty -1, Prot. 3
Partial : Penalty -2, Prot. 5
Complete : Penalty -4, Prot. 6

ANIMAL COMPANION

War hound
STA 7, STR 4, AGI 7, PER 11
MEL 5, ASC -, ART -
SIZ -1 / MV +4 / DB +0
HP 47 / SWT 15 / CWT 23
Skills : Weapon : claws 3,
Weapon : bite 5, Athletics 7,
Hunt 5, Alertness 8



Fornist Black Fey

advisor PAINTER

“ Child, I have not slept nearly as long as you, though I am much older than you can imagine. The earth talks to me and we often have important matters to discuss, for I am the mother of rapiers. Lately, bad vibrations have been disturbing the stones. I may be small and weak but I know how to draw upon the secrets of my arts when faced with the menace.”

Archetype

Origin : Urganand
Race : Black Fey

Age : ? (47 years since her last awakening)
Height : 2' 8" (SZ -2)
Weight : 69 lbs.
MV : 1 / 9

ATTRIBUTES

Flame : 01
Dark Flame : 00

Body : 01
Dark Body : 00
Body bonus : +1
AGility : 6
PERception : 6
STAMina : 3
STRength : 3

Spirit : 01
Dark Spirit : 00
Spirit bonus : +1
INTelligence : 12
WILL : 6

Soul : 01
Dark Soul : 00

Soul bonus : +1
CHARisma : 3
CREativity : 11

SECONDARY ATTRIBUTES

MEL : 4
AIM : 6
ASC : 12
ART : 11
HP : 24
SWT : 8
CWT : 12
DB : -2
Fortune points : 02
Darkening points : 05
Perfidy points : 05

Max. Load : 48
Half Load : 24
Daily Load : 12

SKILLS

Courtly : Etiquette : (Player's choice) 5,
Painting 7, Sculpture 5,
Traditions : Urganand 5,
Knowledge : Alphabet : Armgardic 6, Astronomy 6,

History & legends 6,
Languages : Urganish 5,
Seasons : Winter 5,
Occult : Cipher-sorcerer 5,
Concord 6, Dancer lore 8,
Resonance : Fornist 8, Vista 7,
Rogue : Stealth 6,
Trials : Alertness 5, Dodge 5,
First aid 6, Weapon : Staff 5.

BLACK FEY SPECIAL ASSETS
Mineral insight, Eternity.

OFFICE & SOCIETY ASSET
Secret Hideout (2)

COMBAT
Melee attack : 11 +1d10
Ranged attack : -
Melee defense
Dodge : 12 +1d10
Parry : 9 - armor penalty +1d10
Ranged defense : (12 - armor penalty) / 2

WEAPON
Staff (truncheon) :
-2 / +1 / -1 / +1 / -2

ARMOR
Chain mail (Size -2)
Vest only : Penalty -4, Prot. 4
Partial : Penalty -8, Prot. 7
Complete : Penalty -12, Prot. 8

MAGIC
ART : 11, Vista : 7,
Painting : 7
Magical Art Pot. : 19

ASC : 12, Resonance : 8,
Dancer lore : 8
ASC Pot. : 24

DANCER
Memory : 24
ASC bonus : +3
Empathy : 5
Stamina : 4

Your mundane weapon is a truncheon and you wield as a staff, but you tend to prefer the arts of the mind. Although you sometimes wear a thin and ancient chain mail, your small size is your best protection against physical attacks. Even though you are frail, you have traveled throughout your whole region. You are fond of isolated and secret places, such as grottoes or deep crypts. There you can practice your talents as a painter and as a midwife for insolent and sullen blades. You have gained solid experience and you have learned to mistrust most of the creatures that cross your path. You are taciturn and refrain yourself from speaking openly about your talents. However, your blood still boils when you are faced by a mystery.



Privateer

BUCCANEER HAVEN'S GUIDE

Archetype

Origin : Buccaneer Haven
Race : Human

Age : 40 years
Height : 6' (SIZ 0)
Weight : 185 lbs.
MV : 3

ATTRIBUTES

Flame : 01
Dark Flame : 00

Body : 01
Dark Body : 00
Body bonus : +1
AGility : 10
PERception : 6
STamina : 6
STRength : 8

Spirit : 01
Dark Spirit : 00
Spirit bonus : +1
INTelligence : 6
WILL : 6

Soul : 01
Dark Soul : 00
Soul bonus : +1

CHARisma : 7
CREativity : 3

SECONDARY ATTRIBUTES

MEL : 9
AIM : 8
ASC : -
ART : -
HP : 48
SWT : 16
CWT : 24
DB : +1

Fortune points : 02

Max. Load : 196
Half Load : 98
Daily Load : 49

SKILLS

Courtly : Eloquence 5,
Etiquette : Sailors 5, Trade 5,
Traditions : Buccaneer
Haven 5,
Knowledge :
Alphabet :
Armgaridic 3,
Astronomy 6,
History & Legends

5, Language : Buccaneer
Lingo 5, Language : Keshite
4, Navigation 7, Season :
Summer 4,
Rogue : Acrobatics 5,
Gambling 5,
Trials : Alertness 6, Athletics
7, Climb 7, Dodge 8, Swim 5,
Weapon : Brawl 6, Weapon :
Cutlass 8.

OFFICE & SOCIETY ASSET

Buccaneer Haven Guide (5)

COMBAT

Melee attack :
cutlass : 19 + 1d10 ;
brawl : 17 + 1d10
Ranged attack : -
Melee defense
Dodge : 18 + 1d10
Parry : 19 + 1d10
Ranged defense : 9

WEAPON

Cutlass : +1 / +1 / +1 / +4 / 0

ARMOR

Heavy clothing
Vest only : Penalty 0, Prot. 1
Partial : Penalty 0, Prot. 1
Complete : Penalty 0, Prot. 2

ANIMAL COMPANION

Parrot

STA 5, STR 1, AGI 7, PER 6
MEL 4, ASC -, ART -
SIZ -3, MV +1 (grounded) /
+9 (flying), DB -6
HP 26 / SWT 8 / CWT 13
Skills : Alertness 5, Dodge 5

“ Stop shouting, fools ! I want ten men down to free the rowers who are still chained. All others, man the sails. To the hatch, quick ! Throw those dead bodies overboard. Get to work, you rascals, or I'll personally take care of your hides ! There is a good supply of food in the hold, and weapons aplenty for all of you. This ship was conveying swords and other equipment for the Keshites living on the coast. There are enough of us to man this ship... and to fight ! You have rowed as chained slaves for these Mudehan dogs. Will you row as free men for me ? ”

With a kerchief on your head and a cutlass in hand, you like to stand in the riggings and feel the open sea air on your tanned skin. You have been sailing since you could barely walk and the sea holds no more secrets from you. The only thing you dream of is chartering a ship to explore an unknown sea and find countless treasures to bring back to honor the Helm. You are reckless, but you have learned to temper your fiery spirit enough to lead the crew you recruited, with which you would be ready to go even into the Abyss, if that were needed to ensure your ship's welfare. You are brave and your worst fear is to be stranded on dry ground.



Medusa Courtesan

“ Please, my lord, do not fluster yourself so. Calm yourself. There you go. Let’s sit down here and quietly discuss this state of affairs. Don’t be afraid of my poor little snakes ~ they are absolutely harmless. Why don’t you lie back and relax on these soft cushions ? There, now we can continue our little chat. You were just about to tell me why your ruler is so interested in employing the skills of master assassins. It all sounds so thrilling. I’m all ears. ”

Dressed always in light, soft textiles that outline your bodily charms, you have an aversion for weapons. You prefer to place your trust in the empathic link that unites you with the quietly hissing snakes on your head. With similar reasoning, you would rather rely on your knowledge of poisons to settle an argument. Wrapped in the folds and sculpted edges of your great cape, you engender conspiracies and intrigues. It is your nature, and life would just seem so dull without the excitement of unexpected meetings, or the vital information to be gleaned from courtly gossip. A network of contacts keeps you directly in touch with the corridors of power. You can flaunt your ability to gain entry anywhere, but all this has its price, which you never forget to pay, for you know otherwise the punishment would come with no warning. Thus, every month you pass a quota of intelligence to your contacts.

Archetype

Origin : Widowlands
Race : Medusa

Age : 36 years
Height : 5' 7" (SIZ 0)
Weight : 130 lbs.
MV : 3



ATTRIBUTES

Flame : 01
Dark Flame : 00

Body : 01
Dark Body : 00
Body bonus : +1
AGility : 7
PERception : 7
STAMina : 5
STRength : 5

Spirit : 01
Dark Spirit : 00
Spirit bonus : +1
INTelligence : 9
WILL : 5

Soul : 01
Dark Soul : 00
Soul bonus : +1
CHARisma : 10
CREativity : 6

SECONDARY ATTRIBUTES

MEL : 6
AIM : 7
ASC : -
ART : -
HP : 46
SWT : 15
CWT : 23
DB : 0

Fortune points : 02

Max. Load : 140
Half Load : 70
Daily Load : 35

SKILLS

Courtly : Diplomacy 5,
Eloquence 7, Etiquette :
Nobility 6, Etiquette :
Rogue 2, Fast talk 7,
Music: (player's choice)
4, Poetry 4, Stewardship
6, Tradition :
Widowlands 5,
Knowledge : Alphabet :
Moden-Hen' 4, Language :
Ophidian 5, Language : Keshite
5, Language : Urganish 3, Law 5,

Season : Winter 5.
Rogue : Intrigue 7, Poisons 7,
Search 4, Stealth 7.
Trials : Alertness 5, Dodge 5,
Ride 5, Weapon : Snakes 5.

MEDUSAE SPECIAL ASSETS

Snake hair : Acid spit (POT 5,
Range 1 yard, 3 shots),
Winter Heart

OFFICE &
SOCIETY ASSET
Blackmail (to be determined)

COMBAT

Melee attack : -
Ranged attack : 14 + 1d10
Melee defense
Dodge : 13 + 1d10
Parry : -
Ranged defense : 6

WEAPON

Snakes : +1 / +2 / - / Special / -

ARMOR

Heavy clothing
Vest only : Penalty 0, Prot. 1
Partial : Penalty 0, Prot. 1
Complete : Penalty 0, Prot. 2

ANIMAL COMPANION

Snake, small
STA 2, STR 2, AGI 12, PER 8
MEL 7, ASC -, ART -
SIZ -1, MV 0, DB -2
HP 22, SWT 7, CWT 11
Skills : Conceal 7, Hunt 5,
Stealth 6, Weapon : bite 8

Note: the bite injects a poison into the target. The Virulence of this poison may vary greatly. One of the most common types of snake venom is Green Ruff (VIR 17), which takes effect within a few minutes, provoking a rapid fever and a greenish discoloration around the eyes. Often lethal to children, it does not have sufficient Virulence to obtain such a drastic result on a healthy adult.



Giant Wanderer

"By my great-grandmother's teeth, what did you expect, frail one? Trying to deceive my vigilance is much to hope for in someone your size. You deserve to be squashed like an insect, but for this once I will let you live. Ponder this while you hang there by your feet like a pig to the slaughter. And rejoice that you are still alive..."

Your equipment makes you look like a titanic warrior, but you prefer crushing your opponents by landing huge rocks on their faces. You are colossal, a true force of nature, and people should beware of earning your enmity. You roam about the kingdoms, renting your mighty muscle to architects or foremen on building sites. Your taste for traveling and carousing makes you a wanderer whose high jinks are the talk of the towns and villages you pass through. You like to stand on mountaintops to feel the wind blowing through your bushy hair, appreciating that there are things in the world bigger than yourself.

Archetype

PERception : 5
STamina : 15
STRength : 18

Spirit : 01
Dark Spirit : 00
Spirit bonus : +1
INtelligence : 4
WILL : 5

Soul : 01
Dark Soul : 00
Soul bonus : +1
CHARisma : 4
CREativity : 4

SECONDARY ATTRIBUTES

MEL : 8
AIM : 4
ASC : -
ART : -
HP : 152
SWT : 51
CWT : 76
DB : +35
Fortune points : 02

Max. Load : 1320
Half Load : 660
Daily Load : 330

SKILLS

Courtly : Etiquette : Rural 5,
Traditions : Wild Reaches 5.
Knowledge : Astronomy 7, Beast
lore 5, Geography 5, Language :
Nordik 5, Language : Keshite 3,
Plant lore 7, Season : Summer 5,
Strategy 2.
Rogue : Gambling 2, Hunt 5,
Trials : Athletics 8, Alertness 5,
Dodge 8, Survival 5, Weapon :
giant club 10, Weapon : thrown
rock 7.

GIANTS SPECIAL ASSETS

Empathy with nature,
Ramming.

OFFICE & SOCIETY ASSET

Famous (1)

COMBAT

Melee attack : 20 +1d10
Ranged attack : 13 +1d10
Melee defense
Dodge : 12 - armor modifier
+1d10
Parry : 18 +1d10
Ranged defense : (12 - armor
modifier) / 2

WEAPON

Giant club : +2 / +1 / -1 / +12 / +3
Thrown rock : +2 / +1 / 36 / +6 / +2

ARMOR

Scale mail (Size +2)
Vest only : Penalty -2, Prot. 7
Partial : Penalty -4, Prot. 13
Complete : Penalty -6, Prot. 14

Origin : Wild
Reaches
Race : Giant

Age : 80 years
Height : 13' 5" (SIZ +3)
Weight : 1367 lbs.
MV : 8

ATTRIBUTES

Flame : 01
Dark Flame : 00

Body : 01
Dark Body : 00
Body bonus : +1
AGility : 3



Dwarf Shaper

MASTER BLACKSMITH OF THE SQUARE

Archetype

Origin : Urganmand
Race : Dwarf

Age : 48 years
Height : 5' (SIZ -1)
Weight : 187 lbs.
MV : 2

ATTRIBUTES

Flame : 01
Dark Flame : 00

Body : 01
Dark Body : 00
Body bonus : +1
AGility : 5
PERception : 4
STamina : 8
STRength : 8

Spirit : 01
Dark Spirit : 00
Spirit bonus : +1
INTelligence : 4
WILL : 4

Soul : 01
Dark Soul : 00
Soul bonus : +1
CHARisma : 6
CREativity : 12

SECONDARY ATTRIBUTES

MEL : 6
AIM : 4
ASC : -
ART : 9
HP : 51
SWT : 17
CWT : 25
DB : +1

Fortune points : 02

Max. Load : 192
Half Load : 96
Daily Load : 48

SKILLS

Courtly :
Craft :
blacksmith
9,
Etiquette :
Urban 5,
Sculpture 9,
Traditions :
Urganmand 5,
Knowledge :
Alphabet :
Armgardic 5,
Astronomy 5,
Geography 3,
Language :

Urganmish 5, Law 4, Season :
Winter 5.

Occult : Concord (occult architecture) 5, Demonology 5, Magical art : Shape 9.

Rogue : Locksmith 5,
Trials : Alertness 5, Athletics 6, Dodge 5, Weapon : warhammer 7.

DWARVES SPECIAL ASSETS

Axial verdict,
the Straight Path

OFFICE & SOCIETY ASSET
Bourgeois (2)

COMBAT

Melee attack : 14 + 1d10
Ranged attack : -
Melee defense
Dodge : 11 - armor penalty +1d10
Parry : 14 + 1d10
Ranged defense : (11 - armor penalty) / 2

WEAPON
Warhammer :
0 / 0 / 0 / +5 / 0

ARMOR

Plate (size -1)
Vest only : Penalty -4, Prot. 6
Partial : Penalty -8, Prot. 11
Complete : Penalty -12, Prot. 12

MAGIC

ART : 9, Shape : 9,
Sculpture : 9
Magical Art Pot. : 19

“Oof ! Truly, that blade is sturdier than stone itself. Foolhardy will be those who dare oppose his fortunate wielder. What a fine piece of work ! ”

When you are not fanning the hearth of your forge or quenching a blade, you practice swinging the impressive warhammer that you boast of being able to raise with only one hand. You carry it in battle, along with the shiny plate armor you fashioned yourself. Everyone in the city knows you, and your renown is on par with the perfection of your work. Devoted and punctilious, you have earned enough faithful customers to sell your work at the price it deserves. You enjoy the smell of the forge, with its subtle blend of sweat and scorching embers. For you, true happiness is putting a scalding blade on an anvil and vigorously swinging your hammer while crooning your former clan's distinctive dwarven song.



Ogre Mercenary

“ Creature, there is a taint of evil upon you, as upon all minions of your master. That is why I enjoy hearing you whimper and beg for my pity when I have you on the tip of my sword. It is truly a great pleasure, but not nearly so great as the frenzy I feel when in the heart of furious battle. Ah, how sweet it is to devote one’s life to warfare ! ”

You are a true master of combat. For now, you wear a bluish metal armor adorned with pointed spikes on the shoulders. Hotheaded and aggressive, you do not tolerate anyone treading on your toes, and you make sure everybody knows it. Your nights out frequently end in the local prison, with your jailers waiting for you to sober up. Your reputation as hardened mercenary, and your combat skills, allow you to avoid serious consequences from your frequent lawbreaking.

Archetype

Origin : Urganmand
Race : Ogre

Age : 35 years
Height : 6' 1"
(SIZ 0)
Weight :
224 lbs.
MV : 3

ATTRIBUTES
Flame : 01
Dark Flame : 00

Body : 01
Dark Body : 00
Body bonus : +1
AGility : 7
PERception : 6
STamina : 10
STRength : 11

Spirit : 01
Dark Spirit : 00
Spirit bonus : +1
INTElligence : 4
WILL : 4

Soul : 01
Dark Soul : 00
Soul bonus : +1
CHARisma : 4
CREativity : 2

SECONDARY ATTRIBUTES

MEL : 9
AIM : 6
ASC : -
ART : -
HP : 64
SWT : 21
CWT : 32
DB : +6
Fortune points : 02

Max. Load : 294
Half Load : 147
Daily Load : 73

SKILLS

Courtly : Etiquette : Mercenary 5, Traditions : Urganmand 5,
Knowledge : Language : Urganmish 5, Language : Mercerin 3, Season : Summer 5, Strategy 5, Surgery 5,
Rogue : Conceal 5, Gambling 5, Hunt 5,
Trials : Alertness 6, Athletics 7, Dodge 7, First aid 5, Ride 5, Survival 7, Swim 5, Weapon : Brawl 5, Weapon : Crossbow 5, Weapon : Ogre sword 10.

OGRE SPECIAL ASSETS
Noon Blaze

OFFICE & SOCIETY ASSET
Artful Thrust :
Feint of Jarnac (5)

COMBAT
Melee attack : Ogre sword : 21 + 1d10 ; Brawl : 16 + 1d10
Ranged attack :
Crossbow : 13 + 1d10
Melee defense
Dodge : 15 - armor penalty + 1d10
Parry : 21 + 1d10
Ranged defense :
(15 - armor penalty) / 2

WEAPON
Ogre sword : +2 / +1 / +1 / +5 / +0
Crossbow : +5 / +1 / 120 / +8 / +0

ARMOR
Plate
Vest only : Penalty -5, Prot. 7
Partial : Penalty -10, Prot. 13
Complete : Penalty -14, Prot. 14



Satyr Troubadour

ATTUNED

Archetype

Origin : Princely communes
Race : Satyr

Age : 35 years
Height : 6' 1" (SIZ 0)
Weight : 181 lbs.
MV : 3

ATTRIBUTES

Flame : 01
Dark Flame : 00

Body : 01
Dark Body : 00
Body bonus : +1
AGility : 6
PERception : 5
STamina : 6
STRength : 5

Spirit : 01
Dark Spirit : 00
Spirit bonus : +1
INTelligence : 5
WILL : 5

Soul : 01
Dark Soul : 00
Soul bonus : +1
CHARisma : 10
CREativity : 10

SECONDARY ATTRIBUTES

MEL : 5
AIM : 5
ASC : -
ART : 10
HP : 49
SWT : 16
CWT : 24
DB : 0
Fortune points : 02

Max. Load : 154
Half Load : 77
Daily Load : 38

SKILLS

Courtly : Eloquence 6,
Etiquette : Nobility 5, Fast
talk 7, Music : harp 8, Poetry
6, Traditions : Princely
Communes 5,
Knowledge : History & le-
gends 5, Language :
Kiemenite 5, Language :
Keshite 4, Season : Spring 5,
Occult : Magical art : Tune 8,
Rogue : Acrobatics 5,
Conceal 5, Disguise 5,
Stealth 6,
Trials : Alertness 3, Athletics
5, Climb 5, Dodge 6, Swim 2,
Weapon : hooves 7.

SATYRS SPECIAL ASSETS

Bucking, Sex.

OFFICE & SOCIETY ASSET

Troubadour (2)

COMBAT

Melee attack : bucking : 12
+ 1d10 ; trample : 13 + 1d10
Ranged attack : -
Melee defense
Dodge : 13 + 1d10
Parry : -
Ranged defense : 6

WEAPON

Hoof (bucking) :
0 / -1 / - / + / -
Hooves (trampling) :
-2 / 0 / - / +6 / -

ARMOR

Heavy clothing
Vest only : Penalty 0, Prot. 1
Partial : Penalty 0, Prot. 1
Complete : Penalty 0, Prot. 2

MAGIC

ART : 10, Tune : 8, Music : 8
Magical Art Pot. : 19



“My beloved, I scoured so many paths and overcame so many trials to come to your side ! I can conceive of no greater reward than the sweetness of your lips, and no greater cure for all my weariness than snuggling against your bosom with your arms around me, so that I can think of nothing but you.”

Your great harp is your only visible weapon. Indeed, your one dagger is in the traveling-bag on your back. Moreover, the only protection you have is your motley suit and your feathered hat. You go from city to city as a courtly poet, telling unforgettable epics to lords and their retinues. You particularly appreciate an intimate atmosphere that enables you to express your high spirits and your talent as a narrator. Your behavior is often the cause of much jealousy because rare are the women that do not fall under your charm. You are frequently expelled forcibly for having seduced a lord's wife.



Thief

“ Pretty bauble ye have there, friend. I'm afraid ye'll have to do without it. Sees ye, for if I put a bit more weight on me hand, I believe yer throat'll be cut as clean as a chicken's. So, be ye rather alive and destitute or die quickly and be just as destitute? Make up yer mind. Hurry up! ”

Swathed in a big vest of dark leather, you move lithely and silently. It is very hard to get a glimpse of your features beneath your hood, especially since you like to stay in the darkest places, where you seem to merge with your surroundings and become almost invisible to mortal eyes. You appreciate theft for its own sake and will barely hesitate to take insane risks if there is hope of laying a hand on a fortune that might safeguard you in your old days.

Archetype



Origin : Urganmand
Race : Human

Age : 37 years
Height : 5' 7" (SIZ 0)
Weight : 143 lbs.
MV : 3

ATTRIBUTES

Flame : 01
Dark Flame : 00

Body : 01
Dark Body : 00
Body bonus : +1
AGility : 10
PERception : 7
STamina : 6
STRength : 8

Spirit : 01
Dark Spirit : 00
Spirit bonus : +1
INTElligence : 6
WILL : 6

Soul : 01
Dark Soul : 00
Soul bonus : +1
CHARisma : 5
CREativity : 5

SECONDARY ATTRIBUTES

MEL : 9
AIM : 8
ASC : -
ART : -
HP : 46
SWT : 15
CWT : 23
DB : +1

Fortune points : 02

Max. Load : 196
Half Load : 98
Daily Load : 49

SKILLS

Courtly : Etiquette : rogue 6,
Fast talk 6, Traditions :
Urganmand 5.
Knowledge : Alphabet :
Armgardic 2, Language :
Urganmish 5.
Rogue : Acrobatics 6, Conceal 6,
Disguise 5, Gambling 5,
Legerdemain 6, Locksmith 9,
Search 6, Stealth 7.
Trials : Alertness 6, Athletics 5,
Climb 7, Dodge 7, Weapon : dag-
ger 5, Weapon : thrown dagger 5.

OFFICE & SOCIETY ASSET

Secret hideout (2)

COMBAT

Melee attack : 17 + 1d10
Ranged attack : 15 + 1d10
Melee defense
Dodge :
18 - armor penalty + 1d10
Parry : 15 + 1d10
Ranged defense :
(18 - armor penalty) / 2

WEAPON

Dagger : 0 / +2 / 0 / +1 / -1
Dagger (thrown) :
+2 / 0 / 32 / +1 / -1

ARMOR

Studded leather
Vest only : Penalty -1, Prot. 3
Partial : Penalty -2, Prot. 5
Complete : Penalty -4, Prot. 6

Example of character creation

Steven and Bruce have gathered the necessary items to play a role-playing game: coffee, soda, cookies, pencils, erasers, and 10-sided dice. As the Eminence Grise, Steven tells Bruce about AGONE. He first summarizes the game in a few sentences, to convey the mood and style. Then he reveals the content of the chapter "The role of the Inspired". Finally, he gives a quick survey of the different Twilight Realms and races (humanity and the 9 seasonling races). After all this, Bruce does not think he can live without becoming a player of AGONE immediately.

Steven then gives him a copy of the Scroll and explains the basics of the game system. Bruce's Inspired creation may now begin.

STEP 1

Bruce must choose a race for his character. He decides to play a sprite, whom he calls Lucas.

STEP 2

Bruce is very excited (coffee must help) about dealing with Dancers. So he wants his sprite to be a Dancer hunter. He chooses to be from Urganand, from the barony of Roundrock (ok, Steven might have given hints that this was the setting he had planned for the game...). He will be a male sprite, 27 years old, measuring 3'7" (looking on the racial SIZ table, he has a SIZ -1), and weighs about 100 lbs.

STEP 3

Bruce will now develop his character by choosing assets and faults. Steven shows him the summarized list and Bruce asks questions about those catching his interest.

He can choose up to 10 points of faults, which he uses as follows:

- "Debt" (1 pt): Bruce decides (with the EG's approval) that someone needed a Dancer and Lucas promised to provide one, but had been unable to do so, putting himself in a delicate situation.
- "Sleepyhead" (2 pts)
- "Disciple" (3 pts)
- "Tempted" (4 pts): when he was young, Lucas tried to steal other people's Dancers and agreed to sell Dancers to the Obscurantists. When he learned what happened to them, he stopped. But he enjoyed this perfidious attitude so much at the time that he fears falling back

into his youthful bad habits, and so feels "tempted". Lucas earns a +1 modifier to his Dark Spirit.

$1+2+3+4 = 10$ points invested in faults.

Bruce can now take assets. He chooses:

- "Secret hideout" (2 pts) inside one of Roundrock manor's outbuildings, known only to Lady Ewelf. This is where he hides his Dancers.
- "Gifted" (5 pts): Lucas will be an accomplished Mage, with a +1 bonus to his ASC
- "Very small" (1 pt): Lucas is much smaller than the average sprite, and his SIZ drops to -2
- "Second wind" (2 pts): Lucas is used to running long and hard after his quarries and can run twice as long as others before it is necessary for him to make a STA roll against being winded.

$2+5+1+2 = 10$ points have been used to buy assets, using up the 10 points earned from faults.

Oops, there are still the 5 dedicated points for Lucas' Office. Bruce thinks Lucas might well like being Roundrock's official Dancer hunter, and Steven decides such an Office is acceptable and sets its cost to 3 points. He still has 2 unused points with which he could take any advantages without getting points for faults, but Bruce decides Lucas is well-rounded enough as he is. So the points are discarded. Bruce records on the Scroll that some attributes have been modified by his choices: SIZ -2, ASC +1, Dark Spirit +1.

STEP 4

Lucas, being an Inspired, should basically have: Flame 1/0, Body 1/0, Spirit 1/0, Soul 1/0. However, since he has the fault "Tempted", his Spirit becomes 1/1. This doesn't affect his Flame, which remains 1/0. As a result he has 2 Fortune points.

STEP 5

Lucas has 70 points to buy his primary attributes. Using the Attribute cost table and taking into account the Racial attribute table, Bruce decides to spend the creation points this way:

AGI: 10 pts (+1) = 8; STR: 2 pts = 2; PER: 14 pts (+2) = 10; STA: 5 pts (-2) = 3; INT: 10 pts = 7; WIL: 5 pts (+1) = 6; CHA: 14 pts = 8; CRE: 10 pts = 7

He has spent his 70 creation points.

STEP 6

Bruce calculates Lucas' secondary attributes.

MEL: $[2 + (8 \times 2)] / 3 = 6$; AIM: $(8 + 10) / 2 = 9$; ASC: Bruce intends Lucas to be a Jornist, so $ASC = INT = 7 + 1$ ("Gifted") = 8; ART: $(8 + 7) / 2 = 7$; SIZ: -2 (instead of -1, because he is "Very small"); MV: 1 (instead of 2, because he has SIZ -2); DB: $2 - 2 = 0$ so according to the table DB = -4; HP: 10 (instead of 20, because he has SIZ -2) + $(3 \times 3) + 1d10$ (result: 10) = 29; SWT: $29 / 3 = 9$; CWT: $29 / 2 = 14$; Load and Max. load: $(2 + 3) \times 8 = 40$; Half load: $40 / 2 = 20$; Daily load: $40 / 4 = 10$.

STEP 7

Like all characters, Lucas has three free skills: Language: Urgamish 5, Traditions: Urgamand 5, Etiquette (rural) 5. As a sprite, he has also four seasonling skills for free:

Season: Spring 5 (specialty: spriggans, because Bruce wants to know about this more or less brotherly race), Stealth 5, Plant lore 5, Astronomy 5.

In addition, he has 100 points to spend on skills. Using the cost table, he splits the points as follows:

Weapon: sling 4 (4 pts), Weapon: dagger 4 (4 pts), Athletics 6 (7 pts), Climb 6 (7 pts), Dodge 5 (5 pts), Alertness 6 (7 pts), Acrobatics 7 (10 pts), Conceal 5 (5 pts), Hunt 5 (5 pts), Search 6 (7 pts), Fast talk 1 (1 pt), Dancer lore (spe: places) 8 (14 pts), Resonance: Jornist 9 (19 pts).

Now Bruce has invested 95 points + two specializations (4 pts) = 99 points.

STEP 8

To choose his Ascendancy Spells, Bruce has the following number of points: $(8 \times 9) = 72$. So he will be able to buy Spells whose combined Thresholds are no higher than 72. Steven hands him the list of Jornist Spells and grabs the last cookie as Bruce chooses:

- "Dancer consolation": Threshold 10,
- "Impression of truth": Threshold 10,
- "Branding a Dancer": Threshold 15,
- "Discern the Flame": Threshold 15,
- "Zone of silence": Threshold 15.

Total Threshold points: 65. The 7 remaining points are lost.

Bruce decides to create Lucas' Dancer right now, and to call him "Puny". Steven lets him decide how to proceed, and he decide to use the random generation system.

3d10 = 17, Memory: 18;
3d10 = 14, Ascendancy bonus: +2;
3d10 = 20, Empathy: 5;
3d10 = 10, Stamina: 2.

Puny's Memory of 18 can store $18 \times 5 = 90$ Threshold points. This is enough for the 65 points of Spells Bruce chose. Puny will be able to learn other Spells.

Bruce records his list of Spells and his Dancer's profile on his Scroll.

STEP 9

Bruce records Lucas' basic Initiative ($8 + 10 = 18$), and his two weapons, sling and dagger, in the appropriate section of his scroll. He decides not to wear any armor.

In the occult section, he records his ratings in ASC, Dancer lore and Resonance, and reckons his Ascendancy Potential ($8 + 8 + 2 = 18$) and his Intuitive Potential ($7 + 5 = 12$).

He writes down his standard equipment, including his two weapons.

His two highest skills being from the Occult group, the EG disregards them and finds that the third highest skill is from the Rogue group (Acrobatics 7). So Lucas' sponsor for the Flame was a seasonling of the Fall. Steven thinks that Lucas' feeling of being "Tempted" has found an unexpected explanation he can put to use during the game.

Now they must devise Lucas' history: his past, his relations, etc.

Lucas the Inspired sprite, Jornist mage and official Dancer hunter of Roundrock barony, is ready to receive a visit from an dubious individual called Malycene, who will inform him about his Flame, and reveal that the Enemy is watching him...





The Book of Drama



BOOK THREE





This is where all is ventured.
Thou, my friend, my brother, art an Eminence Grise.
Thou hath in thy hands the keys to acts and
miscarriages.

All that the Mortals attempt to live,
ye are able to appraise it, to cause it and
to take steps to ensure that all will be rousing,
unique and astonishing.

Thou must master events rightly
for they will be crucial.

Naught should seem unknown to thee: the Trials,
the Rogue, the Courthy, the Knowledge and the Occult.
Just as we, the Eminences, try to control
gatherings and conflicts, combats and cures,
wanderings and stays, and even death,
Likewise we must master the arcana of the Mages,
those of the Shard, of the Dancers, Luminaries,
Magical Arts and Ascendancy...

For the Drama is merely a mirror,
a the representation of the Mortals' deeds.
It is the Masque, our great adversary
who conceived it to extend his power.

It is up to us to use it to bring his plans to naught.



The basic rules

ne needs to define game mechanics in order to express the characters' capabilities, to simulate the outcome of their deeds and determine the unfolding of the plot.

THE DICE

To generate an element of randomness, the rules of AGONE use 10-sided dice. There are two different ways of rolling a die: the closed die roll or the open die roll. Several dice may be required for certain rolls.

When rolling a closed die roll, "1" is worth 1 and "0" is worth 10.

When rolling an open die roll, the result can be either negative or positive. If the result of an open die roll is "0", the player must re-roll until a result other than "0" is obtained. The result of an open die roll is thus the sum of the last roll plus 10 for each "0" obtained previously.

If the result of an open roll is "1", the player must re-roll the die until a roll other than "1" is obtained. The final result of the roll is 1 minus the next roll. As above, each "0" counts as 10, and the rolling continues until something else is obtained.

Example: a player rolls first a "0", and then a "1"; the result of his open die roll is $10 + 1 = 11$. If he rolls a "1" and then "6", so the final result is $1 - 6 = -5$. If he rolls "1", "0" and then "2", the result would be $1 - 10 - 2 = -11$.

Closed rolls are used for basic and clear situations, or where the result must be in a limited range. There is less uncertainty, for the different possible outcomes are easily conceivable.

Open rolls are used in situations that are more complicated because they introduce more randomness: there are more possible results and thus the outcome is less predictable.

It is always the EG that decides if it's a closed or an open roll depending on the situation.

THE ROLLS

The mechanics of AGONE are based on the use of "action rolls". The principle of action rolls is to compare the result of the roll to a Difficulty. The player executes a roll for each uncertain action he wants to perform. The higher the result, the more successfully the action is carried out.

The value of an action roll is the sum of a Base and of the result of a die.

Closed rolls are written: 1d10 (C). All other rolls should be considered open.

1 ~ Game mechanics

There are two different types of rolls: action roll and opposed rolls.

Most elementary deeds are resolved by an action roll, to which the EG attributes a Difficulty depending on the situation.

In certain situations, for example an action that involves two characters, the Difficulty can only be determined by the result of another action. That is generally the case in confrontational situations: when an attacker tries to go through his opponents parry, when a thief is trying to evade a guard's watch, or when a racketeer wants to convince a client to purchase something. In those cases, opposed rolls are used. First, the EG decides who is the active participant. Then each opponent then executes a roll and finally the EG determines a Success Margin (SM, see below) by subtracting the "passive" roll (the defender, the guard, the client...) from the "active" roll (the attacker, the thief, the racketeer...).

THE BASE

For an attribute roll, the Base is equal to the attribute multiplied by two.

For a skill roll, the Base is equivalent to the sum of an attribute and a skill.

Depending on the circumstances, a bonus or a penalty is applied to the Base before the roll. Bonuses and penalties are cumulative (semi-obscure - 2 + serious wound - 2 + superior equipment + 1 = -3). Do not forget that the Aspect Bonus is added to the Base for Inspired and Damned (see The Flame, below).

The choice of an attribute is the first step to determining the Base. The eight Attributes are generally used but you can also use the Secondary Attributes (MEL, AIM, ASC or ART). Next, choose a skill (if it is a skill roll).

Example: Melaine the Still and Caan Grey-Blood, two Inspired, are approaching of Essinburgh Manor, where they want to discreetly get their hands on an important document. Reaching their destination in the middle of the night, Melaine attempts to overhear the soldiers' conversation. The EG decides she must execute a roll: he determines PER is the relevant Attribute, to which the Alertness skill is added. Melaine has 7 in PER, 7 in Alertness and a +1 Body Bonus; her Base is therefore 15. The EG applies a -4 modifier because it is nighttime. Melaine's final Base is 15 - 4 = 11.

♣ Special cases

• DEFAULT SKILL

When an Inspired does not actually have the skill he needs to perform a particular task:

If the skill belongs to the Trials, Rogue or Courty groups, he suffers a -3 penalty, and his Base is of course equal to his Attribute only (do not apply the x2 bonus of attribute rolls).

If the skill belongs to the Knowledge or Occult branches, the task is impossible.

• SIMILAR SKILLS

The EG is free to rule that different skills have similar domains of application. In this case, the Inspired does not suffer a -3 penalty to his Base.

Example: All one-handed weapons that inflict cutting damage can be considered similar; the same is true for shields or even closely related languages...

• MULTIPLE SKILLS

In cases where several skills are appropriate, the lower score is considered the main skill, and used to determine the Base, whereas the others are its restrictive (including the main skill).

Example: Melaine wants to safely climb the walls of the manor. The EG decides that AGI is the relevant Attribute. Climb is obviously the skill to use, and Stealth will be its restrictive. Melaine's scores are AGI 9, +1 Body Bonus, Climb 7 and Stealth 5. Her Base for this roll is therefore 15 (and not 17). Indeed, her Base should have been determined like this: 9 (AGI) +1 (Body Bonus) +7 (Climb), however, because her Stealth score is lower than her Climb, it is preferred. Thus we obtain 9 + 1 + 5 (Stealth) = 15.

THE DIFFICULTY

The EG determines the Difficulty for all action rolls. The Difficulty is evaluated independently of the modifier. The EG applies the situation modifiers to the result of the roll, but he calculates the Difficulty as if the parameters were normal.

For example, if the EG applies a -6 modifier to the roll because of poor light conditions, he must not raise the Difficulty because of the same parameters. Instead of that, he should determine the Difficulty of the action in normal conditions. The Difficulty of a roll is shortened to "DIF".

THE DIFFICULTY

| Action difficulty | Score to achieve |
|-------------------|------------------|
| Easy | 10 |
| Medium | 15 |
| Hard | 20 |
| Very difficult | 25 |
| Nearly impossible | 30 |

♣ Free Difficulty

For certain rolls, the Difficulty is considered "free". It is then up to the character to determine the Difficulty of his action. Such is the case for artistic creation. The artist determines the Difficulty he must achieve and the roll decides if he has actually succeeded or not.

Various objects can have a "quality" score. This score represents the Difficulty an object's creator chose in order to create it.

ROLL MODIFIERS

The EG must decide which modifiers apply to which roll. For example, a normal person would suffer a -2 modifier in semi-obscurity, whereas Minotaurs would not because they can see in the dark.

SITUATION MODIFIERS

| | |
|----------------------|--------------------------|
| Luminosity | |
| Intense light | -1 |
| Penumbra | -2 |
| Nighttime darkness | -4 |
| Total darkness | -10 |
| Weight | |
| Daily load | -2 |
| Half-load | -4 |
| Maximum load | -8 |
| Health | |
| Serious wound | -2 / -6 / -12 |
| Critical wound | see table on pp. 164-165 |
| Surroundings | |
| Very advantageous | +2 |
| Advantageous | +1 |
| Disadvantageous | -2 |
| Very disadvantageous | -4 |
| Equipment | |
| Superior | +1 |
| Mediocre | -1 |
| Inadequate | -4 |

THE SUCCESS MARGIN (SM)

The success margin of a roll is the difference between the result of the roll and the Difficulty threshold. It determines the degree to which an action is successful.

If the action roll is higher than the Difficulty (positive SM), the action is successful. If the SM is negative, the action failed. When the SM is equal to 0, the success of the action is equivocal. Equivocal actions are generally mitigated successes that the EG can interpret as he wants.

THE SUCCESS MARGIN

The success margin (SM) of a roll is equal to:

$$\text{Base} + \text{die} - \text{Difficulty}$$

Example: Let's go back to our example where Melaine is discreetly climbing the walls. Her Base is 15. The nighttime applies a -4 negative modifier. Her Base is therefore $15 - 4 = 11$. The EG decides on a medium difficulty, 17. Melaine's player rolls a die and obtains 7. The result of the roll is thus 18. The success margin is $18 - 17 = 1$. Her

success margin is very small, so she barely climbs up onto the wall.

If she had rolled a 2, her result would have been $11 + 2 = 13$; consequently the success margin would have been negative, $13 - 17 = -4$. The action would have been a failure. She would not have been able to climb up the wall but she would not have fallen down either.

If she had obtained a 0 on her roll, she would have re-rolled and might have obtained a 3. In that case, her roll would have been $11 + 10 + 3 = 24$. Her margin of 7 ($24 - 17$) would have enabled her to brilliantly succeed in climbing up the wall.

In the case of an opposed roll, When the SM is positive the "active" character is triumphant. If not, the defender succeeds. The rule for opposed rolls is that ties are always favor the defender, except in combat where they benefit the attacker. For example, the guard sees a thief at the last moment, or a customer has doubts and so does not buy a second-hand weapon...

Opposed roll example: Melaine and Caan must avoid a patrol in order to reach the manor. They both roll their Stealth against the guards' Alertness (the EG decides on only one roll for all four guards). Melaine's Base is 13 (PER 7 + Stealth 6) and Caan's is 16 (PER 7 + Stealth 9) whereas the guards' is 13 (PER 6 + Alertness 7).

The EG decides that the situation requires open rolls and that Melaine and Caan, concealed by the semi-obscurity, gain a +2 bonus to their roll.

Melaine rolls an 8 and Caan a 2. The guards roll a 6. The rolls of the Inspired are therefore $(13 + 8 + 2) = 23$ and $(16 + 2 + 2) = 20$, while the guards only obtain $(13 + 6) = 19$. The two thieves thus reach the manor without alerting the guards.

The SM also helps in estimating the level of success of an action. A strictly positive SM is sufficient in most cases but the EG may want to compare the SM of two different rolls (who will win the race, who will discover the most interesting documents, etc.). He might also ask for a given SM, but this must not replace the Difficulty scale or quality (this is especially true with magic: a Concordist who decides to execute a basic Opus and who obtains an enormous SM on the roll will still create an inferior Opus to one who chose a higher DIF).

The following table gives some indications to estimate the level of success.

FUMBLES

Failing an action with a negative margin of 15 or obtaining a "1" and then a "10" (no matter the scores obtained afterwards) leads to a catastrophe, a "fumble". Such a failure should imply important consequences, often dangerous for the character.

LEVEL OF SUCCESS

| SM | Estimation |
|------|-----------------------|
| 0 | Barely failed |
| 1 | Barely succeeded |
| 5 | Succeeded well |
| 10 | Excellent |
| 15 | Succeeded with brio |
| 20 | Extraordinary success |
| 21 + | Divine |

If the *die* is the cause of the fumble, the failure is produced by an incredible lack of luck.

If the *margin* is responsible for the fumble, it is the Inspired who is the cause of it; he may not have the capacities to succeed in his action or he was clumsy.

Depending on the extent of the negative SM or of the negative roll, the consequences are more or less serious:

♣ If the result of the die is -10 or less, look up the result on the table below.

♣ If the margin is -15 or less, a modifier of +5 is added to it before referring to the table.

♣ If the result of the die and the margin could both cause a fumble, only the one implying the worst consequences is considered (to which a modifier of +5 is added if it is the margin).

Example: If the result of the die is -12 (roll: 1, then 0, and then 3), the character's Base 7 and the Difficulty 20, the result is a fumble caused by both the margin and the roll. Only the most unfavorable will be considered; $7 - 12 - 20 = -25 + 5$ (because it is a fumble caused by the margin) = -20. Not -12 (the result of the roll that can also be the cause of the fumble).

The consequences of the fumble can then be read in the following table on lines "-20 to -24" in the appropriate group.

The last step is to determine the type of catastrophic effect produced. The following table gives catastrophe ideas by Skill groups (Trials, Rogue, Knowledge, Courty and Occult). The EG is free to use them or to invent new ones.

The Flame

The Flame is the essence that differentiates an Inspired from a Dullen. It is composed of three bright Aspects: Body, Spirit and Soul. Each Inspired has three bright Aspect scores between 0 and 10.

FUMBLES CHART

TRIAL CATASTROPHES

-10 to -14: Unfortunate but not directly dangerous (dropping a weapon)

-15 to -19: Ridiculous. Implies the loss of a few Hit Points (falling off a wall, 1d10 damage)

-20 to -24: Potentially dangerous. Implies a Serious wound (to himself or to an ally)

-25 to -29: Very dangerous. May imply a Critical wound (impaling on his own weapon)

-30 and less: Suicidal. The failure implies lethal consequences (falling from a great height, 10d10 damage)

ROGUE CATASTROPHES

-10 to -14: Gauche but not directly dangerous (alerting a guard)

-15 to -19: Minor consequences (discovering the alarm system just a little too late)

-20 to -24: Important consequences (such as losing all one's wealth on a bet)

-25 to -29: Major consequences (drinking poison by mistake)

-30 and less: Lethal. The plot is unveiled and considered as treason.

KNOWLEDGE CATASTROPHES

-10 to -14: Ridiculous (your interlocutor thinks he is dealing with an idiot)

-15 to -19: Ludicrous (the plant supposed to heal is in fact a powerful laxative)

-20 to -24: Serious (the plant supposed to heal is in fact mildly toxic)

-25 to -29: Grave (The doctor knows that to heal from fever, one must take a lot of very cold baths)

-30 and less: Absurd. The failure implies that the character has become mad (at the discretion of the EG)

COURTY CATASTROPHES

-10 to -14: Unrefined. The failure is not dangerous (the character proves to all that he is an unrefined peasant)

-15 to -19: Vulgar. The failure is totally ridiculous (the fast talking does not work and the interlocutor thinks he is being made fun of)

-20 to -24: Up to a duel. The failure is dangerous (all who witness will ignore the character except for one person who will call for a first blood duel)

-25 to -29: Unforgivable. The failure implies extremely serious consequences (mistaking the king for a servant)

-30 and less: Historical. The failure implies permanent consequences (the diplomat causes a war of which he is the first victim)

OCCULT CATASTROPHES

-10 to -14: Ridiculous. The failure causes an outcome that is the exact opposite of what was hoped (mistaking a Jorlist for an Obscurantist)

-15 to -19: Pathetic. The result is dangerous but non-lethal (the Dancer wounds itself)

-20 to -24: Terrible. The failure is very dangerous (to mistake a Flesh Smuggler for a beggar)

-25 to -29: Disastrous. The failure implies critical consequences (a false note produces an Opus of Discord)

-30 and less: Cataclysmic (invoking a High Devil instead of a succubus)



The Flame score is equal to the lowest of these three scores.

The Dark Flame is the sinister counterpart to the Flame. It is also divided into three Aspects: Dark Body, Dark Spirit and Dark Soul. The Dark Flame score is equal to the lowest of these three scores.

For simplicity, bright and dark scores are written separated by a "/".

♣ Inspired and Damned

As long as a character's Flame score is higher than his Dark Flame score, he is an Inspired. When his Dark Flame exceeds his Flame, he is no longer an Inspired. He becomes a Damned that works for the evil forces. Damned characters are handed back to the EG who will manage them from there on.

When the Flame and the Dark Flame are equal, the character keeps his former status, be it Inspired or Damned. It is only when one of these two scores surpasses the other that the nature of the character will change.

Example: Melaine has 1/0 in Body, 1/2 in Spirit and 2/0 in Soul. Her Flame score is therefore 1/0. She is an Inspired.

♣ Aspect Bonuses

The Flame affects every action of those who possess it. In the game, this is represented by Aspect Bonuses, which influence all rolls that use the Primary Attributes or Secondary Attributes they are linked to. There are two ways to calculate Aspect Bonuses, depending on whether the character is Inspired or Damned.

Aspect Bonuses represent the symbiosis between the inspiration given to mankind by the Muses, and experiences that transcend memory and hone instinctual reactions. The fundamental nature of Diurn enables that symbiosis; without it, the Inspired would be burnt alive by his Flame.

The Body Aspect Bonus represents complete physical mastery, derived from an understanding of the Concord the Muses laid upon the world at its creation. That comprehension does not directly affect a character's dexterity or strength but it enables the Inspired to instinctively perceive what to watch, hear, parry or dodge.

The Spirit Aspect Bonus is the result of harmonious and effective mental capacities. The Inspired is not more intelligent, but he uses his intelligence more effectively because he has an instinctive idea of how the Muses thought the Concord for Harmundia. His will is not higher, it is just strengthened by the fact that the character understands the logic of mental attacks.

The Soul Aspect Bonus is probably the Aspect most influenced by the Flame. The Soul is the expression of the beauty of Harmundia (represented by Creativity) and the character's own inner beauty (represented by Charisma). Having a better understanding of these two forms of beauty, the character is more likely to express it and to use it. The Inspired knows what beauty lies in his bosom so he can show himself in a favorable light.

He also knows the beauty Harmundia holds, so he can express it better through art and other creative activities.

The Dark Aspects Bonuses work the same way but in the opposite direction: they are the perception of ugliness, failure, and discordance in Harmundia. When an Inspired uses these, he is no longer drawing upon the positive energies of Harmundia but its weaknesses. A fundamental difference in the use of dark Aspects, is that they require a sacrifice that will lead the character to have more powers or knowledge to exploit.



• INSPIRED BONUSES

For an Inspired, dark Aspects are subtracted from bright Aspects to determine the Aspect Bonuses or negative modifiers for the attributes they influence. The Body Bonus of an Inspired is equal to Body - Dark Body, his Spirit Bonus is Spirit - Dark Spirit, and his Soul Bonus is Soul - Dark Soul.

An Inspired whose Aspect Bonus is negative can choose to invert the calculation in order to gain a bonus for an action.

☛ To use an inversion in Body, the character loses as many HP as his STA.

That loss is due to a certain form of self-mutilation (not necessarily bloody). His body will move strangely, more efficiently, but unnaturally. For example, he could choose to break one or two small bones in order to achieve otherwise impossible positions.

☛ To use an inversion in Spirit, the character gains 1 Darkening point. This represents his slow descent into the darkest and the most destructive thoughts of his mind.

☛ To invert his Soul, the character gains 1 Perfidy point.

This Perfidy point represents not only his acceptance of Harmundia's imperfection but also his participation in that discordance.

Example: Melaine has a +1 Body Bonus, a -1 Spirit Bonus and a +2 Soul Bonus. If she rolls using her STR, she will have a +1 bonus to her roll because Body affects STR. To practice Ascendancy, she has a -1 negative modifier because Spirit affects Ascendancy. When her rolls are based on CHA, she will have a +2 bonus because CHA is derived from Soul. For one roll, Melaine can change her -1 Spirit Bonus into a +1, but her Darkening will be raised by 1 point.

• DAMNED BONUSES

The calculation of Aspect Bonuses for Damned is the exact opposite of the calculation for the Inspired. The Body Bonus is thus equal to Dark Body - Body, the Spirit Bonus to Dark Spirit - Spirit, and the Soul Bonus to Dark Soul - Soul.

A Damned whose Aspect Bonus is negative can choose to invert the calculation (Dark Aspect - Aspect) in order to obtain a positive bonus for one action.

As can be read in Book Four, the Damned are deformed, mad and fundamentally sinister creatures. When deciding to use bright Aspect, they too must follow the same rules as for an Inspired, but to purge their faults.

☛ To use an inversion in Body, the Damned must lose as many HP as his STA.

☛ To use an inversion in Spirit, he must lose 1 Darkening point.

☛ To use an inversion in Soul, he must lose 1 Perfidy point.

Example: Sestar of Lorgol is an Inspired (for the moment). He has 1/4 in Body, 2/2 in Spirit and 2/1 in Soul. His Flame is therefore 1/1. Sestar's Body Bonus is -3 (1 - 4), his Spirit Bonus is 0 (2 - 2), and his Soul Bonus is +1 (2 - 1).

If Sestar received 1 Dark Soul point, his Flame would become 1/2, hence, he would turn into a Damned because his Dark Flame score would be higher than his Flame score. The bonus calculation would be inverted (Dark Aspect - Bright Aspect) and his Body Bonus would therefore become +3, his Spirit Bonus would remain 0 (2 - 2) and his Soul Bonus would become 0 (2 - 2).

☛ Flame and Fortune

The Flame does not only have an effect through Aspect Bonuses. Fortune Points enable the Inspired to perform exceptional deeds. An Inspired has at most as many Fortune Points as his Flame score multiplied by 2. A Damned has at most as many Fortune Points as his Dark Flame score multiplied by 2.

Example: We have said that Melaine, as an Inspired, has a Flame of 1/0. She has 1/0 in Body, 1/2 in Spirit and 2/0 in Soul, therefore she has 2 Fortune Points.

Only one Fortune Point can be spent for one action, as follows:

☛ Before rolling a die, it grants a +5 bonus to the result of the roll.

☛ After the roll, it cancels its result. The character can re-roll the die (even for aging rolls). The Inspired has to accept the second result.

☛ One Fortune Point can prevent an Inspired from dying — his HP are stabilized at -STA + 1. The Inspired will survive even if he is at the threshold of life and death.

Between adventures, the Inspired go through what is called the Revival: they regain all their Fortune Points by resting and recovering. The EG can also authorize a Revival in the middle of a long and difficult adventure, as long as the characters take a while to recover.

☛ Darkening and Perfidy

Several dangers threaten the integrity of the Inspired and of their Flame. There are two forms of spiritual corruption that are recorded on a scale from 1 to 100. Darkening determines the influence the Darken has on the character. Perfidy determines to what extent the character is stained by the Masque.

☛ The Powers

The Flame also has technical applications. Just as corruption enables the slaves of the Darken and the Masque to use strange abilities, the Inspired who nurse their Flame can obtain incredible powers that will make them heroes.

Each time an Inspired gains 1 Flame point after the first, he can choose one of the powers listed in the table

POWERS OF THE FLAME

Gift of Flame

The Flame of the Inspired radiates so much that anyone around him can feel its effects. The Inspired can bestow his Fortune Points upon a Duller or an Inspired who needs them.

Soul of Flame

The Inspired is insensitive to fear. He is no longer able to understand the notion of Fear, only to estimate the damage he endures. This can potentially become dangerous...

Companion of the day

Daylight bestows a +1 bonus on all rolls made by the Inspired (daylight being the shining sun or an incredibly lit site).

Swift Flame

The Inspired will react quicker and better than his companions. He ignores surprise and has a initiative bonus equal to his Flame score.

Light of knowledge

The Inspired can divide his apprentices' durations by his Flame score.

Flame of inspiration

This power enables the Inspired, if he has apprentices or students, to pass his inspiration on to them. All those whom he teaches will be able to use his Soul Bonus for CRE rolls.

Immolation

The Inspired can unveil his Flame. His HP immediately fall to - STA, enough to kill him. All those close to him are affected by the same damage. The damage decreases by 1 point for each yard separating the Inspired from the other victims. The EG can authorize the Inspired to use 1 Fortune Point to survive if he used Immolation in a necessary and heroic situation (he is then at - STA +1).

Day shield

At the cost of 1 Fortune Point, the Inspired can produce a protective circle of light that lasts as many minutes as his Flame score and of which the diameter is equal his

Flame score in yards. Within that area, the creatures of the Darken (such as demons) will be repelled. The Inspired must succeed in a (Flame x 2) + 1d10 roll against a creature's WIL x 2 (or Darkening/5 if it does not have WIL) + 1d10. The SM is the number of rounds that the creature will not be able to enter the circle.

Flame prescience

By using 1 Fortune Point, the Inspired can recognize a servant of the Darken. He must succeed in a Flame + PER roll against DIF 20. If he succeeds, the EG must reveal to him the creature's Blackness score.

Burning weapon

This power enables the Inspired to warm his weapon to the heat of his Flame by spending 1 Fortune Point. The weapon must be at least partially metal (a mace, a sword or an axe can be used, but not a staff). The weapon is granted a damage bonus equal to the Inspired's Flame score. This bonus lasts until the weapon is sheathed. The weapon becomes red hot with a score of 2, white hot with a score of 4, ablaze with a score of 6, pure flame at 8, and it will radiate blinding light at a score of 10. The Inspired is unaffected by the power of his own weapon.

Insensibility

The Inspired chooses a type of damage (fire, cutting weapons, impaling weapons, drowning, etc.), and at the cost of 1 Fortune Point, he becomes resistant to it. This damage is divided by 3 for the duration of the battle.

Tongue of fire

This power, through the use of 1 Fortune Point, enables the Inspired and his interlocutors to speak a strange language. The dialect seems foreign to all that speak it, and they could not say how they came to speak it. This power lasts as long as the Inspired is taking part in the conversation.

Substantial Flame

The Inspired chooses one type of physical need (breathing, eating or drinking). This power, which costs him 1 Fortune Point, makes him insensitive to that need for a period of time (1 hour for breathing; 3 days for drinking or 1 week for eating).

Fiery oration

By using 1 Fortune Point, the Inspired is able to inflame a crowd. He benefits from a +15 bonus to all Eloquence or Fast talk rolls that involve exacerbating a violent feeling in his listeners. This power lasts until the feelings have burst into a riot, a battle, a duel, etc.

War fury

After using 1 Fortune Point, the Inspired is able to enter a dangerous war trance. He is granted a bonus equal to his Flame score for all attack and damage rolls. In addition, he is unaffected by negative modifiers (up to his Flame score) due to serious or critical wounds. In return, he is unable to stop fighting until all his opponents are dead. He is also unable to use artful thrusts or maneuvers, and defends himself with a negative modifier equal to his Flame score. The fury ends with the battle.

Quick as fire

If he uses 1 Fortune Point, the Inspired can multiply his MOV by his Flame score divided by 3 as long as he keeps up his speed.

Iron will

By using 1 Fortune Point, the Inspired can automatically succeed in a WIL roll with a SM equal to his Flame score.

Spitfire

At the cost of 1 Fortune Point, the Inspired is able to spit out flames. The VIR of the Flames is equal to his STA and their range is equal to his STR. The cone of flames can hit up to STR/3 victims as long as they are not more than a yard away from each other.

SANGUINE

"The tavern that Agone frequented before, and even after he went to the Borrowlight School, still exists. Its owner, Sanguine, was recently charged by a Ciphred edict. She is suspected of frequently changing her blood with that of Dancers in order to prevent aging. This unlikely story has nevertheless motivated a Censor to conduct an investigation. The outcome of the inquiry is still unknown. We can, however, understand the consequences for Dancers if the possibility of life lengthening is revealed to be true.

Sanguine saved herself by flight. Using her connections in Lorgol, she is rumored to have found refuge in a Pictureworld. The Censors will first have to find it before they can catch her. In any case, all the rumors concerning this story have swiftly been smothered because if ever others tried to emulate Sanguine, the future of the Dancers would be endangered."

below. Certain powers are permanent, and some others require the sacrifice of Fortune Points. A given power can be chosen twice only if it produces different effects (insensitive to hunger, then insensitive to thirst, for example).

Inspired who become Damned do not lose those powers and can still use them. On the other hand, Flame reduction makes them unusable. They have not disappeared, they are merely useless until the Flame score has reached the necessary threshold to regain them. In the meantime, only the powers under that threshold are accessible. For example, if an Inspired had his Flame diminished by 2 points (from 5 to 3), he could only use the first two powers he obtained when his Flame was increased. He could only use the third one if his Flame score went back up to 4, and his fourth if his Flame went back up to 5. In the exact same way, a Damned gains Gifts as his Darkening and Perfidy points increase.

Movement

Traveling can be simulated in many different manners; each of these have their own rules.

♣ Race

An individual can move at two times his MOV without hurrying. Once he decides to move faster, the following rules should be used.

In order to know at what speed a character is moving, he must roll AGI + Athletics (for a speed race) or STA + Athletics (for an endurance race) against the DIF specified in the "Race" table.

In a speed race, the roll is required every round. In an endurance race, a successful roll must be made every 10 minutes. Every time the character fails, his MOV level is lowered by one until he attains MOV x 1 (speed at which he no longer needs to roll). No fumble can be obtained on a race roll.

♣ Jumping

The jumping roll is STR + Athletics. The DIF depends on the distance the character is trying to jump over. If the character is attempting a standing jump, the DIF is raised by 10.

No one can jump more than MOV x 3 yards (approximately 24 yards for a giant...). Black feys never fail their jumps because they fly (within the limits of their flight range).

♣ Swimming

Swimming requires a STR + Swim or a STA + Swim roll, depending on whether the character must swim fast (roll each round) or for a long period (roll every 10 minutes).

The DIF depends on the speed. Each time the character fails, his swimming speed is lowered by one level. As opposed to racing, fumbles have their normal consequences on rolls while swimming. Moreover, if the swimmer's speed can no longer be lowered, he automatically drowns from exhaustion.

Aquatic creatures use the racing rules instead of the swimming rules, and they cannot, of course, drown.

♣ Flight

Flight uses the same mechanics as racing. The modifiers are not determined by the ground but by the weather.

RACE

| Speed | Speed DIF | Endurance DIF |
|----------|-----------|---------------|
| MOV x 2 | 5 | 15 |
| MOV x 4 | 10 | 20 |
| MOV x 6 | 15 | 25 |
| MOV x 8 | 20 | 30 |
| MOV x 10 | 25 | impossible |
| MOV x 12 | 30 | impossible |

JUMPING

| Distance to jump | DIF length | DIF height |
|------------------|------------|------------|
| MOV x 1/4 | / | 5 |
| MOV x 1/2 | / | 10 |
| MOV | 5 | 15 |
| MOV x 2 | 15 | 20 |
| MOV x 3 | 30 | impossible |

SWIMMING

| Speed | DIF |
|-----------|-----|
| MOV x 1/4 | 5 |
| MOV x 1/2 | 10 |
| MOV | 15 |
| MOV x 2 | 20 |

Combat

Combats are often key moments of an adventure, during which the lives of the Inspired are threatened. These particular situations are governed by specific rules.

In combat, time is crucial. In order to organize the sequence of events, combat situations are divided into 6-second rounds. One minute of combat is made up of 10 rounds.

The round is the base unit during a combat. Each combat round is split into 3 phases: initiative, action declaration, and resolution (which includes initiative order, actions, reactions, and damage).

ACTION AND REACTION DEFINITION

♣ Actions

Generally, actions (attack, spell casting) are aggressive acts. They must be fully specified, with their target, during the declaration phase. If they change in the middle of a round,

COMBAT ROUND SUMMARY

Initiative
PER + AGI + weapon bonus + Body Bonus + 1d10 (closed).

Action declaration
Increasing initiative order

Resolution
♣ Determination of resolution order
Decreasing initiative order, modified by maneuvers and intention changes.

♣ Actions

- Melee attack: MEL + Weapon + weapon attack bonus + 1d10 +/- modifiers against DIF Defense.
- Missile attack: AIM + Weapon + weapon attack bonus + 1d10 +/- modifiers against DIF Defense.
- Spells, Opuses and other actions (First aid, etc.)

♣ Reactions

- Defense: MEL + Weapon + weapon parry bonus + 1d10 +/- modifiers.
- Or: AGI + Dodge - weapon negative modifier + 1d10 +/- modifiers.

♣ Damage
SM + DB + weapon damage bonus.

the EG will have to refer to the "Intention change" paragraph below. There can be no more than one action in a round (except in the case of a maneuver that specifies the contrary).

♣ Reactions

Reactions (parry, dodge, etc.) are usually defensive acts that are decided at the moment of the attack. Therefore, they are not determined during the declaration phase but during the attack. There can be no more than one reaction per round (except in the case of a maneuver that specifies the contrary).

INITIATIVE

The order in which the participants of a combat perform their actions is determined by initiative rolls. Each participant must roll AGI + PER +/- weapon initiative modifier (that initiative is only used for parry weapons when they are used to hit) + 1d10. The roll is always closed.

If a character's weapon is not ready (sword in hand, bow drawn), he suffers a -5 modifier to his initiative.

Players must choose their attack (weapon, spell, etc.) before rolling initiative. Intention changes that generate new initiative modifiers that would raise the initiative higher than the original are not allowed (for example casting a spell: +10 and then choosing to use a rapier: -2).

The initiative of a spell that does not take effect in the round in which it was cast is determined at the moment the character decides to use it.



♣ Initiative Equality

In the case of an initiative tie, the participant with the highest AGI score acts first. If both participants have the same AGI, they each roll a closed die, to which they add their Body Bonus. This must be re-rolled until one of the characters wins.

Example: As they are trying to enter Essinburgh manor, Melaine and Caan run into a patrol composed of a sergeant and a young recruit. The EG decides that all the characters were taken unawares there will be no modifiers. The combat begins. Melaine and Caan are wielding a rapier and a mace respectively; Caan also has a shield. As for the sergeant and his recruit, they both wield an axe and a targe.

Melaine's initiative base (AGI 9, PER 7) is $16 + 2$ (rapier) + 1 (Body Bonus) = 19. Caan's initiative base (AGI 6, PER 7) is $13 + 2$ (Body Bonus) = 15. The sergeants' (AGI 5, PER 6) is $11 + 1$ (axe) = 12. The recruits' (AGI 5, PER 5) is $10 + 1$ (axe) = 11.

Melaine rolls an 8, Caan a 5, the sergeant a 0, and the recruit a 7. The declaration is thus processed in this order: recruit ($7 + 11 = 18$), Caan ($15 + 5 = 20$), sergeant ($10 + 12 = 22$), Melaine ($19 + 8 = 27$).

♣ Surprise

If one of the combatants is surprised, he is unable to perform an action or a reaction. His defense score is adjusted to $AGI + 1d10 - \text{armor modifier}$.

A fighter is considered surprised if he is unable to perceive an action carried out against him. If he is the victim of an attack from behind, he is unable to parry because he did not see the attack. He is also unable to riposte because he has no idea where his opponent exactly is.

DECLARATION

Each player reveals, in increasing initiative order, the action they will carry out during the current round. This is also the moment to declare maneuvers and eventually modify the resolution order. Undertaking a more or less swift maneuver does not indicate whether or not the character's reactions are diminished, but only that the maneuver will take more or less time. The declaration order is not modified by maneuvers.

Example: Melaine is trying her "throwing down" maneuver against Caan. Her initiative is 19, but the maneuver modifies it by -3. She will declare her action at 19, but will carry it out at 16.

♣ Intention change

Once everybody has declared his or her intentions for the round, it is still possible to change them. A fighter can change intentions to adapt himself to actions he had not anticipated. The altered action is however adjusted by -3 for both the resolution order and the action

roll. This modifier can be cumulative if several intention changes are undertaken.

Example: We shall continue with the fight between Melaine, Caan and the patrol. The combatants are in the declaration phase. The recruit starts (initiative 18): she will hit Caan. Now it is his turn (initiative 20). He decides to hit her in the hope of stopping her from hitting him. The sergeant (initiative 22) decides to hit Melaine, and she (initiative 27) decides to attack the sergeant.

RESOLUTION

Actions are resolved in decreasing initiative order, modified by a maneuvers and intention changes.

In case of a tie, the same process as for initiative equality is used.

If an action is negative or equal to 0 in the resolution order (because of negative modifiers), it is considered canceled.

Spells and Opuses depend on the mage's initiative, but take effect with a +10 resolution bonus.

If a combatant has several actions in the round, they are all carried out at the same time.

Example: Caan, who worries that the sergeant is too strong for Melaine, decides to change intention: he will hit the sergeant. He will do that at 17 ($20 - 3$ because of the intention change). His place in the declaration order is still the same (20).

RESOLUTION ORDER MODIFIERS

| | |
|------------------|-----------------|
| Intention change | -3 (cumulative) |
| Spells & Opuses | +10 |

ACTIONS

Most actions are resolved by comparing the attack score to the defense score. Other situations are specified in the "Special cases" paragraph, below.

♣ Movements

During each round, a character can move with no negative modifier as many yards as his MOV. If he wants to move further than that, he must declare his movement as an action.

A fighter that falls to the ground can use an action to get back up: he must succeed in an $AGI \times 2$ roll at DIF 10. If he fails, he suffers a -3 penalty to all attack and defense rolls.

♣ Pacific actions

Pacific actions are those that do not have any direct effect on the combat: casting a healing Spell, picking a lock, etc.

These actions take as much time as the EG decides (unless specified, such as for Spells), and undergo a -4 penalty (very disadvantageous surroundings) due to the fighting.

♣ Magic

The use of magic is specified in the chapter devoted to it. Magic can have direct effects on combat: a mage can teleport himself out of range, destroy a weapon, distract an opponent, etc. If the Spell or Opus does not have a direct effect on the combat, refer to the paragraph above, "Pacific actions".

♣ Attack scores

Attack rolls are open rolls because of the stress inherent to combat.

• MELEE ATTACK

The attribute used is MEL to which the relevant Weapon skill is added, + 1d10. This roll is, of course, modified by any applicable bonuses or penalties. The DIF is determined by the opponent's defense roll.

• MELEE ATTACK SPECIAL CASES

Multiple attackers on one target

All the attackers are granted an attack roll bonus of two times the number of attackers. If there are two the bonus is +4, if there are three the bonus is +6, etc.

Off hand

This means that the attacker is not using his usual weapon hand. Shields are always used in the off hand, and therefore do not incur any penalty.

Mounted combat

When an attacker is mounted, he must use the Ride skill as a restrictive for all his rolls.

If a mounted fighter has to dodge an attack, he will have to succeed on a Dodge -5 roll against DIF attack roll. Moreover, all movements are based on the attributes of the mounts.

For example, if the fighter cannot react to an attack, his natural defense will be determined by adding the mount's AGI (and not the rider's) + 1d10.

• MISSILE ATTACKS

The attribute used for missile attacks is AIM added to the relevant Weapon skill + 1d10. This roll is modified by any applicable bonus or penalty.

The DIF does not depend on the defender's score but on the distance of the attacker from his target. The following modifiers are not affected by the defender's reactions (if he tries to dodge the attack for example). That case is explained in the "Missile defense" below

| AIM DIFFICULTY | |
|---------------------------------------|-----|
| Range | DIF |
| Short (between 0 and Range/4) | 10 |
| Medium (between Range/4 and Range/2) | 15 |
| Long (between Range/2 and Range) | 20 |
| Extreme (between Range and Range x 2) | 25 |

SPECIFIC MISSILE ATTACK MODIFIERS

(The normal modifiers apply if necessary)

| Weapon attack bonus | variable |
|---|-----------------------|
| Aiming* | +2 per round |
| Weapon not ready (reloaded during the round) | -5 |
| Attacker on the ground | -3 |
| Attacker moving | -2 |
| Attacker moving fast or mounted | -4 |
| Attacker in melee | -4 |
| Size of the target | target SIZ (-2 to +3) |
| Target half visible (head and torso, or on his knees) | -2 |
| Target hardly visible or prone | -4 |
| Total darkness (no light) | impossible |

*: The aiming bonus cannot be higher than the attacker's Weapon skill.

• MISSILE ATTACK SPECIAL CASE

Mounted target

To determine the target's defense score, the mount's AGI is used (see Missile defense, below).

The SIZ of the mount is added to the target's SIZ (negative sizes are treated as 0) to determine the DIF of the roll, unless the attacker specifies who he is aiming at, in which case the DIF is determined normally. If he hits without aiming, the victim of the attack is determined randomly by rolling 1d10: from 1 to 7 it is the mount, from 8 to 10 it is the rider. The rider's SIZ is added to the roll.

Example: An archer shoots at a black fey mounted on a mare. Her SIZ is -2 and that of the horse is 2. The bonus should be -2 + 2 = 0. But as the fey's SIZ is negative, it is

SPECIFIC MELEE ATTACK MODIFIERS

(The normal modifiers also apply as appropriate.)

| Weapon attack bonus | variable |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Off hand* | -5 |
| Multiple attackers* | + 2 per attacker |
| Attacker on the ground | -3 |
| Intention change | -3 per intention change |
| Weapon not ready (drawn in the round) | -4 |

*: See "Special cases", above

considered equal to 0, so the attack bonus is +2 (the size of the horse). However, if the archer hits without aiming, he will have to determine the victim of his shot on 1d10, modified by the black fey's SIZ. He will hit her only if he rolls a 10 (10 - 2 = 8).

REACTIONS

Reactions are declared just after an attack has been undertaken against a defender.

☛ Defense scores

• MELEE DEFENSE

Defense rolls are open rolls.

There are two types of defense: "passive" (natural defense) and "active" (dodge and parry).

If the defender is not able to actively react, he will have to use his natural defense. His defense score will then be: AGI + 1d10 - armor penalty.

When the defender is actively defending, he has the choice of dodging the attack (avoiding the hit) or of parrying the attack (blocking or deflecting the hit) with his weapon.

If the defender chooses to parry or dodge the attack, his defense score should be calculated as follows:

☛ Dodge: AGI + Dodge - armor penalty + 1d10.

☛ Parry: MEL + Weapon + weapon parry bonus + 1d10.

Dodging an attack is the most prudent defense option when fighting against powerful creatures that inflict so much damage that parrying could be dangerous. If the dodge score is not equaled (the attacker obtains a higher or an equal SM) no damage is inflicted.

Parrying is the most frequently used option. When a defender is parrying, the attacker rolls his dice normally but adds his damage to his attack roll; thus, even a good parry cannot always stop a powerful blow. A two-han-

SPECIFIC DEFENSE MODIFIERS

| Weapon parry bonus | variable |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Mounted (dodging only) | -5 |
| Weapon not ready (drawn in the round) | -5 |
| Off hand* | -5 |
| Side attack | -1 |
| Back attack | -8 |
| Defender surprised | impossible to dodge or parry |
| Defender on the ground | -3 |
| Defender raised over defender | +2 |
| Attack and parry with the same weapon | -1 |
| Intention change | -3 (cumulative) |

*. The "off hand" penalty is applied if the defender is not trained to defend with that hand. For right-handed person with a shield, the off hand is the right hand.

SPECIFIC MISSILE DEFENSE MODIFIERS

| | |
|-----------------|------------------|
| Normal movement | -2 |
| Swift movement | -4 |
| Dodge | -(AGI + Dodge)/2 |

ded sword cannot be parried — it would shatter the defender's shoulder. (It hits more easily because its damage is added to the SM, even when the SM is negative.) And we haven't even mentioned giants, who just love opponents who parry...

• MISSILE DEFENSE

In order to have any chance of avoiding a missile attack, the defender must have a way to move so that the shot misses. There is no hope of dodging in a narrow corridor, for example. If the defender is unaware of the attack, the EG must determine which modifiers will affect the attacker (see below).

DAMAGE TO OBJECTS

To shatter an object, one must inflict as many damage points to it as its Solidity. The Solidity of an object depends on its material and size. A small object's Solidity scores are listed on the table from small to large.

Example: A black fey's dagger (SIZ -2), even though metal, will have the Solidity of wood (Metal - 2 Solidity levels = Wood). A giant's spoon (SIZ + 1), though wooden, will have the Solidity of stone.

| Materials | Solidity |
|-------------------|----------|
| Paper | 1 |
| Cloth | 2 |
| Glass | 3 |
| Wood | 5 |
| Stone | 10 |
| Metal | 20 |
| Presence of Shard | + Wealth |

THE RESULTS

☛ The attack fails

If the attack does not attain the DIF, it does not inflict any damage.

If the attacker fails with a negative SM of 15 or less, or if the result of the roll is -10 or less, then a fumble occurs. In the case of a fumble, the attack fails automatically even if the attacker had somehow succeeded with these pitiful results.

☛ The attack succeeds and inflicts damage

The attack is a success when the attacker obtains an SM at least equal to the defender's DIF:

☛ Generally, the SM must be equal to or greater than the DIF.

MANEUVER: STUN

Init.: -1

Att.: -2

This maneuver consists of using a weapon to neutralize an opponent (by using the flat of a blade for example), instead of killing him. If a Serious wound is inflicted, the hit does not cause a Serious wound but the target will be stunned for the next 5 minutes. The HP are lost anyway, and if a Critical wound is the result of this maneuver, its consequences would affect the target but they would be read on the contusive weapons table. Weapons that cause type C (contusive) damage are granted a + 5 bonus when attempting this maneuver.

We advise you to include this maneuver in your game even if you do not choose to use advanced combat rules.

SIZE GAPS

| Gap | To hit SM |
|-----|-----------|
| -5 | -10 |
| -4 | -8 |
| -3 | -6 |
| -2 | -4 |
| -1 | -2 |
| 0 | 0 |
| +1 | +2 |
| +2 | +4 |
| +3 | +6 |
| +4 | +8 |
| +5 | +10 |

DISPROPORTIONATE SIZE

Missile attacks only use the opponent's SIZ as modifier. However, size differences are crucial for determining the success of a melee attack. For a creature to successfully attack an opponent of the same size, the minimum SM is 0. Size gaps favor smaller creatures.

The gap is equal to (SIZ of the attacker) - (SIZ of the defender).

(Remember: subtracting a negative number is like adding it.) The smaller creature has its minimum to hit SM lowered by 2 per gap point, whereas the taller creature has its minimum to hit SM raised by 2 per gap point. Therefore, the smaller creature could hit its opponent even with a negative SM that should normally result in a failure. Inversely, the taller creature will not automatically hit its opponent even though its SM should be successful (positive SM, but inferior to the SM modified by the size gap).

Extreme example: A black fey attacks a giant. The fey's SIZ is -2 whereas the giant's is +3. The size gap is therefore: $(-2) - (+3) = -5$; so the black fey's minimum to hit SM is -10 (-5×2) . For the giant, the size gap is $(+3) - (-2) = +5$, so the Giant's minimum to hit SM is +10 $(+5 \times 2)$.

The black fey attacks her opponent. Her attack roll is 15. The giant's defense is 25. She should have completely missed her attack. However, her minimum to hit SM is not 0 but -10; she therefore hits her opponent $(15 - 25 = -10)$. Inversely, the Giant will only succeed in his attack if he obtains SM of at least 10 (lower results are ignored). If he succeeded he would probably kill the fey with one blow, but it is probably not possible for him to hit her.

♣ The minimum SM can only be higher than 0 if the attacker is much taller than the defender (see the "Size gap table", below).

♣ The minimum SM can be negative if the attacker is much smaller than the defender or if the defender has parried. In these cases, the SM will diminish the damage.

A SM of -15 or less always results in a fumble. The attacker does not add his damage to it, even when it is a giant inflicting 48 damage. The rule of negative SMs only applies in two situations: if the attacker is much smaller than his target (see below) or if the defender parries.

Therefore, a very powerful weapon or a very strong attacker could inflict damage through an excellent parry or with a mediocre roll.

The total damage is determined: SM + weapon damage + DB - armor.

A damage total that is negative or equal to 0 means that the attack hit the target without causing any damage.

If the damage total is positive, it is subtracted from the victim's HP - the target is wounded. If the total is equal to or greater than the defender's SWT, the hit inflicts a Serious wound. Then, unless the defender was already on the ground, he must succeed in a balance roll $(AGI \times 2 + 1d10)$ against the Serious wound penalty. If he fails, the character falls face down to the ground.

If the total is equal to or higher than the defender's CWT, he suffers a Critical wound (see "Critical wounds" below, for the consequences).

CRITICAL WOUNDS

Serious wounds inflict the following cumulative penalties: -2, -6, -12. See p. 175 for details.

Critical wounds are an optional rule. The EG can decide to use them if he wants combat to be more dangerous.

Critical wounds generally require magical healing, a talented surgeon or a very long convalescence, that is why the EG should estimate their influence on the rhythm of the game.

Critical wounds depend on the type of damage inflicted (contusive, impaling or slashing) by the weapon. If the weapon inflicts several damage types, it is up to the attacker to choose the one he used. The severity of the wound is then determined with 1d10 (closed) on the table below.

If the attacker is much smaller than the defender, the EG can decide to divide the Critical wound result of the roll by the size gap (minimum 1).

Example: A black fey attacks a giant. With an incredible 87 SM, she causes a Critical wound. She rolls a die and obtains a 10. As the size gap between the two opponents is 5, her roll becomes 2 $(10/5 = 2)$. If she had rolled 7, the final result would have been 1 (result rounded off at the inferior). If she had rolled 2, the final result would have been 1 (1 is the minimum possible). Unimpressive? But what was she hoping to do to a giant?

CONTUSIVE CRITICAL WOUNDS

(Contusive weapons, C)

- 1 **Shattered leg.** The defender takes a Serious wound, falls to the ground and cannot use his wounded leg for at least the next three months. A First aid roll must be made or the victim is affected by the *Lame* fault.
- 2 **Shattered leg, open fracture.** Same as 1, but the defender is affected by minor hemorrhaging (1 HP per round).
- 3 **Smashed joint.** Same as 2, but the hemorrhaging is more severe (3 HP per round). Moreover, the joint cannot be healed. The defender is automatically *Lame!*
- 4 **Shattered arm.** Same as 1, but it is the arm that is damaged.
- 5 **Shattered arm, open fracture.** Same as 2, but it is the arm that is damaged.
- 6 **Smashed articulation.** Same as 3, but it is the elbow or the wrist that is damaged. The defender gains the *Damaged articulation* fault. All actions with that arm are modified by -5 and he loses 1 point of AGI.
- 7 **Abdomen hit, internal hemorrhage.** The character falls to the ground unable to move for the next 10 rounds. He spits out some blood and permanently loses 1d10 HP permanently.
- 8 **Torso hit, pulmonary lesion.** The defender's ribs have been smashed in. The pain is unbearable. He falls on the ground and takes two Serious wounds, plus an additional -4 penalty for all physical actions. One of the Serious wounds will be permanent.
- 9 **Head hit.** If the defender was wearing a helmet, he falls unconscious on the ground for the next 30 minutes. If not, the skull fracture causes a (20 - STA) month coma.
- 10 **Neck hit.** The noise is sickening, but that is no longer a problem for the defender who is struck down dead.

SLASHING CRITICAL WOUNDS

(Slashing weapons, S)

- 1 **Large gash in the leg.** The hemorrhaging (5 HP/round) requires Surgery (DIF 10) or permanent MOV - 1.
- 2 **Huge slash in the leg.** The hemorrhaging is severe (6 HP/round) and can only be stopped by Surgery (DIF 15). The defender suffers a -1 to his MOV permanently.
- 3 **Legs nearly cut off.** The hemorrhaging is lethal (12 HP/round) and requires Surgery (DIF 15) to be stopped. If he survives, the defender will have a *Missing limb*.
- 4 **Large gash in the arm.** Same as 1, but it is the arm that is damaged. Instead of MOV - 1, actions that require that arm are penalized by -1.
- 5 **Slash and arm fracture.** Severe hemorrhaging (6 HP/round), the arm is unusable. The bone must be set back in place or the defender will suffer a -2 penalty to all actions requiring that arm (even when both arms are used). Setting the bone requires a DIF 15 Surgery roll.
- 6 **Arm cut off.** Same as 3, but it is the arm that is damaged.
- 7 **Gash across the torso.** The weapon grazes the thorax, grating against the ribs. The hemorrhaging is deadly (12 HP/round). What a scar!
- 8 **Open abdomen.** The intestines fall out on the ground. The wound requires Surgery (DIF 20) to put everything back inside or the defender will die in two days. A permanent Serious wound.
- 9 **Right in the head.** If the defender has a closed helmet (full armor), he is only stunned and suffers from a cranial traumatism (-4 for all mental actions for the next 2 months). If not, the weapon furrows through the face and blows an eye out. The defender is then *Disfigured* (CHA - 2, maximum lowered by 2 points) and has a *Disabled* sense (sight: AIM - 1). The wound cannot be healed with surgery.
- 10 **The torso is split from the elbow down to the sternum.** Blood everywhere, and the weapon is stuck in the breast-bone (the defender is, of course, dead!).

Combat example: Melaine (initiative 27) hits the sergeant (initiative 22), and he hits her back. Caan (initiative 20) was going to hit the recruit but changed intention and hits the sergeant. The recruit (initiative 18) hits Caan.

Resolution.

Melaine starts because she has the highest initiative. The sergeant decides to parry her attack (as his reaction). Melaine rolls 10 and then 5. She thus obtains 7 (MEL) + 6 (Weapon skill: rapier) + 1 (Body Bonus) + 2 (rapier attack

bonus) + 15 (the result of her roll) + 2 (she hits attacking the same opponent as Caan) = 33.

The sergeant rolls 2 and thus obtains 6 (MEL) + 7 (Weapon: targe) + 3 (targe parry bonus) + 2 (the result of the roll) = 18. Melaine inflicts 19 damage points to the sergeant: 32 + 2 (DB) + 3 (weapon damage bonus) - 18 (the sergeant's parry). The sergeant (45 HP, SWT 15, CVT 22) takes a Serious wound, fails on his balance roll, and falls to the ground.

The sergeant attacks instead of getting back up. Melaine decides to dodge his blow. The sergeant rolls 7 and thus

IMPALING CRITICAL WOUNDS

(Impaling weapons, I)

- 1 **Pierced calf.** Small hemorrhage (lose 1 HP/round). Surgery roll required (DIF 10) to stop the bleeding. MOV - 2 until recovery. One Serious wound.
- 2 **Weapon runs through the thigh.** Severe hemorrhage (6 HP/round). Surgery roll required (DIF 15) to stop the bleeding. MOV - 2 until recovery. One Serious wound.
- 3 **Femoral artery cut.** Deadly hemorrhaging (12 HP/round). Surgery required (DIF 20) to stop the bleeding. In case of failure, risk of gangrene and loss of the leg (death or Missing limb). The defender will be affected by a permanent Serious wound and is unable to move for the first month (or else the hemorrhaging starts again). MOV - 4 until recovery.
- 4 **Pierced hand.** The weapon falls to the ground... and so does a finger. Permanent -1 penalty for all actions that require the use of fingers.
- 5 **Weapon runs through forearm.** Severe hemorrhaging (6 HP/round). Surgery required (DIF 15) or else important muscular problems ensue (permanent -4 to all actions that require the use of that arm).
- 6 **Elbow or wrist tendons cut.** The arm is unusable. The defender is permanently affected by Missing limb.
- 7 **Weapon runs through groin.** The pain is excruciating. The defender must succeed in a STA roll at DIF 10 or die from a heart attack. The defender falls to the ground and cries in pain. Wound cannot be healed with surgery. The genitals are still functional, but the defender is now sterile.
- 8 **Impaled in the heart.** Instantaneous death.
- 9 **Weapon runs through cheek.** If the defender has a closed helmet (full armor) the weapon runs through the chin and pins the tongue to the palate. Permanent elocution difficulties (-2 for all actions involving speech). If the defender has an open helmet or no helmet at all, both cheeks are lacerated, muscles are cut, and the jaw is hanging off. Surgery required (DIF 25) or defender will be permanently mute. If the surgery succeeds, permanent elocution difficulties are incurred (see above).
- 10 **Bull's eye!** Instantaneous death.

obtains 6 (MEL) + 7 (Weapon: Axe) + 7 (result of the die) - 2 (Serous wound penalty) - 3 (on the ground penalty) = 15. Melaine rolls 3 and thus obtains 9 (AGI) + 7 (Dodge) + 1 (Body Bonus) + 3 (the result of the roll) = 20. Therefore she dodges the sergeant's blow.

The recruit now attacks Caan. As the latter changed intention, he suffers a -3 penalty in the resolution order and falls down to 17, just after the recruit. Her Base is 11 and Caan's dodging Base is 14. She rolls 8, her attack roll is 11 + 8 = 19. Caan rolls 3, his dodging roll is 14 + 1 + 3 - 3 (his intention change is also applicable to his reaction) = 15. The recruit's SM is 19 - 15 = 4. To determine the damage inflicted on Caan, + 6 is added to the SM (the weapon's damage bonus). Caan takes 4 + 6 = 10 damage points from which the protection of his leather vest (2) is subtracted. Caan loses 8 HP.

Caan is the last one to attack in this round, and he chooses to attack the sergeant. With his attack Base of 18 (MEL 7 + Weapon: Mace 9 + mace attack bonus 2) + 7 (the result of the roll) + 1 (Body Bonus) - 3 (intention change) + 2 (he is attacking the same opponent than Melaine) = 25. The sergeant's defense score is bad: 5 (AGI) - 3 (on the ground penalty) + 4 (the result of the roll) = 6. Caan hits the sergeant with a 19 SM (25 - 6). The damage is 19 (SM) + 4 (mace damage bonus) + 4 (DB) for a total of 27. The sergeant takes a Critical wound (his CWT is 22), but anyway his HP are now lower than 0, so he faints.

This first combat round is going quite well for the two Inspired; only one lesser wound for them and they have already neutralized the sergeant.

Example (continued): Later, Melaine and Caan, fleeing, are spotted by a patrol containing a minotaur and an ogre, who are both armed with long bows. The EG decides to cancel initiative because the two Inspired ignore being spotted and are running for their lives. Both archers have AGI 13 + (Weapon: Long bow) - penalty (darkness: -2 for the Minotaur because of his night-vision and -4 for the Ogre). The long bow does not grant them any bonus, therefore the Minotaur's Base is 11 and the Ogre's is 9.

Melaine and Caan are at medium range (approximately 30 yards). They are still trying to avoid patrols with Stealth, so they are moving slowly. The EG decides that the DIF is 15 (medium range and no movement penalty). The minotaur aims Melaine and rolls 7, for a total attack score of 18. His SM is 3 (18 - 15), his arrow hits Melaine. The longbow's damage bonus is + 6, so the total damage is therefore 9 (3 + 6).

The ogre attacks Caan. He rolls 1 and then 7, he obtains 3 (9 + 1 - 7). His SM is - 12 (3 - 15), he completely misses Caan and nearly produces a fumble.

Both humans start zigzagging their way out. The EG determines an additional - 4 penalty for the patrol to hit them...



ADVANCED COMBAT

Advanced combat rules enable more precise combat management by providing more options and specific techniques, such as artful thrusts, to the combatants.

☛ Maneuvers

Maneuvers are acts of combat that any experienced fighter should know. They are therefore accessible as soon as a character has a score in a Weapon skill.

The maneuver description format is as follows:

☛ **The specific requirements** necessary to use the maneuver. All the requirements must be satisfied.

☛ **Init.** +/- X is the initiative bonus/penalty applied to the maneuver. This bonus/penalty only affects the resolution order not the declaration.

☛ **Att.** +/- X is the bonus/penalty applicable to the user's Weapon skill.



☛ **Def.** +/- X is the bonus/penalty applicable to the user's defense score (dodge or parry or other options granted by the maneuver).

☛ **Damage:** X is the damage score modifier for the maneuver. For example, "Damage reduced to 0" means that whatever the attack score, no damage will be inflicted on the defender.

Example: To execute the Mounted charge maneuver, one needs a mount, a long-sized weapon (SIZ 1) and to have won the initiative. If one of these three requirements has not been met, the maneuver cannot be attempted. This advanced combat action grants the following: damage is raised by +3 + SIZ (attacker's) + SIZ (mount's) + MOV (mount's).

☛ List of maneuvers

• STUN (ACTION)

Init. -1, Att.: -2

This maneuver consists of using a weapon to neutralize an opponent, by using the flat of a blade, instead of killing him. If a Serious wound is inflicted, the hit does not cause any Serious wound but the target will be stunned for the next 5 minutes. The HP are lost anyway and if a Critical wound is the result of this maneuver, its consequences still affect the target, but they will be read on the contusive weapons table.

Weapons that cause type C (contusive) damage are granted a +5 bonus when attempting this maneuver.

• CREATE AN ADVANTAGE (ACTION)

Requirement: a minimum SM of +5

Damage: reduced to 0

The SM is kept aside for the next round where it is added to the new SM (only if the new SM is positive). The character can repeat this maneuver over and over again so long as the new SM is always positive (if not, the maneuver fails); he then adds all the SM together.

• TOTAL DODGE (REACTION)

The defender sacrifices all his actions in favor of his dodge; he can therefore react to all attacks in the round (whatever their amount or origin).

• CHARGE (ACTION)

Requirement: to carry the initiative.

Damage: +3 + SIZ + MOV. Def.: -4

The character takes a run of at least his MOV in yards before violently attacking his opponent.

• MOUNTED CHARGE

Requirements: a mount, carry the initiative, and a weapon of SIZ 1 or more

Damage: +3 + SIZ + SIZ (of the mount) + MOV (of the mount)

The character must charge from at least the mount's MOV in yards. He hits his opponent with all the mount's inertia.

- **PASSING BLOW (ACTION)**

Requirements: a weapon of SIZ 0 or greater, carry the initiative, a mount

Att.: -4

The fighter hits his opponent while moving (-4 attack penalty) and gets away as soon as possible in order to avoid the riposte. The mount's MOV is added to the dodge: AGI + Ride + MOV (of the mount) + 1d10. It is impossible to parry a blow this way, but the -5 penalty for dodging is ignored.

- **FULL ATTACK (ACTION)**

Init.: +1, **Att.:** +3, **Damage:** +2

The fighter gives up his reactions to concentrate on his attack.

- **DEFENSIVE GAME (ACTION)**

Requirement: a weapon with a parry bonus of 0 or more

Init.: -X, **Att.:** -X, **Def.:** +X

The fighter gives up some of his attack capability to protect himself. He chooses to suffer a -X initiative penalty (X must be inferior to his Weapon skill). His defense is raised by +X points.

- **WEAKNESS (ACTION)**

Requirement: an impaling weapon

Init.: -2, **Att.:** -4

The attacker hits his opponent so as to go pierce the armor. If he succeeds, he can divide the armor protection by 2. This maneuver is not effective on magical armor.

- **KEEP IN CHECK (ACTION)**

Requirements: a longer weapon than the opponent's, carry the initiative

Damage: -10

The fighter attacks to keep his opponent away from him instead of wounding him. If he succeeds, the defender will then attack with a -10 penalty.

- **CLOSING IN**

Requirements: carry the initiative, a shorter weapon than the opponent's

Def.: -5

The fighter dangerously approaches his adversary so as to hinder him from using his weapon. If he succeeds, his opponent will suffer a -10 penalty to all his attack rolls against the fighter using this maneuver (as long as the attacker carries the initiative). The attacker's defense penalty (-5) only applies for the first round of the maneuver: the following rounds, only the opponent's penalty is applied.

- **THROWING DOWN (ACTION)**

Requirements: a slashing or contusive weapon, defender's SIZ not superior by more than 1 point than attacker's SIZ

Init.: -3, **Att.:** -3, **Damage:** +1

The fighter uses the strength of his blow to knock down his opponent. If he succeeds, the defender must make a balance roll or he falls on the ground (even if he does not take a Serious wound). If the damage causes a Serious wound, the defender does not need to roll balance because he falls anyway.

- **FEINT (ACTION)**

Requirement: a one-handed weapon

Init.: -5, **Att.:** -5, **Damage:** reduced to 0

The fighter tries to force his opponent to lower his guard. If he succeeds, the feint enables the attacker to hit his adversary next round with no chance to parry. If he fails, the attacker suffers a -1 penalty to his initiative and attack rolls on the next round.

- **DISARM (ACTION)**

Damage: reduced to 0

The attacker uses the strength of his blow to tear his opponent's weapon away.

The SM of the maneuver must be superior to STR (of the adversary) + weapon defense bonus (of the adversary). If the two scores (SM and defense) are equal, the defender keeps his weapon in hand but suffers a -2 initiative penalty for the next round.

- **THE POINT OF THE SWORD (ACTION)**

Requirement: an impaling weapon

Init.: +X, **Att.:** -X, **Def.:** -X

The fighter gives up some of his precision and defensive capacity to hit his opponent as fast as possible.

- **DOUBLE ATTACK (ACTION)**

Requirement: two one-handed weapons

Att.: -10 to each attack roll

The fighter attacks two times. If the defender has only one reaction, the attacker chooses which of the two blows is parried or dodged. If the attacker is ambidextrous, his rolls are penalized by only -5. The "off hand" penalty does not apply to this maneuver.

- **DOUBLE PARRY (REACTION)**

Requirement: two weapons with parry bonuses greater than 0

Def.: -10 to each parry roll

The defender parries two times. If he is ambidextrous, he only subtracts 5 from both his parry rolls. The "off hand" penalty does not apply to this maneuver.

- **IN FORCE ATTACK (ACTION)**

Damage: +STR, **Def.:** -8

The attacker hits his opponent with so much strength than the opponent may not be able to parry. This attack leaves the attacker nearly defenseless. If he wields a two-handed weapon, the attacker is granted an additional -5 damage bonus.

- **WEAPON BREAK (ACTION)**

Requirement: a bigger (SIZ) weapon than the targeted one

Att.: +1.

The attack procedure is normal but the damage is inflicted to the opponent's weapon. If the damage is equal or superior to 5 times the opponent's weapon damage, it breaks.

- **RIPOSTE (REACTION/ACTION)**

Requirement: an SM of +10 or more on a defense roll
The defender can attempt an additional free attack.

- **SWEEPING BLOW (ACTION)**

Requirement: a SIZ at least 2 points greater than that of all adversaries

Init.: -1. **Att.:** +2. **Def.:** -4. **Damage:** /2.

The fighter hits everyone (opponents and allies) within the range (SIZ) of the weapon at the same time with a sweeping blow. He only rolls one attack whereas each defender must roll their defense (normal parry or dodge).

- **IRON WALL (ACTION)**

Requirement: a weapon with a parry bonus less than 2.

Def.: + DB + weapon damage bonus.

The defender gives up all his actions to perform a complicated parry, using his weapon to block all his adversaries. The total parry score is then divided by the number of opponents.

♣ Artful thrusts

Certain types of attacks can only be learned in fencing schools from masters at arms. These artful thrusts require specific training to be mastered, and only experienced fighters can hope to use them.

Each of them is specifically adapted to a weapon (a branch of the Weapon skill) and therefore can only be used with the given weapon. The "feint of Jarnac" for example, requires the use of a sword.

An artful thrust can only be used once on the same opponent in a fight. Once the adversary witnessed the thrust, he will be on his guard and will strive to hinder the attacker from trying it again. However, an artful thrust can be used more than once in a fight as long as it is targeted at different opponents. Moreover, an opponent who was once victim of the thrust can be affected again during another fight.

An artful thrust is an asset that has to be bought at the creation of the character or developed during the game. In the descriptions, the required weapon and the rarity of the thrust are in square brackets. The rarity score represents the DIF of the roll necessary to find a master at arms that can teach a specific thrust: INT + Weapon skill against DIF rarity of the thrust. The character will then have to convince the master to teach the technique. The rarity score divided by 4 is the number of creation points required to buy the asset.

- **FEINT OF JARNAC (ACTION) [SWORD, 20]**

Requirement: be on the ground, obtain a SM of +5 or more

The next attack slices the heel of the opponent's Achilles tendon. If the defender survives, he has a permanent Serious wound and a Missing limb (leg).

- **GREAT BUCKLERY (ACTION) [OGRE AXE, 12]**

Requirement: the opponent must have a shield.
Damage: reduced to 0.

Instead of hitting his opponent, the attacker smashes his shield into pieces. The shield becomes unusable.

- **THRUST OF NEVERS (ACTION) [RAPIER, 24],**

- **KISS OF THE CYCLOPS (ACTION) [LANCE, 28]**

Requirements: carry the initiative, obtain a SM of 10 or more, fight against an armored opponent that has no helmet

The adversary is hit in the middle of the forehead, leading to a quick and painless death.

- **FINGER SOUP (ACTION) [MACE, 16], FLYING**

- **HAND (ACTION) [SWORD, 16], REFUSED BLESSING (ACTION) [SCIMITAR, 16].**

Requirement: attacker must obtain a SM of -10 or less

The defender's fingers have are smashed or his hand is cut off at the wrist. He takes a Serious wound and has just lost the use of his weapon hand.

- **DOUBLE PHOENIX (ACTION) [DOUBLE AXE, 24],**

- **ONE-TWO (ACTION) [GIANT AXE, 28]**

Requirement: fighting at least two opponents whose SIZ is inferior to the attacker's

The attack inflicts as much damage to all opponents as it does to the target of the blow (the opponent that parries). The movement of the axe resembles the shape of an eight and is generally very bloody.

- **COUNTER-CHARGE (ACTION) [GREAT LANCE, 12],**

- **HOOK (ACTION) [HALBERD, 16]**

Requirement: opponent charges with a shorter weapon

The Inspired performs his thrust before his charging opponent, whatever the resolution order. The opponent's "Charge" maneuver damage bonus is inflicted to him as if it were the defender who had charged. This thrust also works against "Mounted charge" and "Passing blow" (in the latter case, the attacker loses the effects of his maneuver and takes the damage).

- **PETITE BUCKLERY (ACTION) [JAVELIN, 12]**

Requirement: opponent must have a shield

Instead of hitting the opponent, the attacker drives his weapon into the opponent's shield. At the same moment, the attacker unsheathes another weapon. The weapon stuck in the shield penalizes the opponent by

-5 until he gets rid of his shield (he has to hold the fight for two rounds in order to get rid of it).

- **LITTLE GONG (ACTION)** [SLEDGE-HAMMER, 16], **MUSICIAN'S THRUST (ACTION)** [WAR HAMMER, 16], **GREAT GONG (ACTION)** [OGRE Mallet, 16]

Requirement: opponent must have a shield and be using it to parry

A masterly thrust on the opponent's shield, which will start to vibrate wildly; the adversary is nearly stunned. He therefore loses his next action and reaction.

- **PRICKADE (ACTION)** [WAR HAMMER, 12]

Requirements: fighting an armored adversary, obtain a SM of +5 or more

The blow is very precisely performed, it completely ignores the protection of the armor.

- **SERPENTINE (ACTION)** [FLAIL, 16], **GREAT COMET (ACTION)** [BALL & CHAIN, 16]

This artful thrust consists of anticipating the opponent's parry so that the chain goes over the weapon and that the ball hits him anyway. Against this thrust, the defender's parry is penalized by -10.

War equipment

SIZES AND EQUIPMENT

The tallest and the smallest characters are generally seasonlings. None of them have actually developed a true military culture. In this domain, they rely on human ingenuity. Height differences complicate the matter further. Giant plate armor is not impossible to produce, but their pacific nature does not motivate them to study weapon and armor production. Moreover, seasonlings generally use human armor when they need it.

ARMOR

Armor causes penalties to those who wear it. This penalty applies to all AGI rolls (AGI as unique attribute), and it is specified for each type of armor. All armor can be used in three ways: vest only, partial and full. The last

two methods result in a PER penalty due to the helmet.

♣ **Vest only:** The armor only protects the torso and the arms.

♣ **Partial:** -1 on PER rolls. Protects all limbs as well as the head, but it has no joint protection.

♣ **Full:** -3 on PER rolls. This armor consists in a closed helm, leather or chain mail additions to joints, etc. When a seasonling whose SIZ is other than 0 chooses an armor, his SIZ modifies the attributes of the armor. If the creature's SIZ is less than 0, the chosen armor goes back up the table (toward lower protection armors) as many lines as the seasonling's SIZ difference from 0. Inversely, if the seasonling's SIZ is greater than 0, the chosen armor will go down (toward the higher protection values) as many lines as the creature's SIZ difference from 0.

Example: a black fey (SIZ-2) is wearing partial plate armor, so one reads 2 lines higher on the table: she obtains 9 protection points and a -6 penalty. The black fey's plate armor is so thin that it does not protect as well as normal human plate armors.

A giant wearing scale armor will use the attributes of a plate armor (3 lines below). The giant would not wear a chain mail or plate armor because of the weight. (A metal as solid and light as that has not yet been invented.)

♣ Armor description

Padded clothes: This armor consists of several layers of heavy cloth with some leather additions. The corresponding helm is often made of boiled leather or, for the more sophisticated models, chain mail coifs.

Leather: It consists of several layers of supple leather, a boiled leather breastplate and sometimes metal joint additions. The corresponding helm is generally made of boiled leather strengthened by chain mail.

Studded leather: Similar to leather armor, this armor is reinforced by metal nails, rings or plates. The helm is generally a metal calotte or basinet with a nose protector. It can be composed of a chain mail veil and a flap.

Scale mail: This is a heavy leather-and-metal armor. The leather is completely covered by overlapped metal pieces that provide good mobility and no unprotected

| ARMOR | | | | | | |
|-----------------|-----------|-------|---------|-------|---------|-------|
| Armor type | Vest only | | Partial | | Full | |
| | Penalty | Prot. | Penalty | Prot. | Penalty | Prot. |
| Padded clothes | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 2 |
| Leather | -1 | 2 | -1 | 3 | -2 | 4 |
| Studded leather | -1 | 3 | -2 | 5 | -4 | 6 |
| Scale mail | -2 | 4 | -4 | 7 | -6 | 8 |
| Banded mail | -3 | 5 | -6 | 9 | -10 | 10 |
| Chain mail | -4 | 6 | -8 | 11 | -12 | 12 |
| Plate | -5 | 7 | -10 | 13 | -14 | 14 |

TWO-HANDED MELEE WEAPON USE

The use of a one-handed melee weapon with two hands diminishes the minimum STR threshold by 2 points and the minimum AGI threshold by 1 point. Moreover, the damage bonus is raised by 1 point. On the other hand, the initiative bonus is lowered by 2 points.

| | Init. | Att. | Par. | Dam. | STR | AGI |
|-------------------|-------|------|------|------|-----|-----|
| Weapon (2-handed) | -2 | 0 | 0 | +1/1 | -2 | -1 |

leather areas. The helm is identical to other studded leather armors.

Banded mail: Horizontal overlapped metal bands, leather brassards and thigh-boots. Mail additions reinforce the joints of most modern banded mail armors. The helm is a metal basinet that does not generally protect the face but that has a flap. Some wear a full helm for complete protection.

Chain mail: It consists of a layer of padded cloth over which a mail hauberk (a hooded shirt that falls down to the knees) is worn, held up by a large leather belt. The heaviest chain mails include leather brassards and leggings, and a metal basinet or a full helm.

Plate: This medieval technical masterpiece consists of a plate breastplate, plate brassards and leggings, a full closed helm and chain mail joint additions. The lightest models are only composed of the breastplate and of the full helm.

WEAPONS

☛ Weapon description format

The main attribute of a weapon is its SIZ. A SIZ S character can use:

- ☛ His natural weapons.
- ☛ SIZ S-1 melee weapons.
- ☛ One or two-handed SIZ S melee weapons.
- ☛ Two-handed SIZ S +1 melee weapons.
- ☛ SIZ S-1, S and S +1 shields.
- ☛ SIZ S-1, S and S +1 two-handed missile weapons.
- ☛ SIZ S-1, S and S +1 one-handed thrown weapons.

Init.: The initiative bonus or penalty determines the length and the swiftness of the weapon. A very long weapon, such as the pike (9 ft. long), is the most likely to hit first. The rapier, which is sharp and precise, will obtain a higher bonus. Inversely, a dagger requires the attacker to come close to the opponent, and a two-handed sword will require much time to lift for an attack.

Att.: Determines the speed and accuracy of a weapon, usually based on its weight and length.

Par.: Determines the weapon's parrying capacities. Some weapons are specifically designed for parrying.

Range (In yards): Either a fixed range (crossbow) or it can depend on the user's STR.

Damage (S, I, C): These three categories affect maneuvers and the type of Critical wounds the weapon inflicts.

Certain weapons can belong to several categories simultaneously. If the player happens to inflict a Critical wound, he may choose which Critical wounds table he will roll on.

STR, AGI: Most weapons require a minimum STR and AGI to be handled. A fighter with lower attributes than the minimum requirements will suffer a penalty equal to the difference between his scores and the minimum STR and AGI score requirements.

Example: Borromea (STR 4, AGI 9) wants to use an Ogre sword (min. STR 8, min. AGI 3). He is lacking 4 STR points; he will therefore suffer a -4 penalty to all attack and parry rolls. If he uses the weapon with his two hands, the minimum STR score is lowered by 2 points, and he only suffers a -2 penalty.

☛ Weapon description

• MELEE WEAPONS

Axe: A simple axe (approximately 2 ft. long) with one cutting edge.

Club: A coarse wooden mace.

Cane: A short staff.

Cutlass: Long-bladed knife (approximately 20 inches long) with a double cutting edge; often used by hunters and buccaneers.

Dagger: Lighter weapon than the short sword, praised for its efficiency.

Double axe: Long axe with a blade on each of the handles' ends. Favored by minotaur warriors.

NATURAL WEAPONS

| | Init. | Att. | Damage |
|--------------|-------|------|--|
| Brawl | -4 | +1 | -3 |
| Armored fist | -4 | +1 | -2 |
| Horns | -1 | 0 | +3 |
| Claws | -3 | +1 | -1 |
| Fangs | -5 | +2 | +0 |
| Hooves | | | |
| (buck) | 0 | -1 | +4 (the target must roll his balance or fall on the ground). |
| (stomping) | 2 | 0 | +6 (the target must be on the ground). |

Note: one cannot parry with a natural weapon (dodging is still possible).

MELEE WEAPONS

| | Init. | Att. | Par. | Damage | STR | AGI | SIZ |
|------------------|-------|------|------|--------|-----|-----|-----|
| Lamella | -4 | +1 | -1 | +0/S | 1 | 3 | -3 |
| Pin | -2 | +2 | -1 | +0/I | 1 | 1 | -5 |
| Half-axe | -2 | +0 | -1 | +3/S | 2 | 2 | -2 |
| Knife | -2 | +1 | -1 | +1/S | 1 | 3 | -2 |
| Stiletto | -2 | +2 | -1 | +0/I | 1 | 3 | -2 |
| Truncheon | -2 | +1 | -1 | +1/C | 1 | 1 | -2 |
| Cane | +0 | +1 | +1 | +2/C | 2 | 1 | -1 |
| Cutlass | +0 | +1 | +0 | +1/IS | 2 | 3 | -1 |
| Dagger | +0 | +2 | +0 | +1/I | 1 | 3 | -1 |
| Short sword | +0 | +1 | +0 | +3/IS | 3 | 3 | -1 |
| Hammer | -1 | +0 | -1 | +3/C | 3 | 1 | -1 |
| Hatchet | -1 | +0 | -1 | +4/S | 3 | 2 | -1 |
| Main gauche | +0 | +0 | +3 | +1/I | 2 | 4 | -1 |
| Whip | -1 | +0 | -2 | +0/S | 1 | 4 | -1 |
| Axe | +1 | +0 | -1 | +6/S | 5 | 2 | +0 |
| Axe (Ogre) | +1 | +0 | -2 | +8/S | 7 | 2 | +0 |
| Club | +0 | +1 | -1 | +3/C | 3 | 1 | +0 |
| Flail | +0 | -1 | -2 | +6/C | 5 | 6 | +0 |
| Foil | +1 | +2 | +1 | +2/I | 3 | 4 | +0 |
| Mace | +0 | +1 | -1 | +4/C | 4 | 1 | +0 |
| Morning star | +0 | -1 | -2 | +7/IC | 6 | 6 | +0 |
| Pitchfork | +3 | +0 | +0 | +4/I | 5 | 2 | +0 |
| Rapier | +2 | +2 | +1 | +3/I | 4 | 6 | +0 |
| Saber | +1 | +1 | +1 | +4/IS | 5 | 3 | +0 |
| Scimitar | +1 | +1 | +0 | +4/S | 4 | 3 | +0 |
| Sword | +1 | +1 | +1 | +4/IS | 5 | 3 | +0 |
| Sword (Ogre) | +2 | +1 | +1 | +4/SC | 8 | 3 | +0 |
| War hammer | +0 | +0 | +0 | +5/IC | 5 | 3 | +0 |
| Quarterstaff | +2 | +2 | +2 | +4/C | 4 | 3 | +1 |
| Double axe | +1 | +0 | -1 | +8/S | 9 | 3 | +1 |
| Great flail | +1 | -1 | -2 | +8/C | 7 | 6 | +1 |
| Great lance | +5 | +0 | -1 | +4/I | 5 | 2 | +1 |
| Halberd | +4 | +0 | -1 | +10/S | 8 | 3 | +1 |
| Lance | +4 | +0 | -1 | +4/I | 4 | 2 | +1 |
| Lance (horseman) | +6 | +0 | -2 | +7/I | 6 | 4 | +1 |
| Ogre mallet | +1 | +0 | -1 | +8/C | 10 | 1 | +1 |
| Pike | +6 | +0 | -1 | +4/I | 6 | 2 | +1 |
| Pilum | +3 | +0 | -1 | +4/I | 4 | 2 | +1 |
| Trident | +3 | +0 | +0 | +5/I | 6 | 2 | +1 |
| Two-handed sword | +1 | +0 | -1 | +7/SC | 8 | 3 | +1 |
| Giant axe | +2 | +0 | -1 | +12/S | 14 | 2 | +2 |
| Giant lance | +8 | +0 | -1 | +6/I | 8 | 2 | +2 |
| Giant mace | +2 | +10 | -1 | +8/C | 12 | 1 | +2 |
| Giant sword | +3 | +1 | +1 | +8/SC | 14 | 3 | +2 |
| Tree trunk | +3 | +1 | +0 | +6/C | 12 | 1 | +2 |
| Giant mallet | +2 | +1 | -1 | +12/C | 17 | 1 | +3 |
| Giant pike | +10 | +0 | -1 | +6/I | 15 | 2 | +3 |

SHIELDS

| | Init. | Att. | Par. | Damage | STR | AGI | SIZ |
|---------------|-------|------|------|--------|-----|-----|-----|
| Knight shield | -3 | +0 | +4 | +1/C | 5 | 2 | +0 |
| Buckler | -3 | +1 | +3 | +0/C | 2 | 3 | -1 |
| Tower | -4 | -1 | +5 | +2/C | 8 | 1 | 1 |

MISSILE WEAPONS

| | Init. | Att. | Range | Damage | STR | AGI | SIZ |
|---------------------|-------|------|--------|--------|-----|-----|-----|
| Spriggan crossbow | +5 | +0 | 40 y. | +4/I | 3 | 3 | -2 |
| Sprite bow | +4 | +0 | 40 y. | +2/I | 2 | 5 | -2 |
| Composite short bow | +4 | +0 | 80 y. | +4/I | 4 | 4 | -1 |
| Light crossbow | +5 | +1 | 60 y. | +6/I | 5 | 3 | -1 |
| Short bow | +4 | +0 | 60 y. | +3/I | 3 | 5 | -1 |
| Bow | +4 | +0 | 80 y. | +7/I | 4 | 5 | +0 |
| Composite bow | +4 | +0 | 90 y. | +8/I | 5 | 4 | +0 |
| Crossbow | +5 | +1 | 110 y. | +8/I | 6 | 3 | +0 |
| Heavy crossbow | +5 | +1 | 130 y. | +12/I | 7 | 3 | +1 |
| Long bow | +4 | +0 | 130 y. | +8/I | 6 | 5 | +1 |
| Ballista | +5 | +1 | 270 y. | +16/I | 17 | 3 | +5 |

Note:

- A character that uses a missile weapon with a greater SIZ than his must increase the minimum STR requirement by 2 points and the minimum AGI requirement by 1 point.
- Reloading a crossbow (or a ballista) requires 2 combat rounds.

THROWN WEAPONS

| | Init. | Att. | Range | Damage | STR | AGI | SIZ |
|----------------------|-------|------|------------|--------|-----|-----|-----|
| Lamella | +2 | +0 | STR x 2 y. | +0/I | 2 | 6 | -3 |
| Bullet (sling) | +0 | +1 | 50 y. | +2/C | 1 | 5 | -2 |
| Half-axe | +2 | +1 | STR x 4 y. | +3/S | 3 | 5 | -2 |
| Stiletto | +2 | +0 | STR x 2 y. | +0/I | 2 | 6 | -2 |
| Pebble | +2 | +1 | STR x 4 y. | +0/C | 2 | 2 | -2 |
| Pebble (sling) | +0 | +0 | 50 y. | +2/C | 1 | 5 | -2 |
| Dagger | +2 | +0 | STR x 4 y. | +1/I | 2 | 6 | -1 |
| Hatchet | +2 | +1 | STR x 4 y. | +4/S | 3 | 5 | -1 |
| Iron ball (ballista) | +2 | +1 | STR x 4 y. | +4/C | 8 | 2 | -1 |
| Javelin | +1 | +0 | STR x 6 y. | +4/I | 4 | 6 | -1 |
| Lance | +1 | +0 | STR x 5 y. | +4/I | 6 | 6 | +0 |
| Pitchfork | +1 | +0 | STR x 4 y. | +4/I | 6 | 6 | +0 |
| Stone | +2 | +1 | STR x 4 y. | +3/C | 6 | 2 | +0 |
| Throwing axe | +2 | +1 | STR x 4 y. | +6/S | 6 | 5 | +0 |
| Double axe | +2 | +1 | STR x 4 y. | +8/S | 14 | 5 | +1 |
| Iron ball (sling) | +0 | +1 | 50 y. | +6/C | 11 | 5 | +1 |
| Net | +0 | -1 | STR x 1 y. | N/A | 3 | 5 | +1 |
| Paving-stone | +2 | +1 | STR x 4 y. | +4/C | 8 | 2 | +1 |
| Paving-stone (sling) | +0 | +0 | 50 y. | +6/C | 11 | 5 | +1 |
| Pike | +1 | +0 | STR x 5 y. | +4/I | 12 | 6 | +1 |
| Trident | +1 | +0 | STR x 4 y. | +5/I | 6 | 6 | +1 |
| Giant axe | +2 | +1 | STR x3 y. | +12/S | 18 | 5 | +2 |
| Giant lance | +1 | +0 | STR x 4 y. | +6/I | 16 | 6 | +2 |
| Rock | +2 | +1 | STR x 2 y. | +6/C | 16 | 2 | +2 |
| Rock (sling) | +0 | +0 | 15 y. | +8/C | 17 | 5 | +2 |





Truncheon



Lamella



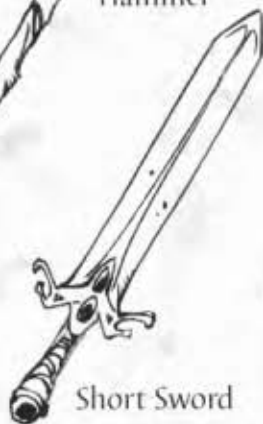
Hammer



Dagger



Stiletto



Short Sword



Mace



Morning Star



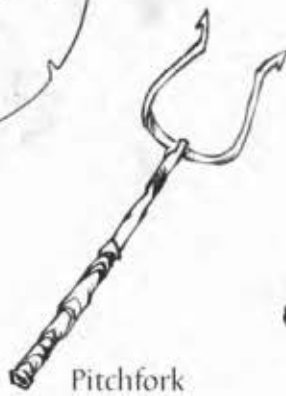
Axe



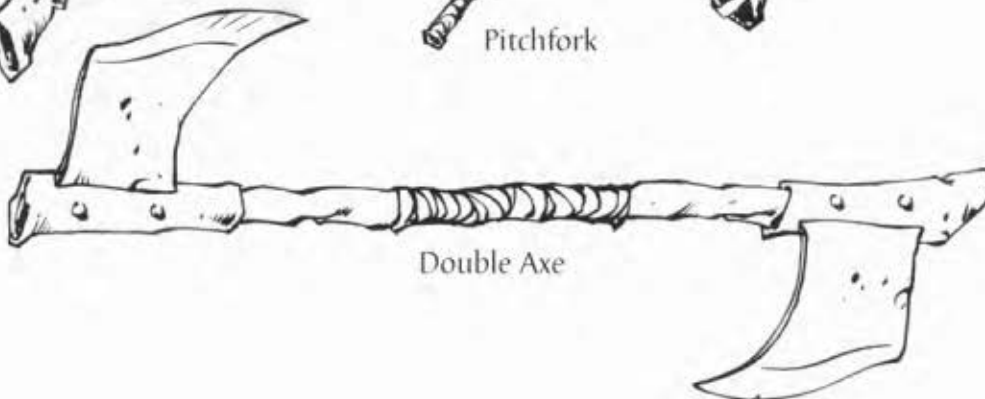
Ogre Axe



Ogre Mallet



Pitchfork



Double Axe

Flail: Metal ball attached to a wooden handle by a chain.
Foil: Thin and flexible blade; designed to cause impaling wounds.

Giant axe: A small tree trunk is required to make the handle of this weapon (8 ft. long). Apart from the size, it is a normal axe.

Giant lance: A blade as long as a halberd and a tree trunk (12 ft. long) are required to make this massive lance.

Giant mace: A normal mace except that the handle is 6 ft. long.

Giant mallet: More primitive than the axe but much longer. The giant mallet is an improved tree trunk, with a 10 ft. long wooden handle and a round log as a head.

Giant pike: The longest of all weapons. Approximately 24 ft. long, its head weighs as much as a sword. Most blacksmiths agree that weapons longer than the giant pike would not hold their own weight.

Giant sword: This 9 ft.-long blade resembles a metallic club more than a true sword. In any case, it is the Giant's strength that really hurts!

Great flail: Flail with a longer handle, and one or several metallic balls.

Great lance: Long lance (7 ft. and over).

Halberd: Pole arm with a cutting blade. Extremely dangerous weapon because of the strength of the blows caused by its long handle (9 ft. long).

Half-axe: Tiny axe with a small handle, generally used by forest sprites.

Hammer: Small metallic mace with a wooden handle.

Hatchet: Small axe (1 ft. 5 inches long).

Horseman's lance: Wooden lance (9 ft. long); generally used for charges.

Knife: Small sharp blade with a rounded point and a short handle.

Lamella: Small crescent blade. The handle is in the middle of the blade.

Lance: Sharp metal head on a long wooden handle (6 ft. long).

Mace: Metallic club.

Main gauche: Dagger with a large hilt and hand-guard, used only to parry.

Morning star: Resembles the flail, only the ball has metal spikes.

Ogre axe: Heavy axe with two cutting edges (3 ft. long).

Ogre mallet: Heavy stone mace on a long and thick wooden handle.

Ogre sword: Very large blade; often used two-handed by Ogre soldiers (5 ft. long). **Pike:** Simple pole arm, as long as a halberd, with a metallic head.

Pilum: Short lance with a large metal head and a large handle (5 ft. long).

Pin: Thin metal needle with a small handle, the weapon of choice of many black feys.

Pitchfork: Small fork with two points, a satyr's favorite weapon.

Quarterstaff: Long wooden staff, ringed with metal at its ends. Generally used with two hands.

Rapier: Long, pointed sword. Praised by fencers for its elegance and efficiency.

Saber: sharp curved sword with a large hilt; designed to inflict slashing cuts.

Scimitar: Curved blade, heavier than the saber, with a smaller hilt.

Short sword: Sword with a small triangular blade.

Stiletto: Small pointy metallic rod (as long as a knitting-needle).

Sword: Long blade with two cutting edges; its hilt is simple (approximately 4 ft. long).

Tree trunk: Improvised weapon equivalent to a club for giants.

Trident: Long fork with three points.

Truncheon: Small wooden club.

Two-handed sword: Long sword (approximately 6 ft. long).

War hammer: Sharp metallic mace on a long handle (identical to a pickaxe handle).

• SHIELDS

Knight shield: Medium-size triangular shield with generally a coat of arms, the typical knight's shield.

Buckler: Small round wooden shield with a central hand-grip.

Tower: Large metallic (oval or rectangular) shield with two hand grips. It is often stuck in the ground to protect the defender from charges.

• MISSILE AND THROWING WEAPONS

Ballista: Originally used on battlefields as a siege weapon, this gigantic crossbow has been redesigned by the giants. A ballista can use longbow arrows... with the power of a giant crossbow.

Bow: A relatively precise weapon, but it lacks power compared to a crossbow. Popular because of its low production cost. Once drawn, it is approximately 3 to 4 ft. long.

Composite bow: More powerful than the classic bow, it is also more expensive because it must be calibrated to its user's strength.

Composite short bow: Equivalent bulkiness to the classic short bow but more powerful. It is however much more expensive.

Crossbow: A simple metallic bow on a perpendicular wooden handle. It shoots short quarrels. Approximately 3 ft. long, it lacks an automatic reloading feature.

Heavy crossbow: This crossbow is 4 ft. long; it shoots very long quarrels at high speed over very long distances. The bow is so tough that it is equipped with a stirrup for the user to put his foot in to support reloading with its two cranks.

Light crossbow: Equivalent to the spriggan crossbow, this crossbow is not equipped with reloading gear but it can still shoot bolts at great speed.

Long bow: 6 ft. of tough and flexible wood, this bow is the king of battlefields. It is as powerful as a cross-

bow but much cheaper. All footmen are equipped with long bows.

Net: The weighted net entangles one's opponent. It is often reinforced with iron threads, making it impossible to cut. Once imprisoned in a net, the adversary moves at MOV/10 and is unable to perform an action or reaction until he spends SM of actions to get rid of it.

Short bow: It is approximately 2 ft. long. Horsemen praise it for its low encumbrance.

Sling: There are three sizes of slings. The most common is the one that shoots pebbles and bullets (the latter grant a +1 attack bonus). It is made of a thin leather or cloth strap. Ogre slings are often made from a piece of chain mail, they work the same way but shoot heavier missiles (stones or paving-stones). Finally, giant slings shoot rocks (up to 110 lbs.). They are made of large interwoven chains.

Spriggan crossbow: Spriggans have made up for their small size with their skillfulness. This crossbow is 1 ft. long and it counterbalances its size with a very tough metallic bow that is reloaded through with an ingenious mechanism.

Sprite bow: This tiny bow shoots small arrows that are no more dangerous than darts. It is favored for its low weight and its discreetness. Generally, the arrows are poisoned.

Health

There are two important parameters concerning the health of a character: his current HP total and his number of Serious wounds. It is possible to lose HP without gaining a Serious wound. The opposite is less common but possible. Indeed, Serious wounds are mainly representative of the character's state of weakness and fatigue – a certain number of non-lethal wounds that are nevertheless painful, that create movement difficulties. They could be cracked ribs, broken fingers or sprains. These wounds are not dangerous but very handicapping. Certain Serious wounds are not associated with HP loss, such as those caused by poisons or diseases.

Some Serious wounds can be "permanent": that is, normal healing cannot cure them. A pierced lung, or a constant weakening due to a disease could induce this effect. Only magic healing can cure such permanent Serious wounds.

DEATH

A character dies in three cases:

- ♣ His total HP reaches -STA.
- ♣ He has 3 Serious wounds and fails a WIL roll against DIF 10.
- ♣ A fourth Serious wounds is inflicted to him.

In the first case, the character's body is simply too injured to keep the character alive. He suffers multiple hemorrhages, several fractures and certain vital organs no longer function.

In the second and third cases, the character dies of pain. The injuries are unbearable, the character falls into unconsciousness and sometimes death.

HEALING

All HP recovery is limited by the HP total. Excess points are lost.

| REGENERATION | |
|--------------|--------------|
| STA | Recovered HP |
| 1 | 1 |
| 2, 3 | 2 |
| 4, 5, 6 | 3 |
| 7, 8 | 4 |
| 9 | 5 |
| 10 | 6 |
| 11 | 7 |
| 12 | 8 |
| 13 | 9 |
| 14 | 10 |
| 15 | 12 |
| 16 | 14 |
| 17 | 16 |
| 18 | 18 |

♣ Natural healing

• HIT POINTS

Each day of rest (at least 12 hours in a row), a wounded character naturally recovers a certain amount of HP. This amount depends on the character's STA.

• SERIOUS WOUNDS

If a character recovers the equivalent of his SWT in HP (no matter whether he actually lost those HP), he can eliminate a Serious wound, and so on.

A character who would have been starving for the last ten days and therefore would have taken two Serious wounds without any HP loss, could eliminate his Serious wounds after the time required to recover a third of his total HP.

Permanent Serious wounds cannot be healed that way.

FIRST AID

First aid must be performed on fresh wounds (less than an hour) through an AGI + First aid roll.

First aid can be administered only once per injured character. For simplicity, the treatment of all his wounds is represented by a single die roll. If it fails, the only other treatment is surgery (see below).

One minute per lost HP is required to heal the patient.

First aid cannot be administered on wounds that have already been healed with surgery.

FIRST AID

| Roll | Effect |
|------------|--------|
| 0-4 | 0 HP |
| 5-9 | 1 HP |
| 10-14 | 3 HP |
| 15-19 | 6 HP |
| 20-24 | 9 HP |
| 25-29 | 12 HP |
| 30 or more | 20 HP |

First aid can also improve the patient's natural healing. Each day devoted to him doubles his regeneration rate if the doctor has the minimum equipment, and a skill of at least 3. No roll is required.

SURGERY

Surgery must also be used on fresh wounds (less than a day). It can greatly improve the state of a wounded character.

The surgeon has three options: have the patient recover his HP, eliminate the patient's Serious wounds, or purge the effects of Critical wounds (certain Critical wounds cannot be purged in this way).

Surgery cannot heal permanent Serious wounds.

SURGERY

| Roll | Effect | Duration |
|------|---|-----------------------|
| 10 | Restores SM x 5 HP | 1 hour/10 HP restored |
| 15 | Eliminates 1 Serious wound per 5 points of SM | 1 hour/wound |
| 30 | Eliminates the effects of a Critical wound | 1/2 day and more |

MEDICINE

The Medicine skill is more often used to diagnose diseases than to heal wounds, but it can help a wounded character recover in the same way as First aid. Each day devoted to the patient doubles his regeneration rate only if the doctor has the minimum equipment and a skill of at least 3. No roll is required.

DISEASES

Diseases can have numerous effects. They generally cause attribute decrease (temporary or permanent). They can also cause permanent Serious wounds.

Every disease is defined by four attributes: Virulence (VIR); Gravity; Periodicity and Rarity.

Each day of exposure to a disease, a character must succeed in a STA x 2 against a DIF equal to its VIR.

If the SM is positive or equal to the DIF, the character resists to the disease.

If the SM is negative, the character is ill. Each negative point becomes the Gravity score (the gravity of the contamination) that will determine the effects of the disease.

Once contaminated, the ill character will have to succeed in a STA x 2 against DIF VIR. The SM will then be subtracted from the Gravity depending on the disease's Periodicity (specified in the disease description).

A Periodicity of one week means that the ill character must roll once a week. Modifiers due to Serious wounds should be taken into account as usual.

At the time of the contamination, the VIR can be modified by +5 to -5 depending on the exposure duration.

♣ Disease healing

• NATURAL HEALING

Once the Gravity comes down to 0, the ill character is cured. His rolls are from there on modified by a +5 bonus when next exposed to that particular disease.

• MEDICINE

Someone with Medicine skill can improve a diseased character's natural healing. The physician must devote half an hour to the patient and succeed on an INT+ Medicine roll against DIF disease rarity. The result determines the bonus the patient can apply to his STA rolls.

♣ Examples of disease

• SLOW-DEATH

Virulence: 20

Periodicity: one week

Rarity: 15

For each 5 points Gravity level, the ill character suffers a permanent Serious wound. The character feels constantly tired and tends to sleep as much as possible. He lives in an increasing state of exhaustion. Sleep does not rest him until a day when he no longer wakes up.

• DUSKHEART

Virulence: 20

Periodicity: half a day

Rarity: 22

For each 2 points Gravity level, the ill character's HP maximum is decreased by 1 point. Unless cured, his blood becomes black and thick. Death, then awaits...

MEDICINE SKILL'S EFFECT AGAINST DISEASES

| SM | Healing roll bonus |
|----------|--------------------|
| 0-4 | 0 |
| 5-9 | +1 HP |
| 10-14 | +2 HP |
| 15-19 | +4 HP |
| 20-24 | +6 HP |
| 25-29 | +8 HP |
| 30 and + | +10 HP |

• DEBILITATING DISEASES

Virulence: 15

Periodicity: one day

Rarity: variable

There are several types of debilitating diseases. Each one of them affects a specific attribute and has a different name. Their average VIR is 15 but some are more or less dangerous.

For each 3 points Gravity level, an ill character loses 1 attribute point. When an attribute falls down to 0, the character dies.

Certain debilitating diseases, pestilences, affect several attributes simultaneously. Body, Spirit or Soul pestilences affect all the given Aspect attributes at the same time. The Black Pestilence, worst of all, affects all eight attributes together.

DEBILITATING DISEASES

| Attribute | Name | Rarity |
|-----------|--------------------|--------|
| STR | Cold languor | 15 |
| STA | Heart breaker | 15 |
| AGI | Trembly | 15 |
| PER | Creeping blindness | 10 |
| INT | Obfivial | 18 |
| WIL | Slaepan fever | 20 |
| CHA | Charm-nibbler | 18 |
| CRE | Musely-death | 20 |

POISONS

There are many varieties of poison, and each has its own effects. Poisons also have a Virulence (VIR). If a poisoned character succeeds in a (STA x 2) + 1d10 roll against a DIF equal to the VIR, he only suffers a minor effect. If he fails, he experiences the full effect of the poison. The SM is sometimes detrimental to resisting the effects of poisoning.

The VIR of a poison might vary depending on the way it is administered.

☞ Healing poisoning

The Medicine skill can be effective in curing poisonings. It can improve a person's natural resistance to a poison or lessen its effects. The healer must devote half an hour to the victim and succeed in an INT + Medicine roll against DIF rarity of the poison. The result determines the bonus the patient can apply to his resistance rolls. However, the healer must have the time to help his patient (in the case of Wyvern bile, the healer only has a couple of seconds).

☞ Poison examples

• ENDORINE

Virulence: 20 (blade poisoning) /25 (ingestion poisoning)

Rarity: 12

Endorine is a powerful soporific that takes effect in half an hour.

• BLUE SHIVERS

Virulence: 26 (blade poisoning)

Rarity: 18

This poison inflicts a sudden body temperature drop in approximately 20 minutes.

If the victim resists, he only loses 5 HP. If he fails his STA roll, he loses 1 additional HP per negative SM point.

• STIFFAL

Virulence: 30 (contact poisoning)

Rarity: 15

Stiffal paralyzes its victim one round after exposure.

If the resistance roll is a success, the victim loses all his actions (not his reactions) for one round. If the roll is failed, the victim loses all his actions and reactions for as many rounds as his negative SM points.

• GLUE

Virulence: 25 (ingestion poisoning)

Rarity: 19

The effects of Glue appear one hour after exposure. They are: a sense of heaviness in the limbs, and then, after a day, strong muscular discomfort.

If the victim succeeds his roll, he only takes a -2 penalty due to muscular difficulties. If he fails, he is completely paralyzed after a couple of hours and dies of suffocation.

• QATAM-SIIR

Virulence: 28 (ingestion poisoning)

Rarity: 26

If the STA roll is a success, the character is victim of violent vomiting 5 minutes after the ingestion. He loses 10 HP and takes a permanent Serious wound.

If the roll is failed, the victim drops unconscious after a couple of minutes, suffering the 10 HP loss and a permanent Serious wound. The victim will have to succeed in another STA roll after half an hour.

• WYVERN BILE

Virulence: 30 (blade poisoning)

Rarity: 30

Wyvern bile comes from the venom secreted from a Wyvern's tail. An extremely powerful neurotoxin, this poison induces a very violent muscular spasm and then death from a powerful nervous disorder.

If the victim succeeds his STA roll, he loses as many HP as his STR + SIZ. This loss is caused by violent muscular

ENDORINE

| SM | Effect |
|-------------|--|
| -10 or less | Leaden sleep |
| -9 to -5 | Light sleep |
| -4 to -1 | Sleepiness |
| 0 to 4 | No effect |
| 5 or more | Anesthesia (cancels the effects of a Serious wound for one hour) |

spasms that throw him on the ground. If he fails, there is no hope.

PLANT LORE

Plant-based remedies can be used in numerous ways: improving regeneration (wound or disease), countering the effects of a poison or disease, etc.

Plant lore necessitates having the required plants and the time to use them.

All remedies have a power (POW) that determines the influence of their effects.

When an herbalist prepares a remedy, he must roll against a DIF equal to the power of the mixture. If he succeeds, the remedy is effective and its POW is enhanced by the positive SM. If the SM is negative, the remedy is ineffective (the ingredients are destroyed and the herbalist knows something went wrong).

The rarity of a remedy also represents the difficulty obtaining its required ingredients (INT + Plant lore, restrictive Intrigue and Etiquette: craftsmen).

♣ Remedy examples

• WILLOWTEA

Rarity: 12

POW: 5

For each full 5 point POW level, this remedy (roots and bark) grants a +1 bonus to all natural healing rolls (wound or disease). Its taste is absolutely awful.

• GUILGREEN TREACLE

Rarity: 18

POW: 15

This moss and resin cataplasm heals as a full day of natural regeneration (only for the wounded) plus another day of regeneration per 5 POW points over 15. This remedy takes 4 hours to take effect.

It can only be used once every two days. If the remedy is used more than that, it may cause a Serious wound due to a major allergy.

• JIZZ GUM

Rarity: 21

POW: 10

This greenish paste is used to quickly reduce fever and pain. It induces slight euphoria that lasts approximately one hour. Frequent use of Jizz gum can cause a strong addiction.

Technically, the paste cancels the effects of a Serious wound, plus an additional one for each 10 POW points. Certain very rare doses can heal three Serious wounds all together, and enable automatic success on the WIL roll in the case of the third Serious wound.

• BLUAL

Rarity: 11

POW: 25

This blue paste must be ingested. It cancels the effects of Glue in a couple of minutes. If the resistance roll failed, it is now considered as a success. If the roll was already a success, it now cancels the negative effects. Taking several doses of Blual provokes the opposite effects.

FALLING

The consequences of a fall vary depending on the SIZ of the character. It determines a base height (see the "Base heights" table, below). When you know the Base height, determine the distance of the fall.

Falling from the first the base height (SIZ x 1) causes 1d10 damage. Falling from the second base height (SIZ x 2) causes an additional 2d10 damage for a total of 3d10 damage; the third causes an additional 3d10 damage for a total of 6d10, etc. up to a maximum of 21d10 from six base heights. Base heights are determined by full group: for example, falling from 12 ft. does not wound a SIZ 0 creature. Armor does not protect against this type of damage.

A successful AGI + Acrobatics roll can reduce the severity of a fall. The DIF depends on the height of the fall.

To determine the damage, one must roll the specified number of dice (all closed).

Normally, all dice are then added, except as follows:

♣ If the surface is particularly hard, all scores under 5 are considered 5.

♣ If the surface is specifically made to kill (a pit full of stakes for example), all scores under 7 are considered 7.

♣ If the surface is particularly soft, all scores over 6 are considered 6.

♣ If the fall ends in water, all scores over 4 are considered 4.

Example: Melaine has just fumbled her Climb roll. The EG determines that she fell from 33 ft. As a human being, she has therefore fallen from two heights, so she takes 3d10 damage (1d10 for the first height and 2d10 for the second height). The street's paving stones will not help her much. At the moment, she tries to fall down correctly (Acrobatics) and obtains 24; the result enables her to only suffer a full of one height. The EG rolls the damage and obtains only a 1. However, the pavement turns the 1 into a 5 (when the surface is particularly hard, all scores under 5 are considered 5).

BASE HEIGHTS

| SIZ | Heights |
|-----|---------|
| -2 | 9 ft. |
| -1 | 12 ft. |
| 0 | 15 ft. |
| +1 | 21 ft. |
| +2 | 27 ft. |
| +3 | 35 ft. |

FALL DAMAGE

| Number of base heights | Damage | Acrobatics DIF |
|------------------------|--------|----------------|
| 1 | 1d10 | 10 |
| 2 | 3d10 | 15 |
| 3 | 6d10 | 20 |
| 4 | 10d10 | 25 |
| 5 | 15d10 | 30 |
| 6 | 21d10 | impossible |

FIRE AND ACID

Like poisons, fire and acid have a Virulence (VIR). The VIR is proportional to their intensity.

When a character is exposed to this type of damage for a full round, he loses as many HP as the VIR of the substance.

☛ Fire

In cases where the exposure to flames can be avoided, a successful AGI + Dodge roll against DIF (depending on the situation) can divide the total damage by 2.

Armor protects from the first round of exposure to the fire. At the next round, only half the armor's protection points are effective against the fire. The armor then no longer protects at all from the flames. Moreover, the armor itself can be damaged by the fire if the EG wishes so.

FIRE TABLE

| Nature of the fire | VIR |
|---------------------|-----|
| Candle | 1 |
| Torch | 5 |
| Small fire, brazier | 10 |
| Big fire, bonfire | 15 |
| Pyre | 20 |
| Conflagration | 25 |

☛ Acid

The VIR of an acid depend on its concentration. The VIR of acid is reduced by half every new round.

Armor, as for fires, only protects the first round; then, the substance seeps through it. Moreover, the protection of an armor exposed to acid is reduced by 1 point for every 5 VIR points from corrosion. The best way to avoid damage through exposure to acid is to clean the exposed surfaces or to get rid of them.

HUNGER, THIRST AND ASPHYXIA

These three types of damage only inflict Serious wounds and do not cause any HP loss. Technically, they all work the same way but at different speeds.

Asphyxia is determined in rounds, thirst in half-days and hunger in days. Certain parameters can modify these speeds (for example, desert turns the periodicity of thirst into hours).

No damage is inflicted for as many time units as the character's STA. In the case of intense physical activity, the EG can decide to reduce the time unit (x weeks become x days, x hours become x rounds, and so on). After that period, the Inspired must succeed in an open STA roll against DIF 10. If he succeeds, he takes no damage and the SM determines the time (per time unit) of the next roll. If he fails, he takes a temporary Serious wound that will heal in several rounds/half-days/days depending on the type of damage. The next roll will then be at the subsequent time unit and is modified by a cumulative -5 penalty until the character's death or health improvement.

Example: Some guards were alerted by Melaine's fall. She hides in a small pond. Unfortunately, one of the guards spots her and stands watch on the edge of the pond.

As Melaine is now threatened by asphyxia, the time unit is the round. Her STA score is 6. Therefore, she is not affected the first 6 rounds. On the seventh, she rolls her STA and obtains 19 against DIF 10. Her SM (+9) enables her to hold her breath another 9 rounds before rolling her STA again, this time against DIF 15. She only obtains a 14, a failure. She takes a Seriouswound, and her next roll will therefore be modified by +2: DIF 20 + 2 = 22.

AGING

Aging depends on the character's Stamina. At half of his race's average life expectancy, an Inspired starts to decline. (For seasonlings, see the descriptions of their races; the average human life expectancy is seventy years.) Then, the Inspired must succeed, once a year, a STA open roll against DIF 15. In case of failure, determine the negative SM and then refer to the table below.

As soon as an attribute falls down to 0, the character dies. This rule is slightly different concerning seasonlings: if a seasonling's attribute falls down to 0 plus the racial bonus, he dies before the attribute is really 0. If a giant's STR falls down to 8 (0 is his true STR score but modified by his racial bonus of + 8), he dies even though his attribute is still 8.

Attribute decreases affect the given attribute's maximum.

AGING TABLE

| STA roll SM | Effects |
|--------------|--|
| -1 to -5 | No attribute loss, but DIF of the next Aging roll is +5. |
| -6 to -10 | Loss of 1 attribute point (Body). |
| -11 to -15 | Loss of 1 attribute point (Spirit). |
| -16 to -20 | Loss of 1 attribute point (Soul). |
| -21 and less | Death |

Experience

Learning by experience enables the Inspired to improve their capacities, be it through a master's teachings or individual experiences. Experience is represented by Inspiration points.

The mechanics of AGONE consider that the experience obtained throughout the scenarios (therefore excluding apprenticeship through a master or a book) is both the will to learn of the Inspired (training) as well as his actual experience (all his successes and failures).

When a player assigns his Inspiration points, he mirrors that duality. He can choose to assign them to attributes, skills, or whatever capacities he used during the adventure that reflects his experience improvement. Or he can choose to assign them to parameters that were not particularly useful during the scenario, in which case he is reflecting all those moments of inaction he used to acquire individual experience through training. There are certain rules that apply to these two cases.

♣ Inspiration point allotment

Points received at the end of an adventure must all be used up. It is not possible to keep a reserve in order to suddenly obtain a skill that appears to be useful in the middle of an adventure. Experience is the outcome of labors and of the will to learn.

♣ Knowledge and Occult skills

These skills cannot be raised through experience unless the Inspired had access to a source of information that could have taught him something. An Inspired cannot train his Geography, for example. He must have access to books or teachings concerning the specific branch.

♣ How to gain inspiration points

At the end of each scenario, the EG must individually attribute Inspiration points to each Inspired depending on their influence on the adventure. Therefore, an active character will get more out of the adventure than one that lagged behind.

A totally failed adventure, which the Inspired did not understand, should bring in 4 to 5 points.

A successful scenario, but nothing more, should bring in 10 to 20 Inspiration points.

An adventure achieved with brio, in which one of the character found fame, should bring in 20 to 30 points to the given character.

♣ Inspiration point distribution

The EG gives out the points depending on the accomplishments of the characters. Here are several examples of inspiration point distribution.

In the case of very long scenarios or campaigns, Inspiration points must be given out at each important stage; not at its end.

♣ Surviving the adventure: 3 to 4 points depending on the encountered dangers.

♣ Understanding one of the major elements of the scenario and using it: 4 to 5 points depending on the results.

♣ Performing an important deed (but not essential to the story): 2 points.

♣ Coming up with a brilliant idea that helps solving a problem (e.g.: discovering a demon before he had time to do any harm): 3-5 points.

♣ Very good rendering of the character (other player's laughter or admiration): 2 or 3 points depending on the dangers caused by that interpretation.

♣ Individual accomplishment (the character finds something in the scenario especially positive for him, e.g.: a satyr falls in love with an eminent lady): 1 to 2 points depending on the accomplishment.

♣ Behaving in a heroic manner (fighting a dangerous adversary in a duel): 1 to 2 points depending on the opponent.

♣ Learning something important (discovering an Elder art Opus when the character is a Painter for example): 1 to 2 points depending on the acquired information.

The abbreviation of "Inspiration points" is IP. They are listed on the Scroll, in the boxes on the right of the actual attributes.

USING INSPIRATION POINTS

The IP are applied to Aspects, attributes, skills, assets and faults.

Concerning the first three, they will increase by 1 point once a certain number of IP are applied to them (as specified in the table below). They can only be increased once per adventure. Once enough IP have been applied to an Aspect, attribute or skill, and enabled its increase, the remaining points must be shared out between other parameters.

Nonetheless, exceptional circumstances can allow the player to increase the same parameter several times (fighting a huge battle that went on for five days could allow him to increase his Weapon skill several times).

IP cannot be attributed to Occult or Knowledge skills unless the character had access to information concerning Knowledge or the Occult. The EG must determine if the scenario let him access the information or if the character has spent all his spare time reading about the field of knowledge (this last case is different from the apprenticeship rules).

A character can also buy a Specialty. This can only be done if the character's skill is at least at level 5, and it costs 3 IP. A character can only have one specialty per skill, so the player should think his choice through carefully. Moreover, acquiring a Specialty in a skill makes further general skill improvement impossible.

Assets are acquired when the character spends 10 times their creation point cost. Faults are removed when the character spends 5 times their creation point value. Only primary attributes (not secondary attributes) can be increased, and the increase affects the secondary attributes in certain cases.

Aspect Bonus modifications influence the Flame.

Example: Lowl the Minotaur just brilliantly finished a quite difficult adventure. The EG grants him 22 Inspiration points to distribute immediately.

He spends 6 IP in Geography: Widowlands. As the adventure mainly took place in that area, the EG allows him to increase that Knowledge skill (normally, he would not be able to unless he specifically studied that field of knowledge). His skill score was 1. He must therefore spend 2 (the level he wants) x 3 (specific skill multiplier). The 6 points he invested enable him to improve his skill by one level. He then spends 9 points in Stealth. His score was 2. Three times the desired level gives 9 points, so here again he increases his skill by one level.

He has 5 points left. Lowl invests them in "Weapon: axe". His skill score is 8, so another 22 points are required to improve the skill by one level (9 x 3 = 27 - 5 = 22). He does not improve his skill this time.

Lowl is not the most discreet of characters. However, because he has already improved his Stealth with his 9 points, he cannot increase it once again for the time being.

ned points are kept as normal IP). The process must be started all over again if the Inspired wants to continue his study.

Example: Lowl the Minotaur is trying to learn the Weapon: horns skill from one of his brothers. The latter is not a great teacher but he is a master of the weapon. His Base is 10 (2 CHA + 8 skill). He rolls 8. His SM is therefore 3 (10 + 8 = 18 against DIF 15). Lowl then rolls. He has INT 5 and Weapon: horns 5. The DIF is 15 (3 x 6 (the level he wants to reach) = 18 minus his brother's SM (3) = 15). If he succeeds, it will take him 18 days to reach the next skill level. If he interrupts his study after 10 days for example, he will have anyway gained 10 IP in the skill Weapon: horns.

Learning from a book is a similar process except that the "master's" level and his SM are predetermined. A geography book for example could have a level of 4 and a SM of 5. These two actually represent the informational contents of the book (its level) and the quality of the writing (its SM).

ASSETS AND FAULTS

It is possible to cancel faults and acquire assets throughout experience. The EG can restrict some possibilities. It is, of course, impossible for a one-legged person to cancel the fact he is missing one leg, as it is hardly conceivable to instantly obtain supernatural senses. The EG is the ultimate judge in that matter. If he considers it possible for a one-legged person to compensate for his disability in another way, or that some obscure master unveils the secrets of supernatural senses through transcendental meditation, it is his choice.

On the other hand, it is quite conceivable to obtain assets without spending IP, especially Offices. There are no IP involved when a grateful noble makes the Inspired a knight. In this case, IP would represent the time and efforts to find and convince the right person of the merits of his request, and as those deeds have already been performed in the adventure, there is no reason to spend IP for that Office.

It is impossible to cancel dark Aspects or Sorrows with Inspiration points. The only ways to do so are through quests or magical rituals that have nothing to do with apprenticeship.

SPELLS AND OPUSES

They cannot be learned through experience, but rather a specific learning process that draws on the intuition and artistic sensibility of the Inspired. This process is detailed in the chapter devoted to magic.

INSPIRATION POINT MULTIPLIER TABLE

| Modified Parameter | Multiplier (to the obtained level when it is applicable) |
|--------------------------|--|
| Aspects | x7 |
| Attribute | x5 |
| Skill | x5 |
| Asset | x10 |
| Fault (to eliminate one) | x5 |

LEARNING FROM A MASTER OR A BOOK

Learning from a master or a book works the same way as the experience gained from the scenarios, except that this way the IP are only granted as long as the master or book actually has something to teach the character.

These points must be invested in the concerned field of knowledge. A book about geography has little chance of teaching the character about athletics.

The master must have a greatly superior skill level than his pupil. He must succeed on a CHA + relevant skill roll against DIF 15 (the difficulty can vary depending on the study conditions). The student will have to succeed on an INT + relevant skill roll against DIF 3 x (the wanted level - the master's SM).

Then, for each day devoted to study (at least 8 hours in a row) the student will receive 1 IP until he improves the level of his skill or until he stops studying (obtai-



Equipment and costs

All prices are given in gold pieces (GP). The Keshite gold piece is acknowledged for its low gold content relative to its high amount of lead. One gold piece is equivalent to a day of minimal board and lodging. It contains 0.07 oz. of gold and can be divided into 11 "scraps" (also ironically called leads) that are only used by commoners.

The prices below refer to scraps when they use decimals. Do not forget that eleven scraps make 1 GP; so 3.11 GP is actually 4 GP.

You find this monetary system too complicated? Great! That is exactly what most Keshite merchants wanted when they created it...

A FEW SALARIES

The following prices are average examples; they can vary from ten to one hundred times depending on the object's rarity, accessibility. Keshite traders usually deal with large amounts of money, whereas some minor nobles see only a few gold pieces a year.

Wages for workers are not always paid in gold. Apprentices, for example, are only paid board and lodging. Paying in kind has nothing surprising to it. Certain prices are only listed to give an idea of how much money that kind of person can have on a day-to-day basis.

Per day (apprentice/average individual/master)

| | |
|--|----------|
| Agricultural worker, peasant | 1/1/3 |
| Specialized craftsman..... | 2/3/7 |
| Craftsman, country | 1/2/3 |
| Craftsman, city | 1/2/4 |
| Servant | 1/2/5 |
| Merchant (peddler)..... | 2/5/7 |
| Merchant (head of a trading company) | 7/15/50 |
| Noble..... | 12/25/60 |
| Bureaucrat | 1/2/5 |
| Carter..... | 1/3/7 |
| Cook..... | 2/3/7 |
| Scholar..... | 2/4/7 |
| Guard..... | 1/2/3 |
| Sergeant..... | 2/5/7 |
| Officer..... | 10/20/40 |
| Sailor | 1/6/20 |
| Magician..... | 1/15/45 |

CONSTRUCTIONS

Real estate is rarely for sale. A house is often the only possession a person or family has. The following prices are the building costs.

Sale/building

| | |
|---|--------|
| Castle | |
| • Basic keep with a palisade or town-house..... | 30,000 |

| | |
|---|--------------------|
| • Double ramparts and many watch-towers or manor | 250,000 |
| • Huge castle with quadruple ramparts or ducal residence..... | 1,000,000 and more |
| Booth, workshop..... | 1,000 |
| Shed | 250 |
| Pit and 18 ft. high rampart (per yard) | 500 |
| Big town-house | 2,500 |
| Forge | 1,200 |
| Barn | 350 |
| Peasant house..... | 850 |
| Mill | 1,700 |
| Palisade, 9 ft. high (per yard) | 100 |
| Liturgical temple..... | never for sale |
| Watch-tower | 1,500 |

☛ Renting

For a town house, the monthly rent is equal to the tenth of the building cost. The rent also depends on the neighborhood where the house is built. Houses in the bad parts of Lorgol are free, whereas houses in a fashionable neighborhood of the Keshite capital can be worth ten times these prices.

TRANSPORT

Transport costs do not include the required escorts without which owners would refuse to travel through dangerous regions. Transport costs can vary depending on the region's risk factor. Travel conditions also affect the cost of transport. For someone who is part of the transport organization (helping out as a guard, as an accountant, etc.), transport costs can be divided by 10. For a luxurious cabin though, the cost can be multiplied by 10.

Per day, per person or per 200 lbs. of goods:

| | |
|-------------------------|----|
| Sea transport..... | 15 |
| Fluvial transport | 10 |
| Road transport..... | 12 |

RAW MATERIALS

These are the wholesale prices obtained by producers; middlemen can multiply these prices by 5.

| | |
|--|--------------|
| Wheat, per ton | 400 |
| Wood, per 10 cubic ft. | 50 |
| Coal, per ton | 350 |
| Exotic spices, per pinch (0.035 oz.)..... | 25 |
| Rare materials (onyxium, Wyvern scales, Dancer's bones, Shard), per pinch (0.035 oz.)..... | 1250 or more |
| Marble (block), per 1/2 ton..... | 600 |
| Iron or, per ton..... | 700 |
| Copper ore, per ton..... | 450 |
| Gold ore, per ton | 500 |
| Silver ore, per ton | 320 |

SERVICES

♣ Corruption

The following prices can very much vary depending on the place, the status of the victim and of the criminal. A peasant risks death for poaching in Urgamand, whereas a lord that kills and rapes his peasants will only fall into discredit.

For an unimportant act

| | |
|--|----|
| Minor official (militia man)..... | 2 |
| Senior official, medium hierarchy (officer)..... | 7 |
| Higher official, of good position (commanding officer)..... | 30 |

For a serious act

| | |
|--|-------|
| Minor official (militia man)..... | 50 |
| Senior official, medium hierarchy (officer)..... | 200 |
| Higher official, of good position (commanding officer)..... | 1,500 |

AT THE TAVERN

Lodging, per night

| | |
|---|---|
| Stable....0.2 (free for customers that eat at the tavern) | |
| Dormitory..... | 1 |
| Separate room..... | 3 |
| Separate room, high quality..... | 6 |

Board (one daily meal)

| | |
|---|-------------|
| Loaf of bread..... | 1 |
| Low quality meal..... | 2 |
| Average quality meal with some wine..... | 3 |
| Abundant meal, open bar, several courses..... | 5 |
| Feast, banquet..... | 20 and more |
| Dried rations (one week)..... | 6 |

Beverages

| | |
|------------------------|-----|
| Beer, per tankard..... | 0.2 |
| Local alcohol | |
| • Per bottle..... | 2 |
| • Per glass..... | 0.3 |
| Strong alcohol | |
| • Per bottle..... | 2.5 |
| • Per glass..... | 0.4 |
| Vintage wine | |
| • Per bottle..... | 5 |
| • Per glass..... | 1 |
| Famous vintage wine | |
| • Per bottle..... | 50 |
| • Per glass..... | 10 |

♣ Various services

| | |
|--|---------|
| Bath | |
| • In a watering hole..... | free |
| • Hot, in a room..... | 0.5 |
| Barber..... | 0.7 |
| Horse care (rubbing it down, oat, etc.)..... | 0.1/day |

VARIOUS ILLEGALITIES

(no guaranty of success)

| | |
|--|-------------|
| Assassin, ordinary contract..... | 40 |
| Assassin, important person and/or protected..... | 50 and more |
| Spy, per day..... | 28 |
| Forged documents..... | 25 |
| Informer, per consultation..... | 3 |
| Prostitute, bad part of town..... | 4 |
| Prostitute, competent..... | 9 |
| Prostitute, medusa courtesan of the Widowlands..... | 400 |
| Thief, simple contract..... | 12 |
| Several thieves, intricate contract..... | 20/thief |

MEDICAL CARE

| | |
|-----------------------------------|----|
| First aid for a wound..... | 1 |
| Doctor for a disease..... | 7 |
| Long and difficult operation..... | 15 |

TRAVELING OUTFIT

| | |
|---|-----|
| Astrolabe..... | 15 |
| Camp-bed..... | 1.5 |
| Cloth sack..... | 1 |
| Compass..... | 14 |
| Crampons..... | 0.8 |
| Dressing-case (wooden comb, hairbrush, soap)..... | 1.5 |
| Field-glass..... | 15 |
| First aid equipment (bandages, alcohol, needle, suture thread...)..... | 3 |
| Flask, wooden (3 pints)..... | 0.5 |
| Goatskin, 2 gallons..... | 0.7 |
| Iron Pot..... | 5 |
| Kitchen equipment..... | 5 |
| Lantern, ordinary..... | 1.5 |
| Lantern, dark..... | 2.5 |
| Leather backpack..... | 1.2 |
| Lectern..... | 1.3 |
| Mosquito net..... | 0.7 |
| Rope, 15 ft..... | 1 |
| Staff..... | 0.5 |
| Tent, 2 persons..... | 3.2 |
| Tent, 8 persons..... | 7.5 |
| Tent (pavilion, up to 20 persons, requires 2 mules or 4 carriers)..... | 20 |
| Traveling-rug..... | 0.7 |
| Trunk..... | 3 |

ANIMALS

| | |
|---|-----|
| Cat..... | 1 |
| Chicken..... | 0.5 |
| Cow..... | 32 |
| Dog..... | 1.5 |
| Domestic snake from the Widowlands..... | 65 |

| | |
|---------------------------|----|
| Exotic singing-birds..... | 80 |
| Goat..... | 15 |
| Hunting dog..... | 12 |
| Fig..... | 25 |
| Plough-ox..... | 35 |
| Sheep..... | 13 |
| Trained falcon..... | 15 |
| Watch dog..... | 4 |

THE SCHOLAR'S DELIGHT

| | |
|---|-----|
| Big sheet of parchment (ideal for a map)..... | 1 |
| Ink (0.5 pint)..... | 2.2 |
| Ink-pot..... | 2.5 |
| Notebook..... | 4 |
| Paper book..... | 3.5 |
| Papyrus, 10 sheets..... | 2 |
| Parchment, per sheet..... | 0.7 |
| Quill-pen, 10 feathers..... | 0.5 |
| Seal and sealing wax..... | 1.3 |

THE CROOK'S AMUSEMENTS

| | |
|-------------------------------------|-----|
| Garrote..... | 0.6 |
| Glazier's diamond..... | 3 |
| Grappling-hook..... | 3 |
| Latch-key..... | 6 |
| Pepper (1 oz.), for watch dogs..... | 0.3 |
| Playing cards..... | 1 |
| Playing cards, marked..... | 3 |
| Six-sided dice, a pair..... | 0.5 |
| Six-sided loaded dice, a pair..... | 2.5 |
| Thieve's picks..... | 10 |
| Whistle..... | 0.4 |

JEWELRY

| | |
|---|-----------------|
| Bare pattern with no gemstones | |
| Base metal (copper, bronze or iron)/Precious metal (silver, gold)/Rare materials (Wyvern scales, onyxium) | |
| Belt buckle..... | 3/450/5,000 |
| Earrings, a pair..... | 1/100/2,000 |
| Bracelet..... | 2.5/230/4,000 |
| Broach..... | 1.8/250/4,300 |
| Necklace..... | 4/500/10,000 |
| Crown..... | 25/3,500/55,000 |
| Diadem..... | 20/2,300/40,000 |
| Mask..... | 5/2,600/45,000 |
| Medallion..... | 1.8/250/4,500 |
| Pendant..... | 1.5/120/2,500 |
| Scepter..... | 5/3,500/60,000 |

Semi-precious stones (big enough for a jewel)

| | |
|----------------------|----|
| Agate cat's eye..... | 18 |
| Amber..... | 12 |
| Aquamarine..... | 15 |
| Amethyst..... | 20 |
| Bloodstone..... | 15 |

| | |
|-------------------|----|
| Coral..... | 10 |
| Garnet..... | 10 |
| Hematite..... | 15 |
| Jade..... | 35 |
| Jasper..... | 25 |
| Lapis lazuli..... | 20 |
| Malachite..... | 7 |
| Moonstone..... | 25 |
| Serpentine..... | 17 |
| Tourmaline..... | 18 |
| Turquoise..... | 6 |

Precious stones (big enough for a jewel)

| | |
|---------------|-----|
| Diamond..... | 280 |
| Emerald..... | 180 |
| Ruby..... | 150 |
| Sapphire..... | 130 |
| Topaz..... | 100 |

ACCESSORIES FOR MAGES

Ascendancy mentor

- To improve Dancer lore..... 10/day
- To improve Resonance..... 15 to 45/day

Dancer

- Branding of a Dancer (the Cipher-sorcerer grants rewards to those who voluntary brand their Dancers)..... 50
- Unbranded, just captured..... 250
- Branded, no training..... 500
- Branded, minimum training (20 Threshold points)..... 800
- Normal training (60 Threshold points)..... 1,850
- Talented Dancer (with no training, otherwise undiscoverable)..... 5,000 and more

Demonology or Discord mentor..... 250 to 1,000/day

Elder art Opus

- 10 Threshold points..... 1,000
- up to 20 points..... Threshold points x2,500
- up to 30 points..... Threshold points x10,000

Magical Arts mentor

- To learn an Opus..... 50/day
- To improve an uninitiated art..... 7/day
- To improve a Magical art..... 15 to 45/day

Magical ink to invoke a demon

(Circle I/II/III/IV/V)..... 10/25/50/125/175

Pigment (a pinch)..... 50

HUNTING AND FISHING

| | |
|--------------------------------|-------|
| Bear-trap..... | 4.5 |
| Cage (small/medium/large)..... | 1/2/4 |

| | |
|---------------------------|-----|
| Fish-hooks and angle..... | 0.2 |
| Fox trap | 2.5 |
| Harpoon (river)..... | 0.8 |
| Harpoon (whale)..... | 1.5 |
| Hunting horn..... | 2 |
| Net..... | 1.2 |

MISCELLANEOUS

| | |
|---|---------------------|
| Barrel (20 gallons)..... | 7.5 |
| Candles, 10 (tallow/scented bee wax)..... | 0.1/3.5 |
| Cask (70 gallons)..... | 16 |
| Keg (4 gallons)..... | 4 |
| Magnifying glass..... | 1.8 |
| Mirror, mural..... | 2.5 |
| Oil lamp | 1.3 |
| Oil, 0.4 pint flask..... | 0.6 |
| Padlock..... | 10 |
| Poison | |
| • Rarity 10 | 100 |
| • Rarity 15 | 1,500 |
| • Rarity 20..... | 5,000 |
| • Rarity 30..... | very rarely on sale |
| Scale and weights | 3 |
| Taper.....(tallow/wax) 0.2/0.4 | |
| Tun (220 gallons; untransportable)..... | 50 |

PROFESSIONAL EQUIPMENT

| | |
|--|-----|
| Carpenter's workshop (planes, levels, saws, plumb-line, etc.)..... | 105 |
| Field kitchen (pots, pans, cookers and cutlery for 25 persons)..... | 120 |
| Forge (anvil, hammers, pliers, blower, etc.)..... | 160 |
| Letter-writing stall (paper, inks, quill-pens, fusains and pencils)..... | 95 |
| Mason's workshop (hammers, chisels, etc.)..... | 110 |
| Torture room (brazier, rack, pliers, thumb-fetters, etc.)..... | 300 |

HORSEMANSHIP

| | |
|---------------------|-----|
| Harness..... | 2.6 |
| Horseshoes (4)..... | 3 |
| Horse whip..... | 0.8 |
| Rein..... | 1 |
| Saddle..... | 7 |
| Scabbards..... | 2.5 |
| Stirrups..... | 1.5 |

MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

| | |
|-----------------|-----|
| Cittern..... | 10 |
| Drum..... | 5 |
| Flute..... | 1.5 |
| Harp..... | 18 |
| Horn..... | 3 |
| Kettledrum..... | 13 |

| | |
|-----------------|-----|
| Tambourine..... | 2.3 |
| Viol..... | 12 |

FURNITURE

| | |
|---------------------------------|------|
| Armchair..... | 8 |
| Bench..... | 4 |
| Bookshelf..... | 6 |
| Stool..... | 3 |
| Wardrobe..... | 12 |
| Writing-table..... | 14 |
| (with secret compartments)..... | + 20 |

TOOLS

| | |
|-------------------------|-----|
| Awning (3 ft.)..... | 0.9 |
| File..... | 3 |
| Graver..... | 4 |
| Hammer..... | 2 |
| Hatchet..... | 3.5 |
| Ladder..... | 4 |
| Nails, one hundred..... | 1.3 |
| Pegs, one hundred..... | 1 |
| Pick..... | 5.5 |
| Awl..... | 0.9 |
| Pliers..... | 4 |
| Saw..... | 4 |
| Shovel..... | 5 |
| Spade..... | 5 |
| Wedge..... | 1.7 |
| Whetstone..... | 1 |

CLOTHES

| | |
|--|-----|
| Apron..... | 1.2 |
| Boots..... | 5 |
| Breeches..... | 1 |
| Cap..... | 0.5 |
| Cloak..... | 0.9 |
| Coat..... | 5 |
| Coif..... | 0.6 |
| Dress, common..... | 3.5 |
| Dress, newest Princely Communes fashion..... | 35 |
| Fine shoes..... | 2.8 |
| Full dress..... | 28 |
| Fur-lined coat..... | 10 |
| Gloves..... | 1.5 |
| Guard's uniform..... | 12 |
| Hat..... | 1.1 |
| Hood..... | 0.6 |
| Plain clothes..... | 15 |
| Sandals..... | 0.8 |
| Shirt..... | 1 |
| Surcoat..... | 3 |
| Traveling clothes..... | 10 |
| Trousers..... | 3 |
| Underwear, common..... | 0.7 |
| Underwear, hussy..... | 6.5 |

MEANS OF CONVEYANCE

Road transportation

| | |
|---------------------------|-----|
| Camel..... | 65 |
| Caravan..... | 100 |
| Cart, two wheels..... | 55 |
| Chariot, four wheels..... | 85 |
| Coach..... | 180 |
| Donkey..... | 20 |
| Mule..... | 25 |
| Packhorse..... | 75 |
| Palanquin..... | 35 |
| Pony..... | 55 |
| Sedan chair..... | 18 |
| Trained war horse..... | 140 |

Ships

Prices for a new boat with no tackle

| | |
|---------------|-----------------|
| Bark..... | 200 to 500 |
| Corvette..... | 4,800 to 7,000 |
| Cutter..... | 2,900 to 4,000 |
| Frigate..... | 9,000 to 12,000 |
| Galleon..... | 4,100 to 8,000 |
| Galley..... | 3,900 to 5,900 |
| Chebek..... | 1,800 to 3,200 |
| Sloop..... | 400 to 700 |

ARMOR

(Vest only/Partial armor/Full armor)

The following prices are for bare models with no specific ornamentation and average quality. Used equipment can cost half the specified price (body snatchers frequently offer such bargains). Superior quality or intricately ornamented armors can multiply the listed prices from 10 to 100 times.

| | |
|----------------------|-------------------|
| Banded mail..... | 350/800/1,700 |
| Chain mail..... | 850/1,800/4,200 |
| Heavy clothes..... | 7/15/30 |
| Leather..... | 17/40/120 |
| Plate..... | 1,000/2,500/5,000 |
| Scale mail..... | 150/350/750 |
| Studded leather..... | 50/120/250 |

WEAPONS

Same remarks as for armor: the listed prices are for new, and average quality item. They cost half the price when they are second-hand. Superior quality or ornamentation can modify the price from 10 to 100 more.

| | |
|------------------|-----|
| Axe..... | 12 |
| Club..... | 1 |
| Cane..... | 1.5 |
| Short sword..... | 6 |

| | |
|-----------------------|------|
| Dagger..... | 5 |
| Double axe..... | 57 |
| Flail..... | 9 |
| Foil..... | 14 |
| Giant axe..... | 63 |
| Giant mallet..... | 19 |
| Giant mace..... | 50 |
| Giant pike..... | 30 |
| Giant sword..... | 65 |
| Great flail..... | 55 |
| Great lance..... | 30 |
| Halberd..... | 49 |
| Half-axe..... | 3.6 |
| Hatchet..... | 3.1 |
| Horseman's lance..... | 12 |
| Knife..... | 3.7 |
| Lamella..... | 4.7 |
| Lance..... | 9 |
| Mace..... | 10 |
| Main gauche..... | 11 |
| Morning star..... | 13 |
| Ogre axe..... | 18 |
| Ogre mallet..... | 13 |
| Ogre sword..... | 22 |
| Pike..... | 6 |
| Pilum..... | 8 |
| Pin..... | 2 |
| Pitchfork..... | 6 |
| Quarterstaff..... | 2.1 |
| Rapier..... | 17 |
| Saber..... | 15.5 |
| Short sword..... | 14 |
| Scimitar..... | 15 |
| Stiletto..... | 2.2 |
| Sword..... | 16 |
| Tree trunk..... | free |
| Trident..... | 8 |
| Truncheon..... | 1.7 |
| Two-handed sword..... | 60 |
| War hammer..... | 13 |

♣ Shields

| | |
|--------------------|----|
| Knight Shield..... | 21 |
| Buckler..... | 12 |
| Tower or Kite..... | 45 |

♣ Missile weapons

| | |
|--------------------------|-----|
| Ballista..... | 340 |
| Bow..... | 12 |
| Composite bow..... | 36 |
| Composite short bow..... | 21 |
| Crossbow..... | 25 |
| Heavy crossbow..... | 55 |
| Light crossbow..... | 20 |
| Long bow..... | 18 |
| Short bow..... | 7 |
| Spriggan crossbow..... | 75 |
| Sprite bow..... | 6 |



An overview

THE ENCHANTMENT OF THE WORLD

☛ The magic of the Eternals

The Eternals populated Harmundia with creatures, some of which have lingered on to our time. We group them below according to their origins.

• THE MUSES

In the beginning, as they scoured Harmundia in their Quest of Perfection, they paused in sites that became Perfections. Full of Inspiration, most of these relics disappeared during the Agony. However, some survived and are now considered sanctuaries dedicated to the Muses. Concealed and rare, there are only a few dozen Perfections remaining.

At the time of the Quest of Perfection, the Muses also gave birth to creatures. Some became Wonders (like unicorns and sirens) and were assigned the duty of tending to the Perfections; others became the soldiers of the Muses, the Excellences (like dragons and phoenixes). In the course of the battle against the Masque and the Darken, the Excellences were decimated to the extent that many species disappeared forever. The Wonders also suffered in this clash but some have endured. Nowadays, sirens are considered the most often seen Wonders on Harmundia (they are said to hold the secrets of the paths that lead to the Perfections).

• DIURN AND NYX

When the night covered the faults of the earth, it dug out the Abysses. Thus were born the demons. Their nature is detailed in Chapter 1 of Book Four. However, one should be aware of the legend that tells of certain demons named the Sunken. They are supposed to have abjured the inheritance of Nyx who had become the Darken. Over time, the Sunken supposedly founded a brotherhood, a resistance in the heart of the Abyss against the pact that bound Nyx to the Masque. Invokers cannot summon these magical creatures onto Harmundia. Their magic is active only in the Abyss.

When the first day broke, Diurn came forth, and with him his servants: the Glimmers. Knights of light, as demons were creatures of the Darkness, the Glimmers were depleted during the Agony. They fought the Masque and his allies in the front lines and have today almost completely disappeared. Still, a few survived the battle. Wounded or dying, they fell "asleep" in order to recover. To do that, they spun their golden blood into the shape of sunrays. Sometimes, one can hear a voice or even catch a glance of a Glimmer's face through a stained glass window, or in a reflection on a decanter. In order to materialize, the Glimmers will need Diurn's help, in spite of Janus being on guard. However, they can communicate from a reflective surface. Such a sign,

2 ~ Magic

vaguely outlined on glass or steel, can every now and then be very good counsel to the Inspired. A blade of incredible purity is said to permanently reflect the Glimmers so that it bestows great power to whoever should possess the sword.

• THE SEASONS

The magic of the seasons does not only come down to the Vista (see below). There is a magic conveyed by the Ladies themselves through a subtle link with a seasonling. This type of magic is generally expressed in dreams as sibylline messages. It may even, under extraordinary circumstances, possess the seasonling. It usually becomes a magic of nature (as Emerald the Sprite exerts when he sows his barren field to create bountiful harvests all the year round). In addition, there are powers that the Lady of Autumn bestowed on her Seasonlings. These powers are unknown, and differ from those of the Autumn Vista.

• JANUS

The magic of Janus is named the Sentence. It is exerted through his many servants, creatures of the Masque that were wrested from their master to serve the Flame, and came under Janus' wing at their deaths. It is also practiced by most of the eminences grises, and the Glimmers whose messages are often inspired by Janus. The magic of the Sentence is used all circumstances to render judgments and to restore Concord.

♣ The Flamboyance

• REMAINS AND RELICS

In the time of the Flamboyance, when all men were inspired, the power of magic was at its zenith. It inhabited beings and sites, shined in objects, and inspired artists and their creations. Harmundia inherited Remains (sites and architectural elements) and Relics (objects of the time such as pottery or weapons) from Flamboyance.

The common attribute of Remains and Relics is the Shard contained within them. The Shard represents the magic of the Flamboyance, crystallized at the time of the Eclipse. When one speaks of Remains and Relics, one implies that they contain some Shard. Certain Flamboyant objects or ruins may not hold any Shard but most of those would have disappeared.

The Thousand Towers of Lorgol is an example of a Remain of the Flamboyance, and the dagger, Airguez, is a Relic (see box).

Each Remain and Relic has a different part that is Shard. It could be the heart of an edifice, the pommel of a weapon or even the entire blade. The power, abilities and permanency of an object depend on the amount of Shard it contains.

• ERGASTULUM

Ergastulum are scenes from the time of the Eclipse, captured in the form of frescoes. They are like snapshots of an epoch — places imprisoned in time that can be freed

AIRGUEIZ

Nature: Relic

Value: 5 (in the blade)

Primary Emotion: Jealousy

Secondary Emotions: Shame and Revenge

Description: A dagger with a slightly curved blade. A golden phoenix is carved onto the hilt and the amber-colored blade assumes the form of a flame-burst.

Story: Airguez was the tool of an ancient nomadic prince's revenge. He wandered through what would later become the Desert of Keshe. On his return home, the Madjin prince found out that his wife had betrayed him for several years with his rival from the Mountaquim tribe. Mad with rage, he sent his troops on a surprise attack to a Mountaquim encampment in order to slit their throats one by one. The Madjin prince personally took care of his enemy by methodically cutting off his head with Airguez.

Attributes: Airguez confers a +4 bonus to its bearer's Weapon: dagger skill. Moreover, it has the power to reflect the true face of reality. In game terms, illusions do not fool the bearer of the sword if he looks at the reflection on the blade.

PERCEPTION OF THE SHARD

A Dullen cannot realize the presence of Shard below a Value of 2. An Inspired can try to feel the presence of a Shard of any Value. To do so, he must succeed on a roll of PER + Concord against 20 - the Value of the Shard.

Roll: PER + Concord = (20 - Value)

If he fails, he will only see a solid or liquid copper-colored metal. But if he succeeds, he will see the golden grooves that run through it, and feel the magical aura of the Remain or Relic.

by the Magical Arts. The Ergastulum came to be at the height of the Eclipse. They emerged where the Shard could not express the immense power of the Inspiration of the Luminary. Ergastulum can appear on a wall, a canvas or a personal object. A layman will always be surprised by the attention that was given to every detail of these opuses. Ergastulum are not Pictureworlds, One cannot travel inside them, but only summon their elements (characters, objects, a scene) into Harmundia. Rare are those who can penetrate the secrets of an Ergastulum. Such a power is available to only the most powerful Concordists, those who practice Vista and Shape at the very highest levels. An uninitiated person might not even recognize a mural as an Ergastulum.

ATTRIBUTES OF THE SHARD

Nature: The Shard may be present in a Relic, a Remain or of a Dancer.

Value: Rated from 1 to 10; the value of the Shard determines the effects it has on those close to it, or on the bearer.

Attributes: The abilities granted by the Shard, could be bonuses or a magical effect.

Primary Emotion: The emotion embodied in the Shard.

Secondary Emotions: Two emotions, specifically linked to an historic context.

EMOTIONS AND THE DANCER

For a free Dancer, the situation is exactly the same as for humans and seasonlings, except that it is not affected by a Shard value less than 5.

On the other hand, the situation is very different with a captive Dancer, bound to a mage. The Eminence Grise will have to roll a die that he will add to the Shard's value against a Difficulty equal to the mage's Resonance plus the Dancer's Empathy. Only then can the Dancer be affected by a Shard whose value is less than 5.

Roll: Value against a DIF equal to (Empathy + Resonance)

If the roll is successful, the captive Dancer is affected in the same way as a free Dancer.

INFLUENCE OF EMOTIONS

It is necessary to differentiate the effects of Primary and Secondary Emotions.

PRIMARY EMOTION

The Primary Emotion can be felt by anyone in contact with the Relic as with at least a Value of 2. If the bearer wants to resist, he will have to succeed in an open Will roll against the Value of the Relic multiplied by 5.

Roll: WIL against a DIF equal to Value x 5

If he fails, the bearer will be affected by the Primary Emotion at the rate specified in the Effects of the Shard table. If the SM is between 0 and 9, the duration of the effect is cut in half. If the SM is at least of 10, the bearer will not be affected by the Relic's Primary Emotion.

SECONDARY EMOTIONS

A Relic's Secondary Emotions can influence the bearer when its Value is of at least 4. If the latter wants to resist, he will have to succeed on a Will roll against the Value of the Relic multiplied by 3.

Roll: WIL against a DIF equal to Value x 3

If he fails, the bearer will be affected by both Secondary Emotions at the Rate specified in the Shard effect box. If the SM is between 0 and 9, the bearer will only suffer from the first of the two Secondary Emotions. If the SM is at least of 10, the bearer will be affected by none of the two Emotions. This roll may only be attempted once and the result is permanent.

When subjected to an Emotion, the Eminence Grise should guide the player in his character's interpretation. He should also estimate the implications of such an Emotion on the character, depending on the character's personality and the Value of the Relic.

THE MAGIC OF TODAY

♣ The Shard

• NATURE

A Shard is fossilized magic. It is a concrete representation of the Inspiration that covered Flamboyant Harmondia. Shard has a coppery hue and every so often is

engrained with golden grooves. It can be found in a solid state as in the Dancers' bone structure, in Remains and Relics. It is the most resistant matter known.

It can be melted by a magical fire in special forges and even by the Flame of an Inspired. In its liquid state, the texture of the Shard resembles quite closely that of mercury. Forging it requires a specific knowledge. Not only can it lose all of its special attributes, but it can also cause uncontrollable spontaneous reactions in the process.

• EMOTIONS

Each Shard bears three emotions:

♣ **The Primary Emotion:** It is the fossilized representation of an emotion at the time of the Eclipse, that of one or several Inspired. This emotion is not always active and may have lost all of its force with time. One would generally refer to a Shard of courage or of hatred when speaking of its Primary Emotion. The bearer reacts differently depending on the value of its Shard (see Powers, below).

♣ **The two Secondary Emotions:** They are rare and are usually present only if a circumstantial emotion is linked to the Remain or the Relic. The sword of a king could, for example, have courage as its Primary Emotion, and its Secondary Emotions could be fear (of the demon he fought) and hatred (of his enemy). These Secondary Emotions only appear if the Inspired is in a similar situation. In the example above, the Inspired might be particularly fearful when fighting demons with that sword. Secondary emotions are often linked to historic circumstances.

In the case of Remains, Primary and Secondary Emotions only show up in specific places. Entering Remains does not always entail being overwhelmed by the Shard's Primary Emotion. It will more likely reveal itself in a specific room, in a corridor, on a throne, etc. Secondary Emotions will manifest themselves at certain moments linked to their history.

• POWERS

In theory, the powers of the Shard are limitless. Each Shard can contain the Inspiration of one or several persons of the Flamboyance. Nevertheless, each Shard has its "signature" ability. Let's consider for example a sword that belonged to a king at the time of the Eclipse. In that case, the Shard contains the king's courage and possibly even his talent. The sword would now be considered a Relic, and would grant its bearer the courage and talent of a king. But that does not mean the Shard has a true memory. At the moment of the Eclipse, the king's memory was transformed into a Luminary, whereas his innate emotional side was fossilized in the Shard.

So, the Shard does not have a true personality. If fact, its powers are often the product of several different and overlapping Inspirations. Although the Shard is magical, it is a non-living material.

The EG can use this system at will in order to create a variety of Remains or Relics. The Value of the Shard (on a scale of 1 to 10) measures the importance of its powers.

The purpose of the scale below is to provide a way to determine the power of the Shard in an object or in a place.

♣ The Luminary

The Luminary is the concrete embodiment of the Flame. A Luminary is a person whose three Aspects have reached 10. At this level of Soul, Body and Spirit, an Inspired becomes a Luminary.

A Luminary has retained a certain number of memories and abilities of the past. Even if, ever since the Eclipse, the memories of the dead usually transmute into Ghosts, Luminaries keep traces of the past. Every Luminary knows at least some important events of their

lives, but most of them are forced to research their own past. Some Dullen, who know of the nature of the Luminaries, try to hunt them down for their knowledge of the past. They have become Luminary Stalkers, talented mercenaries who search for secrets concerning hidden treasures or Shard-rich places, etc. Also, a Luminary's failing memory can lead to many quests for the Inspired. A Luminary who was once rich could send the Troupe out on the quest for his hidden treasure.

The abilities of a Luminary are exactly those he possessed before his death. From there on, he can practice Ascendancy and the Magical Arts without accessories. He also keeps all the powers of his Flame as well as his Fortune points. But he is no longer able to become an Invoker, having lost his Darkness and Perfidy at the moment he became a Luminary.

EFFECTS OF THE SHARD DEPENDING ON ITS VALUE

Each Shard amount listed is accompanied by the rate of the emotional feeling (if the Will roll is failed/if the SM is under -10).

Note: Dullen cannot perceive the Shard, but are more vulnerable to its influence than the Inspired. For them, the scale is shifted down one notch. If a Dullen is affected by a Shard Value of 1, the consequences will in fact be equal to those of a Shard value of 2.

1: The presence of the Shard is nearly imperceptible.

It is equivalent to a drop of rain. The EG could plan a subtle emotional feeling upon contact, or perhaps grant an artist a better inspiration (the Shard might take the form of several paint-brush hairs in a regular brush).

2: From here on up, the amount of Shard can be perceived by a Dullen.

The Shard could fit into a nutshell. The EG can decide to grant an extra bonus to a weapon and to pass on a more frequent emotional feeling rate (once every couple of weeks).

3: The mass of the Shard is equal to that of a stiletto

and will affect anybody in contact with it. A weapon with this Value will necessarily apply an attribute or ability bonus. (Emotion rate: once or twice a week)

4: The Shard will directly affect an Inspired.

Its mass is equivalent to that of a glass. Moreover, the Inspired will feel both Secondary Emotions. This is the threshold at which a site is considered being a Remain. If the Shard Value is less than 4, it only makes up an object of the site, not the site itself. (Emotion rate: twice a week to once every two days)

5: Equal to a Dancer.

This is an important threshold, because it implies a clear resonance of the Primary Emotion. It is now omnipresent and directly affects the personality of the Inspired. A Shard of wrath will sharpen the aggressive behavior of the Inspired. A Relic with a Value of 5 has 4 bonus points to be divided according to the bearer's attributes or ability adjustments. (Emotion rate: once every two days/once a day)

6: This Shard is the size of a short sword.

Primary and Secondary Emotions affect the bearer of the Relic directly. He or she is subjected to them in the same way as Remains. There are 5 to 6 bonus points usually allotted to free or elder Magical Arts. (Emotion rate: once a day/twice a day)

7: Equivalent to a two-handed weapon.

The Inspired is affected daily by all three Emotions. Such a Relic gives 7 to 8 bonus points that may be allotted to attributes, abilities or Magical Arts abilities (Shape, Tune, Vista and Scansion). A Dancer in the vicinity of the relic will be affected by its Primary Emotion. Theoretically, the Value of a Relic cannot exceed 7 unless it is a large object such as a throne or a tomb.

8: At this level, the Shard is contained in a very large Relic or in a Remain.

Only two or three giant weapons can reach this level, no other weapon can. It usually corresponds to an important Flamboyant Remain. In such a site, the Inspired can be affected by a Secondary Emotion for life. (Emotion rate: once an hour to permanent)

9: Only Ergastulum and large Remains may attain this level.

The Shard cannot be melted or separated from its site. A Dullen will be permanently affected by all three Emotions in such a place, whereas the Inspired can be victim of the two Secondary Emotions. (Emotion rate: permanent)

10: The maximum level: only concerns Flamboyant Remains.

There is no mass equivalency. At such a level, the Shard is inseparable from all other building materials. The Shard cannot be used for other purposes by melting and forging it. In certain specific areas of the Remain, the Shard may overwhelm the mind of the Inspired. For example, a thief might experience a deep melancholic feeling and would then allow himself to die. (Emotion rate: permanent)

In such Remains, the Concordists become god-like. The Ancient Art is enhanced, and their artistic creations will resemble those of the Flamboyance. In many respects, living in such Remains is like living in the time of the Flamboyance.

• THE ORIGINS

At the end of the Agony, the Muses created the Spiritcore, kingdom of the Luminaries. This magical place held the Flame of the Inspired and perpetuated the Muses' cycle of reincarnation. At the time of the Flamboyance, Luminaries were known and admired for their talents. Nowadays, they are thought of as Gods.

At the time of the Eclipse, the Flames ascending to the Spiritcore fell back onto Harmundia as Luminaries. At that moment, each Luminary symbolized the inheritance the Muses left in each Flame that could not reach the Spiritcore. Just as the Day created the Dancers, and as Inspired's memories became the Ghosts, the Luminaries are the Muses' creation. For several decades, some Luminaries wandered around Harmundia searching for their memories and for the essence of Diurn. They tried intuitively to reform the Flames fragmented by the Eclipse. That quest turned out to be vain and perilous. Many Luminaries died in those years, some from the sorrow of being "incomplete". However, others reconciled themselves to such an existence and from then on three different types of Luminaries have coexisted on Harmundia.

• THE WANDERING LUMINARIES

The vocation of these Luminaries is to wander through Harmundia in order to fight the enemies of the Muses and to unveil the Spiritcore. Each of them has a complex personality that is the true essence of the Inspiration. The Dullen take them for the heirs of the Gods or for mysterious, and sometimes sinister, prophets because of their numerous talents.

Wandering Luminaries materialize as luminous entities. Their original bodies - those of the last Inspired to bear their Flame at the moment of the Eclipse - float in a pale blue halo. The majority of wandering Luminaries have mastered Ascendancy and the Magical Arts, and have learned to travel discreetly. Some take the form of the elderly or of animals. These Luminaries are full of wisdom, and they show discretion with the use of their talents and powers. Their quest is to amass as much knowledge as possible about the Eternals, in order to thwart the plans of the Masque, saving the Lady of Autumn from his influence, and thus restoring the link between Harmundia and the Spiritcore.

Wandering Luminaries don't fight in the front lines against the Masque. They strive to be archivists of the knowledge of the Eternals. They do their best to convey their knowledge to the Inspired and to others who fight the Masque more directly. The Troupe may chance upon a wandering Luminary in the course of its adventures. He will usually appear as a guide when everything seems lost, or as a legendary warrior who fights at their sides when the enemy is about to overcome them.

Wandering Luminaries are far from being tutelary and omniscient entities. They are most certainly powerful, but, like every other Inspired, they run the risk of becoming victims of the Masque and his allies. These

Luminaries prefer to dwell in the hearts of forests, studying in grottos and crypts, traveling in the form of an eagle and observing Harmundia in order to determine the secret of its salvation. They also know that they cannot defeat the Masque alone, that they need the Inspired, and that the battle will only be won with the help of each and every person in Harmundia. For that reason, their attitude is sometimes misunderstood by the Dullen. Wandering Luminaries will often be the Troupe's mentors, guides and allies.

• THE NEW LUMINARIES

They are those who became Luminaries independently of the Eclipse. They are Inspired who, having attained 10 at each of the three Aspects, became Luminaries at their deaths. As they were not able to reach the Spiritcore, they are confined to Harmundia and so join the other Luminaries in their fight against the Masque.

Nevertheless, one distinguishes them from the wanderers and the founders because their philosophy is radically different from that of their elders. Compared to the wisdom and studies favored by the wanderers, the new Luminaries prefer direct engagement and struggle. They try to unite in order to found a true army - a legion of Luminaries able to defeat the Masque in his lair.

This opinion is not unanimous. Amongst the new Luminaries, some prefer the ways of the wanderers. They blame their more aggressive brethren for their short-term outlook and for a fight that depletes their resources.

On the other hand, the quarrelsome Luminaries think that Harmundia is heading for ruin, that its days are numbered, and that they have to arm themselves to fight the Masque and his allies. They strive to convince the Inspired of the merits of the struggle, and do what they can to enlist the best to help them. Their halo has become reddish with time.

• FOUNDING LUMINARIES

Amongst the Luminaries, some feel the need to become rooted in Harmundia. They are the privileged inheritors of the Muses and they embody the Quest of Perfection. Each of these Luminaries holds in it the architecture and the magical abilities of a future Remain.

Most of them date from the Eclipse. It is extremely rare that a new Luminary feels the need to become a founder. Concretely, the Luminary has chosen a site to fall into a deep sleep, a cataleptic state that brings him into resonance with Harmundia. These sites are often inaccessible to Dullen, hidden or well protected. It may be a clearing in the heart of a forest, a grotto hidden behind a waterfall or even a crypt; the site becomes a magical haven where the Luminary learns little by little how to develop his empathy with Harmundia and the original power of the Muses.

When an Inspired or the Troupe discover the method of founding a Remain, they express the same power of creation as the Luminaries of foundation. They are able to create a magical architecture that shapes space to

bring a Remain to life. Founding Luminaries are of course rare and extremely precious in the fight against the Masque. A quest of a founder will be a major stake for the Troupe.

The Dancer

DEFINITION

A Dancer is the only creature that enables the use of Ascendancy. It is essential for the practice of the three Cipher-sorcerer obediences: Jormism, Eclipsism and Obscurantism.

A Dancer is a humanoid creature measuring 3 to 5 inches. Its body is tall and thin, and has a milky hue that slightly changes depending on the type of Ascendancy used. It is sexless; its face has neither mouth nor ears. Its eyes are the size of a pinhole and are entirely black. Its bone structure is similar to that of humans except for the silvery color that indicates the presence of some Shard. The bones are covered with a tracery of inextricable grooves, golden filaments named "rets", that help the body keep its elasticity. A Dancer's only internal organ is its "brain", a smooth and transparent gem that looks like a gem used by Cipher-sorcerers to enable Dullen to use Ascendancy.

When a physical wound is inflicted on a Dancer, it bleeds a substance named "sanguineous". The sanguineous of certain Dancers is supposed to be an elixir.

One must differentiate free Dances from captive Dancers. Theoretically, Dancers are immortal; at least, they are not affected by aging. They may be killed, but their stamina is higher than that of Dullen; it is in fact equal to the endurance of an Artifact. Its endurance changes if the Dancer is in the service of a mage, especially an Obscurantist. Indeed, Obscurantists are able to physically wound a Dancer without any trouble. This may be explained by the relationship between the mage and the Dancer. The empathy bonding the mage to the Dancer undermines the Dancer's resistance and therefore enables the Obscurantist to use the Torture on his Dancer.

THE ORIGINS

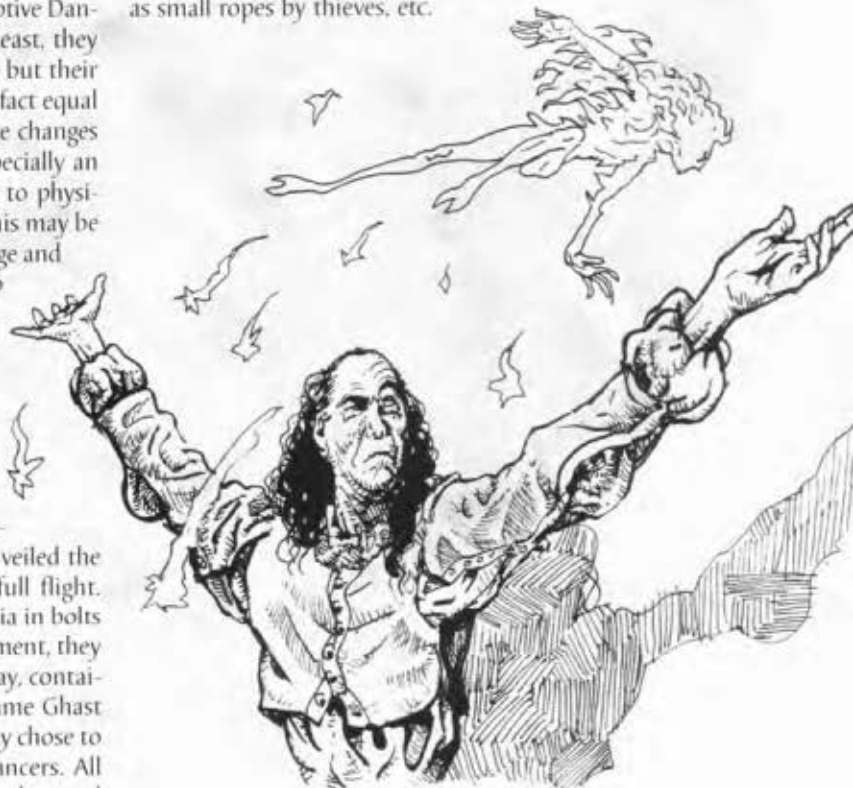
The Dancers were spontaneously born at the time of the Eclipse. When the Masque succeeded in seducing the Lady of Autumn and veiled the Spiritcore, certain Flames were stopped in full flight. Those shattered Flames fell back to Harmundia in bolts of fire and became Dancers. At that exact moment, they represented a part Diurn, the aspect of the Day, contained in each Flame. Whilst the memory became Ghost and the Inspiration became Luminary, the Day chose to reincarnate himself as living Shards: the Dancers. All Dancers rose at that moment. In order to understand

that transformation, the men and women of the time alluded to an alchemy of the fall: the essence of Diurn twirled in the sky and changed at the mercy of the winds into Dancers. This idea of motion is fundamental to the emergence of the Dancers. From their creation, the Dancers have sought all types of movement at all times. Some say that their Dances are pantomimes to elevate themselves to the sky and to reach the Spiritcore (see the legend of the winged Dancers below).

THE FREE DANCERS

♣ Physical attributes

A free Dancer is more resistant than one affiliated to a mage. As long as there is no bond with a mage, the Dancer's endurance is equal to that of an Artifact. No human or animal disease can affect it. This stamina is probably the reason why the Dancers have survived through time, but it does not mean the Dancers are invincible. A Dullen will quite certainly have trouble finding and killing a Dancer, but he can succeed. Throwing a Dancer into glowing coals or off a cliff will wound it. A free Dancer will not be affected by fatigue. Its sole physiological need is sleep. It will sleep at night, once every week. In this presence of Shard (other Dancers, Relics or Remains), a Dancer can stay awake up to two consecutive weeks. A free Dancer's internal organs are far more valuable than those of captive Dancers. Not only is the Shard of their bones more pure but their rets keep their elasticity and resistance. Rets are used to make clothes, to tighten bows, to be used as small ropes by thieves, etc.



♣ Personality

Free Dancers are essentially innocent creatures. They do not understand the principles of good and evil, but live only to Dance. They are emotional creatures, unable to lie; they are led impulsively by their emotions. Due to their deeply chaotic nature, Dancers do not obey anything or anybody. The Dancer's personality evolves based on the emotions in the Shard it encounters. It will seek resonance with that Shard and lets itself be overwhelmed by every possible emotion.

They may be considered to have child-like personalities, and an ingenuousness that sometimes gets them into trouble. In addition, a Dancer's personality depends of its past. One must bear in mind that they have all been living ever since the Eclipse. That long background composes and refines each Dancer's personality. Some were captive and are now free, while others may have declined since the death of their master. Each personality has its unique qualities. Dancers have only their innocence, their craving for Dance and their Memory ability in common.

♣ Behavior

Day and night, free Dancers seek the Shard that will enable them to improvise new Dances. That is why Dancers tend to gather around Remains and, more generally, around everything that contains Shard. They take pleasure in being amidst complex architecture. Consequently, they appreciate cities, urban environments that have a variety of forms for them to dance among. They often live on roofs, or wander on gutters and chimney-tops. The complexity of the foliage of an oak can also inspire their dances, but rarely contains any Shard.

Free Dancers travel frequently and grow quickly weary of a place. Once they decide to move on, they will generally travel at night so as to avoid men. Dancers often travel in groups of up to a dozen. These groups only rarely use roads or paths made by Dullen. They prefer to cut through fields or forests. They fear Dullen more than wild animals. Dancers may feel the emotional states of most animals. If an animal is scared or starving, the Dancer is naturally able to create small sparks for self-defense.

♣ Feelings

Dancers have confused and intuitive feelings. They seethe day and night and radically change depending on the circumstances. Dancers are highly sensitive. Not only are they affected by their own feelings but also by those of others.

Dancers are thoroughly inconstant. They can be sulen in the morning, enthusiastic in the afternoon and sorrowful in the evening. However, they usually come off as being careless. This lack of worry is a way of life for Dancers, a true philosophy. Quite like a will 'o wisp, they are tuned in to feelings, letting themselves be guided by them, and only obeying their impulse.

THE CAPTIVE DANCER

Captive Dancers must be bound to a mage of Ascendancy, whether he be Jornist, Eclipsist or Obscurantist.

♣ Physical attributes

When a Dancer is caught, its physical abilities are jeopardized. As long as the Dancer is in a cage and it has not been bound to a mage, its abilities are equivalent to that of a free Dancer. As soon as the Dancer is bound to a mage, its endurance diminishes. The Resonance between the Dancer and the mage (of any master) makes it more vulnerable to physical and mental attacks.

♣ Personality and behavior

When a Dancer is bound to a mage, its personality deeply changes depending on the mage's personality, and most of all on the degree of obedience he demands. When bound to a Jornist, the Dancer will perceive the friendship and love that can bind it to an Inspired or even a Dullen. From then on, the Dancer controls its feelings much better; it is now able to regulate itself. This relationship is mutual: the mage offers the Dancers the opportunity to dance differently, with fewer chaotic steps, leading to a more successful dance. The Dancer likes the sparkles on its body but adores when its master tries improvising new spells and creating new dances. The personality of a Dancer bound to an Eclipsist depends on the mage. Some are as considerate as Jornists, whereas others treat Dancers as pets. Generally, Dancers bound to Eclipsists retain the spontaneity that ruled their lives when they were free. When a Dancer is bound to an Obscurantist, it is affected by torture and psychological pressure that can be lethal. Its behavior will be that of a victim, of an imprisoned creature without any hope.

♣ The magic of the Dancers

When a Dancer is caught, it divulges a certain number of memorized spells. Each Dancer has a given quantity of Memory points that determine the number of spells that it knows. That Memory can evolve. Certain spells can be forgotten or erased, while others spontaneously emerge (frequently using a given Intuitive magic spell makes the Dancer memorize it). This is the reason

THE LEGEND OF THE WINGED DANCERS

"Many think it is a legend, but I have seen them. Believe me, I have seen them wander in Pictureworlds just like butterflies... They are winged Dancers, those who drew upon the Muse Nuence's magic to fly. Why? Because they want to reach the Spiritcore, of course. The day they are able to escape from their prison, the day a Concordist succeeds in painting the door to Harmundia, that day they will leave their Pictureworlds behind them and will come amongst us. Watch for that day, my dear disciples, for the winged Dancers may be our salvation."

why the Dancer trade is so lucrative. A mage of Ascendancy will always seek the best Dancer, the one with the largest Memory and the most interesting spells. Memory also depends on the type of relationship and its duration. The more they become attached to one another, the more the Memory is likely to increase. But the opposite is also true — some Dancers' Memories decline as soon as they are imprisoned.

♣ The Branding

When a Dancer is caught, it must be "branded" in a Cipher-sorcerer academy. This mark enables them to register and to know the origin of each Dancer. Each obedience has its own branding even if all three are magic and theoretically inviolable. Marks can be tattoos, invisible runes, etc. Flying in the face of this institution, a black market enables certain renegade mages to buy their own Dancers.

♣ The experience of a Dancer

Once the bond between the mage and his Dancer has become strong enough, a true empathic exchange can take place between their two minds. This bonding can allow the mage to take the Dancer's damage upon himself. As for the Dancer, he will be able to take on it some of its master's Darkness or Perfidy. This experience only takes place after several years, or even several decades of coexistence. This perfection of the Resonance is still misunderstood and will not be available to the Inspired for a long time unless he has been bound to his Dancer since he was a child.

The Ascendancy: an overview

Ascendancy is based upon the mastering of Dancers for casting spells. In fact, Ascendancy cannot exist without Dancers. Yet, the manner in which a mage uses his Dancer can be very different depending on if he is Jornist, Eclipsist or Obscurantist. The first uses Empathy, the second Impulse, and the third Torture.

Theoretically, the mage's submission to an obedience signifies the way he uses his Dancer, the way he uses a specific type of magic, and the way he submits to the rules of the Cipher-sorcerer. It is essential to know the Cipher-sorcerer to completely understand Ascendancy. Renegade mages, who abjure the precepts of Cipher-sorcery, do exist, but they practice one of the three paths of Ascendancy, without the moral code of their obedience.

Moreover, it is theoretically impossible to use two different obediences at the same time. One must disavow an obedience for another. Obscurantism is an exception. It is considered a dead-end, and Obscurantists are very often unable of learning Jornism or Eclipsism. Even

so, certain very powerful mages use spells from different obediences, but only in cases of absolute necessity. Their manner of casting the spell will be wildly different from the "accepted" method.

THE INSPIRED MAGE AND THE DULLEN MAGE

Dullen can practice Ascendancy. For a Dullen to use Ascendancy, he must bear the Gem, a Dancer's "brain" that an academy of the Cipher-sorcerer implants in the mage's flesh. Jornists bear it on their foreheads, Eclipsists on their wrists and Obscurantists on their chests.

The Gem enables Dullen mages to create a Resonance with the Dancer. Without it, they could not use the magic of the Dancers. The Gem is traditionally a mark of recognition as well as a sign of submission to the Cipher-sorcerer.

Inspired mages do not need the Gem to use Ascendancy. Some know that, others don't. Few mages would ever dare take their Gem off; indeed, it is considered a breaking of the most fundamental rule of the Cipher-sorcerer. Extracting the Gem is sufficient reason to be arrested by the Censors.

Many Inspired mages bear the Gem in order to fade into the Dullen. One would notice by the fact that the mage is not bearing a Gem that he is not like any other mage. For those who have heard about the Inspired, the absence of a gem would be a clear indication of their nature.

THE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE DANCER

Being a mage implies coexisting with one or several Dancers. The relationship is based upon obedience. Jornists tend to develop sincere friendships with their Dancers, whereas Obscurantists treat their Dancers as slaves.

The relationship with the Dancer is a fundamental magical principle of Ascendancy. The creature is not just an instrument but also a companion that the mage must protect. Even Obscurantists feel this way. They resist it, they refuse to admit it, even to themselves, but they do feel a bond with their Dancer. Mages must realize that the Dancers are not an inexhaustible resource and that maybe one day because of the Obscurantists, the Dullen and especially the Masque, they all might disappear along with the magic of Ascendancy.

THE CHOREOGRAPHY

The most powerful mages can master more Dancers than others. When more than one Dancer is used to cast a spell, it is a Choreography. Magical Choreography is a difficult and very precise process. Not only must the mage harmonize the Dancers, but he must also orchestrate all their movements to obtain one Dance. Choreographers are considered the most powerful mages of Harmundia. Few Censors are able to rival them. The

Inspired will not be able to use Choreography at the start of the game. Choreography will be detailed in the supplement devoted to magic.

JORNISM

Jornists are known as good people, whose sense of equity and loyalty is valued. However, they are far from simple-minded. They are aware of the realities of the world so they practice a protective magic, a magic of nature that can be turned against others. When perusing the Jornist's spells, one will notice that he attaches much importance to his Dancer. They consider Dancers sacred creatures. That is the basis upon which their special relationship — Empathy — is centered on. As opposed to Obscurantists and Eclipsists, Jornists do not have to touch their Dancers in order to cast a spell. The bond takes place through their minds via a Resonance based on love and on mutual confidence. A Jornist never parts from his Dancer without feeling deep melancholy. The Dancer has a preponderant place in his life as the fellow of his thoughts. This is reciprocal, and some Dancers let themselves die on their masters' deathbeds.

During the game, an Inspired who chooses to become a Jornist must understand the nature of his relationship with his Dancer. He must also know that Jornist magic is sincere and straightforward. The Gems on their foreheads attest that vocation. Jornists will not hide their practice and will always try to convince Dullen to respect and cherish Dancers, as long as the situation allows it.

Being a Jornist requires full compassion, always exploring the nature of Dancers, and strictly obeying the laws of the Cipher-sorcerer. They make a point of submitting to the values of the Cipher-sorcerer. None other than a Jornist will give a respect to the ciphered laws, to teaching in the academies and to fighting for harmony between Dancers and Dullen. This behavior belies a more or less tolerant attitude toward Obscurantists. Jornists accept that they are a necessary evil. They cannot rewrite history and that it is better for them to accept Obscurantism in order to maintain a better hold over it.

ECLIPSISM

This obedience gathers those who get pleasure from hiding themselves. Thieves, and sometimes murderers, were the earliest users of this magic of secrecy, illusion and shadows. Eclipsism is neither good nor evil. It implies an ambiguous relationship with the Dancer. When an Eclipsist wants to cast a spell, he uses Impulse: a mix of gestures and the empathic bond.

Eclipsists become attached to their Dancers but they are able to get rid them if another Dancer's spells interests them more. Their relationship completely depends on the mage's personality and behavior. He can see his Dancer as a friend, as a pet, or even as a precious tool.

Eclipsists are often opportunists who prefer to use their magic unknown to Dullen. They will use Small Hunters unhesitatingly to obtain Dancers, and accept Obscurantists as long as they don't jeopardize the existence of the Dancers.

Regarding the Cipher-sorcerer, Eclipsists do bend some of its laws. They created the Cipher-sorcerer, and that most of its leaders are Eclipsists, but some of them are always evading its nebulous rules. Most renegades come from their ranks. Those with no institutional role consider the Cipher-sorcerer an adequate but dusty organization. Many Eclipsists don't tolerate the Brand; they don't like people nosing in on their concerns. They use their magic in an underhanded manner when the Censors get over-inquisitive.

OBSCURANTISM

The choice of Obscurantism is a one-way street. As opposed to the two other paths, the relationship between Obscurantists and their Dancers is extremely peculiar. Their practice, named Torture, implies that the magic is sprung from the agony and mistreatment of their Dancers.

The punishments are often physical, but very powerful Obscurantists can use psychological pain to cast spells. Physical torture is considered an art. The mage must wound his Dancers as precisely as would a surgeon, without ever killing it.

For Obscurantists, the notion of Dance mainly consists of movement. Torture is a sequence of forced movements that generates sparkles.

The mage has to be extremely familiar with his Dancer's endurance, the time a wound takes to heal, etc. Torturing a Dancer implies a lack of scruples and a large dose of cynicism. He will hear the complaints of his Dancer on a day-to-day basis; he will live with a suffering creature that sometimes even begs for death.

Theoretically, an Obscurantist should not feel anything for his Dancer. But just like the complicity between an executioner and his victim, there are occasionally very strong bonds linking these mages to their Dancers. Obscurantists usually get used to the torment and grow to understand how it endures the pain. They feel their Dancers' most secret feelings, and often when the latter dies, the mage feels an intense sense of loss.

The mage holds his Dancer prisoner. The most powerful Obscurantists are able to chain them through their strong empathic influence, but most often use chain or small ropes to prevent the Dancers from escaping.

Oddly, the attitude of Obscurantists towards the Cipher-sorcerer is quite similar to that of Jornists. They realize that without Cipher-sorcery, they would be the victims of witch-hunts, and that Jornists and Eclipsists would unite to end Torture. The existence of the Cipher-sorcerer is completely in their interest. Moreover, contrary to accepted opinions, Obscurantists do care for Dancers. Like for Jornists and Eclipsists, the disappearance of

AN OBSCURANTIST AMONGST THE TROUPE

An Obscurantist and a Jornist can coexist amongst the Troupe as long as they obey the charter of Cipher-sorcery. Concretely however, their vicinity can affect the outcome of a spell. Indeed, a Jornist's or an Eclipsist's Dancer will be affected by the Obscurantist's Dancer's pain. The EG will have to decide when and how Torture affects the other Dancers.

Dancers has no profit for them. For that reason, the ultimate Torture - the sacrifice of a Dancer - is only a last resort.

The Cipher-sorcerer

The Cipher-sorcerer is an order founded by mages for mages. It regulates the use of Ascendancy and controls the use of Dancers.

HISTORY

Eclipsists who had discovered the use and powers of Dancers, and therefore Ascendancy, founded the Cipher-sorcerer not long after the Eclipse. Officially established at the Symposium of the year 30, its primary objective was to wrest control of magic from the nobility. A chart brought into being the Cryptic precepts for the First Age. One of those precepts roused a general outcry among the nobility: that mages no longer had the right to get involved in the affairs of the State or to work for kings and their vassals. This thirst for independence launched an unprecedented witch-hunt. Many mages were imprisoned and executed, while others chose to continue their activities clandestinely. The Cipher-sorcerer survived in secret groups throughout Harmundia. That Dark Age lasted over a century, until kingdoms were no longer able to ignore the organization. This clandestine time united the mages like nothing else could have. Today, most of them understand the need for such an organization.

The beginning of the Second Age was a golden era, a time where Ciphered academies opened wide their doors to all who dreamt of using Ascendancy. They trained without discrimination a number of mages who would later cause regrettable disasters. Ascendancy was then considered an unstable and chaotic magic that most uninitiated distrusted.

When the mages admitted their helplessness, and the Dancers were jeopardized by this wild use of Ascendancy, the Cipher-sorcerer called for a new Symposium. During that conference, the charter was modified. Ascendancy became an art reserved to the most competent. That Symposium also outlined the laws of Cipher-sorcery such as they exist today. Each kingdom would house

an academy jointly ruled by Jornists, Eclipsists and Obscurantists.

From that time on, Ascendancy became the exclusive domain of secluded mages, jealous of their knowledge and prompt in calling on the Censors to punish those who disobeyed the Ciphered precepts. That epoch lasted until Lerschwin's intrigue and Agone of Roundrock's epopee. Agone was the first man ever to become a Baron as well as a mage. Nowadays, the Cipher-sorcerer admits the advantages of the alliance of swords and magic.

THE FOUNDATIONS

The main purpose of the Cipher-sorcerer is to protect the Dancers and to master their magical energy. Cipher-sorcery remains an elitist and esoteric institution.

Each academy differs from the others depending on the kingdom. In other words, Jornists, Eclipsists and Obscurantists are represented differently in each academy. An Eclipsist from the academy of Keshe does not obey the same rules as an Eclipsist of Urganand.

However, each Cipher-sorcerer academy uses the same founding precepts. There are different tolerances depending on the kingdom but there are no laws that go against the charter of Cipher-sorcery. Academy leaders must always preserve the independence of the Cipher-sorcerer regarding the ruling powers of the kingdom. Theoretically, academies are exempt from a kingdom's laws. Soldiers cannot chase a mage into an academy; rather the Censors must decide if the fugitive is subject to the Ciphered laws or to the laws of the country.

The relationship between the Cipher-sorcerer and monarchs is the cause of many intrigues. Rulers desire the loyalty of Cipher-sorcery whereas mages only obey Ciphered laws. Thus, many plots and power plays are made and unmade in the midst of the Cipher-sorcerer.

THE ORGANIZATION

All three obediences are traditionally designated by a Stripe seal: a White Stripe for the Jornists, a Gray Stripe for the Eclipsists and a Black Stripe for the Obscurantists.

The Cipher-sorcerer consists of two distinct groups: the High House and the academies. The High House is the leadership of the order. They control all academies in a given kingdom. This is where most important decisions are taken, leaders of other Ciphers are invited, Ciphered laws are revised, and Dancers are studied. Many legends concern their high edifices that are usually built in the hearts of cities. More protected than kings, the leaders of the Cipher-sorcerer are untouchable.

There are generally a dozen academies in a given kingdom. They resemble monasteries, and prepare future mages of the Cipher-sorcerer. It is in academies that the Gems are incusted, and the Dancers are branded and tracked. Each academy covers a region of the kingdom and is a refuge for every mage.

In all the High Houses and academies, servants are apprentices and disciples. Those who are not Ascendant mages are relegated to certain specific rooms.

THE HIERARCHY

Ciphered hierarchy depends greatly on the country. However, the basic master/apprentice format remains. There are four different categories in the hierarchy: those who teach, those who rule, those who learn, and those who travel.

♣ **Those who teach:** The master transmits the Ciphered knowledge to his apprentice. Be it Empathy, Impulse or Torture, the apprentice will have to stay in the academy with his masters for two years. After a long series of trials, the masters will incrust the Gemstone in the appropriate place, and the mage will be free to leave the academy.

♣ **Those who rule:** A council of seven mages, each elected by his peers based on his merits, dwells in the High House. A rule of equity prevails: there must be at least one mage of each obedience in the council. These mages are called the High mages and are generally able to perform Choreography.

♣ **Those who learn:** Anybody can knock on the doors of an academy. But rare are those who overcome the selection process. The trials are dangerous enough to discourage those who are not very well prepared. Becoming an apprentice requires staying for two years in an academy to learn Ascendancy — two very difficult years with many trials and studies that are not always magic. The apprentice must also learn how to read, write and understand the nature of each obedience.

♣ **Those who travel:** After a certain period at the academy, most mages travel in order to meet their fate. Most of the Inspired will have been apprentices, then teachers for a while, and then decided to only go back to academies to brand their Dancer.

THE CENSORS

They represent the Ciphered laws and are considered powerful and loyal mages. They are hunters, judges and executioners. Most of them were formerly Eclipsists or Obscurantists.

They are surrounded by an aura of mystery because they never show their faces, and only the High mages know them. Censors usually travel alone, except when several Dancers are needed (the treason of a High mage for example). Their orders come from the High House and they only return when their mission is completed, be it retrieving a fugitive mage or killing a dangerous renegade. They rarely leave their victims an opportunity to escape, and one never talks about them without looking over one's shoulder. Mages who know they are hunted by a Censor usually flee or hide.

CRYPTIC

This is the ancient language of magic and scholars. Many ancient texts are written in Cryptic. Most texts concerning Cipher-sorcery as well as many texts concerning the practice of Ascendancy are written in Cryptic. Cryptic is taught in the academies.

The Ascendancy: technical aspects

THE MAGE

♣ Ascendancy score

Each mage calculates his Ascendancy score (ASC) at the creation of his character. It represents his ability to draw the movements he needs for a given spell from his Dancer.

Depending on his obedience, the character's Ascendancy score is obtained as listed:

- ♣ **Jornist:** ASC = INT
- ♣ **Eclipsist:** ASC = (INT + WIL)/2
- ♣ **Obscurantist:** ASC = WIL

The Ascendancy score then becomes a secondary attribute and is added to a skill when casting a spell. The Ascendancy score and the attributes linked to it (Intelligence and Will) are developed through experience.

DETECTION OF MAGICAL EFFECTS

When a spell is cast or an opus is performed, one may try to detect it by rolling PER + Ascendancy or Concord against a DIF 20. The same process can be used for most supernatural phenomena such as esoteric architecture, elder Art Artifacts, Prodigies, Wonders, or influence of the Muses. Only Darkened, with the Gifts "Detect demons" or "Detect Darkness", may detect Darkness or demons. As for the effects of the Masque, they are by nature undetectable. The Masque is, after all, the ultimate chameleon.

♣ Resonance

Resonance is the ability of the mage to commune with his Dancer's spirit. Be he Jornist, Eclipsist or Obscurantist, the mage is tightly bound to his Dancer, as represented by his Resonance.

It is a skill that belongs in the Occult category and its score is on a scale from 1 to 10. At a rating of 1 or 2, the mage does not understand Dancers and remains insensitive to their feelings. At a 9 or 10, the mage is able to comprehend each of the Dancer's emotions and reactions. However, that does not imply that Jornists have higher Resonance scores than Obscurantists; indeed, the latter may be more strongly bound emotionally to their Dancer.

ASCENDANCY FUMBLE

| Negative SM | Consequences |
|--------------|--|
| -10 to -14 | Ridiculous. The failure implies an absurd, but not dangerous, outcome. The empathic bond is broken off for 5 minutes, and the Dancer does not answer. |
| -15 to -19 | Pathetic. The failure is dangerous but non-lethal. Jornist: loss of the Dancer's trust. Its Ascendancy bonus becomes negative (+ 5 becomes - 5) for 24 hours. Eclipsist: independence of the Dancer. It tries to escape for 24 hours and then comes back. Obscurantist: the Dancer is terrified. It is unable to perform a magical effect for 24 hours. |
| -20 to -24 | Terrible. The failure is very dangerous and has serious consequences. Another spell (the EG's choice) is successfully cast onto another target (the EG's choice). |
| -25 to -29 | Catastrophic. The failure has very serious consequences. Another spell, of equal threshold, is successfully cast but its obedience is chosen by the EG. |
| -30 and less | Cataclysmic. The consequences are dreadful. An Obscurantist is victim of a paranoia fit; he is persuaded that the whole world has a grudge against him and that he must hide to survive. He protects himself by any means necessary. A Jornist has drawn too much from his Dancer, who dies of exhaustion (of course, the mage feels his Dancer's pain). |

♣ Dancer lore

This skill represents the mage's theoretical knowledge of Dancers. An expert in this field will perfectly know the abilities of a given Dancer, its physical limits and the structure of its psyche. Therefore, he will be able to foresee the Dancer's reactions. This skill implies a true intellectual study of the Dancer's behavior in order to enable a maximized effect when casting a spell.

A mage with a score of 1 or 2 only has an intuitive understanding of Dancers and cannot predict the Dancer's limits. With a score of 9 or 10, the mage is able to anticipate the Dancer's accumulated fatigue as well as its reaction to the environment.

Note: Resonance and Dancer lore are two independent skills. A mage may have a low score in one of them and a high score in the other.

♣ The Ascendancy aptitude

During character creation, Ascendancy aptitude is determined by adding the ASC score and the Dancer's Ascendancy bonus to the the character's Resonance or Dancer lore, whichever is lower.

Ascendancy aptitude = ASC + lower of Resonance or Dancer lore + Dancer's Ascendancy bonus.

ASCENDANCY APTITUDE MODIFIERS

| Type | Modifier |
|--|----------|
| Site rich in Shard | +Wealth |
| Esoteric architecture | +1 to +5 |
| Location favorable to Dance | +1 |
| Presence of a cat | -5 |
| Invisible Dancer | -2 |
| Imperceptible movements (Jornist only) | -3 |

The score obtained is then used for all Ascendancy rolls and will change with experience, just as the Ascendancy score and the Resonance and Dancer lore abilities do.

♣ Casting a spell

When casting a spell, the mage rolls an open roll, to which he adds his Ascendancy aptitude to any adjustment (see table) against the Threshold of the cast spell (DIF). If the roll is higher than the spell's Threshold, the spell is cast successfully; if not, it fails.

Casting a spell: Ascendancy aptitude + 1d10 + adjustments against DIF (spell's Threshold).

Once the mage has cast his spell — devoting one action to motivate the Dancer to perform his Dance — he is free to act as he wishes during the time it takes the Dancer to execute the spell (that is his Dance). See the Spell description format box, p. 202. The mage will be affected by a -3 negative modifier due to the concentration required for the Dancer to succeed in his Dance. During this time, the mage may of course not cast another spell with the same Dancer. He will have to use another one.

♣ Instantaneous magic

In certain cases, a mage will want to achieve a rapid and powerful magic in order to get himself out of a dangerous situation. It is indeed possible for a spell to take effect in the same round it was cast. However, as the Dancer is not able to perform the exact Dance, the spell's Threshold is multiplied by 2, in order to simulate the difficulty of such an action.

♣ Concealing the magic

• DANCER INVISIBILITY

Usually, every Inspired can see Dancers without any problem. Dullen must succeed in a PER + Alertness roll against DIF 15 to be able to see a visible Dancer.

THRESHOLD MULTIPLIERS

Always apply the multipliers before the modifiers. Thus, casting an Instantaneous spell (x 2) of another obedience (Threshold +5) involves multiplying the Threshold by 2 and only then adding the +5 modifier. Example: if the Threshold is 10, it becomes 25, not 30.

The rules of magic mention in several occasions actions that involve the multiplication of the spell's Threshold (Instantaneous magic, Intuitive magic). The rule is that associated multipliers are not added to each other but the multiplier is increased by 1. Therefore, in the case of Instantaneous AND Intuitive magic, the Threshold is multiplied by 3 and not 4.

RESISTANCE FOR NON-MAGES

Any individual targeted by a magical effect is capable of resisting, even if he is not able to create magical effects himself. The individual must decide to resist. He could always choose to submit to the magical effect. Magic resistance is spontaneous and is not counted as an action or a reaction. To resist to a magical effect, the target has to roll WIL x 2 (for Ascendancy) or CRE x 2 (for Magical Arts) against a DIF equal to the spell's Threshold. The target is not affected if the SM of this roll is greater than the SM that the mage or Concoctist obtained when casting his spell.

This method also works with the Perverted Arts. With regard to the powers granted by the Masque or by the Darken, there is at present no known method to resist the powers of these two Eternals.

A mage can empathically ask his Dancer to conceal its presence. From then on, an Inspired will have to succeed in a PER + Alertness roll against DIF 15 in order to notice the concealed Dancer, whereas Dullen will not be able to see it. A mage casting a spell with such a Dancer undergoes a -2 negative modifier to his Ascendancy aptitude. It takes one round for a Dancer to become invisible or to reappear.

• MAGE SECRECY (JORNISTS ONLY)

Mages must move their hands to guide their Dancer's acrobatics. However, if a mage wants to remain secret and perform only imperceptible movements, he must succeed in casting his spell with a -3 negative modifier to his Ascendancy aptitude. In such a case, the mage can only *empathically communicate* with his Dancer. This capacity has saved the lives of many mages who were bound and gagged, and only able to guide their Dancer with their minds and a few movements.

Note: Once the sum of the mage's Resonance added to the Dancer's Empathy reaches 15, their empathic bond is strong enough to enable the mage to guide his Dancer without any movement. At such a level, the mage no longer undergoes the -3 negative modifier to cast the spell without moving his hands.

• RECOGNIZING A SPELL

When a mage sees another mage casting a spell, he can try to predict its effects by observing the Dancer's

movements. This is only possible if the mage is able to see the Dancer. The mage must succeed in an ASC + Dancer lore against DIF equal to the Threshold of the spell. It is preferable that the EG rolls this action so that the character does not find out the Threshold of the spell. If the roll fails, the mage cannot recognize the spell. If it succeeds, the EG will describe the effects of the spell as well as its obedience. The mage can never determine the spell's range, duration and area of effect. Recognizing a spell is considered as an action for the mage.

• Magic Resistance

When a mage is the direct target of a magical effect, he benefits from magic resistance thanks to his Dancer. In order to resist a magical effect, the mage must succeed in an open ASC x 2 roll against DIF 15. The positive SM is added to the Threshold of the spell. For a mage to be the direct target of a spell, he must be included in the spell's range or the area of effect. For example, acid rain is not a direct attack because the spell only creates the rain that wounds the character.

Example: Melphenia, obscurantist mage, casts the spell Intensified emotion upon Krill the Eclipsist. The latter is the direct target of the spell and so is able to use his magic resistance. The DIF is 15. If Krill gets 17 on his roll, the SM is 2. Thus, the Threshold of the spell "Intensified emotion" goes from 20 to 22.

A mage can decide to not use his magical resistance in order to voluntarily come under the effect of the spell. Generally magical resistance is spontaneous and is not considered as an action.

• Counter-magic

Magical resistance is used only when a target is directly affected by the spell. Spells that influence light, matter, etc., even when used against a target, cannot be resisted in the same way.

For example, "Fiery touch" enables the mage to wound a target, but it is not the target that is affected by the spell. It's the hand of the mage.

Moreover, if a mage sees another casting a spell, he is able to try to stop him as long as the Dance is not finished. This process is considered an action and is only effective on Dances that last at least one round from the moment the mage has begun countering the spell.

Example: Let's come back to Melphenia and his Intensified emotion. If Krill had wished to counter his spell, he should have started his counter-magic at most two rounds after the beginning of the Dance, because it only lasts three rounds.

The counter-magic roll is an open roll of a mage's Ascendancy aptitude against a DIF equal to the opposing mage's Ascendancy aptitude. If the SM is at least

10, the spell is immediately interrupted because the Dancer is too unsettled to finish his Dance. If the roll is a success but the SM is less than 10, the spell is not countered but the Dance requires one round more because of the interruption. If the roll fails, the spell not countered and the Dance can go on normally.

Counter-magic is an action that must be ended before the end of the spell.

Example: Krill starts his counter-magic at the same moment Melphenia casts his "Intensified emotion". Melphenia's Ascendancy aptitude is 12 (ASC 5, Ascendancy bonus +3, Resonance 4, Dancer lore 6) whereas Krill's is 14 (ASC 8, Ascendancy bonus +1, Resonance 6, Dancer lore 5). The EG rolls for Krill so that he won't know the Obscurantist's Ascendancy aptitude. He obtains a total score of 23 (14 + 9 with the die), which is 10 points over Melphenia's Ascendancy aptitude. The Obscurantist's Dancer is interrupted and the spell is ended. If Krill had scored 21, the "Intensified emotion" Dance would have lasted 4 rounds instead of three.

For the counter-magic to be effective, the opposing Dancers must be able to see each other or at least able to feel each other's presence.

☛ Interrupting a mage

When a mage of Ascendancy has started to cast a spell, there are two ways to interrupt him.

☛ The first consists of hitting the Dancer. In this case, the spell is immediately interrupted.

☛ The second consists of hitting the mage himself. The pain he feels may disturb the Dancer through their empathic bond and hinder its Dance. If the mage is stunned or unconscious, the Dancer stops and the spell fails.

ORCHAL

"Little is known of this mage of Torture who got involved with Agone of Roundrock. He apparently founded a new Obscurantist academy at the boundaries of the marshes of the barony of Roundrock. However, the Cipher-sorcerer of Urganand confesses that his pupils are among the most talented of the kingdom. Orchal obviously selects his students carefully, and he hardens and trains them in the numerous dangers of the marshes. According to a rumor, Orchal may be practicing the way of the Fratricide. This is supposed to be a new form of Ascendancy that forces Dancers to torture each other. We know from a conversation with a former student that the purpose of this method is to inculcate the notion of masochistic pleasure during the Torture..."

If the mage takes damage, he must succeed in a roll of WIL against DIF 15 (20 if the wound is Serious). If he fails, the spell is unsuccessful. If he succeeds, he may continue normally. This roll must be executed each time the mage is wounded during the casting of a spell. If several opponents are attacking him, each hit will require the mage to roll his WIL.

☛ Magic of another obedience

In special circumstances, a mage can decide to use a spell of another obedience. The EG will have to adapt the Dance and the effects of the spell to the mage's obedience. Moreover, the Threshold of the spell is modified by +5 in order to simulate the Dancer's efforts to create an opposite effect as that of the Resonance it has developed with its master. An Obscurantist's Dancer that is used to being mistreated will have much trouble creating the movements necessary for a healing spell. That is why only minor spells can be cast by mages of other obediences (Threshold of 10 to 15 at the maximum). Only the most powerful mages can hope to cast spells of other obediences with higher Thresholds.

ASCENDANCY ROLLS SUMMARY TABLE

| | |
|----------------------------|--|
| Jornist Ascendancy: | INT |
| Eclipsist Ascendancy: | (INT + WIL) / 2 |
| Obscurantist Ascendancy: | WIL |
| Ascendancy APTitude: | ASC + (Lower of Resonance or Dancer lore) + Ascendancy bonus |
| Intuitive APTitude: | CRE + (Resonance or Dancer's Empathy) |
| Cast a spell: | Ascendancy APT + modifiers against Threshold DIF |
| See a Dancer: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Automatic (Inspired) • PER + Alertness against DIF 15 (Dull) |
| See a hidden Dancer: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PER + Alertness against DIF 15 (Inspired) • Impossible (Dullen) |
| Recognize a spell: | ASC + Dancer lore against DIF Threshold of the spell |
| Mage magic resistance: | ASC x 2 against DIF 15 |
| Non-mage magic resistance: | WIL x 2 or CRE x 2 against a DIF equal to the Threshold of the spell |
| Counter-magic: | Ascendancy APT against DIF opponent's |
| Ascendancy: | APT Dance + 1 round if roll is failed; spell interrupted if SM 10. |
| Other obedience: | Spell Threshold + 5. |
| Intuitive magic: | Spell Threshold (determined by the EG) x 2. |
| Discover a spell: | ASC + Resonance against DIF spell Threshold. |

CREATION OF AN ASCENDANCY MAGE

One must follow the normal character creation process (see the Character creation chapter) in order to create a mage of Ascendancy, except for several special cases.

♣ A mage can only belong to one Ascendant obedience at a time. The Resonance score must absolutely be greater than 0 to become a mage of Ascendancy.

♣ The player whose character is a mage of Ascendancy will have to determine his different aptitudes (Ascendancy APTitude, Intuitive APTitude) and write them down on the occult side of his Scroll. The player will also have to determine the number of Threshold points he can use in order to discover his Dancer's spells by multiplying his ASC by his Resonance. He then chooses his spells by deducting their Threshold points from that total until he has none left. Thus, he can obtain many minor spells or fewer greater spells. Certain assets and faults can modify the total number of Threshold points.

♣ A mage begins the game with a Dancer unless otherwise specified by an asset, a fault, or by the EG.

♣ Changing obediences

A mage must change obediences in order not to be affected by the +5 DIF penalty to the Threshold of a spell from the desired obedience. Only Jornists and Eclipsists can change obediences and it is a radical change that can only occur once in a lifetime. When changing obediences, the mage must also change his Dancer's spells. All those of his former obedience have their Threshold modified by +5. It can also make certain spells disappear because the memory of a Dancer is not infinite (the EG chooses the spells that disappear). Moreover, the mage's ASC and Resonance are reduced by -2 in order to simulate the mage's adjustment to his new magic.

♣ Intuitive magic

Intuitive magic does not call upon the Dancer's memory but on the mage's Empathy and Creativity. It requires a great deal of improvisation from the Eminence Grise and a thorough knowledge of the spells from all three obediences. Intuitive magic enables the Dancer to spontaneously create a magical effect with its sparks without having memorized the spell.

The process of an Intuitive spell involves four steps:

♣ **First step:** The mage explains the effect he wants to obtain, specifying its duration, range, area of effect, and the duration of its Dance.

♣ **Second step:** The EG estimates the Threshold of the spell and determines its obedience by comparing its effects to those of the listed spells. If necessary, the EG can modify any parameter the mage had decided on in order to balance the power of the spell with its Threshold.

♣ **Third step:** The Threshold is multiplied by 2 in order to simulate the difficulty of Intuitive magic. If the spell had is determined to belong to an obedience other than the mage's, its Threshold is multiplied by 2 and then modified by +5.

♣ **Fourth step:** The mage adds his Intuitive aptitude to an open roll.

Intuitive aptitude = Creativity + the lower of Resonance or his Dancer's Empathy.

An Inspired who is not an initiated member of the Cipher-sorcerer does not have enough experience in Ascendancy to use Intuitive magic, even if he finds a Dancer. He must first know how to cast spells, make his Dancer dance, etc. Creatures familiar with Dancers, such as spriggans, who have developed the Dancer lore skill, cannot also use Dancers to create magical effects.

THE DANCER

♣ Memory

The unique feature of Ascendancy is that it is the Dancers who are the makers of the magic. It is the Dancer who learns the necessary steps and movements. The mage only stimulates his Dancer's memory when he wants to obtain a magical effect. Each Dancer has a certain quantity of memory allocated to the movements that are the exclusive spell components. A Dancer usually has 10 to 50 memory blocks. Each of these blocks can store 5 Threshold points. To cast a spell with a Threshold of 20, the mage will have to use 4 memory blocks (20 / 5 = 4). A Dancer with 28 memory points will be able to store 5 spells with Thresholds of 20, 2 spells with Thresholds of 15 and one spell with a Threshold of 10 (a total of 140 Threshold points, 28 x 5).

♣ Ascendancy bonus

Certain Dancers are more talented than others and each of them has a different Ascendancy bonus that will directly influence the mage. The Ascendancy bonus can vary from 0 to 10 depending on the Dancer. It represents the Dancer's ability to be manipulated by the mage in order to create the sparks that cause the magical effect. This bonus can be raised through experience.

♣ Empathy

The Empathy of a Dancer is its ability to intuitively communicate with a human mind. A Dancer with a high Empathy score is able to perfectly understand what the mage wants from him, even when it has not memorized the movements. Moreover, high Empathy enables the Dancer to convey its own feelings to the mage so that he can modify the Dance depending on them. The Empathy score is also used for Intuitive magic (see above).

DANCER RANDOM CREATION

| Creation points | 3d10 | Memory | Ascendancy bonus | Empathy | Endurance |
|-----------------|----------|--------|------------------|---------|-----------|
| 1 | 3 | 12 | 0 | 2 | 1 |
| 2 | 4 to 11 | 14 | +1 | 3 | 2 |
| 3 | 12 to 16 | 16 | +2 | 4 | 3 |
| 4 | 17 to 25 | 18 | +3 | 5 | 4 |
| 5 | 24 to 27 | 24 | +4 | 6 | 5 |
| 6 | 28 to 29 | 30 | +5 | 7 | 6 |
| 7 | 30 | 40 | +6 | 8 | 7 |

♣ Fatigue

The Dancer's fatigue is represented by his Endurance attribute. A Dancer is able to cast as many spells in a day as it has Endurance points, whatever the power of the spell, the Threshold, or even if it is Intuitive magic. It is only the number of cast spells that count.

♣ Dancer creation

When a player creates his character, he must also create his Dancer, if he wants one. The EG can also use this creation process for his NPCs. The creation of a Dancer can be done randomly (see the following box) or by allotting creation points.

♣ **Random method:** Roll 3d10 for each of the Dancer's attributes. Certain Dancers have higher or lower attributes than the ranges shown on this table but they remain exceptionally rare.

♣ **Allotment method:** The Dancer has a total of 17 creation points. 1 point invested in an attribute enables the player to use the first line of the table, 2 points allows the use of the second line, etc.

♣ Initial spells

Be it wild or tamed by a mage, a Dancer always has a certain number of spells rooted in his memory. The player and the EG determine together the Dancer's spells according to the Dancer's Memory. However, that does not mean the mage has discovered all the spells known by his Dancer.

Technically, the player multiplies his ASC by his Resonance and the result enables him to discover his Dancer's spells. It is actually the Dancer who used up his Memory. But it is the player who decides which spells his Dancer gets at the creation of his character.

If the player wants spells of another obedience than his for his Dancer, the Threshold of each spell is modified by + 5. If the Dancer has no more free Memory blocks, it means that the mage has discovered all of its spells. Inversely, if empty Memory blocks remain, then the mage has not yet completely discovered his Dancer.

Note: If the player obtains a higher score than his Dancer's Memory points, the character is still blocked by the Memory limit.

♣ Discovering a Dancer's spells

If the mage has not yet discovered all of his Dancer's spells or if he has acquired a new Dancer, he can try to

explore the creature's Memory in order to find latent spells. It is a long and complex procedure that requires many hours of fruitless tests to uncover all the secrets of a Dancer.

The spells are discovered in the same order as the Dancer memorized them. The duration of the search for a spell is equal to its Threshold in hours of intensive study. During that time, the mage must not say a word or move unless it has to do with his study. He cannot be disturbed or else he will have to start everything over again.

After that time, the mage will have to roll ASC + Resonance against a DIF equal to the Threshold of the spell. If he succeeds, he has discovered the spell and can add it to his list. If he fails, the spell is still hidden in his Dancer's Memory, and the mage must try again a week later. If he fumbles, he will have to wait a whole month before trying again.

SPELL DESCRIPTION FORMAT

Spell name

Obedience: Jornist, Eclipsist or Obscurantist.

Threshold: Difficulty of the spell.

Range/Area of effect: Distance at which the spell can be cast/area in which the spell takes effect.

Duration: Total duration of the magical effect. If not specified, it is the maximum duration of the spell that the mage can interrupt at any time, even before the end of the duration.

Dance: Time it takes for the Dancer to execute the spell.

Spell description

RANGES

Contact: The mage must touch or be able to touch the target.

Proximity: Target is not over 10 feet away, with visual contact.

Line of sight: Target is not over 50 yards away.

Individual: The mage himself.

Special: Specified in the text.

JORNIST SPELLS

♣ **Wholesome sustenance**

Obedience: Jornist
 Threshold: 10
 Range: contact
 Duration: 5 minutes
 Dance: 3 rounds

This spell enables the mage to make a small piece of matter edible. A bit of mud can be turned into drinkable water, or a stone can become a piece of bread. There is only enough food for one person. The food is edible for 5 minutes and then turns back into its original form.

♣ **Vigor**

Obedience: Jornist
 Threshold: 10
 Area of effect: individual
 Duration: 30 minutes
 Dance: 2 rounds

The Dancer covers the mage with sparks by dancing on him. Once the Dance is over, the mage's STA is modified by + 2 for the duration of the spell (30 minutes). The spell has no visible effect on the Jornist but temporarily modifies his hit points by + 6 as well as his resistance to diseases and poisons.

♣ **Dancer consolation**

Obedience: Jornist
 Threshold: 10
 Range/Area of effect: at contact/one target
 Duration: instantaneous
 Dance: 1 minute

With this spell, the Jornist is able to comfort a Dancer that has been forcibly constrained by an Obscurantist. As a result, the Dancer is no longer traumatized.

♣ **Impression of truth**

Obedience: Jornist
 Threshold: 10
 Area of effect: individual
 Duration: 5 minutes
 Dance: 3 rounds

The Dancer communicates his feelings to the Jornist in order for him to conceal the truth. The mage will be able to lie without any possibility of being discovered, even by magic. In game terms, the mage has a + 4 SM modifier to all of his Fast Talk rolls.

♣ **Branding a Dancer**

Obedience: Jornist
 Threshold: 15
 Range/Area of effect: at contact/one target
 Duration: instantaneous
 Dance: 10 minutes

Jornists manage Dancers for the Cipher-sorcerer. That duty enables them to brand Dancers in order to officially identify them and protect them for theft. The brands are invisible to those who are not mages of Ascendancy, and only the Cipher-sorcerer know about them.

♣ **Discern the Flame**

Obedience: Jornist
 Threshold: 15
 Range: line of sight
 Duration: 1 hour
 Dance: 5 rounds

The Jornist has the ability to see through the eyes of his Dancer for one hour. This enables him to distinguish Flames, though without being able to make out their intensity. Once he has spotted an Inspired, he can discern the Dark Flame in him.

♣ **Minor healing**

Obedience: Jornist
 Threshold: 15
 Range/Area of effect: at contact/one target
 Duration: instantaneous
 Dance: 2 rounds

The Dancer runs all over the body of a wounded person, performing aerial acrobatics. After 2 rounds, the mage who is guiding the Dancer restores SM + 10 HP to the patient.

♣ **Body purification**

Obedience: Jornist
 Threshold: 15
 Range/Area of effect: N/A
 Duration: instantaneous
 Dance: 1 minute

After having made the Dancer wheel in a glass or another small container, the Jornist pours in pure water. The sparks left by the Dancer transform the water into a beverage that purifies the body from any poison absorbed less than two hours earlier. The person must drink the whole potion. It does not cure any damage previously caused by the poison but it immediately cancels any secondary effects (negative modifiers, temporary attribute loss...). The liquid returns to its normal state it is not consumed within a few minutes.

♣ **Magic shield**

Obedience: Jornist
 Threshold: 15
 Area of effect: individual
 Duration: 5 rounds
 Dance: 1 round

The Jornist reaches out both of his hands to the sky while his Dancer starts somersaulting from one hand to the other. The bluish sparks create an invisible shield

before the mage that completely protects him from all kinds of missile weapon, even magical ones (damage reduced to 0). This shield does not protect the mage's back.

☛ Resist extreme temperatures

Obedience: Jornist
 Threshold: 15
 Area of effect: individual
 Duration: 10 minutes
 Dance: 1 minute

The Dancer turns around on the mage's head and his Dance causes a stream of sparks that cover his body. The mage can then resist temperatures from -60° F to + 160° F without any negative modifier.

☛ Zone of silence

Obedience: Jornist
 Threshold: 15
 Range/Area of effect: line of sight/10 ft. diameter
 Duration: 5 minutes
 Dance: 2 rounds

The mage guides his Dancer all around the area of effect so it can mark the boundaries with sparks. After 2 rounds, any entering or outgoing sound is eliminated by the spell.

☛ Invisible arm

Obedience: Jornist
 Threshold: 15
 Range: 90 yard line of sight
 Duration: 5 minutes
 Dance: 5 rounds

After dancing on the mage's arm, the Dancer bestows on him the power to act at a distance. The mage can use an invisible arm up to 90 yards away to move objects. The arm has a STR of 4 and cannot attack. The mage must always have visual contact with the arm.

☛ Truth

Obedience: Jornist
 Threshold: 20
 Range/Area of effect: proximity/one target
 Duration: 5 minutes
 Dance: 1 minute

The Dancer come and goes between the mage and the target. After a minute, a unidirectional empathic bond is established that enables the mage to discern the truth in the words of the target. The Jornist must succeed in a PER + Fast talk against DIF 15 to uncover the lies of the target.

☛ Major healing

Obedience: Jornist
 Threshold: 20
 Range/Area of effect: at contact/one target
 Duration: instantaneous
 Dance: 5 minutes

The mage seems to be going over the wounded body with his hands, when he is actually guiding his Dancer in a series of extraordinary acrobatics. It takes the Dancer 5 minutes to express all the compassion it feels for the victim and to confer onto him the necessary comfort. All fractures are repaired, all hemorrhages are stopped, and the victim recovers all of his hit points. Permanent Serious wounds cannot be healed in this way.

☛ Sphere of silence

Obedience: Jornist
 Threshold: 20
 Range/Area of effect: individual/10 ft. diameter sphere
 Duration: 2 minutes
 Dance: 5 rounds

The effects are similar to that of Zone of silence, but the sphere is mobile. Moreover, other individuals can benefit from the effects of the spell, moving silently as long as they are within 10 ft. of the mage. However, as opposed to Zone of silence, the mage can hear all sounds that originate from outside of the sphere.

☛ Clairvoyance

Obedience: Jornist
 Threshold: 20
 Range/Area of effect: N/A
 Duration: N/A
 Dance: 1 minute

This spell enables the Jornist to have a clear opinion concerning an intricate situation. When a mage is faced with complex information, the spell allows him to point out unconsciously the essential data. In game terms, the EG helps the player answer a specific question.

☛ Repel a Damned

Obedience: Jornist
 Threshold: 20
 Range/area of effect: line of sight/one target
 Duration: 1 hour
 Dance: 5 rounds

The mage stretches out his hand so the Dancer can frenetically perform on it. A veil of sparks is created before the Jornist that protects him from the targeted Damned, which cannot approach within less than 5 yards for the duration.

☛ Protective aura

Obedience: Jornist
 Threshold: 25
 Area of effect: 5 yard radius around the mage
 Duration: 1 minute
 Dance: 2 rounds

The Dancer dances around the mage, protecting all individuals in a sphere around the Jornist against all missile weapons, and granting them a 5 + SM bonus to

their magical resistance. Missile weapons just ricochet as if hitting an invisible wall.

☛ Sanctification

Obedience: Jornist
 Threshold: 25
 Range/Area of effect: line of sight/90 sq. y.
 Duration: 3 days

Dance: 1 hour

This spell is exhausting for the Dancer because it has to cover the whole area of effect with its sparks. After the end of the Dance, any person with a Dark Flame of 2 or higher has to roll WIL against DIF 20 to enter the sanctified zone. If the creature is already in the zone, it must make the roll, or it will be forced to leave the area as quickly as possible.

ECLIPSIIST SPELLS

☛ See through a wall

Obedience: Eclipsist
 Threshold: 10
 Range/Area of effect: at contact/9 sq. y.
 Duration: 1 minute
 Dance: 1 round

The Eclipsist throws his Dancer onto the targeted surface. It first starts to crackle, then slowly it becomes

transparent, without losing its texture. Any person on the same side as the mage can see through the surface.

☛ Bolt

Obedience: Eclipsist
 Threshold: 10
 Range/Area of effect: at contact/one target
 Duration: 24 hours
 Dance: 2 minutes

The Eclipsist is able to magically lock any type of lock or closing mechanism. Only the mage who cast the spell is able to cancel the effect and no non-magical device is able to unlock the door. It may however be possible to break down the door or to get it off its hinges.

☛ Blurred sight

Obedience: Eclipsist
 Threshold: 10
 Range/Area of effect: line of sight/one target
 Duration: 1 minute
 Dance: 1 round

This spell enables the mage to shoot sparks into the eyes of his target. The latter then has his sight blurred and is no longer able to clearly distinguish forms and distances. The target receives a -5 modifier to all rolls requiring his sight (combat, magic, etc.).

☛ Jump

Obedience: Eclipsist
 Threshold: 10
 Area of effect: individual
 Duration: 5 rounds
 Dance: 1 round

The Dancer first performs on the mage's shoulders and transforms into a ball of sparks on the mage's feet. The mage can then achieve extraordinary acrobatics such as jumping off a roof or striding over a large crevice. In game terms, his Acrobatics skill is modified by SM + 4.

☛ Illusory echo

Obedience: Eclipsist
 Threshold: 10
 Range: 90 yards
 Duration: 10 seconds
 Dance: 5 rounds



This spell allows the mage to create sounds for which he can choose an origin of up to 90 yards, in order to create an effect of distance. The mage is only able to create a sound he has already heard and that he is able to remember. He can also mix different sounds.

♣ False trail

Obedience: Eclipsist
 Threshold: 10
 Range/Area of effect: N/A
 Duration: 1 hour
 Dance: 2 rounds

This spell enables the mage to conceal his passage at a specific site (a street, a room...), and to send his pursuers on a false trail thanks to a magical residue left by the Dancer. The pursuers think that the mage left in a different direction.

♣ Play of light

Obedience: Eclipsist
 Threshold: 10
 Range: 90 yards
 Duration: 5 minutes
 Dance: 1 round

The Eclipsist is able to create subtle effects of light and shadow, such as will o'wisp, a shadow on a wall, or a vague light in the distance. The mage cannot however light up or darken a room.

♣ Luminous halo

Obedience: Eclipsist
 Threshold: 10
 Range/Area of effect: line of sight/25 y. diameter
 Duration: 1 hour
 Dance: 5 rounds

The Dancer turns around and becomes an extremely powerful halo of light controlled at will by the mage. It is a 12 in. diameter sphere, lighting a 25 y. diameter zone, that can be guided by the mage as long as he has visual contact with the sphere of light. As soon as the mage can no longer see the sphere, the spell ends.

♣ Increased vigor

Obedience: Eclipsist
 Threshold: 10
 Area of effect: individual
 Duration: 30 minutes
 Dance: 2 rounds

This Dance enhances the mage's Strength by 2 points for half an hour. No physical change is visible on the mage's body, even though the spell modifies all damage bonuses, weight loads, etc.

♣ Distort appearance

Obedience: Eclipsist
 Threshold: 15 or special
 Range/Area of effect: individual or at contact/one target

Duration: 1 hour
 Dance: 5 minutes

The mage can create the illusion he is somebody else. It is a minor illusion that distorts his features and clothes, but that does not change his height or corpulence. If the Eclipsist can see his model, the Threshold is 10; if he has to remember the features of his model, the Threshold is 20.

♣ Opening

Obedience: Eclipsist
 Threshold: 15
 Range/Area of effect: at contact/one target
 Duration: instantaneous
 Dance: 3 rounds

The purpose of this Dance is to create a resonance between his Dancer and a bolted lock. Once that is done, the lock is automatically unbolted. All types of locks are affected by the spell, as long as they are mechanical and non-magical.

♣ Illusory reflection

Obedience: Eclipsist
 Threshold: 15
 Range/Area of effect: line of sight/4 y diameter sphere
 Duration: 1 minute
 Dance: 2 rounds

This spell creates a minor visual illusion that only affects those in sight. The illusion is limited to a 4 y. diameter sphere but the visual effect is only limited by the mage's imagination. All persons present are affected by the spell, but as the illusion has no material existence, the illusion can be dispelled upon physical contact.

♣ Magic alarm

Obedience: Eclipsist
 Threshold: 15
 Area of effect: 100 sq. ft. room
 Duration: 1 week
 Dance: 30 minutes

The Eclipsist guides his Dancer around the room until it is filled with sparks. The targeted room is then protected by a magic alarm that is set off as soon as any living being enters the room. The mage is warned of the intrusion and has a glimpse of the person or animal that entered the room.

♣ Blow-pipe

Obedience: Eclipsist
 Threshold: 15
 Range/Area of effect: 40 yards/one target
 Duration: instantaneous
 Dance: 1 round

This spell transforms the Dancer into a small dart able to strike an opponent with incredible speed and power. The dart automatically hits the target of the spell but does not run through armor. Nevertheless, the Dancer

can aim at a non-shielded part of the body in order to cause SM + 5 damage points.

☞ The eight steps of the spider

Obedience: Eclipsist
 Threshold: 15
 Area of effect: individual
 Duration: 30 minutes
 Dance: 2 rounds

This spell enchants the mage's body in such a way that he is able to stick to walls. He can climb walls, stay fixed on the ceiling without falling, etc. It is up to the EG to decide the limits of this spell depending on the situation. Moreover, all of the mage's Climbing skill rolls are modified by + 5 as long as the spell lasts.

☞ Full illusion

Obedience: Eclipsist
 Threshold: 20
 Range: line of sight
 Duration: 1 hour
 Dance: 1 minute

The mage has achieved such a high level of illusion mastery that he is able to create a stable image that calls upon all senses at the same time. The illusion has texture, smell, taste, colors, and makes sounds; thus, everybody is convinced that it is true. The mind is so persuaded of its reality that it will unconsciously stop the hand right before it touches the illusion. However, if someone unintentionally touches it he will probably go right through it and ruin the mage's efforts. This spell enables the mage to create a 30 cubic ft. illusion without any problem.

☞ Enchanted projectile

Obedience: Eclipsist
 Threshold: 20
 Range/Area of effect: 90 yards/one target
 Duration: instantaneous
 Dance: 2 rounds
 Special: no dodging possible

Through this spell, the Dancer becomes a cone of bluish sparks that automatically hits their target. The missile inflicts (SM x 5) + 10 damage points. But, as opposed to "Blow-pipe", it can be blocked by armor.

☞ Sleep

Obedience: Eclipsist
 Threshold: 20
 Range/Area of effect: at contact/one target
 Duration: 1 hour
 Dance: 2 minutes

The Dancer enchants the mage's hand. He can then put to sleep a person he touches for approximately one hour. The somnolence is sudden and does not seem natural. Once the victim awakens, he is perfectly aware that he fell under a magical effect. The sleeper can of course be

woken up by noise or by another person, but the sleep is nonetheless very deep.

☞ Invisibility

Obedience: Eclipsist
 Threshold: 20
 Area of effect: individual or at contact
 Duration: 10 minutes
 Dance: 6 rounds

This extremely powerful spell enables the mage to make himself completely invisible. The spell can also be targeted at a companion, an object, or anything else that does not exceed the mage's size. When the target is a person, his clothes and personal belongings are of course invisible as well. As soon as the target is touched by another person, the spell is automatically broken. It is a spell of concealment, therefore it is impossible to attack while remaining invisible.

☞ True illusion

Obedience: Eclipsist
 Threshold: 20
 Range: line of sight
 Duration: 30 minutes
 Dance: 2 minutes

The mage has accomplished the highest degree of illusionism. He is now able to create such real illusions that he can cause damage with them by auto-suggestion. The mage can still not create illusions larger than 30 cubic ft. but he is now able to create an embodied illusion. That is, if the mage creates a unicorn it will have the ability to charge and to wound. The victim is so convinced of the reality of the illusion that his body generates the wounds he should have taken. The mage is only able to create illusions of things he has already seen.



OBSCURANTIST SPELLS

♣ **Strike Blind**

Obedience: Obscurantist

Threshold: 10

Range/Area of effect: line of sight/one target

Duration: 24 hours

Dance: 1 round

Special: the Dancer is immobilized until the end of next round

The mage stiffens his Dancer's eyelids with quick and simple movements. The victim shuts his eyes in a scream of agony and is not be able to open them for 24 hours. The Dancer is also blind for one round; thus, during its blindness, it cannot Dance.

♣ **Play of darkness**

Obedience: Obscurantist

Threshold: 10

Area of effect: 30 ft. around the mage

Duration: 5 minutes

Dance: 2 rounds

The mage evokes the worst fears of his Dancer. He is then able to manipulate shadows around him, moving and intensifying them at will. He is not able to completely darken a room, but he is able to create a shadow play and darken the general ambience.

♣ **Fiery touch**

Obedience: Obscurantist

Threshold: 10

Range/Area of effect: at contact/one target

Duration: instantaneous

Dance: 1 round

This spell enables the Obscurantist to deeply burn somebody upon touch. Fiery touch inflicts SM + 5 damage points according to the fire damage system. In order to cast this spell, the mage must be barehanded (he would probably burn his glove off if not).

♣ **Penetrate obscurity**

Obedience: Obscurantist

Threshold: 10

Range: individual

Duration: 1 hour

Dance: 1 round

The mage's mastery of darkness enables him to perfectly see in total obscurity. The Dancer's sparks surrounds the mage in a dark red halo that can attract attention in the darkness.

♣ **Fiery breath**

Obedience: Obscurantist

Threshold: 15

Range/Area of effect: 30 ft./one target

Duration: instantaneous

Dance: 1 round

The Dancer, by a grotesque Dance, creates a thin burst of flames that seems to come out of the mage's mouth. The breath can hit a target at a range of 30 ft. and inflicts SM + 15 damage points. It is possible to dodge it or to parry it with a shield.

♣ **Own shield**

Obedience: Obscurantist

Threshold: 15

Area of effect: individual

Duration: 2 minutes

Dance: 1 round

Solidly bound to the mage, the Dancer executes discreet and jerky movements around its master in order to create sparks that become a shield. This spell only protects from frontal attacks for 6 protection points. The shield protects from both magical and non-magical attacks.

♣ **Cause pain**

Obedience: Obscurantist

Threshold: 15

Range/Area of effect: proximity/one target

Duration: 5 rounds

Dance: 1 round

This perverse Dance enables the mage to inflict intense pain to his target. The pain does not cause any hit point loss but acts as a Serious wound negative modifier (-2) to all rolls and for the duration of the spell.

♣ **Affliction of the Dancer**

Obedience: Obscurantist

Threshold: 15

Range/Area of effect: line of sight/one target

Duration: 5 minutes

Dance: 4 rounds

This Dance is a direct emotional combat between two Dancers. The targeted Dancer is defenseless and its Ascendancy bonus as well as its Empathy are reduced by SM + 1 points for the duration of the spell. The Ascendancy bonus may become negative and all modifications are carried over to the opposite mage's Ascendancy APT.

♣ **Eavesdropping walls**

Obedience: Obscurantist

Threshold: 15

Range: special

Duration: 1 hour

Dance: 5 minutes

The mage creates a resonance between his Dancer and the walls of a room. The targeted walls then have the strange ability to record all sounds emitted in the room for one hour and replay them entirely for the mage. However, the walls replay the information randomly, so



a more recent conversation might be heard after an older one and vice-versa.

♣ Potency

Obedience: Obscurantist
 Threshold: 15
 Area of effect: individual
 Duration: 15 minutes
 Dance: 2 rounds

This spell enables the mage to increase his physical attributes for a short period. His STA and STR are modified by + 2 for 15 minutes.

♣ Instill fear

Obedience: Obscurantist
 Threshold: 15
 Range/Area of effect: proximity/one target
 Duration: 10 minutes
 Dance: 1 round

The mage's presence is boosted by this spell; it is now he looks very dangerous, and people instinctively fear him. The mage is therefore respected, but more by fear than admiration. All of the mage's CHA rolls are modified by SM + 3 points.

♣ Instill dread

Obedience: Obscurantist
 Threshold: 15
 Range/Area of effect: line of sight/one target
 Duration: 10 minutes
 Dance: 1 round

The Obscurantist's Dancer empathically communicates his fear to a person in visual range. If the target fails his Resistance roll, he will no longer be able to fight or to manifest any courage. The victim does not flee from the mage but his fear drives him out of his sight.

♣ Acid rain

Obedience: Obscurantist
 Threshold: 20
 Range/Area of effect: 40 y./30 sq. ft.
 Duration: instantaneous
 Dance: 1 round

This extremely powerful spell turns normal rain into acid rain that severely wounds everybody within the area of effect. Each wounded person suffers a VIR 10 acid attack. This spell only works outdoors while it is raining.

♣ Pyrokinesthesia

Obedience: Obscurantist
 Threshold: 20
 Range/Area of effect: 40 y./one target
 Duration: instantaneous
 Dance: 2 rounds

This strange and frenetic Dance enables the mage to spontaneously set combustible matter on fire. It can be an enemy's clothes, a wooden hut, etc. The fire has a VIR 10 and spreads according to the normal fire propagation rules.

♣ Concealment

Obedience: Obscurantist
 Threshold: 20
 Area of effect: individual
 Duration: 5 minutes
 Dance: 3 rounds

The Obscurantist has achieved such a high mastery of darkness that he is able to hide in shadows. Technically, he becomes invisible. The shadows must however be at least as large as the mage for the spell to take effect. This extremely powerful spell leads to a very important risk: if the shadow fades away while the mage is still concealed within it, he is trapped. In such a case, the only way the mage can escape is to reach the Abyss and convince a demon to let him come back up with it. The EG should be very careful with such situations.

♣ Burning sphere

Obedience: Obscurantist
 Threshold: 20
 Range/Area of effect: 90 yards/special
 Duration: instantaneous
 Dance: 6 rounds

The Dancer forms a glowing sphere of bluish fire that can hit its target extremely swiftly. The sphere — approximately 3 ft. diameter — is able to wound several targets as long as they are very close to each other. Whatever happens the sphere continues on its trajectory until it has reached the 90-yard range. The sphere has a fire aptitude of SM + 20.

♣ Exacerbate emotion

Obedience: Obscurantist
 Threshold: 20
 Range/Area of effect: proximity/one target
 Duration: 10 minutes
 Dance: 3 rounds

The mage is able to amplify the target's main negative emotion to the extreme. The mage does not know the emotion beforehand. A widow could commit suicide whereas an angry man could start a fight.

♣ Surge of terror

Obedience: Obscurantist
 Threshold: 25
 Range/Area of effect: line of sight/up to 50 people
 Duration: 1 hour
 Dance: 10 rounds

The Dance is complicated and trying for the Dancer because it must empathically communicate to every tar-

geted victim. If the spell succeeds, all the targets will be affected by unbearable fear that compels them to flee from the mage. The targets will be unable to identify the exact cause of their fear.

♣ Refuge

Obedience: Obscurantist
 Threshold: 25
 Range: individual
 Duration: instantaneous
 Dance: 1 minute

This extremely powerful spell enables the mage to teleport himself to another place that is determined beforehand with the EG. It has to be the safest and the dearest place for the mage. The haven will have to be determined at the beginning of each game session in order to simulate the changes in the life of the mage.

♣ Portal

Obedience: Obscurantist
 Threshold: 25
 Area of effect: individual
 Duration: instantaneous
 Dance: 1 hour

The mage fade away in shadows and enters the Abyss. The Obscurantist is then able to come back out of any shadow on Harmundia. As opposed to Refuge, the mage decides on the place he comes back out to, but only as long as he has already been there. Just as for Concealment, if the arrival shadow is no longer there then the mage is trapped in the Abyss and will have to count on a demon to let him return to Harmundia.





The Magical Arts: an overview

Magical Arts are the magic inherited from the Muses. This magic uses the arts of Vista (painting), Shape (sculpture), Tune (music) and Scansion (poetry). As a result, the "spells" of this magic are called *opuses*. Each one of these arts can be used in two distinct ways: as elder Art and as free Art. Those who use the Magical Arts are called Concordists. As an emanation from the Muses, Magical Arts can only be used by an Inspired – never by a Dullen. The Magical Arts were created by Inspired to keep the remembrance of the Muses alive, and to contribute to their return. For Concordists, the practice of Magical Arts helps restore the connection with the Spiritcore and participate in the edification of an ethereal temple dedicated to the Muses. We describe here below the four Magical Arts. The combinatory rules will be detailed in the supplement devoted to magic.

INTRODUCTION

One has to possess the Flame (Inspired or Damned) in order to use Magical Arts. All those who possess a Flame may use the elder Art and the free Art. It is theoretically possible to use several Magical Arts but most Concordists prefer specializing in one Art.

♣ The elder Art

This form implies the use of Artifacts and special materials. It demands time, space and tools. It was mainly used during the Flamboyance, when all shared the Inspiration. Nowadays, the free Art is preferred to the elder Art because it is easier to use. However, some who live on the fringes of society, and dedicate themselves to important opuses, are able to use the elder Art. It enables the most powerful effects but is much more difficult to bring into play. All the necessary information concerning the elder Arts will be detailed in the supplement devoted to magic.

♣ The free Arts

Free Arts were born at the end of the Second Age, thanks to the Luminaries who urged Inspired to use a more spontaneous form of the Magical Arts. The threat

that laid on Harmundia stimulated the creation of the free Arts. They arose chaotically, but they have now attained complete maturity. This new form of magic does not concretely use the Arts. It draws its inspiration from the opuses of the past, and conveys them in a lighter and more spontaneous manner, with less power than the elder Art.

THE FOUR MAGICAL ARTS

♣ The Vista

The magic of Painting rose from the brushes and the quills of Inspired painters. At the time of the Flamboyance, the opuses created by painters became true independent worlds where one could seek shelter, travel or even live. Vista can be created in any type of medium as long as painting and drawing are at work; an opus may be a charcoal sketch, a mural painting, a canvas, etc. The tools used do not affect the creation of the magic unless they are magic themselves. Indeed, some Concordists of Vista use Flamboyant Artifacts, such as a pen that has Shard in the nib.

Humans and seasonlings do not agree about the foundations of Vista. Seasonlings consider Vista a magic of the Seasons since each opus is determined depending on a hue that corresponds to a Season. Thus, paintings have a Winter, Spring, Summer or Fall hue. This discordance has no particular consequences on the use of Vista. It is a scholarly dispute of which the only consequence is the preference the seasonlings show toward Vista.

• AS AN ELDER ART

The elder Art of Vista is materialized in Pictureworlds. These are opuses whose the scene and the characters can interact with Harmundia. Concordists nowadays indulge in speculations about the powers and abilities of Pictureworlds. Of all four Magical Arts, the elder Art of Vista is the least known, the one that still holds the most secrets. The unique feature of these paintings is that they represent a virtual space in which one can seek refuge. One can even travel from one Pictureworld to another through the mystic openings that bond them. Concordists usually use Pictureworlds to collect knowledge from before the Eclipse.

• AS A FREE ART

In order to enable the free Art of Vista, the Luminaries developed an alchemic system based on pigmentation. Created after the Ladies of the Seasons disappeared, this magical Art requires the Concordist to throw one or several colored powders for the opus to take effect. Those powders are called "Pigments". These Pigments

NAMES OF SPELLS AND OPUSES

One must note that the spell and opus names listed are generic appellations. Each civilization, kingdom – and even sometimes Domain – has its own name for a spell or an opus, depending on which academy is present or on the level of their occult education, etc. For example, Seeing across a wall will be called The "lying mirror" in the Widowlands, and "the walls have eyes" in the Mercenary Republic.

correlate with the Seasons just as the Pictureworlds do. For a free Art opus to be effective, it must draw its power from an elder Art opus. In other words, certain Pictureworlds have several magical effects depending on their hue (i.e.: the season to which they correspond). Improvised Arts resemble elder Arts and require the Concordist's creativity. That is the reason why they are difficult to put into effect.

Each Season has a domain of application.

- ♣ **Summer Pigment:** Heat, fire, dryness and light.
- ♣ **Fall Pigment:** Aging, decay, poison.
- ♣ **Spring Pigment:** Birth, care, opulence.
- ♣ **Winter Pigment:** Ice, cold, death.

Certain very powerful Concordists are able to mix these Pigments. The dosage must be extremely precise or uncontrollable reactions may occur. One could mention as an example the case of the Fireworks Man from Abyss who imprison the souls of his victims in Winter and Summer colored rockets...

Nowadays, Pigments can be bought from certain seasonling merchants. Each seasonling race has access to Pigments of its related Season. Some say seasonlings take in fresh stores from certain mythical Pictureworlds.

♣ **The Shape**

The magic of Sculpture was used to manufacture magical objects that became Artifacts after the Eclipse. The elder Art requires the use of a material, whereas the free Art allows the Concordist to shape an object through gesture. Concordists of the Shape are called "Shapers".

• AS AN ELDER ART

It permits the creation of Artifacts. The Art of Shape classifies all alterable materials in five categories: glass, stone, wood, metal and cloth. Each of these materials represents a family of craftsmanship.

There are two different methods involved in the practice of the elder Art of Shape. On the one hand, the way of the Animate: using a material to create a living creature that will serve the Concordist. On the other hand, the way of the Inanimate: the creation of very powerful Artifacts that are also influenced by the material used.

• AS A FREE ART

It is based on the law of alteration. A Concordist that uses Shape as a free Art is able to change the consistency, weight and shape of an object. The resistance of the object is of course fundamental in the practice of such an Art. (It is advisable to distinguish a typical table from a crystal of Shard...)

In practice, alteration requires gestures and touch. The gestures consist of moving the hands over the object for the opus to take effect. The Concordist must also touch the object to change it. Contrary to the elder Art of Shape, the free Art is not classified depending on the

type of material, but by a scale of progression related to the materials. A young Shaper will start by modifying cloth, while the most experienced ones will use alteration on metal and stone.

♣ **The Tune**

Concordists of the Tune are called "Attuned"; they practice the magic of the mind with a musical instrument. Initiated by a Luminary named Lucine, the free Art of Tune came forth in a chapel with great acoustics. One day, six musicians took refuge in it. From their meeting with Lucine were created the six families of Tune.

The Tune is mainly used by characters as a free Art because the elder Art of Tune usually involves the manufacture of the musical instruments for the Attuned. During the Flamboyance, the six families were able to play magical concerts of an incomparable power. Separated since the Eclipse, the six instruments of Tune are used by many Attuned who appreciate their magical Wealth, and the ease with which they can conceal their use.

The musical instruments listed below are not restrictive. The drum for example can be replaced with a war-drum, a tambourine from Keshe, or even with drumsticks against a wall. The listed instruments have broad definitions (except for the harpsichord — the damned instrument.)

• AS AN ELDER ART

There is no distinction between elder and free Art of Tune. Indeed, the Attuned often practice both in order to create and use a magical instrument. However, the elder Art is not limited to the creation of magical instruments. It is also used by Inspired to compose powerful scores, often where instruments are combined to create new opuses.

The Attuned like having their own instrument to keep for life — usually a Shard instrument that enables them to enhance their opuses.

• AS A FREE ART

There are six families of instruments, of which only one cannot be used by the Inspired: the harpsichord. A long time ago, that instrument was chosen by the Masque and his allies. Its music is that of discord, with tones that fight others and explore new boundaries. The Attuned of the harpsichord are extremely *dangerous*. Concordists, and most of all other Attuned, distrust them and fear their ability to destroy their opuses. In order to practice one of the five instruments, the Inspired will have to understand the peculiar fraternities that bind the Attuned of one instrument. For example, Flutists like to gather, learn and teach each other. These fraternities sometimes go beyond the boundaries of Inspiration. When one joins a family of the Tune, he becomes a member of a brotherhood that does not accept treason, and that always goes to its members' assistance. There is

however no organization that federates all of the Attuned, though they recognize each other in their common sensitivity and in their immoderate love of music.

♣ **The cittern:** This is the ancestor of the guitar and it enables the manipulation of the mind. It is considered the most dangerous and the most powerful of all five instruments because it can penetrate other minds, interfering with one's memory. It also enables certain opuses that create hallucinations. In the Borrowlight school, Agone of Roundrock had to seek shelter in a virtual space that an Attuned created with his instrument. That place was drawn from Agone's memory. It was not a true creation, but a place that "existed" just as a Pictureworld exists.

♣ **The harp:** An Attuned will play the harp for blessing and charm. The harp is the favored instrument of seducers.

♣ **The drum:** The Attuned uses the drum to call two different aspects into action: madness and morale. They both combine to create a berserk effect. The Attuned who prefers combat usually chooses the drum. Knocking a simple rhythm with hands against a table is sometimes enough to create a basic, but useful, opus.

♣ **The flute:** This is used by the Attuned to hypnotize and bewitch his victims. The bewitchment is different from harp's charms. Its effects are more subtle but often more powerful. A bewitchment could urge someone to commit suicide whereas a simple charm could not.

♣ **The viol:** This heavy instrument enables the Attuned to influence the fauna and the flora by creating a resonance with animals and plants. Its effects are numerous, from a sudden growth of ivy that allows a burglar to enter a house, to a haunting melody that attracts a particular species of animal to a clearing.

♣ **The Scansion**

Of all four Magical Arts, the Scansion is the only one that has a fundamental connection with writing, speech and time. Scanders study manuscripts, alphabets and ancient languages that hold magical knowledge scattered across time. This is the magic of study, solitude and patience.

The difficulty of this Art is that there are many different ways of writing. Being a poet does not suffice to master Scansion. The Scander must truly be a man of knowledge, stirred by a curiosity about languages and the secrets that lie within them. One must master several dead as well as modern tongues, and scour many libraries to unearth hidden opuses in order to excel in the Art of Scansion.

All opuses of Scansion deal with time: auguries, accelerating or slowing time, aging somebody, etc. These opuses are divided between elder and free Art just like the other Magical Arts.

• **AS AN ELDER ART**

Any medium — manuscript, parchment or codex — is acceptable so long as the opus is written and is learnt at reading.

There are two approaches to the elder Art: readings to become acquainted with certain opuses and the writing of those texts.

Nowadays, most Scanders dedicate themselves to reading. Very few undertake the writing of an opus, a work that is long, sometimes tedious and often doomed to failure. Studying readings is also as tiresome because learning an opus requires far more than one reading. Scanders dedicated to the elder Art are respected by their peers, and a master of elder Art opuses is able to fold time at will. However, such opuses are dangerous to put into practice. Reading a text to use the opus it holds is not enough; one must understand the work as an exegete, over and over for the opus to give away all of its secrets.

• **AS A FREE ART**

This is considered much easier. Indeed, the free Art of Scansion mainly requires a good voice and recitation skills for the opus to take place. Scansion is not as straightforward as that. It is based on reading, just as in the elder Art, but the texts are shorter, and can be memorized. Later, the Scander will have to learn to modulate his voice to have the right pitch for the opus to take place. Pitch is an important element of Scansion. A whisper and an exclamation do not have the same effects. This form of Scansion is constantly evolving, so it is now possible for some experienced Scanders to teach opuses orally without even using written material. An opus may be occurring when the listeners think they are only hearing a simple legend around a campfire.

The Magical Arts: technical aspects

MAGICAL ART SKILLS

At the character creation, the Concordist chooses one or several Magical Art skills. There are four Magical Art skills that determine the Concordist's ability to use his art to create a magical effect. These skills are used to generate magical effects, as opposed to skills of the Courty group, that only determine an uninitiated's ability to perform a written work.

♣ **Tune:** This skill is linked to music and its applications. There are five different branches of learning: Cittern, Drum, Flute, Harp and Viol. An Attuned who uses flute and cittern has to possess the Tune skill as well as both Music: Flute and Music: Cittern skills.

♣ **Shape:** This skill is linked to sculpture.

♣ **Vista:** This skill is linked to painting. There are four different branches of spells that are named for the Seasons: Spring, Summer, Fall and Winter.

♣ **Scansion:** This skill is linked to the arts of speech, poetry and prose.

♣ Magical Arts aptitude

When creating a Concordist, the player must calculate his Magical Arts aptitude. It is determined by adding the secondary attribute ART (the average of CRE and CHA) to the either the Magical Art skill and the artistic skill of the Courtyly skill group, whichever is lower.

♣ Tune APT = ART + lower of Tune or Music skill branch.

♣ Shape APT = ART + lower of Shape or Sculpture.

♣ Vista APT = ART + lower of Vista or Painting.

♣ Scansion APT = ART + lower of Scansion or Poetry.

The Magical Arts aptitude is used for all Magical Arts rolls. It may of course be developed through experience as well as through Magical Arts skills and profane artistic skills.

♣ Executing an opus

As opposed to Ascendancy, where the magical effect is called a spell, the term opus is used to describe the results of Magical Arts. When executing an opus, the Concordist must add his Magical Art APT and all possible modifiers (see table) to an open roll against the DIF Threshold of the opus. In the case of a fumble, he must refer to his art's fumble table, below.

♣ Roll: Magical Art APT + modifiers + 1d10

♣ DIF = Threshold + Quality Margin (see below)

♣ Quality of an opus

The main technical difference between Magical Arts and Ascendancy is the use of Quality when executing an opus. That is, the Concordist can raise the Threshold of the opus he is about to execute in order to obtain a better performance. This Threshold increase is called the Quality Margin and must be determined before the execution of the opus. The normal roll is then used to execute the opus with the raised Threshold. If the roll succeeds, the Quality of the opus is determined according to the Quality Margin (see table below). Opus Quality influences the effects of the opus as a multiplier on its duration, effects, range or area of effect. Some opuses, depending on their effects, cannot have their properties increased.

Example: the "luner beauty" opus has a Threshold of 10. Marsus, an Attuned harpist, decides to execute it with a Quality Margin of 15. The DIF is then 10 (Threshold) + 15 (Quality Margin) = 25. If the roll succeeds (25 or more), the Concordist can choose between (the Quality gain is 10):

• Range/Area of effect: proximity/one target

The Range cannot be modified because it is not a numerical value. But he can choose to affect 10 targets.

or

• Duration: 1 day

MAGICAL ARTS APTITUDE MODIFIERS

| Origin | Modifiers |
|--|---------------------|
| Site rich in Shard | +Wealth |
| Hindered movements (except for Scansion) | Magic is impossible |
| Site favorable to Inspiration | +2 |
| Site unfavorable to Inspiration | -2 |
| Tune | |
| Poor instrument* | -2 |
| Very poor instrument** | -4 |
| No instrument*** | -8 |
| Vista | |
| Opposed Season**** | -2 |
| Identical Season***** | +2 |
| Shape | Special |
| Scansion | |
| Total silence | +2 |
| A lot of noise | -2 |
| Cannot speak | Magic is impossible |

* Panpipe instead of a normal flute.

** Using a leaf.

*** Whistling without instrument.

**** Based on the cycle of Seasons: Spring is opposed to Fall, Summer to Winter.

***** e.g.: the Concordist executes a Winter opus in winter.

The Concordist can choose to modify the duration of the opus up to 10 days.

or

• *The opus affects the target by a bonus of $+3 \times 10 = +30$ to all seduction and charm rolls.*

♣ Instant opus

In case of an emergency, the Concordist may have to use an Instant opus. This consists of executing one of the Concordist's opuses so that it immediately takes effect. However, as the Concordist does not have the time to harmonize his opus, the Threshold is multiplied by 2 in order to simulate the difficulty of such an opus. Moreover, if the player rolls a fumble when executing his opus, he will have to multiply his negative SM by 2 on the catastrophe table.

♣ Identify an opus

When a Concordist witnesses one of his peers executing an opus, he can concentrate on the melody, the movements, the Pigment or the Word in order to foresee its effects. This may only be done when the Concordist actually sees the components of the opus (melody,

EXAMPLES OF MAGICAL ARTS FUMBLES

| Negative SM | Consequences |
|--------------|---|
| -10 to -14 | Ridiculous. The failure implies an detrimental but safe outcome. The Concordist loses Inspiration for the next 5 minutes. Tune: soundless instrument. Shape: paralyzed hands. Vista: Pigment fades away and loses power. Scansion: structure of time thickens and the Concordist is unable to alter it for the next hour. |
| -15 to -19 | Pathetic. The failure is perilous but not lethal. Tune: Concordist breaks his instrument. Shape: unable to shape matter for the next 24 hours. Vista: all Pigments are useless for the next 24 hours. Scansion: objects and people around the Scander move at random speed for the next hour. |
| -20 to -24 | Terrible. The failure is very dangerous and leads to serious consequences. Tune: the Attuned executes another opus of equivalent Threshold and Instrument (EG's choice). Shape: unwanted effect in opus (the complete opposite or unexpected effect). Vista: the Painter executes another opus of the same Season and Threshold (EG's choice). Scansion: the Scander executes another opus of similar Threshold (EG's choice). |
| -25 to -29 | Catastrophic. The failure has extremely important consequences. The effects of the opus are aimed towards another target (EG's choice). Tune: the Attuned executes another opus of the same Threshold but of different Instrument (EG's choice). Shape: the Shaper executes another opus of equivalent Threshold on the same matter (EG's choice). Vista: the Painter executes another opus of equivalent Threshold but of a different Season (EG's choice). Scansion: the effects of the opus are aimed toward a new target (EG's choice). |
| -30 and less | Cataclysmic. The failure has a terrible outcome. Tune: a Mental assault affects the Attuned (see the cittern opus); the Attuned also executes a Discordant opus of same Threshold (EG's choice). Shape: targeted matter is chaotic; its shape, size, density, weight, texture change for the next hour. The target finally disintegrates and the Shaper is trapped within it (whatever the size of the matter) for the next 5 hours. Vista: damned by the Muses; the use of Vista becomes disordered for a whole week and the Painter has to roll 2d10 instead of 1d10. Scansion: time is frozen. Time slows down so much that the Scander feels it has stopped for one hour. The latter moves 100 times slower than he normally does (he needs 45 minutes for a 30 second walk). Time envelops the Scander, who disappears from the physical world of Harmundia for the next 5 hours. |

QUALITY TABLE

| Quality Margin | Quality |
|----------------|---------|
| 0 | 1 |
| 1 to 4 | 2 |
| 5 to 9 | 5 |
| 10 to 15 | 10 |
| 16 to 20 | 30 |
| 21 and over | 100 |

movements, etc.). He must then succeed in an ART + relevant Magical Art against DIF Threshold of the opus (not counting the Quality Margin).

The EG should roll a hidden die so that the player has no idea of the opus's Threshold. If the roll fails, the Concordist is unable to identify the nature of the opus. If the roll succeeds, the EG can superficially describe the effects and the branch (Season, Instrument, etc.) of the opus. However, the Concordist has no way to determine the duration, range or area of effect of the opus.

Identifying an opus is considered as an action for the Concordist.

♣ Magic resistance

Magic resistance is applied to anybody directly targeted by a magical effect. Opuses that affect light, matter, etc., cannot be resisted, even when they are used to harm someone.

For example, an Ice missile hits a target. However, it is not the target that is affected by the opus, but the Winter Pigment that was transformed into ice.

♣ Discord (Tune only)

If an Attuned is near another Attuned executing an opus of Tune, he can attempt to counter him by performing on his own instrument as long as the latter has not finished. As it is considered an action, the Attuned can only use Discord upon opuses that still have at least one round left in their execution time.

The Discord roll is an open Magical Arts APT roll against a DIF equal to the opponent's Magical Arts APT. If the SM is at least 10, the opus is immediately put out of tune and countered. If the roll is a success but the SM is less than 10, the opus is not countered but the Concordist is distracted (the execution of his opus requires 1 extra round). If the roll fails, the opus is not stopped.

Discord is a 1-round action that must be completed before the targeted opus is performed.

Example: Drahim uses Discord to counter Orsh, who is executing Chaotic behavior. Orsh's Tune Magical Art APT is 11 (ART 6, Tune 7, Drum 5), whereas Drahim's is 14 (ART 8, Tune 6, Cittern 6). The EG rolls the die for Drahim so that he won't know Orsh's Magical Arts APT.

He obtains a total score of 22 (14 + 8 from the die roll) that is a SM 10 points higher than Orsh's Magical Arts APT. The Drummer's performance is stopped by the Flutist and his opus is not executed. If Drahinn had only obtained a 20, Chaotic behavior would have taken 5 rounds instead of 4 to be executed.

Note: For Discord to be effective, both Concordists must be able to hear each other's Tunes.

♣ Material resistance (Shape only)

The Shaper's handling of matter mainly depends on the materials used. Except for specific cases, the objects used present a natural resistance to the opus. Matter is not neutral and its "will" resists the assault. Each material has its own resistance score that is added to an open roll by the EG against a DIF equal to the Magical Arts APT of the Concordist. If the roll succeeds, the opus is cancelled by the resistance. If the roll fails, the Concordist is able to overcome the resistance.

♣ Object size (Shape only)

In the Shape opus descriptions, different object sizes are used. The criteria are the height, mass and weight of the object. The size of the object also depends on its complexity. Even a small watch will be considered as "Medium" whereas a huge timepiece will be "Unlimited". Here are some size examples:

- ♣ **Small:** A key, a glass, a dagger, a hat, a shoe, a small tool, a book
- ♣ **Medium:** A chair, a sword, a trunk, a watch
- ♣ **Large:** A table, a hut, a wardrobe, a clock, a sprig-gan crossbow
- ♣ **Unlimited:** An edifice, a grandfather clock (such Shape opuses are, of course, very rare).

♣ Improvisation

Improvisation is an intuitive magic that requires much adaptability from the Concordist. Moreover, improvisation requires that the EG is well acquainted with all the opuses. Improvisation is performed in four steps:

- ♣ **First step:** The Concordist explains to the EG the opus effects he would like, including the duration, range, area of effect and the execution time (Measure, Modeling, Sketch and Word).
- ♣ **Second step:** Based on the listed opuses, the EG estimates the Threshold of the opus, and specifies its branch or Season if necessary. The EG can modify the certain parameters of the opus in order to balance its power with its Threshold.
- ♣ **Third step:** The Threshold is multiplied by 2 in order to reflect the difficulty due to improvisation.
- ♣ **Fourth step:** The Concordist must succeed in an open roll to which he adds his Creativity plus the lower of his Magical Art skill or his profane Art skill.

THRESHOLD MULTIPLIER

As always, multipliers apply before any modifiers. Thus, an opus performed without any instrument (+8 DIF) and executed instantaneously (x2) will first have its Threshold multiplied by 2 and only then will the modifier (+8) be added.

Example: If the Threshold is 10, it becomes 28 (10 x 2 = 20, 20 + 8 = 28) and not 36 (18 x 2).

There are two different situations where the Threshold is multiplied during opus execution: Instant opuses and Improvisation. If they are both used at once (an Instant Improvisation), the final Threshold is 3, not 4. Associated multipliers are not added up but are increased by 1.

MATERIAL RESISTANCE SCORES

| Materials | Resistance |
|-------------------|------------|
| Cloth & paper | 2 |
| Glass & sand | 3 |
| Wood & earth | 4 |
| Metal | 5 |
| Stone | 6 |
| Presence of Shard | + Wealth |

CREATION OF A CONCORDIST

In order to create a Concordist, one should use the character creation rules of Book Two, chapter 2. There are certain specifics to the process:

- ♣ Only Inspired can become Concordists.
- ♣ The relevant Occult skill must be greater than 0 in order to use that Magical Art.
- ♣ An Attuned must develop all the instruments he desires to use as branches of the Music skill. However, the Tune Occult skill is sufficient to inspire the magic of Tune for all instruments. Thus, an Attuned will have as many Tune aptitudes as instruments he uses.
- ♣ The player will have to calculate all his Magical Arts aptitudes and write them down on the Occult section of his Scroll. The player will then have to determine the number of Threshold points he can invest in each Magical Art he performs. For each of those, the player multiplies the relevant Magical Art Occult skill (Vista, Shape, Scansion, or Tune) by his ART score. He then chooses his opuses by subtracting the Threshold of each from his total score until it is down to zero. In this way, the player can pick many minor opuses or fewer major ones. Certain assets and faults can modify the character's Threshold point total.
- ♣ The Concordist begins the game with the tools of his Art (instruments, pigments, etc.).

OPUS RANGES

- ♣ **Proximity:** Not over 10 ft. with visual contact.
- ♣ **Line of sight:** Not over 50 yards.
- ♣ **Individual:** The Concordist himself.
- ♣ **Special:** Specified in opus description.

MAGICAL ARTS ROLLS SUMMARY TABLE

| | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| Tune APT | ART + (Tune or Music; branch of concerned instrument) |
| Shape APT | ART + (Shape or Sculpture) |
| Vista APT | ART + (Vista or Painting) |
| Scansion APT | ART + (Scansion or Poetry) |
| Execute an opus | Magical Arts APT + modifiers against DIF Threshold (+ Quality Margin) |
| Quality Margin | Threshold increase decided by the Concordist himself (see table) |
| Identify an opus | ART + Magical Arts against a DIF equal to the Threshold of the opus |
| Magic resistance | WIL x 2 or CRE x 2 against a DIF equal to the Threshold of the opus |
| Discord | Tune APT against opponent's Tune APT Execution time + 1 if roll succeeds. Opus out of tune if SM 10 |
| Material resistance | Resistance against a DIF equal to the Shape APT |
| Improvisation | CRE + Magical Arts skill or concerned profane art skill against DIF Threshold (specified by the EG) x 2 |
| Learn an opus | ART + Magical Art against a DIF equal to the Threshold (with a mentor) ART + Magical Art against a DIF equal to the Threshold - 5 (from an opus of Elder Art) |

TUNE OPUS DESCRIPTION FORMAT

Name of the opus

Instrument: Harp, Cittern, Flute, Drum or Viol.

Threshold: Opus difficulty.

Range/Area of effect: Distance at which the opus can be executed/area in which the opus takes effect.

Duration: Duration of opus. If not specified otherwise, it can be interrupted at any time by the Concordist.

Measure: Period of time required for opus execution.

Opus description

Improvisation = CRE + (lower of Magical Art skill or Courtly skill) + 1d10 against DIF Threshold chosen by the EG x2.

In the case of a fumble, the negative SM is multiplied by 2 on the catastrophes table.

♣ Learning a new opus

A Concordist must find a mentor in order to learn a new Free Art opus. The student must also be in direct contact with the very substance of his Art; i.e.: drawing the power from the Elder Art (Pictureworld, tome, etc.). As those objects are hard to find, Concordists who are

lucky enough to find one of them are usually glad to teach their knowledge to other Concordists. The transmission of such knowledge is usually oral.

Once he has found his mentor, the Concordist must succeed on a roll of ART + relevant Magical Art against the DIF Threshold of the opus. The talent of the mentor does not affect the learning of the opus. The Concordist will have to thoroughly study the opus for a period of time equal to the Threshold of the opus in hours in order to add his new opus. During that period of time, the Concordist must dedicate himself entirely to his study. If the roll succeeds, the opus is memorized. If the roll fails, the Concordist has not learned the opus and will have to devote twice as much time to learning the opus over again in order to retry the roll. If the result is a fumble, the Concordist will not be able to learn an opus of the same Art for a month.

It is also possible to learn new magical effects from the Elder Art without the help of a mentor. A coarse sculpture could enclose an opus of Threshold 10 whereas a masterpiece could hold several opuses for a total of 50 Threshold points or more. The learning method is exactly the same as with a mentor. The DIF of this method is reduced by 5.

Roll: ART + concerned Magical Art against DIF Threshold of the opus - 5



Opus

TUNE

♣ Harp

INNER BEAUTY

Instrument: Harp
 Threshold: 10
 Range/Area of effect: proximity/one target
 Duration: 1 day
 Measure: 2 rounds

This opus enables the Attuned to embellish an object or a living being in order to grant the target a more harmonious appearance. An object will seem new and well made, whereas a man will seem newly handsome. The monetary value of such an object will be increased, and such a man or seasonling will roll charm and seduction actions with a + 3 bonus.

APPEASEMENT

Instrument: Harp
 Threshold: 10
 Range/Area of effect: 5 y./one target
 Duration: 1 hour
 Measure: 2 rounds

The Attuned performs an appeasing melody that peers into the target's mind in order to hold back all possible causes for anger, magical or not. As long as the target

stays in the area of effect, he will be unable to feel anger against the Attuned or anyone else for the next hour.

KINDRED SPIRIT

Instrument: Harp
 Threshold: 15
 Range/Area of effect: proximity/one target
 Duration: 10 minutes
 Measure: 2 rounds

This opus is very useful when the Concordist desires to be let in on a secret by a secretive person. The opus highly develops the Concordist's empathy and grants him with an extremely acute psychological understanding of the target. The target of the opus trusts the Concordist excessively. The EG will have to determine the exact consequences of such an opus.

BENEDICTION

Instrument: Harp
 Threshold: 15
 Range/Area of effect: at contact/one target
 Duration: 1 week
 Measure: 5 minutes

Benediction enables the Harpist to bless an object (clothing, weapon...) so that it is able to repel a Damned. A blessed object radiates a 10 ft. diameter sphere against which any Damned must succeed on a WIL x 2 against DIF 12 roll in order to enter.

ALLURE

Instrument: Harp
 Threshold: 20
 Area of effect: special
 Duration: 30 minutes
 Measure: 5 rounds

By performing this opus in the middle of a crowd, the Attuned becomes extraordinarily charismatic. He affects everybody that can hear the music. During the performance, the Harpist will invoke sympathy in men and love in women. But after half an hour, everything will return to normal and the Concordist's charisma will fade away, leaving any possible consequences for him...

♣ Flute

ORDER

Instrument: Flute
 Threshold: 10
 Range/Area of effect: proximity/one target
 Duration: 1 round
 Measure: 1 round

Through a series of briefs notes, the Flutist is able to give an order empathically to the target. This order can only be one word but the target must obey. Moreover, the



order must be completed in one round. The following are some examples of orders that can be used: jump, run, fall, quiet, hit, laugh. The victim is totally aware that he is acting against his own will.

The target of this opus will never do anything that directly endangers him.

EMOTION DISCHARGE

Instrument: Flute

Threshold: 10

Range/Area of effect: proximity/one target

Duration: 10 minutes

Measure: 3 rounds

This opus enables the Attuned to create a feeling that was inexistent in his target's mind. The emotion must be simple and basic with a precise goal. Examples: anger against a man, jealousy towards a black fey, sympathy for a giant...

BAN

Instrument: Flute

Threshold: 15

Range/Area of effect: proximity/one target

Duration: 24 hours

Measure: 1 minute

While performing this opus, the Flutist tries to stare into his target's eyes. He can then make a way into his mind in order to place an interdiction. This prohibition prevents the victim from performing an action for the next 24 hours. The action must be specific and non-dangerous to the target. Examples: do not shake that man's hand today; do not go to the market at Lorgol; do not buy that jewel, etc.

FASCINATION

Instrument: Flute

Threshold: 15

Range/Area of effect: proximity/one target

Duration: 1 hour

Measure: 1 round

The Flutist performs a soft and hypnotic melody. Very quickly, the target is affected by a feeling of well-being and thus strongly trusts the musician. The target is unable to attempt any action whatsoever against the Flutist and agrees to all that he says for the next hour. Once the effects of the opus are over, the victim realizes his own strange behavior but will not be able to identify its cause nor its nature.

HYPNOTISM

Instrument: Flute

Threshold: 20

Range/Area of effect: proximity/one target

Duration: 1 hour

Measure: 5 rounds

The Attuned performs a perfidious melody that insinuates into the target's mind, dominating it. This opus enables the Flutist to program an individual in such a

way that he can perform a more complex action than with Order. Here, the order can be summarized in a long phrase only limited by one parameter: the action must be achieved in one hour from the beginning of the opus. However, the action can be postponed as long as it ends before the maximum duration of one hour. Examples: hit that man as soon as he enters this room; steal that precious cloth from that shop and bring it back to me; go hide in that crypt and stay there as long as possible, etc. In that last example, the victim will awake one hour later without knowing what he is doing in the crypt. The victim of Hypnotism cannot endanger himself.

Viol

GRASPING ROOTS

Instrument: Viol

Threshold: 10

Range/Area of effect: 50 y./one target

Duration: 1 minute

Measure: 2 rounds

This opus enables the Attuned to command underground roots. They immediately come out of earth and start clutching a target. The latter can try to escape them if he succeeds in a STR roll against DIF 18. The roots do nothing else other than grasp the target's limbs for one minute.

GAME OF SEASONS

Instrument: Viol

Threshold: 10

Range/Area of effect: 90 y./one target

Duration: 1 week

Measure: 30 minutes

The Attuned who performs this opus is able to target any type of plant (from weed to bicentennial trees) and change the Season that influences it. In the case of a tree in summertime, the Attuned can make it go under the yoke of Fall for a whole week and thus see its leaves drop off. At the end of the opus, the plant will slowly return to its normal season.

PLANT HOSTILITY

Instrument: Viol

Threshold: 15

Range/Area of effect: 25 y./one target

Duration: 1 round

Measure: 1 round

This very surprising opus uses all surrounding plants to cause damage to its target: bramble lacerates, fruits fall, branches hit, roots clutch, etc. Nature comes to terms with the Attuned to inflict damage to the target in the area of effect. The damage is 1d10 HP (the Quality Margin multiplier applies to the result of the roll and not to the number of dice. In other words, if you have a very good quality margin, you can multiply the result of the 1d10, but you cannot roll more dice). This damage cannot be dodged because of the number of different attacks.

The Attuned must be surrounded by plants for the opus to take effect.

PRISON OF PLANTS

Instrument: Viol

Threshold: 15

Range/Area of effect: 40 y./90 cubic ft.

Duration: 1 hour

Measure: 3 rounds

This opus enables the Attuned to create a prison of plants around his target. The prison can hold several people as long as they are all in the area of effect. The bars are made of brambles, lianas and branches that are impossible to open. However, the plants are still combustible and a controlled fire can free the prisoners. There must be plants in the area of effect for the opus to work.

RULE NATURE

Instrument: Viol

Threshold: 25

Range/Area of effect: sight/one target

Duration: 15 minutes

Measure: 5 rounds

Through this opus, the Attuned is able to completely control a given plant and alter its natural characteristics. For example, the Attuned can bend a tree in order to use it as a bridge over a river. The Attuned can also use the plant to attack a target for the duration of the opus. The Concordist will have to use his Magical Arts APT for any skill or attribute when making the plant act, and the plant's damage bonus is obtained by multiplying its height (in yards) by 2. The plant can only attack in an area that his branches can reach.

♣ Drum

OVERCOME FEAR

Instrument: Drum

Threshold: 10

Area of effect: individual

Duration: 30 minutes

Measure: 2 rounds

This opus helps the Drummer regain his courage. He can ignore all effects of fear for the duration of the opus. The origin of the fear can be magical (e.g.: Surge of terror), physical or psychological. The Drummer will be able to overcome it and will not be affected by its negative modifiers. Once the opus is finished, if the origin of the fear is still present, the Attuned can be affected by it.

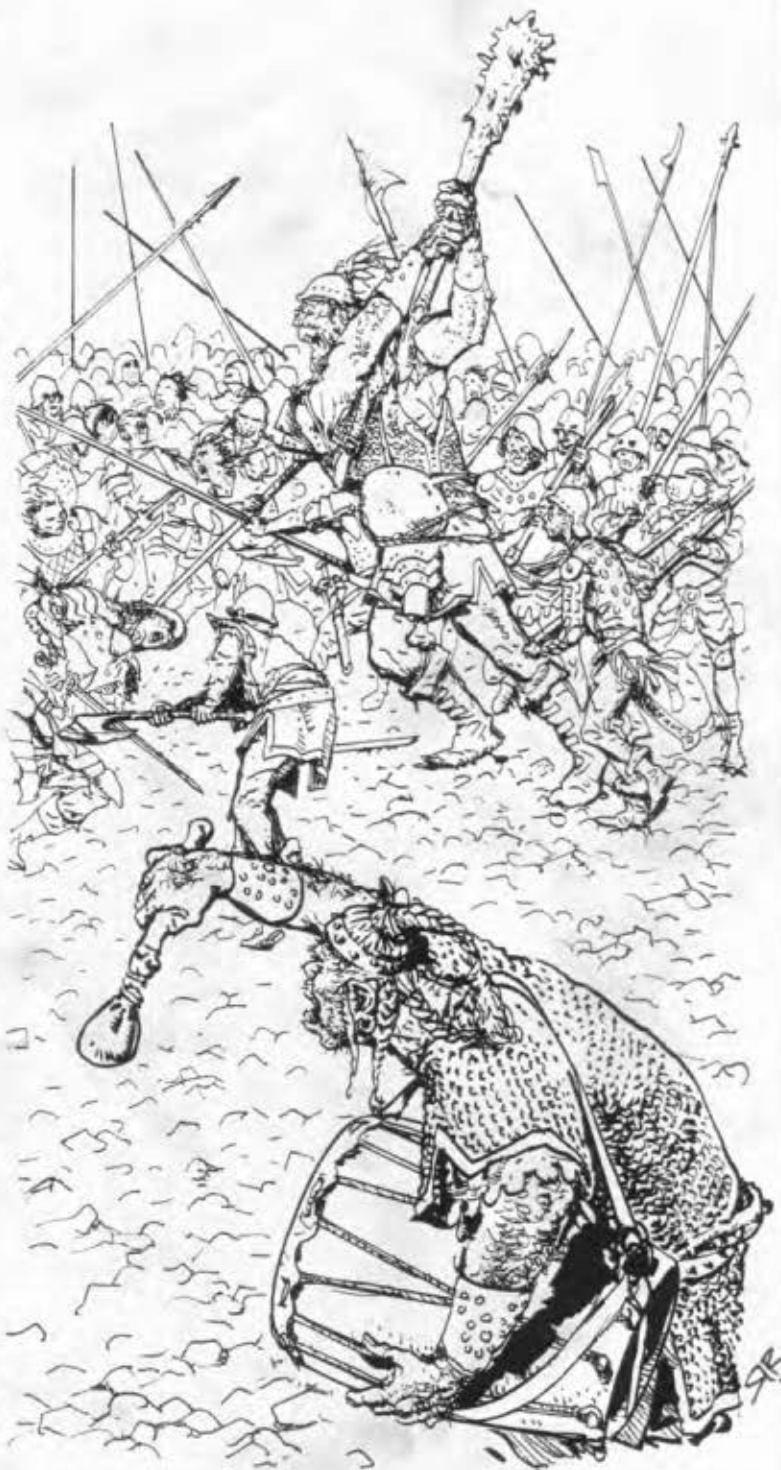
BERSERK

Instrument: Drum

Threshold: 15

Range/Area of effect: sight/one target

Duration: duration of combat



Measure: 1 round

The Drummer performs a series of frenetic sounds that create an atmosphere of murderous madness for a single combatant. The target has his attack capacity raised by 3 points for the duration of the combat. However, he is no longer able to dodge or parry while under the effects of the opus.

CHAOTIC BEHAVIOR

Instrument: Drum
 Threshold: 15
 Range/Area of effect: proximity/one target
 Duration: 5 minutes
 Area of effect: 4 rounds

This opus enables the Drummer to confuse one target. For the next 5 minutes, the target will act chaotically, changing his opinion over and over again, unable to communicate coherently. In the middle of a fight, this opus forces the target to roll 1d10 before each of his actions and look up the result on the following table.

| CHAOTIC BEHAVIOR | |
|------------------|---|
| 1d10 | Behavior during a fight |
| 1 to 3 | Waits until the end of the round to react |
| 4 to 5 | No action this round (target does something completely different) |
| 6 to 7 | Tries to get out of fight |
| 8 to 9 | Hits an ally |
| 10 | EG's choice |

DEMENTIA

Instrument: Drum
 Range/Area of effect: proximity/one target
 Duration: 10 minutes
 Measure: 5 rounds

The target of Dementia becomes mad for 10 minutes. The victim is no longer able to think or talk rationally and has all the symptoms of a serious mental illness. The EG chooses the type of affliction that comes upon the target of this opus.

LEADER

Instrument: Drum
 Threshold: 20
 Area of effect: 50 yards around the Drummer
 Duration: 30 minutes
 Measure: 1 minute

This opus is quite impressive when performed by a talented Drummer before a large-scale battle. The Drummer radiates an unexpected charisma. All the Drummer's allies on a battlefield will obey him blindly and will protect him at any cost if he is attacked. Moreover, even his enemies will side with him if they are in the area of effect and fail their magic resistance roll. Everything returns to normal at the end of the opus.

♣ Cittern

TEMPER ALTERATION

Instrument: Cittern
 Threshold: 10
 Range/Area of effect: proximity/one target
 Duration: 1 hour
 Measure: 5 rounds

The effects of Temper alteration have a large number of variants. By performing one of these readings, the Attuned is able to modify the target's general temper. This opus does not alter memories, it merely instills a particular state of mind. A sad person could feel happy but someone who thoroughly hates another will not forget that so easily (a higher Quality Margin would be required).

THOUGHT TRANSFERENCE

Instrument: Cittern
 Threshold: 15
 Range/Area of effect: sight/one target
 Duration: 5 minutes
 Measure: 1 round

The Attuned is able to create a bridge between his mind and his target's. If the latter is not willing, he can try a magic resistance roll but in no case will he be able to identify the origin of the intrusion. This telepathy enables a normal conversation just as if the two of them were side by side. They can also send each other pictures in flashes.

RECALL MEMORY

Instrument: Cittern
 Threshold: 15
 Range/Area of effect: proximity/one target
 Duration: 1 round
 Measure: 1 round

This opus enables the Attuned to intrude on his target's mind to search for specific information. Technically, the player asks a precise question of the EG who answers indirectly in order to simulate the complexity of the target's thoughts. The more accurate the question, the more the answer will reveal. Examples: were you at the tavern on Vaults Street yesterday afternoon? (very specific); are you really a comedian? (specific); whom don't you like? (unspecific). The answer to his question will be relayed in a series of mental flashes that reveal the target's state of mind.

ALTER MEMORY

Instrument: Cittern
 Threshold: 20
 Range/Area of effect: proximity/one target
 Duration: 1 day
 Measure: 1 minute

Here the Attuned is not only able to enter his target's mind but also to partially modify his memories. He can change the memory of a date, of a person encountered, or of a minor event. He can only alter small fragments of memories, unless he chooses a very high Quality Margin (10 or more). It is impossible for instance to make an aristocrat believe that he is the son of a peasant, unless the Attuned chooses a Quality Margin of 21. On the other hand, he can make someone believe they met and befriended yesterday. The return to normal is often hard for the victim to go through.

MENTAL ASSAULT

Instrument: Cittern

Threshold: 25

Range/Area of effect: proximity/one target

Duration: instantaneous

Measure: 1 round

The effects of this discreet opus are perfidious and sadistic. It is a melody that insinuates into the target's mind and tears down everything it comes across. This opus is not aimed at the target's memories but directly at his intellectual capacities, inflicting 1d10 damage points that are subtracted from his INT. If the damage is sufficient to reduce the target's INT to 0, he is turned into a vegetable. This damage cannot be healed.

SHAPE OPUS DESCRIPTION FORMAT

Opus name

Threshold: Opus difficulty

Area of effect: Area in which the opus takes effect, size of the object. Shape opuses always require contact with the matter being shaped.

Duration: Total duration of the magical effect. The effect can be ended early by the Shaper. Modeling: Necessary execution time

Opus description

SHAPE

WEAKNESS

Threshold: 10

Area of effect: unlimited

Duration: 1 hour

Modeling: 1 minute

This opus enables the Shaper to create a weak point in the targeted structure. It could be a piece of armor, a table or even a piece of complex architecture. The opus affects the structure by making it two times more fragile. It thus takes two times less damage to destroy.

REPLICA

Threshold: 10

Area of effect: one small object

Duration: instantaneous

Modeling: 1 hour

Through this opus, the Shaper is able to perfectly reproduce an object he can touch. He is able to imitate the object's texture, shape and weight. Moreover, the imitated object must be the most homogeneous as possible; that is, made of one material maximum (the Quality Margin can then be used to affect several materials). He would therefore be unable to reproduce a painting. The Shaper must also possess the material he is supposed

to remodel. The solidity of the replica depends on the modeled material.

ALTER CONDITION

Threshold: 10

Area of effect: one medium-sized object

Duration: one day

Modeling: 5 minutes

The Shaper can choose to modify the wear of a given object. The object can seem newer or older than it really is. The alteration is superficial, but sufficient to give more or less value to the object depending on the needs of the Shaper.

MATTER COHESION

Threshold: 10

Area of effect: one small object

Duration: 1 hour

Modeling: 5 rounds

This opus allows the Shaper to increase the density and solidity of matter. The targeted object then requires two times more damage to be destroyed. This opus can be executed to counter "Weakness".

REMODEL

Threshold: 10

Area of effect: one small object

Duration: instantaneous

Modeling: 1 round

This opus enables the Shaper to reform the shape of a small object. He is however unable to create complex motifs and can only recreate basic shapes. It is impossible to remodel a sword from a key (the shape and structure of a sword is too complex), but this opus could allow the Shaper to model a poker out of a key.

SHARPEN A BLADE

Threshold: 10

Area of effect: one medium-sized object

Duration: 1 hour

Modeling: 2 rounds

This very basic opus allows the Shaper to temporarily sharpen a blade. The blade is granted a +2 damage bonus. The blade returns to normal after one hour.

CRACK LOCK

Threshold: 15

Area of effect: one small object

Duration: instantaneous

Modeling: 1 round

The Shaper is capable of remodeling a lock so that it opens by itself. The lock is left a bare hole, so the forced entry will be easily noticed.

ALTER STATE OF MATTER

Threshold: 15

Area of effect: one small object

Duration: 1 minute

Modeling: 4 rounds

This opus enables the Shaper to modify the state of a material where physically possible. Metal, glass or ice can be liquefied, but not cloth, wood or stone. This opus can only affect liquid and solid states. However, the materials will keep the cohesion of their structure so that they can reshape at the end of the opus. A puddle of liquid metal will not separate, so that the sword can reform.

MODIFY MATTER

Threshold: 20

Area of effect: one medium-sized object

Duration: 1 hour

Modeling: 1 minute

This extremely powerful opus allows matter transmutation. It can for example change a silk shirt into a chemise of fine metal. The side effect of this opus is that the original material deteriorates. An object can withstand up to five alterations before being destroyed. Moreover, it is a rough alteration, unable to reproduce complex motifs or high-quality materials such as gold. The resistance of the altered material is equal to the higher resistance of the two materials.

DECAY

Threshold: 20

Area of effect: one medium-sized object

Duration: instantaneous

Modeling: 1 minute

This opus grinds matter, enabling the Shaper to destroy an object. It only affects homogeneous and simple objects. It is therefore impossible to destroy a painting, but it is very easy to destroy a wooden chair.

MATTER MEMORY

Threshold: 20

Area of effect: one medium-sized object

Duration: instantaneous

Modeling: 1 minute

Matter perceives, in its own way, changes in its environment. This subtle opus allows the Shaper to feel the memories in matter. Matter can recognize textures, weights and shapes that were in contact with it in the last 24 hours. By laying his hand upon the object, the Shaper can learn such information that he can more or less understand. A paving stone can memorize the texture and the weight of a specific shoe but will not be able to describe the person's clothes. If the Shaper touches the object with something it had already been in contact with in the last 24 hours, the object will automatically recognize it.

ONE WITH MATTER

Threshold: 25

Area of effect: individual

Duration: 1 hour

Modeling: 1 round

VISTA OPUS DESCRIPTION FORMAT

Opus name

Season: Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter.

Threshold: Opus difficulty

Range/Area of effect: Distance at which the opus can be executed/area in which the opus takes effect.

Duration: Maximum duration of the opus. If not specified, the opus lasts until interrupted by the Painter.

Sketch: Necessary Pigment manipulation time to execute the opus.

Opus description

This very impressive opus enables the Shaper to merge into matter for one hour. For the opus to be properly executed, the object must be at least the same size as the Shaper. The object must also be made out of one material (a big rock, a large mirror, a tree trunk, etc.). The Shaper's clothes and equipment is also altered.

VISTA

♣ Spring

FERTILITY

Season: Spring

Threshold: 10

Area of effect: 15 ft. radius around the Painter

Duration: 24 hours

Sketch: 1 round

Through this opus, the Painter enralls all vegetation in the area of effect with the Pigment of Spring, enhancing their fertility and facilitating their growth. After 24 hours, all affected plants will grow to ten times their original size, with enough strength to break a door or stone wall.

CURE A WOUND

Season: Spring

Threshold: 15

Range: contact

Duration: permanent

Sketch: 3 rounds

The Concordist summons the regenerating energies of Spring to accelerate the target's natural healing process. This opus divides the necessary healing time by 2 and immediately restores 5 hit points.

CHAOTIC VEGETATION

Season: Spring

Threshold: 20

Area of effect: 20 y. diameter around the Painter

Duration: 30 minutes

Sketch: 5 rounds

The Painter harmonizes with all plants in the area of effect. They begin to come to life and grow in a strange

orderly way. They are compelled to grab every moving body with their appendages. This opus organizes the plants as an impassable wall that clutches and immobilizes anything moving into the area of effect.

SUN SPELL

Season: Spring
 Threshold: 20
 Range/Area of effect: N/A
 Duration: 1 hour
 Sketch: 1 minute

This powerful opus makes the sun shine on a specific site. It does not affect the weather of the chosen region but only forces the sun to come out for one hour in the next 24 hours (the Painter chooses the time of day). With a Quality Margin of 10, the sun can shine at night. The negative modifiers due to darkness are thus ignored for the duration of the opus.

☀ Summer

BLINDING LIGHT

Season: Summer
 Threshold: 10
 Range/Area of effect: sight/one target
 Duration: 5 rounds
 Sketch: 5 rounds

The Painter focuses the forces of Summer in a beam of intense light that blinds the target. The victim must

close his eyes or is rendered completely blind for the duration of the opus, with all the ensuing consequences on the use of magic, on combat, etc.

HEAT

Season: Summer
 Threshold: 15
 Area of effect: 90 y. radius around the Painter
 Duration: 1 hour
 Sketch: 1 round

The Concordist invokes one of the fundamental forces of the Summer vista: heat. The Painter is able to increase the temperature of a location by up to 70°F.

EXTEND LIFE

Season: Summer
 Threshold: 15
 Range/Area of effect: contact/one target
 Duration: 1 hour
 Sketch: 2 rounds

This opus enables the Painter to sustain life in a wounded person until he is healed. It protects the person from his injuries as soon as it takes effect. A dead or dying character is considered on the verge of death, and his Hit Points are immediately increased to STA + 1. However, if the victim is hit again, Extend life will not prevent the new injury. This opus only applies to the consequences of an injury (hemorrhage, fracture, etc.), and not to illness or poisoning.



IGNITION

Season: Summer
 Threshold: 20
 Range/Area of effect: sight/one target
 Duration: instantaneous
 Sketch: 1 round

Through this opus, the Painter is able to cause spontaneous combustion in any combustible material. It is impossible to set someone alight but it is however possible to set their clothes on fire. Damage: the fire has a VIR of 5 (a hat, a shoe) to 15 (a robe, a cape).

♣ Fall

WITHERING

Season: Fall
 Threshold: 10
 Range: contact
 Duration: permanent
 Sketch: 1 round for a flower, 10 for an old tree

This opus causes the death of a plant by accelerating its aging. The Painter chooses a plant and casts the Pigment of Fall on its roots or in its sap. At the end of the Sketch, the targeted plant will shrink and die until there is nothing left of it but humus.

TOXIN

Season: Fall
 Range: contact
 Duration: permanent
 Sketch: 1 round

By throwing Fall Pigment on food or drink, the Painter alters its components in order to insert a VIR 20 ingestive poison in it. If the target succeeds his resistance roll, he will feel nauseous and experience internal bleeding: all of his actions will be modified by -5 for the next week. If the victim fails his roll, he will die from severe multiple internal hemorrhages in only a couple of minutes.

DECAY

Season: Fall
 Threshold: 15
 Range/Area of effect: contact/3 cubic ft.
 Duration: permanent
 Sketch: 3 rounds

The Painter applies Pigment of Fall onto inert matter. The target then has its natural decomposition highly accelerated. At the end of the opus, the targeted matter crumbles to pieces, leading to any possible consequences for the rest of the structure (the main-beam of a tavern cracks, or the central pillar of a temple shatters, and the buildings fall apart).

VEIL OF AUTUMN

Season: Fall
 Threshold: 20
 Area of effect: individual



Duration: 1 hour
 Sketch: 2 rounds

This powerful opus enables the Painter to conceal his presence from Fallen. It has the same effects as "Invisibility" on those creatures, but has absolutely no effects on non-Fallen creatures.

♣ Winter

PLANT DEATH

Season: Winter
 Threshold: 10
 Range: contact
 Duration: permanent
 Sketch: 1 round

By targeting a plant, the Painter is able to freeze its metabolism and stop its growth. The plant will not actually be dead but will be frozen in that state forever. If one tries to break the plant, it will shatter in thousands of fragments. This opus also affects semi-conscious plants, such as carnivorous plants.

BITTER COLD

Season: Winter
 Threshold: 15
 Area of effect: 90 y. radius around the Painter
 Duration: 1 hour
 Sketch: 1 round

This opus enables the Painter to generate a sensation of cold. He is then able to lower the temperature of a location by 70°F.

ICE MISSILE

Season: Winter
 Threshold: 15
 Range: sight
 Duration: instantaneous
 Sketch: 1 round

The Painter focuses the powers of Winter and transforms the Pigment of Winter he has thrown into a projectile of ice shaped like a stalagmite. The ice missile inflicts 5 damage points to the target, who can try to dodge it.

WINTER ARMOR

Season: Winter
 Threshold: 20
 Area of effect: individual
 Duration: 10 minutes
 Sketch: 2 rounds

This opus covers the Painter with a thick shell of ice that impedes his movement, but protects him as a protection 6 armor. The Quality Margin does not affect the amount of protection: if thicker, the Winter armor would totally hamper his movements and he would suffocate. The shell is eliminated in less than a round by fire damage.

SCANSION

EROSION

Threshold: 10
 Range/Area of effect: sight/one medium-size object
 Duration: instantaneous
 Word: 1 minute

This opus allows the Scander to considerably accelerate the decomposition of an object. He can hew a stone by crumbling it or even quickly disintegrate a wooden table. Erosion has an influence on any material naturally affected by erosion and cannot generate an effect that would not have occurred with natural erosion. The targeted material's solidity is lowered by one rank.

STEP AHEAD

Threshold: 15
 Area of effect: individual
 Duration: 5 minutes
 Word: 1 round

The Scander declaims a series of brief and senseless words. Once that is done, he is able to perceive events one step ahead. Used before combat, this opus bestows a +4 initiative bonus on the Scander. It is also used in other situations that require fast reactions. Alas, his increased perception does not enable the Scander to predict the outcome of an event.

FAST HEALING

Threshold: 15
 Range/Area of effect: contact/one target
 Duration: instantaneous
 Word: 2 rounds

The Scander is able to accelerate the normal healing time of a person. The injured target restores his Hit Points two times faster than normal. However, the Hit Points are not immediately restored.

SCANSION OPUS DESCRIPTION FORMAT

Opus name

Threshold: Opus difficulty.

Range/Area of effect: Distance at which the opus can be executed/area in which the opus takes effect.

Duration: Maximum duration of the magical affect. If not specified, the Painter can interrupt the opus at any moment.

Word: Necessary recitation time to execute the opus.

PSYCHOMETRICS

Threshold: 15

Range/Area of effect: contact/one medium-size object

Duration: N/A

Word: 3 rounds

When declaiming this opus upon contact with an object, the Scander is able to make out the emotions that it radiates and its close past. Through a series of short flashes, he can reconstitute the last 24 hours of an object: the people that touched it, events that it went through, etc. The quality of the visions depend on the Quality Margin.

PROPHECY

Threshold: 10

Range/Area of effect: N/A

Duration: N/A

Word: 1 hour

This opus enables the Scander to make a prediction concerning a specific future event. The character has however no control on his prophecy; it is the EG who details the nature of the prophecy depending on the needs of his scenario.

PREMONITION

Threshold: 15

Range/Area of effect: N/A

Duration: N/A

Word: 20 minutes

The Scander can sense the threads of fate. The player questions the EG about a precise event in the near future (not over 24 hours from the moment of the omen). The EG must answer him more or less vaguely, depending on the Quality Margin.

AGING

Threshold: 20

Range/Area of effect: contact/one target

Duration: instantaneous

Word: 5 minutes

The Scander alters the cycle of time by focusing his effect on his target. At the end of the opus, the target will be permanently aged by 10 years (or the equivalent for a seasonling), causing all the consequences of aging. The target's appearance will only change slightly. This opus

cannot be lethal. If it is, the victim must re-roll his aging until he obtains a different result.

PERCEIVE THE PAST

Threshold: 20

Area of effect: 90 sq. y.

Duration: N/A

Word: 1 hour

As opposed to Psychometrics, this opus allows the Scander to become imbued with the energy of a site and perceive the last ten years of its history. The Scander specifies a precise date to the EG who must then describe the chief events at that time in that location. The quality of the visions depends on the Quality Margin and the importance of the site.

TIME SLIP

Threshold: 25

Area of effect: individual

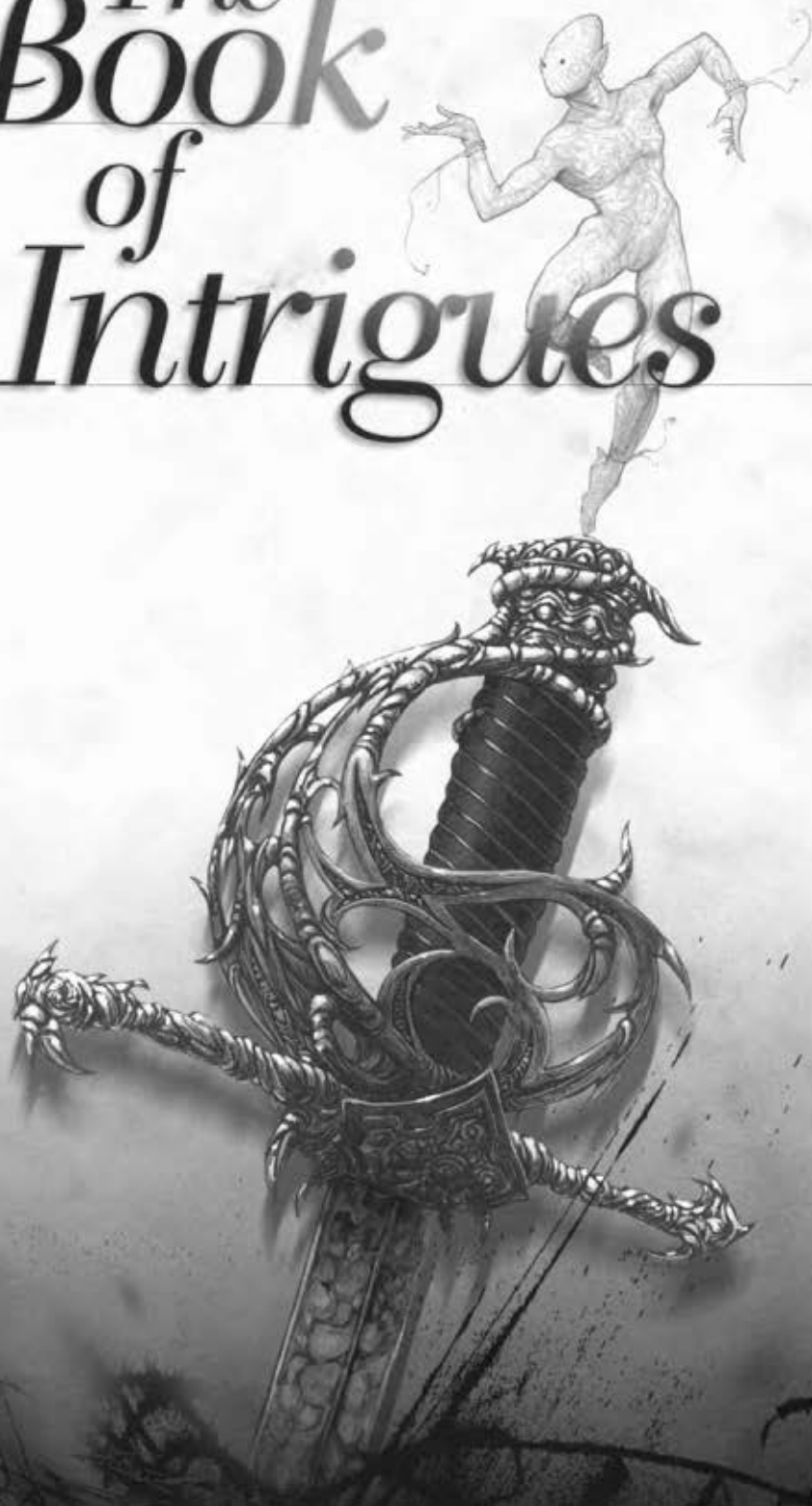
Duration: 1 hour

Word: 5 rounds

The Scander creates a refuge in the flow of time and can hide there until he is no longer in danger. Those who witness the Time slip will see him suddenly disappear, and reappear not long after. In his shelter, the Scander cannot be affected by either magical or non-magical attacks.



The Book of Intrigues



BOOK FOUR



G. PICHAC W.



This is the last step. I have hesitated a long time before mentioning it. The Muses know it is a painful one for me to take. Harmundia is, and always has been, a world of schemes, plots, epic battles and secret conflicts. But there comes an Enemy more powerful, more dangerous than any other. You, Eminence, and a handful of Inspired, will be the only ones able to rise up against him.

Fortunately, our adversaries do not have a monopoly on intrigues. We ourselves are masters of this art. We keep watch for the gaze of the Eternals, the deeds of the Cipher-sorcerer, and other forces that give life to the secret side of the Twilight Realms.

And, above all, we carry a great hope: somewhere there are Sanctuaries, where Luminaries sleep, waiting for heroes to come and revive the memory of the Muses. And then there is Agone...

Anyway, I cannot back down now.

The sun is setting over our meeting.

Let the Darken overcome my soul and drag me down into the Abyss! Let the Masque seize me to use as he pleases! My duty is done. I taught you things few mortals have glimpsed. You are in charge now.

You are now the Eminence Grise and your troupe of Inspired is ready.

As for me, I am going to walk this path, you see, the one that meanders between the edge of the woods and the shore where the ocean rumbles.

I am sure Agone walked it too.

We will meet again, Eminence.



evious enemy or unconscious ally? That is the question all the Inspired face vis-à-vis the Darken. Are the creatures of the Abyss to be trusted? Who actually rules this underground world? Who are the fools who explore the Darkness to master the invocation of High Devils? There is no shadow without light. Even flames cast shadows. So what to do? Should one try to understand the Darken?

1 ~ The Darken

The Darken wants to create an eternal Night, which would enable its legions to rise out of the Abyss. It agreed to take sides with the Masque because it could not bear that the Glimmers, children of Diurn, should spread through Harmundia while its own children, the demons, wander the tunnels of the Abyss. The Masque is the brother the Darken should have had. Not Diurn the Vain, Diurn the Jealous, Diurn the Unfair. The Masque understands the Darken or, at least, the Masque has convinced it that he does. But the Darken does not know where it comes from or what it was before meeting the Masque. Nonetheless, it knows that before it was... different.

Today, the Darken has forgotten that it was once Nyx, the Night. The Masque erased that memory to ensure its collaboration. A very long time ago, the Master of Sham duped the Night, making him believe that serving him would enable his legions of demons to rise above ground. Nyx believed him. He also neglected the warning of the other Eternals: beware of he who has not one face, but several, for he is perfidious. That was his mistake, but Nyx was not totally naive. He suspected that the Master of Sham was brewing some vicious trick behind his enticing offers. He shared his misgivings with a few inhabitants of the Abyss, his closest advisers, and asked them to find a weapon which could be used against the Masque, should he break their agreement. Then he left to meet the Great Corrupter, and never came back.

The Darken is all that is left of Nyx, his shadow, surviving spiritless in the Abyss. There is also the Darkness, a disease or infection that some mortals catch and develop. The demons are made from it, as are their weapons and treasures. The Darkness also enables the Darken to recruit its champions, the Invokers, those able to bring demons out of their prison for various amounts of time. But the Masque has won; the Darken has become his ally and its children his army. Together, they are the Enemy.

The Darkness

The Dullen are of course completely unaware of Nyx's fate, its alliance with the Masque or even the ambi-

guous relationship these enemies of the Inspired have with the Flame. Mortals fear the night and what it might hide, worrying about the presence of demons in their towns and countrysides. This natural fear is transmitted from one generation to another through dozens of terrifying legends. Thus, people's minds are prepared for darkening and for receiving this essence, the Darkness, which makes up the Abyss and its inhabitants.

Indeed, when they mix with beings from the Abyss (chiefly demons and High Devils), mortals, whether Dullen or Inspired, can increase their dark side. They then become Darkened. They accumulate Darkening points and develop an empathy with the Darken, which expresses itself as a secondary attribute: Blackness. Little by little, the Abyss leaves its mark not only on the Flame of the Inspired but also on the flesh of any mortal.

Every appearance of the Darken carries a disquieting and unhealthy aura. With the passage of years, this sinister radiation can alter an Inspired by affecting the light and warmth of his Flame (the Spirit and the Body). Unlike the Masque, the Darken will not try to take control of the Inspired. It will try to attract them, to convince them to help the demons, especially in their attempt to reach the surface of Harmundia. The Darken also tries to make the Inspired create or transform architecture whose forms are sensitive and receptive to the influence of the underworld, and facilitate the invocation of demons. But even though it has agreed to serve the Masque, the Darken seldom makes one of the Inspired do something contrary to his deepest beliefs.

In AGONE, the Darkness plays a much more ambiguous part than Perfidy. It is the hallmark of Nyx's stand against the domination of Daylight imposed by the Muses long ago, a spark of rebellion which survives in the heart of the Inspired. It does not oppose the Muses' wishes, although in its fight for supremacy it did have to side with the Masque.

SYSTEM

☞ An Overview

The Darkness is a joint creation of Nyx and the Masque, as if the Great Corrupter had extracted and expressed the essence of the Night. It is a magical matter, which can change its state and appearance, make up solid beings such as demons, or just as well float through space and contaminate objects. It also shows itself as a feeling, an impression that worms its way into the minds of those who get close to it, in the recurring guise of Terror.

Darkening points are recorded on the Inspired's Scroll, and may very well build up during their adventures. The Darkness scale is from 0 to 100, and further divided in stages. The accumulation of these points brings two kinds of consequences to the Darkened: Sorrows and Gifts. Every time the Inspired (or Dullen) reaches one of these stages, he gets a Sorrow. Some of these Sorrows bring positive effects by permitting access to Gifts.

Gifts should be kept secret as long as the Inspired has not reached a stage of Darkness high enough to develop them. Only once the stage is reached will he learn the secrets of the Darkness, so as to explore the mysteries of this new potential. The Invokers, and more generally those who serve the Darkness, are self-serving and distrustful individuals, hardly liable to share their experiences.

Darkness brings on a new secondary attribute to the Inspired, Blackness, the level of which equals the number of Darkening points divided by ten (rounding down to the nearest 10). The Blackness is a secondary attribute of the soul, and therefore uses the Aspect bonus of either Soul or Dark Soul for all rolls.

Blackness = Number of tens of the Darkening points.

Example: Fulige is an Inspired who has been contaminated by the Darkness following an encounter with demons inside a ring of black stones in the Roundrock swamps. He acquired 27 Darkening points during an epic fight with his monstrous attackers. Therefore, his Blackness rating is now 2 (27 divided by 10), rounded down. He is consequently afflicted with the two following Sorrows: Trickster (stage 10) and Nightmares (stage 20). In return, he can now invoke demons of the First Circle (Gift First Circle Invoking, stage 10), and teach new powers to his Imp (Gift Experienced Imp, stage 20).

☞ How does the Darkness progress?

There are several ways to get Darkening points, depending on the situations, places and events mortals have to face. Some are obtained from faults chosen when creating the character.

Darkness is not directly obtained from the Darken itself. It expands naturally under the influence of those who are made up of it — demons and High Devils — and through anyone touched by it. Most of the latter are Darkened, but some animals, plants, objects and places can become infected and radiate it as well.

Sorrows and Gifts are granted progressively according to a set scale, which reflects the slow mutation of a Darkened into a creature of the Abyss. Nevertheless, you are completely free to choose which Sorrow you intend to give to an Inspired (or any other mortal). As you now understand, your choices must always be guided by the enjoyment of the game and the needs of the scenario. When handing out Darkening points and Sorrows, try not to overburden the Inspired, and try to assess the consequences on their behavior accurately.

Once the Darkness has set on someone's destiny, it lures him or her. Any contamination by the Darkness is permanent and indelible. It is impossible to escape it. There is no known method to get rid of Darkening points...

On the other hand, there is definitely some habituation to these occurrences. The Darkened who are already far down this somber road are no longer very sensitive to elementary manifestations of Darkness. In terms of

INFESTATION BY THE DARKNESS

| Situation | Darkness gain (subtract the Blackness rating) |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| Invoking an Azuren or Saphiren | +2 |
| Invoking an Amber or Saffron | +6 |
| Invoking a Crimson or Scarlet | +10 |
| Invoking an Obsidian | +15 |
| Mixing one's blood with the ink | from +2 to +5 |
| Asking advice from an Imp | +4 |
| Terror | variable |
| Fumble in the presence of a Darkened* | Darkened's Blackness +5 |
| Fumble in the presence of a demon* | Circle x 2 |

* When a Darkened fumbles an action in front of a demon or other Darkness-infested beings, he attracts their Darkness, which insinuates itself in him, amplifying his infection.

TERROR

The Darkness also governs the effects of fear: this is called Terror. Some situations linked to the Darkness, or endangering the psyche of an individual (witnessing or being subjected to torture, watching a loved one die, etc.), throw mortals into fits of uncontrollable anguish. Such situations with their effects are listed below. When they arise, mortals present must make a WIL roll against the difficulty listed in this chart. The consequences of the roll are as follows...

♣ **Success:** The blow struck home but without any disastrous consequences for the mortal's psyche. In doubt (SM = 0), all the mortal's actions during the next three rounds undergo a negative modifier of $-(10 - \text{Blackness})$. Mortals greatly infected by the Darkness are so used to it that Terror does not affect them any more.

♣ **Failure:** The mortal is frightened. He gets Darkening points as indicated in the column "Terror" of the following table. All the mortal's actions during the next five rounds undergo a negative modifier of $-(10 - \text{Blackness})$.

♣ **Fumble:** Terror takes hold of the mortal's mind. Racked by petrifying fear, he is unable to do anything for $(10 - \text{Blackness})$ minutes. Moreover, he gets Darkening points as indicated in the column "Terror" of the table below. (The duration of the paralysis should be determined before calculating the number of Darkening points obtained).

The Difficulty of the WIL roll and the terror gain from the situations described in the table can be raised by 2 to 5 points. This depends on the circumstances: seeing your wife tortured, your lord come back from the dead or rea-

lizing that your best friend is a demon, are much more trying experiences than similar situations involving total strangers.

Example: Lidunya pays a visit to the Restless Inn. This place has a Terror rating of 10 with 2 potential Darkening points to be gained. If she fails her WIL roll against 10 (DIF), she will gain 2 Darkening points. If her Blackness rating were 1, she would only gain 1 (2 Restless Inn rating - 1 Blackness rating). If her rating were 2 or more, such a sight would not affect her at all.

♣ Terror situations

| Situation | DIF | Terror (subtract Blackness from it) |
|--|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Being faced with a horrifying gruesome sight (a body horribly mutilated) | 10 | 2 |
| Facing an undead creature | 15 | 5 |
| Witnessing torture | 15 | 3 |
| Being tortured | 20 | 5 |
| Seeing mutilations | 15 | 3 |
| Being mutilated | 25 | 6 |
| Frightening creature | Creature's Blackness x 3 | Creature's Blackness + 5 |

game mechanics, the Blackness rating is subtracted from the number of Darkening points that are gained.

The chart "Infestation by the Darkness" provides guidelines for managing your Inspired's Darkness contamination.

Moreover, any infected place, plant or creature can give Darkening points to any Darkened who are just starting out on the path of Blackness. Any fool coming near gets a number of Darkening points equal to the Darkness

rating of whatever is trying to infect him, minus, as usual, his Blackness rating.

Example: Lidunya pays a visit to the Restless Inn. This place has a Darkness rating of 7. Lidunya's Blackness rating being 0, she gets 7 Darkening points. If she had had a Blackness rating of 1, she would have got only 6 points (7 Restless Inn rating, minus 1 Blackness rating). Had her Blackness rating been 7 or more, such a common sight (at

least for such a Darkened Inspired) would have left her unperturbed.

♣ Sorrows

The Sorrows pertaining to the Darkness are obtained each time a stage of Darkening points is reached (see the Summary chart for stages). Thus, when one gets 10 Darkening points, an Imp appears and starts pestering the Darkened.

Each time a stage is reached, a step is taken towards the final metamorphosis into a creature of the Abyss. First, mental problems arise, followed by physical changes. Finally, the people around the Darkened begin to change too.

This list is not comprehensive, of course, and you are free to add Sorrows of your own, bearing in mind the logic behind their progression. You can also use some Faults (see the Assets and Faults chapter in Book Two) as Sorrows.

As the Darkened progressively loses himself in the oh-so-welcoming mist of the Darkness, he becomes familiar with the modus operandi of its servants. He becomes able to master supernatural abilities which are direct consequences of his gradual metamorphosis into a demonic creature. These are Gifts.

These abilities go hand in hand with the acquisition of particular Sorrows. Once the Darkened has been afflicted with a Sorrow, he can instantly use the corresponding Gift. Thus, when he passes the mark of 75 Darkening points, he becomes extremely sensitive to light, but in return is able to see in the dark.

If no Gift accompanies a given Sorrow, as, for example, in the case of Sleepwalking, the Sorrow simply lacks any compensation.

• TRICKSTER (10)

The first sorrow every novice Darkened is afflicted with is the appearance of a creature of Darkness called a Minor Devil or Imp (see below), responsible for keeping an eye on this potential recruit's progress.

The Trickster has 10 experience points secretly given by the EG. The Imp can only manifest from shadows, is very easy to "kill" (he will always come back), and is not present all the time. He appears in tricky situation such as combat to give good - or not so good - advice. His presence will certainly give rise to more-or-less welcome entertainment during the game. You are free to stage this Imp any way you want.

Nonetheless, keep in mind that even though this creature is in essence unpleasant and perverse, its main purpose is to seduce, help and watch over the Darkened. The Imp, unless its own life is in the balance, should never openly try to put its master at risk.

The creature's unbearable comments and disagreeable tricks bring the Darkened a bonus of 1 to Dark Spirit.

• NIGHTMARES (20)

The Darkened's dreams are veiled with a somber cloud. The pleasant dreams of the past revisit him, this time

SUMMARY CHART OF STAGES, SORROWS AND CORRESPONDING GIFTS

| Stages | Sorrows | Gifts |
|--------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 10 | Trickster | Invoking Circle I |
| 20 | Nightmares | Experienced Imp |
| 30 | Mischievous demon | Invoking Circle II |
| 40 | Sleepwalking | |
| 50 | Insomnia | |
| 55 | Contempt | |
| 60 | Sexual perversion | |
| 65 | Lunar scarifications | |
| 70 | Demon Twin | Invoking Circle III |
| 75 | Obsessed by shadow | Night vision |
| 78 | Oppressive presence | Hearing and talking with the dead |
| 81 | Alteration of the senses | Detect demons |
| 84 | Black blood | |
| 87 | Demonic appearance | |
| 90 | Shadow of Perfidy | Invoking Circle IV |
| 92 | Siamese of Darkness | |
| 94 | Curse | |
| 96 | Living shadow | Detect the Darkness |
| 98 | Inner Portal | Invoking Circle V |
| 99 | Touch of the High Devils | |
| 100 | Final metamorphosis | |

with monsters and demons as lead characters. These dreams come to ill-fated conclusions for the Darkened and his Troupe. The Darkened wakes up screaming each night, and becomes irritable and pessimistic.

Furthermore, the EG can decide that some particularly trying nights inflict a penalty of -2 on all the next day's physical actions.

Lastly, the Darkened gets a bonus of 1 to Dark Spirit.

• MISCHIEVOUS DEMON (30)

The Darkened has gone far enough into the Darkness to have attracted the attention of a mischievous demon. It might have noticed him during one of its stays above ground in the service of an Invoker, or might have felt his presence in the fluctuations of the Darkness. This child of the Abyss has a devious mind and enjoys manipulating people like the Darkened. It is up to you to determine what caught the attention of this First or Second Circle demon. It can, for example, meet the Darkened to explain a few fundamental truths to him before pretending to go on its way... while in fact, sticking around, never far from its new master, whom it will help or pester with rotten tricks, depending on its mood.

This demon bursts out of all the Darkened's orifices as a blackish muck. The first time this happens, this gives a bonus of 1 to Dark Body to the character by wreaking havoc upon the organism it extricates itself from.

- **SLEEPWALKING (40)**

At night, the body of the Darkened responds to fluctuations in the Darkness. He gets up and walks. His steps trace the contours of the shadows around him. In this state, no Athletics roll is required. His balance is perfectly stable unless woken. Should this happen, a WIL roll against DIF 20 is needed so as not to fall. In the morning, the fact that one is never sure to wake up where one has fallen asleep is a source of constant worries. The Darkened gets a bonus of 1 to Dark Body.

- **INSOMNIA (50)**

Nights are long for the Darkened who is burdened with this Sorrow. Sleep evades him and its few precious moments, crowded with nightmares and disturbed by unremitting fits of sleepwalking, are hardly refreshing. The lack of sleep gives a bonus of 1 to Dark Spirit.

- **CONTEMPT (55)**

The Darkened nurtures an animosity that often manifests itself in acts of violence against certain persons: the opposite sex, a particular Season, Decan or trade, etc. The Darkened gets a bonus of 1 to Dark Spirit.

- **SEXUAL PERVERSION (60)**

The Darkened's libido takes an utterly perverse turn. He might be unable to take pleasure except through rape or the bloodiest sadistic practices, or simply be attracted by utterly absurd forms of sexual intercourse (a sprite might be tempted to breed only with female giants. Or male, why not?) You are free to choose the theme of this deviance but we strongly advise that you discuss this Sorrow with the player. Such a Sorrow can be particularly difficult to take on and moreover to role-play. Be careful.

This gives the Darkened a bonus of 1 to Dark Spirit.

- **LUNAR SCARIFICATIONS (65)**

At full moon, the Darkened is driven to carve his flesh, tracing the outline of the shadows cast on his naked body with a sharp blade. These marks have no major physical consequences, and the pain is usually sufficient to "cut short" the scarification session.

This gives the Darkened a bonus of 1 to Dark Spirit.

- **DEMONIC TWIN (70)**

The Darkness knows the Darkened so intimately that it has automatically belched forth a demonic doppelgänger of its protégé. This demon twin appears as a hideous, misshapen copy of the Darkened. The demon is "normal" but very strongly linked to the original. It can be invoked more easily by the Darkened (The DIF of the invoking is reduced by -5) and each of the twins can see through the other's eyes. They can transfer emotions and sensations from one body to the other and thus relieve themselves of pain from combat wounds (in game terms, transfer the penalties caused by Serious wounds). This can of course kill them, especially if they

are both fighting. You must be particularly careful with this Sorrow.

In return, the Darkened begins to look like his misshapen twin, gaining a bonus of 1 to Dark Body.

- **OBSSESSED BY SHADOW (75)**

The Darkened is obsessed by obscurity and shadow, particularly his own. During the day, he keeps glancing around to make sure it is still there. He avoids areas flooded with zenithal sunlight, favoring the peaceful shade of sunrise and sunset, always seeking to cast a long shadow. Full light impairs the sight of the Darkened who is frequently dazzled (though the effect is not serious enough to give penalties to the character).

The Darkened gets a bonus of 1 to Dark Spirit.

- **OPPRESSIVE PRESENCE (78)**

The Darkened feels permanently watched. Something lurks in the shadows, on the edge of his vision. Ghost, specter, phantom, beast, he knows not what it is. He must get used to this shifty presence, which, of course, gives rise to a whole batch of paranoid hallucinations. He is constantly on the lookout. The absent-mindedness brought on by this permanent distraction brings a bonus of + 1 to Dark Body.

- **ALTERATION OF THE SENSES (81)**

The Darkened's senses are altered as follow:

♣ **Sight:** All colors seem darker than they really are.

♣ **Hearing:** The Darkened hears cries and screams in the background. He either believes himself to be the victim of a practical joke, or that people are actually being brutalized somewhere. In fact, the noises rise from the Abyss.

♣ **Smell:** Smells perceived by the Darkened are atrocious. The air reeks of rotting flesh and he always has the impression of proximity to an open grave.

♣ **Taste:** Every swallow, every sip, tastes rotten. The Darkened has trouble identifying what he eats. There is even a risk of accidental poisoning, since he might not be able to tell the difference between what is edible and what is not.

♣ **Touch:** Every thing the Darkened touches feels cold and smooth as a marble tombstone.

This Sorrow brings a bonus of 1 to Dark Body.

- **BLACK BLOOD (84)**

The Darkened's blood turns into a black muck. It has the same characteristics as blood, so it is not physically inconvenient, but when his flesh is cut, the sight of this oozing muck could shock others. The real problem comes with the signature of Connivances. Demons will not hesitate entering into a pact with the Invoker, but an Advocatus Diaboli will be rather distrustful, fearing that the Invoker might be powerful enough to evade the Connivance and/or that he might be under the protection of a High Devil controlled by the Masque.

This Sorrow brings a bonus of 1 to Dark Body.

• **DEMONIC APPEARANCE (87)**

The Darkened's body becomes monstrous, demon-like. Although still mortal, the Darkened can be mistaken for a runaway demon from the Abyss. You must make life difficult for him. Indeed there are few towns in the Twilight Realms where demons are tolerated. Even in Abysm, everyday life will be tricky.

This earns the Darkened a bonus of 1 to Dark Body.

• **SHADOW OF PERFIDY (90)**

The Masque, always on the lookout for new allies, has taken notice of the Darkened. The latter is contacted by one of the Master of Sham's henchmen, who makes him understand that services are required from him. The Darkened earns 10 Perfidy points, which might come with Sorrows and corresponding Gifts.

• **SIAMESE OF DARKNESS (92)**

A blackish and disquieting lump of oozing flesh grows on the Darkened's body. As time goes by, it will grow into a face, black as obsidian, bursting out of the poor wretch. When the Darkened earns a new Darkening point, the face will be completed and able to speak... and to bite. The face is given life by the spirit of an inhabitant of the Abyss, who talks through its mouth. This demon might be a loyal confidant or an irritating passenger. The location of the face, as well as its personality, are up to you. Nevertheless, we advise you to make it rich and coherent as you would if you were creating a non-player character.

This Sorrow gives a bonus of 1 to Dark Body.

• **CURSE (94)**

Animals react badly to the presence of the Darkened. Alone, an animal will be on its guard. In a pack or other group situation, they will attack him.

This earns the Darkened a bonus of 1 to Dark Spirit.

• **LIVING SHADOW (96)**

The Darkened's shadow ceases to obey his body, nor any light sources. It follows his spirit, the Darkness, and the emotions that trouble him. In the grip of anger or desire, the shadow can grow to become huge and menacing. It can simulate shadows of objects the Darkened possesses, like his or her weapons, and attack any other shadow. Of course, no physical damage is inflicted.

This Sorrow increases the Darkened's Dark Spirit by 1 point.

• **INNER PORTAL (98)**

The Darkened is now so intimately linked to the Darkness that, when he faces a dangerous situation, a portal to the Abyss opens in front of him, allowing escape. Taking it or not is up to the Darkened, but taking it means he is left to his own devices to come back to the surface. The EG is also free to let a demon use the portal. Others who witness the portal's appearance may also take it, at their own risk.

The wrenching of the portal out of the Darkened's belly permanently deforms his body, which increases his Dark Body by 1 point.

• **TOUCH OF HIGH DEVILS (99)**

The Darkened's nightmares have materialized in the Abyss, in the demonic court of a High Devil. The latter, intrigued by these harrowing visions, has used his sinister powers to find out who they belonged to. Ever since identifying the Darkened, it has kept a very close eye on him. It has put a physical mark on his back, which has brought strange deformations to its victim's figure.

This Sorrow increases the Darkened's Dark Body by 1 point.

• **FINAL METAMORPHOSIS (100)**

A Darkened that has reached a Darkness potential of 100 ceases to be human (or seasonling). The High Devil that put its mark on him now has an empathic link with him. Thanks to this unnatural kinship, it can observe Harmondia through his eyes. If the link is strong enough, they can even have telepathic conversations. The Darkened will, most of the time, sink into madness (which does

HOW TO PLAY AN IMP?

The Imps, or Minor Devils, see themselves as the Darkened's slaves and faithful servants. Unfortunately, this does not mean they are docile beings. Although the Imp obeys, it will always make its master feel how fed up it is with serving him and that it is only waiting for an opportunity to take off. Of course, this is not true, but it usually gets on the Darkened's nerves.

In AGONE, the Imp is a non-player character (NPC) that you can use to pester the Inspired when the action slows down or, on the contrary, when he progresses too quickly in a story. It is up to you to mimic the tired and fuming attitudes of the Imp: tease the players with this character, make them laugh and, when they feel confident, let this servant of the Darken become capricious. In one word, be unbearable. When the Imp arrives, it has the following characteristics:

| | | |
|-------|-------|--------|
| STR 0 | WIL 1 | RES 1 |
| INT 1 | AGI 0 | CRE 1 |
| PER 1 | CHA 0 | SIZ -2 |

THE DARK ART

"These stupid Eclipsists from the Cipher-sorcerer say that I, one of them, a follower of the Torture, am cursed.

The truth is, they are afraid. Yes, afraid! Afraid of what they do not know. Afraid of my sorcery. They fear us because we represent a dangerous alliance, that of the Darken and the Dancers.

I see fear in your eyes. Be without fear. Do not let Terror overcome you, not if you wish to join our ranks. If you join us, the word "sorcerer" will be whispered next to your name by horror-stricken mortals. Rather look at my Dancer, focus on the shadows cast by the sparks of its magic and follow their outline with your pencil. Do you see the tortured figures that you just inked on the floor? This is the true Dark Art."

not make them any less dangerous) unless he becomes *Advocatus Diaboli* (see below).

Unfortunately for him, the Darkened is now close enough to a true demon to be invoked (by mistake most of the time). Although this is quite rare, a good few Darkened do get dragged into foul intrigues this way. This invoking does not bind the Darkened in any way. He is not under the control of his Invoker, and does not have to do him any favors. Connivances are out of question and worthless anyway. In fact, these particular situations often end in combat.

This Sorrow increases the Darkened's Dark spirit by 1 point.

Gifts

Dark Sorrows are not really disadvantages, but steps in the slow mutation into a creature of the Darken. They are an opportunity to gain, through the Sorrows themselves, new abilities. They imply that the Darkened is able to overcome his Sorrows to gain new powers liable to help him fathom the mysteries of the Darken.

The name of each Gift is followed by the corresponding Sorrow in brackets.

• CIRCLE I INVOKING (TRICKSTER)

When a Darkened gets his 10th Darkness point, he hears a voice that seems to belong to his shadow. It's true, the Darkened's shadow has just given birth to a form of consciousness which immediately jumps out of it, an Imp. This creature uses the shadow as a portal to come out of the Abyss. It is a fellow traveler that the invoker will have to put up with. The Imp can advise him during involkings he undertakes, although this can be dangerous (see below).

Through this first unwitting invoking, the Darkened is introduced to the art of invoking demons. He is now able to invoke minor demons, the Opalins. His Demonology skill has turned into an effective power that can be used to bring before him the less-powerful creatures of the Abyss. (In game terms, before this day, his Demonology skill was only the sum of what he knew about the demon. Now, he can use it to Invoke demons.)

• EXPERIENCED IMP (NIGHTMARES)

The nightmares he experiences are opportunities to witness the tremendous powers of the demons. The Darkened needs to understand this in order to acquire the necessary knowledge to develop his creature. All Imps are not alike. It is up to the Darkened to develop his Imp by giving it all or some of his Inspiration points. It can acquire skills, but their number cannot be superior to its INT, nor higher than 5.

| Imp Improvement | Cost |
|--------------------|---------------------------|
| +1 to an attribute | 2 |
| Skill +1 | 1 (including from 0 to 1) |

Do not forget to determine the secondary skills after each change.

The following advantages will enable you to make it easier for your Inspired to develop their Imps. Each advantage's name is followed by a number in brackets indicating the Inspiration point cost for the Inspired. These costs must be paid in full when the advantage is acquired.

♣ **Demonic friendship (1):** The Imp knows the demons and the Abyss well. It has many friends there, who are "quite ready to help their old buddy". It provides its master a bonus of 1 for all rolls involving Demonology. This can be added to any corresponding bonuses for advice given by the Imp, or Demons' language (see below).

♣ **Empathic link (1):** The Darkened can use the Imp's senses and knows instinctively where it is.

♣ **Demons' language (1):** The Imp can lend its linguistic skills to its master. The Darkened earns a bonus of +1 every time he tries invoking. This can be added to any corresponding bonuses for advice given by the Imp, or Demonic friendship.

♣ **Telepathic link (2):** The Darkened and the Imp can communicate telepathically. Although the Darkened does not know it, the Imp can read his thoughts and memories. This can create comical or even embarrassing situations.

♣ **Physical link (2):** The Imp can take on the physical pain and tiredness that the Darkened feels. Penalties due to wounds or exhaustion then fall on the Imp.

♣ **Superior physical link (3):** Not only can the Imp take on part of the physical pain its master feels (see Physical link, above), but also it sustains half of the damages done to the Darkened until it dies. At this point, all wounds taken on by the Imp are instantly inflicted on the Darkened.

• CIRCLE II INVOKING (MISCHIEVOUS DEMON)

The demon that bursts out of the Darkened's body gives him another secret, the Invoking of Second Circle creatures. This is all the Invoker needs to penetrate the mysteries of this new breed of creature and invoke them.

• CIRCLE III INVOKING (DEMONIC TWIN)

The few images that the Darkened has been able to catch through the eyes of his hideous demonic counterpart have enabled him to perceive one more piece of the reality and structure of the Darkness. He now can invoke the things that haunt the deepest levels of the Abyss, creatures in the image of his pseudo-sibling, demons from the Third Circle.

• NIGHT VISION (OBSESSED BY SHADOW)

The Darkened has come to loathe light so strongly that he has developed the ability to see even in complete obscurity. Or could it be a power granted to him by the Darkness? In any case, the Darkened can now cultivate a skill called Dark sight, which will be used as a restrictive for every action taken in the dark. When this skill is used, penalties brought on by partial or complete lack of light are ignored.

• **SPEAKING WITH THE DEAD (OPPRESSIVE PRESENCE)**

The unbearable and elusive presence that the Darkened keeps glimpsing is legion. He sees the souls of the dead who wander around him, gone but still present. He can even talk to them. To do this, he must concentrate intensely and make a Blackness roll + 1d10 against a DIF that depends on whether the deceased is ready to talk or not. Success means a dialogue can be established. The Darkened speaks aloud and may seem quite strange to any witnesses of his trance. If the deceased is very old or comes from far away, the Darkened, despite this ability, has to know the dead person's language.

• **DETECT DEMONS (ALTERATION OF THE SENSE)**

The Darkened's senses start resonating with the Abyss, which begins to cause interference in his perceptions. The Darkened can now clearly detect all creatures born from it, especially demons. He can make a Blackness roll + Demonology + 1d10 against DIF 15 and automatically detect any demonic creature. That does not make him immune to the illusions these creatures can generate.

• **CIRCLE IV INVOKING (SIAMESE OF DARKNESS)**

The horrible outgrowth that protrudes from the Darkened's body shelters the intelligence of a powerful demon, opening the door for the invocation of its kind. The Darkened can now invoke demons from the Fourth Circle... at his own risk.

• **CIRCLE V INVOKING (INNER PORTAL)**

The Darkened can take control of his inner portal and use it to invoke the only kind of demons that were still out of his reach: the Obsidians. Only a physical portal can bring them out. The invoking requires that the invoker outline his own shadow with black ink. Obsidians are always happy to answer the call of anyone foolhardy enough to open a passage for them.

• **DETECT DARKNESS (TOUCH OF THE HIGH DEVILS)**

The High Devil, by marking its prey, has allowed the Darkened to penetrate its field of perception. The Darkened can now perceive the Darkness in everything. He feels it instinctively and can even evaluate its degree of concentration. In terms of game mechanics, he can make a Blackness roll + Alertness + 1d10 against a DIF of 20 to feel the presence of the Darkness in an object or a being. His SM multiplied by 10 indicates the level of precision obtained: a SM of 5 will provide a precision of about 50%. A SM of 10 (100%) gives the exact concentration of the Darkness.

On the other hand, the Darkened now knows that Obsidians and High Devils are such tremendous creatures that they just cannot come out of shadows. A physical portal is necessary to invoke them.

SOME ADVICE

As you now understand, you will have to stage the development of the Darkness and the appearance of Sorrows and Gifts with great care. Here are a few pieces of advice to make the discovery of the Darkness a slow and fearful process.

- Do not give the players the impression that the stages of Sorrows and Gifts are linear and preplanned. When one or the other is obtained, keep it to yourself. Write them down and stage them progressively.

- The appearance and expansion of the Darkness is an evil process that gnaws away at the flame of the Inspired. Although it is not their real enemy, it is still the tool chosen by the Masque. Its touch is cold as ice on the skin, as hard and sharp as a dagger's blade. Therefore, you must take great care with your descriptions of the first symptoms of the Sorrows. When you stage the first Invokings your characters witness or participate in, be as evocative as you can, and don't balk from the spectacular.

- Be terrifying! The Darkness and the Darken are agonizing phenomena and the demonic legions horrible creatures. Their sight is unbearable for most mortals and terrorizes Dullen and Inspired alike.

The Invokers

Invokers are mortals who, under the hold of the Darkness, have discovered how to bring demons out of the

Abyss in order to exchange services. These deals are put in writing; they are called Connivances. Advocatus Diaboli are jurists who warrant that parties abide by the terms of the contract. Although demons and invokers are present throughout Harmundia, some areas, such as the city-state of Abysm, are more welcoming than others to the forces of the Darken.

INVOKING

The Blackness is a phenomenon that spreads through the individual affected by the Darkness. It gives the disturbing feeling of having a power buried at the bottom of one's soul, which can rise up in waves, to torment the psyche. Invoking is its main expression and brings undreamed-of possibilities. A particular sensitivity to the Abyss develops with the Darkness. The Invokers can bring the demons out of the Abyss, by following, with magical inks, the shadows cast by the sun on the urban landscape, streets and front walls.

♣ The Blackness rating

Each Invoker has a Blackness rating. It changes over the course of various scenarios because it depends directly on the Darkening. It is determined by dividing the Darkening rating by 10 (rounded down). The Blackness is added to the Demonology skill to calculate the base for the invoker's roll.

Example: A Darkened with a number of Darkening points between 80 and 89 has a Blackness rating of 8. If he has a Demonology skill of 5, he must roll $(5 + 8) = 13 + 1d10$ to invoke demons.

INVOKING MODIFIERS

In this chart, the column "Modif." shows modifiers applied to the invoking roll. Some of them have result in a gain of Darkening points. This is shown in the column "Darkening".

| Situations | Modif. | Darkening (minus Blackness) |
|---|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Very careful inking | +1/round max: 5 rounds | +0 |
| Inking too fast | -2 | +0 |
| Very deep shadows (almost no light) | +1 | +0 |
| Very bright shadows (strong light) | -1 | +0 |
| Mixing your blood with the ink | + x = 1/lost HP (max: 5 points) | +x +3 |
| Imp with: | | |
| Demonical friendship | +1 | +0 |
| Demons' language | +1 | +0 |
| Imp's advice | +2 | +5 |
| Advice of a demon from the same Circle as the one invoked | +5 | +2 x Demon's Circle |
| Presence of a Minotaur | +1 | +0 |
| Presence of another Darkened | +1 | +0 |
| Help from another Darkened | +Blackness of the helping Darkened | +Blackness of the helping Darkened |

☛ Demonology

Demonology is much more than an ordinary Occult skill. Indeed, as the Darkness penetrates a mortal, he feels that his knowledge of the demons — his or her level in demonology — is magnified by the infection. When he reaches the first stage of the infection, the Darkened can use the skill Demonology to invoke demons.

☛ Invoking

To invoke a particular demon, there are certain requirements:

- ☛ The Invoker must have at least 1 point in Demonology (no Occult skills can be used without a rating for the roll would be impossible).
- ☛ The Invoker must have a high enough level of Darkness (see below).
- ☛ He must have the proper ink to outline a shadow on a surface, which will be used as a portal for the demon. Invokers tend to work by daylight. Invoking at night, when the shadows are everywhere, is too dangerous.
- ☛ He must succeed his invoking roll: Blackness + Demonology + 1d10 (+ Aspect Bonus of Soul or Dark Soul) against a DIF linked to the circle of the invoked demon. This roll is modified according to the Invoking modifiers chart.

If, during this last stage, the roll fails, the invoking also partly or completely fails with harmful consequence: the demon does not come, runs away, misunderstands the orders, signs a phony Connivance, etc. The result depends on the demon's power: an Opalin will only play a stupid trick before going back to the Abyss, whereas an Obsidian will put the Invoker under its yoke.

If the roll is successful, the demon crawls out of the shadow obediently. The terms of the contract, the Connivance, which will bind the invoker and the Darken's creature before the High Devils and the Advocatus Diaboli, can now be discussed.

☛ Invoking disaster

When a fumble occurs during an Invoking, disastrous consequences fall upon the Invoker. They are similar to the disasters listed in the Occult disasters chart.

☛ Invoking time

Outlining the shadow with ink takes a period of time in rounds based on the Circle of the invoked demon. Then the demon takes a variable amount of time, depending on its Density (see below), to come out of the shadow.

DAMAGE TO THE INVOKER

An Invoker outlining a shadow can be interrupted or prevented from finishing the drawing. On the other hand, once the Connivance is signed, the demon is completely independent and will carry out what it has been invoked for, as far as it is able and according to its degree of perversity. The demon, should its master be unable to control it, might carry out its task in an unexpected way. Attacks on the Invoker cannot harm the demon and vice versa.

INVOKING TIME

| Circle | Materialization time |
|--------|------------------------|
| I | 1 round |
| II | (Density/10) round (s) |
| III | (Density/5) round (s) |
| IV | Density round (s) |
| V | Density minute (s) |

(The results of these operations should be rounded up to the nearest whole number.)

The Abyss

THE DEMONS

Demons are classified by demonologists and invokers in five groups (Circles) of increasing power, depending on the density of the Darkness that the demon is made of (see below). In ascending order of power, there are the Opalins, the Saphirrens and Azurens, the Ambers and Saffrons, the Crimson and Scarlets, and finally the most powerful of demons, the Obsidians. Knowing the category of a demon amounts to knowing its might. Therefore Obsidians (demons of the black inks) are much more powerful than Crimson and Scarlets (demons of the red inks), which are themselves more powerful than Ambers and Saffrons (demons of the yellow inks).

☛ Morphology

Although they are born from shadows, demons are not dark figures with blurred outlines, but actual, solid beings. Nevertheless, the similarity to any living form ends there. They have neither flesh nor blood as we define them. Everything in them is Darkness. Solid, it gives them a body; liquid, it is their vital fluid. Inhabitants of the Abyss look like mortals. When they are not human-like, they share certain morphologic aspects with seasonings (succubi, for example, look very much like medusae). But they are characterized by disturbing if not gruesome details: shapeless jaws, extra or atrophied limbs, rotting flesh, disgusting smells, dull eyes, hideously shaped ears, inverted or missing joints, acid sweat, etc.

Most demons have a pair of membranous wings that they can use to move about in the air more or less easily. All can fly, but not all of them can use this ability under difficult circumstances. Although the Abyss is the per-

fect playground for their flying games, they have difficulties performing acrobatics or even simply gliding above ground, on the surface of Harmundia (see below).

♣ Connivances

• PLEASURE

Connivances remain obscure for most Invokers. After a whole life spent in the service of the Darken, they still often find it difficult to understand what the demons want. They are sure of only one thing: demons are whimsical, fickle creatures, driven only by their pleasure. The outside world is much more interesting than the Abyss, and they desperately want to live here. Of course, this pleases the Darken, although the demons' willingness to live aboveground among the mortals is in no way prompted by a desire to take over. They want to wander the Twilight Realms, but not necessarily rule them. Of course, eternal night would be pleasant to them, but it does not represent a goal in itself. The only thing that matters to them is the exploration of the inexhaustible sensuousness of our rich world, with its infinity of nuances and colors, far away from the tyranny of High Devils – which they serve primarily out of fear – and from the weapons of the Abyss' guardians, the Minotaurs.

• PRICE

Keep in mind this obsession with pleasure when you have to choose the demands of a demon. Any service carried out by a demon implies a fair payment set by it in the Connivance. Here are some general suggestions for each circle but they are only ideas. You are quite free to adapt them.

♣ **Opalins:** They do not make difficult requests, preferring incongruous things such as a detailed account of the invoker's adventures – preferably punctuated by tricky situations – or the right to kiss a complete stranger in the street, etc. Be ruthless. Insist that the player whose Inspired is invoking an Opalin give a vivid tale and call the others to witness. If they do not react to their companion's story – laughing, nervous smiles, etc. – decree that the Opalin feels betrayed and that it demands something else. Stage the meeting of the stranger and the demon. (There is no way she is going to let herself be kissed by such a monstrous creature, and the demon finds the ridicule of the situation tremendously entertaining.)

♣ **Azurens and Saphirens:** These are keen on rare items (food, precious objects, work of art, etc.). They do not mind asking for appreciable amounts of them. This leads Invokers to take risks – financial or otherwise – to please them.

♣ **Ambers and Saffrons:** They are the most curious about Harmundia and its diversity. They often demand to follow the Invoker in his adventure for a few days or to take trips with him. Stage these situations. Going places with an Abyss' inhabitant in tow is never easy, and can bring about memorable role-playing situations.



♣ **Crimsons and Scarlets:** These demons like the mortals' everyday life. They often ask for a house on the first invoking, then for furniture, books, and knickknacks to decorate it, before demanding servants to tend to it. Some even become part of the Invoker's family, in the midst of which they behave like some distant uncle, making no bones about entertaining themselves with these mortals, often at the Invoker's expense.

♣ **Obsidians:** They are a special case. They enjoy the favor of the High Devils and therefore are content in the Abyss. Thus, despite being the most difficult to invoke and the most powerful inhabitants of the deep, they usually ask the Invoker nothing straightaway. In other words, no Connivance is signed. But there is nevertheless a price to pay: that of the Darkness. The Obsidians rule over the Imps and can, as soon as they have been invoked at least once, use the latter to make demands on the Invoker. This can drag the Inspired – and his troupe – into many adventures for the glory of the Abyss: assassination, missions on behalf of an *Advocatus Diaboli*, etc. These adventures are always dangerous and can cost the lives of many mortals. Some are even

linked to the agreements between the Masque and the Darken.

• THE BREACH

If the Invoker does not fulfill the Connivance within the time allowed, a situation of "breach" arises. The breaches have different consequences, depending of the circle of the demon. Although there is no rule, some general principles should be respected:

♣ Should demons turn up on Harmundia to take vengeance for a breach, they will use passages opened by other Invokers. So that sometimes, the price of a contract is to exact vengeance on a colleague who has brought a demon's wrath upon himself.

♣ **Opalins:** Minor consequences. The Invoker's personal Imp sulks for a few days or plays a vicious trick on its master.

♣ **Azuren and Saphirens:** These demons submit the matter to the High Devils, the real masters of the Abyss. The High Devils quickly spread the news, so that the number of candidates willing to respond to an invoking by the bad debtor is dramatically reduced. This inflicts a permanent penalty of -3 to all his invoking rolls.

♣ **Ambers and Saffrons:** They will bring the matter to the High Devils with the same consequences as before (penalty of -3 to all invoking rolls). Furthermore, these demons send a horde of Imps on a mission to ruin the debtor: precious objects mysteriously disappear, secrets are laid out in the open, employees are the victims of accidents and made to quit, employers are warned that the Invoker can not be trusted in any way, etc.

♣ **Crimsons and Scarlets:** They will take the matter to the High Devils with the same consequences as before (penalty of -3 to all invoking rolls). Then they send a horde of Imps to take vengeance on the dishonest Invoker. They will try to, if not kill him, at least to cripple him, kill his friends or his family, etc.

♣ **Obsidians:** These beings are tremendously powerful. The Invoker's death is certain to be long and unpleasant. If he needs to, an Obsidian will make no bones about sending a lot of demons from the lower Circles to achieve its end.

♣ Circles

The ink used by the invoker corresponds to the Circle to which the invoked demon belongs, and thus to its power. The inks used for invoking are active magical substances. They certainly come from the Abyss, but no one has been able to prove it. They actually contain very small amounts of Darkness. Only the *Advocatus Diaboli* can provide them.

The final chart summarizes the Circles and the Darkness stage necessary to invoke inhabitants of the Abyss.

THE RULE OF THE DARKEN

Of good faith and reputation

Advocatus Diaboli are responsible for the agreements concluded, always put in writing, between the invoker and the demon. This document is called a Connivance by the parties involved in the Invoking. The *Advocatus Diaboli* collect the Connivances brought to them by Invokers before the next sunrise, and vouch for the mortals' good faith toward the inhabitants of the Abyss. Whenever an invoker fails to keep his word, he is accountable to the *Advocatus Diaboli* owning the Connivance that has not been respected.

The eyes of the High Devils

The question all invokers wonder about is: "How do *Advocatus Diaboli* manage to always know everything?" The answer is simple and tells a lot about the place occupied by the Darken in Harmundia. *Advocatus Diaboli* are Invokers totally infested by the Darkness. Their psyche all but collapsed, saved from insanity only by their iron will. Nevertheless, although they have resisted the onslaught of the Darken and his most trusty servants, the High Devils, the fate of an *Advocatus Diaboli* is no longer his own. Once out of danger, he is chained to the High Devils that have the power to observe any demon (or *Advocatus Diaboli*) by using its senses. These lords of the Abyss know everything about the Connivances: they read them through the eyes of the demons when they are signed, and warn their *Avocatus Diaboli* if the Invoker is not true to his word.

It also shows the difficulty of the invoking roll, as well as the number of skill levels and groups among which these stages can be distributed (Trials, Rogue, Society and Knowledge, not Occult except for the Obsidians).

An Opalin, an Azuren or a Saphiren is seldom invoked twice in a row, unless the invoker decides to build up a lasting relationship with the demon. On the other hand, Ambers and Saffrons, as well as Crimsons and Scarlets, are always the same. Once one of them has been invoked, the Darkness furthers the link between this particular demon and the Invoker. Indeed, the latter often gives it an affectionate name or nickname.

• ATTRIBUTES

Demons only have 7 attributes. As opposed to humans, they do not have a STA but a Density (see below). During the invoking, the color of the ink and the Pull of the Darkened determine the attributes of the creature. The attributes of all demons from a given Circle have a minimal rating. To this is added as many points as the Blackness level of the Darkened, multiplied by the SM of the invoking roll. The results of this are called the "Pulling points".

Demons' attributes are limited by a minimum and a maximum, depending on its Circle. When a demon is created, all its characteristics are automatically at least equal at its circle's minimum. The demon's secondary attributes are calculated according to the usual procedure, with the following exceptions: its SIZ and MV (in flight; its MV on the ground is determined according to its SIZ) are taken directly from the Pulling points.

SUMMARY CHART OF DEMONS' ATTRIBUTES

| Darkness level | Circle | Name (s) | Invoking dif. | Basic char. | Maximal char. | Skill Levels* |
|----------------|--------|--------------------|---------------|-------------|---------------|---------------|
| 10 | I | Opalin | 10 | 2 | 9 | 10 |
| 30 | II | Azuren Saphiren | 15 | 3 | 11 | 30 |
| 70 | III | Amber Saffron | 20 | 4 | 14 | 50 |
| 90 | IV | Crimson Scarlet | 25 | 7 | 17 | 100 |
| 98 | V | Obsidian | 30 | 9 | 20 | 300 |

| Circle | NB of skill groups | Density | Density Bonus | Opacity | Opacity Bonus |
|--------|--------------------|---------|---------------|---------|---------------|
| I | 1 | 20 | +1 | 0 | +1 |
| II | 2 | 25 | +3 | 5 | +3 |
| III | 3 | 40 | +6 | 10 | +4 |
| IV | 4 | 55 | +9 | 15 | +5 |
| V | 5 | 100 | +15 | 25 | +10 |

* Note: The skill levels translate directly into scores. One skill level gives a score of 1 in a skill. DO NOT use the same table as for Inspired. Obsidians are the only demons able to use the skills of the Occult group.

LIGHT

By nature, demons, beings of pure Darkness, are particularly sensitive to light. Therefore, it is often used by mortals to drive them off. The following chart shows the effects of various light sources on demons, their Opacity and Density.

| Source | Effect |
|--------------|--|
| Sun | Density reduced by 5 points |
| Zenithal sun | Density reduced by 15 points |
| Fire | Density divided by the fire POT (instead of subtracting it). Opacity is inefficient. |

Pulling points = Blackness x SM

Example: A Darkened with a Blackness of 6 invokes an Opalin with a SM of 5. The demon has 2 points in all its characteristics, to which are added $6 \times 5 = 30$ Pulling points (Blackness \times SM 5) to be split between them. The Darkened adds 7 points to STR, 7 points to AGI, 7 points to INT, 4 points to PER and the 5 last points to WIL ($7 + 7 + 7 + 4 + 5 = 30$). The Opalin therefore has the following characteristics: STR $2 + 7 = 9$; AGI $2 + 7 = 9$; INT $2 + 7 = 9$; PER $2 + 4 = 6$; WIL $2 + 5 = 7$. The last attributes (CRE and CHA) will remain 2 since they have not benefited from a bonus due to the splitting up of the Darkened's Pulling points.

Other characteristics

Characteristics and skills are not the only parameters that define demons. They also have a Density, an Opacity, and natural weapons.

DENSITY

For demons, it is the equivalent of Hit Points. When this rating falls to zero, the demon dissolves and goes back to the region in the Abyss where it was born from the Darkness. This is usually seen as a death by mortals. Indeed some crystallized Darkness remains as a shapeless body in a blackish pool. All demons from the same Circle have the same Density, unless the invoker decides to strengthen this particular aspect of his demon by allotting Pulling points to it. Every Pulling point thus allotted, adds a bonus to the Density as is indicated in the chart above.

Note: If you need to know the STA of a demon in order to resist an attack, divide its Density by 5.

OPACITY

A demon's Opacity is a form of supernatural resistance to damage. If the damage rating is not superior to the Opacity rating, the demon does not lose any Density points. If it is, all the damage points are taken away. A demon is immune to any form of damage except weapons, light and magic. Drowning, poisoning and suffocation do not affect it.

Example: Lidunya inflicts 15 damage points to a demon. The latter has an Opacity of 14. It therefore suffers all the damages and loses 15 Density points. If its Opacity had been 15, it would not have suffered any damage.

All demons from a given Circle have the same Opacity unless the invoker decides otherwise during the outlining of the invoking shadow. He can strengthen

the demon's Opacity in the same way as Density: he invests part of the Pulling points into it and, in return, he gets Opacity bonuses, according to the type of demon, as shown in the chart above.

♣ Skills

• MOTHER TONGUE

All demons have a free skill which enables them to communicate with their invoker. This power is a consequence of a demon's empathy with the invoker's Darkness. Most of the time, it takes the form of an innate ability to speak the Darkened's mother tongue on a level equal to his Blackness.

Demon's skill level in the invoker's mother tongue = Invoker's Blackness.

• OTHER SKILLS

The demons' number and level of skills are set and cannot be improved. Demons learn only what they are willing to and, contrary to their physical attributes, it is extremely difficult to assess their skill level in any domain. The invoker is sure that it will have a minimal level in the skills he wanted. But establishing the precise skill level of such an untrustworthy creature is difficult.

♣ Natural weapons

All demons have claws and fangs, but the invoker must decide to allot skill points to them if he wishes them to serve any other purpose than looks.

Demons' natural weapons skills are not included in the Trials group but are considered to be general skills, which can be developed outside the restrictions imposed by the demon's Circle.

MINOR DECEIVER, AZUREN, SECOND CIRCLE DEMON

Minor Deceivers are good-looking humanoids, often lacking wings suitable for flying. They always appear dressed in the latest fashion of the place where they were invoked. They are masters of the arts of dissimulation, lying and hypocrisy. Depending on their mood, they can look like humans or seasonings.

This one has chosen, for some unfathomable reason, to take on the appearance of a female spriggan. It has been invoked by Master Gomzi, a small-time schemer at the Jannenian court, to spy on palace plots in a area only accessible to women. The Darkened enjoys a rating of 4 in Blackness and of 7 in Demonology. Having rolled the die for a total of 19, his SM is 4 for a global Pull of 16. Out of these 16 points, 10 have been allotted to flying, 3 to PER and the remaining 3 to AGI.

Minor Deceiver

Gender: female

Origin: Azuren, Second Circle Demon

| | | |
|---------|-------------------|--------|
| TAL: -1 | MV: 2/10 (flying) | |
| AGI: 6 | INT: 6 | CHA: 6 |
| STR: 3 | WIL: 3 | CRE: 3 |
| PER: 6 | MEL: 5 | AIM: 6 |
| BD: -1 | | |

Density: 25 **Opacity:** 5 **Claws:** 4

SKILLS

Trial: Athletics 5; Dodge 5; Alertness 7

Rogue: Conceal 5; Stealth 5; Intrigue 5

THE RESTLESS INN

Darkness: 7

Terror: DIF 10

Darkening points gain: 2.

The Restless Inn is a brothel specialized for clients with exotic demands. It is located in Lorgol, on the edge of the Thousand Towers district. Its actual owner, Olphina Three Streets, is an old prostitute moved over into demonology. She managed to come to an agreement with an Obsidian called "the Souls Fucker". Nobody ever knew what she asked and what the price of the demon was. She bought the building and turned it into a brothel where all the "girls" are demons, probably invoked by the lady of the house.

Inside, shouts and screams, obscene and hideous laughter ring out all the time. A unique room, huge and completely empty, entirely hung with black drapes, makes up the reception hall of the establishment. Lighting is scarce, with only a few braziers providing a reddish light that leaves the room mostly in the dark. A beautiful young woman, sporting a pair of large membranous wings and a look of unfathomable sadness in her eyes, is always there to welcome the clients. She merely shows a corner of the room without the client ever having to say what he came for: she lifts a drape, revealing others and others again in infinite layers, through which the client plunges... and disappears.

A few hours later, bewildered but satisfied, he reappears out of another corner.

One says that a dwarf architect of the Square measured the room and found that it had to be the only one in the building. But to imagine that the passages that start from it lead somewhere else, maybe even to the Abyss. In any case, the dwarf never came back from his next visit. Another rumor tells of the striking resemblance between the prostitute who founded the Inn and the demonic hostess in charge of the clients' reception.

The clients who frequent the Restless Inn usually keep quiet about what happens to them inside those walls. The few accounts that have reached us are either the work of insane people, or the sign of unspeakable perversity...

The Inn is but a gigantic physical portal to the Abyss. Each client taking it helps strengthen and stabilize it permanently in Harmundia. The goal of the Obsidian who established the Inn – the unfortunate Olphina having been dead for a long time now – was to create this portal and to attract a clientele of sorcerers who could further Nyx's designs and the return of the Abyss to the surface.

THE MASTER OF THE ABYSS

"I too wanted to know more about the Abyss, and the one demons only mention with fear. I wanted to know the truth about the one who is said to strikes fear into the withered hearts of the Advocatus Diaboli. I too wanted to know whether there is a King of the Devils.

One evening, under a bloody sky, as the shadows of the jade palaces of Abbadrah were dangerously spreading between the tombs of the necropolis, I invoked an Obsidian. I asked it the question that haunts us all. Who is behind the High Devils? Who rules over the abyss? I will not tell you what it revealed to me. But you should know that the Connivance I had to sign will demand sacrifices from my children, my grandchildren, and their children.

I do not regret having to pass such a heavy burden on to them. Nevertheless, listen to me. Should you take only one piece of my advice, let it be this one: do not try to find out... if you care about your Flame."

SUMMARY OF THE INVOKING PROCESS

1. Choose the Circle of the demon to be invoked
2. Outline a shadow with the appropriate ink
3. Perform an invoking roll: **Blackness + Demonology + 1d10** against a DIF which depends on the demon's Circle
4. a) **Success:** The demon comes. Define a task and its counterpart. Have him sign a Connivance
b) **Failure:** The demon does not come or, if it does, a harmful consequence ensues.
5. Distribute the demon's characteristics
a) **Basic characteristics:** According to the Circle
b) **Add to these:** Pulling points = Blackness x SM
c) **Free skill:** Mother tongue of the Invoker = Blackness
Other skills: according to the Circle
d) **Basic Opacity and Density:** according to the Circle
e) **Add to these:** According to the Circle and the pulling points invested
6. a) **Bring the Connivance to an Advocatus Diaboli**
b) **Failure to bring the Connivance to an AD:** breach
7. a) **Pay the price demanded by the demon**
b) **Failure to pay:** breach

THE ORACLE OF DESIRE, SHE WHO WELCOMES THE RESTLESS

The Oracle of Desire is an Amber (a Third Circle demon) specialized in the fulfillment of the Restless Inn clients' desires. She is a young woman, tall and slender, and so beautiful that she is more awe-inspiring than truly desirable.

She sports huge membranous wings that she sometimes wraps around her nakedness like a veil of flesh. She was called from the Abyss by the Souls Fucker after he made old Olphina pay for her carelessness, which explains her exceptionally high attributes. The Oracle of Desire took over the body of the prostitute but improved it somewhat.

Officially, she never asks for payment, which is surprising coming from an Amber. But many people in high places are known to use her services excessively, and are probably indebted to her beyond reasonable limits (if anything might be considered reasonable as far as demonology is concerned).

The Oracle of Desire

Gender: female

Origin: Amber, demon of the Third Circle

| | | |
|--------------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| SIZ: 0 | MV: 3/9 (flying) | |
| AGI: 8 | INT: 14 | CHA: 14 |
| STR: 5 | WIL: 7 | CRE: 11 |
| PER: 14 | MEL: 7 | |
| AIM: 11 | DB: 0 | |
| Density: 40 | Opacity: 22 | Claws: 4 |

SKILLS

Trial: Athletics (specialty: sexual intercourse) 10 (11); Alertness (spe: secret desires) 10 (11)

Rogue: Acrobatics (spe: sexual intercourse) 8 (9); Intrigue (spe: contacts of the Restless Inn) 10 (11); Poison (spe: aphrodisiacs) 5 (6)

Knowledge: Alphabet (spe: Connivances) 8 (9); Surgery (spe: sadism) 8 (9); Plant lore (spe: aphrodisiacs) 8 (9); Language (Urgamish) 5; Medicine 5; Beast lore (spe: zoophilia) 10 (11)

THE RIPPER

The Connivance that gave birth to the Ripper is among the strangest ever signed.

The invoker asked the demon to give him its hand and turn it into a weapon. The demon, smiling, did tear off its hand and fastened it at the end of a shaft to make a kind of mace. The legend alleges that the demon tore off the invoker's legs to make up the shaft, before asking for both his hands as payment.

The Ripper is made up of a huge onyxium claw fastened onto a long bone shaft.

| | | |
|---------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| Darkness: 6 | Terror: DIF 12 | Darkening gain: 3 |
| Init: +1 | Att: +2 | Def: -1 |
| Damage: 4/CI | | |

The owner of this weapon is always tempted to wolf down his enemies after having killed them. To resist this impulse, he must perform a successful WIL roll against DIF 12. Add their Blackness of its owner to the DIF.



2 ~ The Masque

mask: A rigid object representing a face – whether human, seasonling, animal or imaginary – which one uses to cover one’s true face. This is the essence of the most unexpected and creepy opponent your Troupe will have to defeat. The Lord of Masquerade is indeed the most fearsome menace Harmundia has ever known. His goal is simple. He intends to take vengeance on the Muses who vanquished and banished him. He longs to sow the nourishing earth with his malefic seed and turn the world into a theater that would be his to rule. Then, with all mortals bent under the Perfidy’s yoke, he will launch a gruesome performance of which he will in turn be both director and audience. In other words, he is set on ruling Harmundia and becoming the One.

But before any further ado, let us be careful of curious ears. Come! Let us settle here by the fireside. Nobody will hear us. Now listen closely...

A YOUNG MAN OF UNFATHOMABLE BEAUTY

The Darken seeks to cover the world with an eternal Night so his legions can rise up out of the Abyss. As for the Masque, he hungers for his revenge over the Muses and for a universe of puppets with strings to pull as he pleases. He also hopes to find a way to forestall and pervert the seasonlings.

Very few people have seen his real face: that of a young man graced with unfathomable beauty and a completely unexpected, grating voice. But he can wear numerous guises, which he uses as so many obstacles to ward off his enemies. Each of these guises is specifically created according to the abilities he needs. Each represents a trait of his character. In turn, he can be the embodiment of meanness, treason, disloyalty, deceit, machiavellism, spite, treachery or oppressive danger.

Do not forget that the Masque is an Eternal, the fifth Muse born through the ritual of Ultimate Perfection. Although he has not been recognized as such by the Muses, he nevertheless has the power to taint the Arts.

Being a blend of the four Muses, the Masque lusts after their magic. To this end, he collects and distorts Inspired’s Flames and Opuses.

Still, he does not like to kill humans who are his comedians. Often holding back the might of his blows, he sometimes sheds a crocodile tear when the worst happens.

In the end, always keep in mind that the Masque embodies perversity, illusion, manipulation and illness. He is a corrupter who can blow out the Flames of the Inspired and turn them into Dark Flames. He interferes with the Body and Soul of the bravest to taint them, to take them over and make them serve his somber plans and inordinate ambition.



THE BLEAK CARAVAN

The Masque is at the same time everywhere and nowhere. He sometimes travels in a caravan under his primal guise, that of the Wanderer. Sheltered by this caravan, he achieved his quest and desecrated one place in each of the Twilight Realms. In each of these twelve locations, where Corruption flourishes, is kept one of the Masque's costumes, a particular guise dedicated to a particular realm.

Inside the Caravan, twelve Lost Souls, the Flesh Smugglers, sport extremely intricate tattoos (actually tainted Pictureworlds) on their chests. These tattoos enable the Masque to instantly travel to one of his corrupted hideouts and put on the disguise kept there. The twelve Flesh Smugglers are followers of the Curtain Sorcery, a Darkness-tainted power, which enables them to alter reality and vanish at will.

While he stays in his cursed caravan, the Masque can use the senses of the most tainted creatures, those who have reached the maximum Perfidy stage (100 points). Nevertheless, when under his primal guise, he must use mortal puppets. He cannot directly intervene in the play he is staging without using the twelve costumes.

Of course, all these details are undecipherable secrets for those who fight him. Quite fortunately, the Eminences Grise are not as ignorant as the common run of mortals. People in the highest places on the continent know about the Masque but they are few. Although some Domains are directly under his thumb, and despite his having wormed his way to the core of all realms, the Eminences Grise have penetrated a number of his best-kept secrets.

So listen, and become acquainted with Harmundia's greatest enemy.

The Perfidy

The Perfidy is a measure of the degree of corruption the Masque inculcates in mortals.

It is the Masque's trump card. It is his magic, his mark, resulting from eons of thinking and maturing. Perfidy corrupts. It changes the nature of the environment and sullies consciences with a permanent and evil tarnish. Century after century, it has grown, strengthened by the Masque's deeds and their echoes in Harmundia. It is everywhere, whether dormant or overwhelming. It takes over places, and mortals Bodies and Souls. Perfidy has spread throughout all realms, carried by traitors and mythical monsters. It now enables the Masque to brand mortals with his touch and act out his terrifying seductions. Through Perfidy, the Masque and his most powerful minions, the Maskers and the Betrayers, can control mortals.

Perfidy shows the progress of the corrupted in the hierarchy of the Masque's creatures. As Perfidy points build up, the Inspired first becomes a Corrupted, and then joins one of the categories of the Great Corrupter's servants (described hereafter). Little by little, depending on his degree of Corruption, a Corrupted moves up in a perverted mockery of a social hierarchy created by the Master of Sham, until he blindly gives up his life and soul to his emblematic Lord. During this process, his master endows him with specific powers according to the part he is to play.

When foul smells pinch the Inspired's nostrils, as if the winds themselves reeked of rotting flesh, and their ears ring with the hails of sniggering whores, then the Masque's henchmen are near. Grinning horrors, oh so near, and wearing so many masks...

It is by encountering the Masque's manifestations that the Inspired accumulate Perfidy points and gradually turn into corrupt creatures. Every time the Masque

appears or manifests himself through any medium, an aura of perversity, manipulation and madness are spread, and the environment is fundamentally changed. Perfidy attacks the Body and Soul, and it can turn a Flame into a dark Flame if the Darkness joins in. Only the purest and bravest hearts can resist these terrifying assaults.

And the Master of Sham has more than one trick up his sleeve. He shamelessly makes the most of fear, greed or cowardice. He spreads them around thanks to terrifying tales, giving even more strength to the Perfidy, feeding it with this inexhaustible energy. The terrifying tales have an impact on the environment, allowing the Masque to root himself in a reality progressively overcome by evil.

It is therefore an almost hopeless, never-ending fight in which no holds are barred and every piece of information gathered about this tremendous opponent is one step closer to him. The Inspired furthers his understanding of the Perfidy and the Masque only if he is willing to pay the price: Corruption!

SYSTEM

♣ An overview

Perfidy points build up on the Scroll according to a scale from 1 to 100. Every time a new stage in Perfidy points is reached, a Sorrow is obtained. The more the Perfidy points pile up, the closer the stages get.

Up to 50, Sorrows are obtained every 10 points. From 55 to 75, the increment goes down to every 5 points, from 77 to 90 every 3 points, from 92 to 98, every 2 points. Finally, a Sorrow is obtained at 99 and another at 100.

Example: Elias has just reached 78 Perfidy points. He thus has 11 Sorrows obtained at 10, 20, 30, 40, 50, 55, 60, 65, 70, 75 and 77 points.

Sorrows linked to the Perfidy are not organized in levels. The EG is perfectly free to choose the one that seems to fit the situation. The only restriction has to do with the origin of the Perfidy points. Some are obtained through characters, others through places, and others still through specific circumstances.

The Masque, being constantly on the look-out for ways in which to further the corruption of the Inspired, gives them the opportunity to benefit from it. Since nothing ever comes free, if an Inspired agrees to take on a new Perfidy point, he is granted a Gift connected to one of the Sorrows with which he is burdened. If several Sorrows can bring the same Gift, it is up to him to choose one among the Sorrows. If the Gift linked to the Sorrow has already been granted, the price is paid but the Corrupted gets nothing in return.

♣ Building up Perfidy points

In game terms, the Masque's emanations target the Body and Soul Aspects of the Inspired's Flames. The closer they get to evil, the more they are contaminated.

When they meet a Masque's creature, or a character with a behavior strange enough to endanger their WIL (as for example a pack of rabid dogs), all the Inspired must perform a WIL roll against a DIF of 15, 20, 25 or 30, depending on the amount of Perfidy which motivates the roll. Sometimes an uncommon situation (such as discovering an ancient spellbook bound in human skin, or gazing at a particularly foul painting) will call for a WIL roll.

Furthermore, in some cases, an Inspired's Perfidy can increase through reading forbidden books, going to a tainted place, or trying to talk sense into a Masque's creature.

A successful roll means the Inspired's Perfidy does not increase, or only by a minimum, so that he is still able to act until he faces another threat. Each confrontation needs its own separate roll.

A failed WIL roll always means that the Inspired gets Perfidy points. The number of points depends on the type of creature, on the situation and on what you, Eminence Grise, decide. Finally, when an Inspired's Perfidy reaches 100, he becomes desperately, incurably, perfidious and sly. He also becomes a non-player character (NPC) taken over by the Masque.

♣ Sorrows

Sorrows linked to Perfidy are obtained according to the stages of Perfidy points. This list is not exhaustive and does not follow any particular order. You are free to adorn it with Sorrows of your own.

Sorrows are granted according to the situation that led to the increase in Perfidy points. The Eminence Grise alone decides which Sorrow to grant. (Should you happen to lack inspiration or to be caught on the wrong foot, you can always use a random method.) Following the description of each Sorrow the corresponding Gift is listed between brackets. Note that different Sorrows bring the same Gift. Getting the same Gift several times has no benefit.

Note: Although the EG has complete control over the granting of Sorrows, we advise him to pick them carefully, according to what the players are capable of and willing to role-play.

THE PERFIDY'S GAME

There is only one known way to get rid of the Perfidy's stigmas (in game terms, decreasing one's Perfidy rating). The Masque, always the gambler, owns a Tarot game of which every card is a tainted Opus of Vista. To those who manage to find him and are foolhardy enough to challenge him to a game of cards, the Master of Sham offers a "double or nothing" round to be free of their Perfidy. The legends do not tell of anyone who has actually managed to win against the Great Cheater... On the other hand, there is no end to stories about the unfortunates who lost themselves trying.

DIFFICULTY OF THE WILL ROLLS AGAINST CORRUPTION

| Perfidy Points | DIP |
|----------------|-----|
| 0 to 50 | 15 |
| 51 to 75 | 20 |
| 76 to 90 | 25 |
| 91 and more | 30 |

• SORROWS GRANTED FOLLOWING AN ENCOUNTER WITH MASQUE'S CREATURES

☛ **Covered with worms** (*Lightening speed*)
Sickening sticky worms swarm under your skin, or crawl lazily on your forearms. You are disgusting. Earn 1 point in Dark Body.

☛ **Cruelty** (*Doggedness*)
Pain heartens you. You are an inflexibly evil-hearted person and the sight of blood is the only thing that lightens up your dismal life. Should you have magic abilities, you will be violently attracted to Obscurantism. Indeed, you are so obsessed by the desire to inflict pain that you fail to develop any other form of entertainment or knowledge. This new propensity brings you a new point in Dark Soul.

☛ **Deformity** (*Chronicle of the Oncoming*)
You are twisted, stooped or even hunchbacked. Your body is deformed in an unnatural way. You are far from pleasant to look at. Your Dark Body rating increases by 1 point.

☛ **Traitor's mug** (*Hypnotism*)
Your skin is greasy and pockmarked, and your beady eyes seem incapable of settling frankly on anyone. You look like an individual of doubtful reputation and when somebody is suspected of treason, fingers are inevitably pointed at you. You get 1 point in Dark Body.

☛ **Lewdness** (*Sensuousness*)
You have a wild and irresistible appetite for lechery and brutal sensuality. Your shamelessness is well known and you thrive in the company of satyrs. Your Dark Soul rating increases by 1 point.

☛ **Meanness** (*Doggedness*)
You purposely cause harm; moreover, you seek to cause harm as often as possible, openly and aggressively. Your Dark Soul rating increases by 1 point.

☛ **Stench** (*Foresight*)
A fetid and loathsome smell pervades the atmosphere around you. You have trouble going unnoticed for your unbearable odor is very strong and garners you a lot of attention. You get 1 point in Dark Body.

☛ **Venomous Blood**
Your blood is corrupted. You can generate ingestive or contact poison, the effects of which last an hour with

a VIR of 30. They turn your victim's blood into a foul black substance. Most of the time, this transformation is fatal. Should your victim happen to survive, his or her Perfidy rating would increase by a tenth of yours. You get 1 point in Dark Body. In case of a Serious wound, no treatment can be applied to you; you can only count on a good night's sleep to get your strength back. This Sorrow brings no Gift.

☛ **Swelling face** (*Fog face*)
Your face sports large blue and purple marks that look like bruises. These swellings twist the usual lines of your face. This brings you 1 point in Dark Body. You'd better get used to hiding your face.

☛ **Premature Aging** (*Chronicle of the Oncoming*)
You do not look your age anymore. Your hair goes white, and numerous wrinkles dig into your dried-up skin. Who would guess your real age when faced with your haggard appearance? Your Dark Body rating increases by 1 point.

• SORROWS GRANTED AFTER HAVING VISITED A PLACE TAINTED BY THE PERFIDY

☛ **Acrimony** (*Doggedness*)
You get up every morning on the wrong side of the bed. Your bad mood has become legendary, and you let it out in harsh and caustic words, so that no one particularly values your company. You get 1 point in Dark Soul.

☛ **Heart of Stone** (*Consummate Acting*)
You are insensitive, as cold as marble. Nothing makes you laugh. This brings you 1 point in Dark Soul.

☛ **Decay** (*Fog Face*)
A physical weakening befalls you. Although it does not show, you often feel old, even ancient, and almost crippled. Your Dark Body rating increases by 1 point.

☛ **Spiteful** (*Lethal charm*)
You are full of bitterness, topped by bad temper and meanness, that prevents you from being invited to any lively and friendly event. You are always the first to point out other people's faults, to criticize and magnify them. You get 1 point in Dark Soul.

☛ **Grandiloquence** (*Smooth Talker*)
You like to talk in a pompous style, overusing big words and cheap clichés. Your Dark Soul rating increases by 1 point.

☛ **Hypocrisy** (*Consummate acting*)
You purposely hide your real personality and make a show of ideas, feelings and virtues you do not have. You favor underhanded ways and duplicity. This brings you 1 point in Dark Soul.

☞ Lies *(Smooth Talker)*

You never say the truth. You cannot help mislead or deceive your Troupe and your close friends. You are a pathological liar and you do not know how long this information will remain secret. What you do know is that you have won 1 point in Dark Soul.

☞ Cold Sweat *(Chronicle of the Oncoming)*

You keep experiencing fits of shivers and starts. You always look restless and you often massage your forearms to smooth the goose bumps that bristle your skin. You regularly fall prey to weird sensations of purely physical unease that turn you into a worrying and distressed individual. Your Dark Body rating increases by 1 point.

☞ Bragging *(Consummate acting)*

You like to magnify your qualities or distort the truth in order to brag. You blow your own horn every day, recounting feats born of your fertile imagination. This brings you 1 point in Dark Soul.

☞ Croaking voice *(Sensuousness)*

The sound of your voice is as raspy as if your vocal cords had been torn out. It is not a sound anyone wants to hear twice. It gives you 1 point in Dark Body.

• SORROWS GRANTED UNDER OTHER CIRCUMSTANCES

☞ Body Alteration *(Lightning speed)*

A part of your body undergoes a transformation. You must determine which one. This Sorrow can be granted several times. Your Dark Body rating increases by 1 point each time.

- The flesh on your left leg dries up.
- Your right leg finds itself covered with purulent scars.
- A sixth finger grows on your right hand.
- Your left hand grows long black hair and your nails become long, chipped and dirty.
- Your chest caves in and turns hard as rock while being overrun by sticky, black scales.
- A third eye grows on your forehead.

☞ Blinding *(Dire Wisdom)*

Your eyes are constantly running with tears and your sight is blurred. This gets you 1 point in Dark Body

☞ Physical Identity Crisis *(Fog face)*

You cannot reconcile your self and the vision you have of yourself. Your mirror seems to reflect someone else and you have strong doubt about who you really are. You find yourself troubled and distressed. You get 1 point in Dark Soul.

☞ Hand confusion *(Foresight)*

You are unable to decide whether you are right or left-handed, which puts you in tricky situations. In fact, every time you manage to make up your mind, you have the feeling that you are wrong or that it has chan-

PENUMBRA

"Having come into the world thanks to Amertine, this rapier was Agone's loyal servant until he achieved the throne. It goes without saying that she must still be in the hands of her owner, but an intriguing detail echoes the Liturgical controversy about the 'souls of weapons'. If poltergeists truly are the reincarnations of dead blades, then Penumbra might actually have been broken. We might have a way to prove it. Last week, since the fire that destroyed the school, an eminence reported a poltergeist haunting the ruins of the Borrowlight. The place is in the care of the sprites. They are positive that the poltergeist in question makes no secret about its origins. We are considering sending a mission in a few weeks, in order to capture it. If it turns out to be Penumbra, we might have the opportunity to gather new information about Agone of Roundrock's fate."

ged again. This has no other consequence but to increase your Dark Body by 1 point.

☞ Evil readings *(Dire Wisdom)*

You have a deep fascination with grimoires, demonology treatises and other tomes of ill repute. As you explore this new pendant, your Dark Soul rating increases by 1 point.

☞ Gifts

As he is granted Sorrows, the Perfidious also gets the corresponding Gifts. For example, the Sorrows Cruelty and Bragging may bring you the Gifts Doggedness and Consummate acting. If the Perfidious agrees to take on an additional Perfidy point, he can choose a Sorrow and gain Doggedness for Cruelty or Consummate acting for Bragging. Of course, it is a blind choice and the Perfidious has no clue as to the gift he will obtain, if there is one to be obtained. Indeed, in all cases, a Gift can only be gotten once, even though it may be associated with several Sorrows. Again, this list is not exhaustive and does not follow any particular order. You are free to add Gifts of your own. Keep in mind that the Masque is a whimsical being that sometimes behaves illogically, but always with the same goal: to corrupt. The Sorrows that bring the Gifts are between brackets.

☞ Foresight *(Hand confusion, Stench)*

Your train of thoughts never stops and you manage to imagine or live events shortly before they occur. Among other things, you can foresee an opponent's attacks (he must tell you which maneuver, thrust or parry, he intends to use even if he has won the initiative). This ability works only against people: the fall of a rock cannot be anticipated.

☞ Smooth talker *(Grandiloquence, Lie)*

You are very eloquent, although your sentences are more semantically impressive than profound and wise. Your DIF pertaining to Fast Talk rolls decrease by 5 points.

☞ Lethal Charm *(Spiteful)*

You are surprisingly charismatic and catch everybody's eyes. When you turn on the charm, very few can ignore

you. When you are lying or brewing a vicious trick, and more generally, when you intend to hide your ill-meaning purposes behind a deceptive front, no roll can be attempted to find you out.

♣ **Fog Face** (*Swelling, Physical Identity Crisis*)
The features of your face are never clearly visible. Even your own parents have trouble making them out, and your friends often wonder whether it is actually you. You can only be identified by people who know you well. Anyone else will provide confused and contradictory descriptions.

♣ **Chronicle of the Oncoming** (*Deformity, Cold Sweat, Premature Aging*)
You are subject to prophetic visions, which warn you about impending unpleasant events that directly or indirectly concern you. For example, you can predict quite accurately whether the next 24 hours are going to be dangerous. This phenomenon is entirely controlled by the Masque (The EG chooses when it is going to occur).

♣ **Consummate Acting** (*Heart of stone, Hypocrisy, Bragging*)
You are a born performer. No one can tell whether you are acting a part or being serious. The ability to improvise and adapt in any kind of situation definitely prevents anyone to see through the roles you put on. This does not exempt you from some minimal preparation: if, for example, you have nothing to sell, you can hardly pretend to be a merchant.

♣ **Lightning speed** (*Alteration of the Body, Covered with worms*)
You are extremely fast. You are second to none when it comes to catching fish with your bare hands or drawing your favorite weapon. This earns you a bonus of +1 to everything pertaining to initiative and speed.

♣ **Dire Wisdom** (*Blinding, Evil Readings*)
You make headway in your learning of the Masque's hierarchy and begin to have an almost instinctive feel for his ways. Confronted with one of the Masque's creatures (anybody whose score in Perfidy is above 0), you can perform a PER roll to find out how implicated it is in the Masque's plans and what it has been commissioned to do. The DIF is 15 if you wish to be of aid, and 30 if you intend to thwart the plans. Pieces of information discovered this way are always vague and difficult to read. Seeing a potential murderer, you will be able to tell that he is going to kill, but not who, when or where.

♣ **Doggedness** (*Bad temper, Cruelty, Meanness*)
You are aggressive, hateful or destructive enough to be a tough, unrelenting adversary. Like a mad dog, you never let go once you have gotten your teeth into something. You do not faint anymore when you fail your WIL

rolls in the case of Serious wound, provided you keep fighting the same opponent (or group of opponents).

♣ **Hypnotism** (*Traitor's mug*)
You have mastered the art of subtle suggestion. If you can take time in a quiet place, you can plant a suggestion in a mortal's mind (its precision and complexity depends on the result of a Will roll against the target's Will). This suggestion cannot cause the target's death. It can be triggered whenever you want, as long as you precisely indicate beforehand, the triggering circumstances (word, event, length of time...). The target will then blindly do what you commanded.

♣ **Sensuousness** (*Croaking voice, Lewdness*)
Your lusty personality prompts you to seek and try whatever excites and delights your senses. Your connoisseur's delicate palate and nostrils have made you a master of good taste and sensuous games. You cultivate grace and elegance. Whatever your appearance or your origin, you are always welcome (at least in the beginning) in places dedicated to pleasure (whether a brothel or a gourmet's good table).

THE TRANSFORMATION PROCESS

As soon as the Perfidy starts eating away at the Inspired, the Masque becomes aware of him and makes space for him in his Great Play - a grating, twisted cosmic farce, where all the unspeakable delusions of its demented producer will finally be enacted.

Thus is set in motion his slow mutation into a fallen creature, the progressive loss of humanity, which will make him a Masque's puppet in every way. He is but an inordinate mockery of himself with grotesque features and temper. Having become an actor in the Masque's game, the Perfidious takes on Gifts and Sorrows.

The soon-to-be puppet may notice his decay, but will he find inner resources to fight? The horrible transformation brings along advantages and powers that can only be acquired through the Masque. Temptation is strong, and Perfidy weakens mental and physical abilities, making mortals feeble and persuadable... The corrupted Inspired assumes the part of a tragic and senseless character. He fails to keep his word, betraying those who trusted him, becoming false-hearted and wicked. He is all the more dangerous because it does not necessarily show. Thus his Flame is progressively turned into a Dark Flame.

Corruption

THE POWERS OF CORRUPTION

On top of Sorrows and Gifts, the Masque's minions are granted specific powers by their master. Each is endo-

wed with his own gruesome specialty, chosen by the Masque according to their role in his insane play.

The Masque also uses large mirrors as a communication device, to give instructions to his agents. In return, they can give their reports through small mirrors that they carry on their belt or keep in a place known only to them.

♣ The Masquerade

The Perfidious becomes a master of dissimulation. He gets a bonus of +5 in four of his skills: Conceal, Disguise, Hunt and Stealth. His opponents' Alertness is reduced by 3 points, but cannot be reduced to less than zero.

♣ The Miasma of Chaos

The Corrupted instills confusion, fear and nightmares in the Inspired he meets. His victims experience sleepless nights, which lead to an overall tiredness. This inflicts a modifier of -1 on all his actions until the Corrupted stops hounding him.

♣ Horrid Whispers

The Corrupted makes his victim hear indecipherable whispering and hissing. The target feels like somebody keeps prompting him with lines and actions, but in such a low voice that he cannot understand a thing. This phenomenon reduces the victim's Stealth by half.

♣ The Slow Death

Mere contact is enough for the Corrupted to spread Slow Death, a hideous disease.

♣ The Snuffing

The Corrupted can snuff a Flame and cancel bonuses pertaining to it, thus turning an Inspired into a Dullen. A roll of Flame x 2 against DIF 20 is performed. A negative SM represents the number of positive Aspects lost by the Inspired, from most to least important. The negative modifier is immediately effective.

♣ The Danse Macabre

The Corrupted can animate a dead body during one round for each of his Perfidy points (a hundred rounds for a Betrayer). He can control it within the limits of its abilities while it was alive. The revived body has Body attributes, with a modifier of -1.

♣ The Three Knocks

This is a fearsome curse. Through his alliance with the Darken, the Corrupted is able to summon a High Devil. All he has to do is knock three times on the ground with a specially decorated rod. On the third knock, a High Devil appears and carries away its victim into the Abyss. The Three Knocks are usually spread out over time, once a week or once a month. The target is the only one to hear the muffled echo of a powerful bang.



♣ Curtain Sorcery

Born from the alliance between the Masque and the Darken, the Curtain Sorcery enables the Corrupted to vanish at will by wrapping himself in his coat.

CORRUPTED CREATURES

Apart from the Lost Souls and some Betrayers, all the Masque's servants are Dullen, whether human or sea-sonling.

• THE GRINNING PUPPETS

Perfidy level: 00 to 30

Ensuing Corruption: 1d10

Power: None; some have access to the Masquerade.

The Grinning Puppets are the Masque's main strike force. Wherever humans have settled, there may be Grinning Puppets.

Indeed, the Master of Sham and his Lost Souls can exert complete control over the Puppets without their knowledge. They are usually humans playing minor roles in their village or town.

Suddenly taken over by the Masque, these quiet people lose their kindly appearance to become bloodthirsty killers with strangely distorted faces. Their jerky gestures make them look like hideous mechanical puppets, hence their name. Their will and intelligence are annihilated. All their attributes undergo a modifier of -1.

Combat: Base of 10, **Alertness:** base of 10, **Hit Points:** 36, **SWT:** 12, **CWT:** 18.

- **THE ROTS**

Perfidy level: 10 to 60

Ensuing Corruption: 1d10

Power: Slow Death

The Masque has a soft spot for these degenerated and necrophilious beings. Truly obese, with rotting flesh and purplish lips, they live in great troglodyte cities, nestled in the most remote areas of the continent. The Great Corrupter likes using them to wreak havoc in an region, or raze villages which, according to him, are full of brazen rogues who defy his might.

Attributes:

STA 7, SRT 10, AGI 5, PER 6, WIL 2, INT 3, CRE 1

MEL 6, ASC -, ART -, AIM 5

SIZ + 1, MOV 6, DB + 6

HP 70, SWT 23, CWT 35

Skills:

Weapons: one of your choice 7, Athletics 10, Climb 5, Dodge 4, Alertness 7

- **THE FLAYED AND THE SOOTS**

Perfidy level: 10 to 50

Ensuing Corruption: 1d10

Power: Masquerade, Miasmas of Chaos, Horrid Whispers.

The Flayed are skinless creatures whose feet do not touch the ground. They move around a few inches above ground in silent but ferocious packs. Their associates, the Soots, are smart, small and misshapen creatures with ebony skin. They slip through flaws in castle walls to kill their victims with poisoned stings. Legions of them follow the Bleak Caravan, protecting it with unfaltering vigilance. When a whisper comes out of nowhere and chills you to the bone, it is a sure sign that the Flayed are after you, and that they intend to gorge themselves on your soft and tender flesh.

THE DRACHMA, THE MASQUE'S TAINTED GOLD

One Drachma is worth 10 gold pieces, and 1d10 Perfidy points befall those who use it. This magical gold can be recognized by the profile engraved on both sides – that of the Master of Sham – and it changes according to his location. Accepting drachmas, whatever the sum, also brings the Inspired 1 point in Dark Body. Spending Drachmas, again whatever the sum, brings him 1 point in Dark Soul. The Drachma is thus the best vehicle for the Perfidy and helps strengthen the Masque's position in all realms.

Attributes:

STA 5, SRT 5, AGI 10, PER 8, WIL 2, INT 3, CRE 1

MEL 8, ASC -, ART -, AIM 9

SIZ -2, MOV 1, DB -1

HP 28, SWT 7, CWT 14

Skills:

Weapons: blowpipe 8, Athletics 10, Climb 5, Dodge 8, Alertness 7, Acrobatics 7, Conceal 7, Stealth 8, Search 5, Legerdemain 8, Poisons 5, Locksmith 7.

- **THE MARIONETTES**

Perfidy level: 25 to 50

Ensuing Corruption: 5 + 1d10 (only when the Marionette is found out.)

Power: Masquerade

These peoples know they work for a powerful entity that they liken to an incarnation of evil. Counting on their ill-meaning nature, the Masque only needs to manipulate them subtly and selectively by sending an emissary (usually a Betrayer, sometimes a Masker). Remember to take into account the Gifts and Sorrows caused by their Perfidy score.

The Masque's favorite Marionettes are cursed merchants who use Drachmas, the tainted gold of the Masque.

- **THE WEBWEAVERS**

Perfidy level: 20 to 40

Ensuing Corruption: 1d10, when they are found out

Power: Masquerade

These agents of the Masque have skillfully made a place for themselves among the Twilight Realms' heads of state. They are prosperous and highly respected... spies. Very few people know whom they really work for. The Masque likes using them and is about the only one to understand the inextricable tangle of their devious plots.

- **THE BETRAYERS**

Perfidy level: 100

Ensuing Corruption: 1d10 + 10

Power: Masquerade, very rarely Danse macabre

Betrayers have surrendered themselves completely to the Great Corrupter to satisfy their unquenchable yearning for power and riches. Whether human, seasonling, Dullen or Inspired, they have taken an oath of allegiance to him out of their own free will and have accumulated 100 Perfidy points. There are only few of them and they sometimes use unexpected covers. In Urgamand, we know that the jester Bifas the Gloomy has been one of them for a long time. We are careful to keep this impudent spriggn unaware of our watch over him so that we can anticipate his master's moves.

To create Betrayers, you can use the profile of an archetype who holds the office in question, for example the Baron.

- **THE MASKERS**

Perfidy level: 100

Ensuing Corruption: 1d10 + 20



Power: Masquerade, Curtain Sorcery, Snuffing

Burdened with troubled pasts, Maskers are the only Corrupted with completely dark Flames. They usually have developed aptitudes for dissimulation, deception (Disguise, Replication, etc.) and escape (Curtain Sorcery). Their hooded figures are a symbol of illness and corruption. The air stinks with the foul-smelling winds of their souls when they appear, like sniggering comedians, their faces hidden behind black masks. Most carry copper lanterns, either by hand or attached to their belts. In these they lock away Inspired's Flames. Maskers can only be wounded by Artifacts. To stop them, the Inspired may use one Fortune point to enchant an ordinary weapon (long enough to strike three times, no more) and inflict normal damages. This spell can only be implemented in that particular case and no other.

The following characteristics pertain to human Maskers. To create a seasoning Masker, just apply the appropriate attribute bonuses, increasing or decreasing those that do not respect the seasoning's minimums and maximums.

♣ The Brothers of the Leer

Also known as the Night Crafters, because of their skill at making masks that look like real people. Endowed with a power of recollection, these masks keep traces of the personality and memories of the original owner. Talented painters work for them occasionally, (just before their tragic death, of course). They appear at the latest hours in dark alleys, wrapped in long coats, their obscure faces hidden under puckering broad-brimmed hats rammed down over their eyes. A strange fog hangs around them while a sulfurous stench pervades the air. They pay with drachmas before meeting up with the Bleak Caravan and handing over to their master the fruit of their villainous deeds.

♣ The Blackguards

Also called Plague Riders, these dethroned kings mount putrefied horses, gliding on icy winds and mephitic steam. They are lords of the Dark Hour, their faces encased in silver helmets that seem to hide only a deep obscurity. Their curses go back to ancient times and they faithfully serve the Great Corrupter.

Attributes:

Flame: 1/8, Body: 1/8, Soul: 1/8, Spirit: 1/8
STA 10, STR 8, AGI 8, PER 6, WIL 10, INT 9, CHA 7, CRE 3
MEL 8, ASC -, ART 5, AIM 7
SIZ 0, MOV 9, DB + 1
Hit Points 60, SWT 20, CWT 15

Skills:

Weapon: Mace 10, Weapon: Morning Star 8, Weapon: Knight Shield 8.
Athletics 6, Ride 10, Dodge 6, Alertness 10, Hunt 8, Intrigue 10, Fast Talk 7, Diplomacy 10, Eloquence 10, Music: Horn 6, Trade 5, Tradition: realm of origin 8, Alphabet: realm of origin 7, language: realm of origin 7, Law 7, Strategy 8, Tune 5.

♣ The Snuffers

Masters of the Snuffing, they were once Princes. Overcome by Perfidy and corrupted to the core, they now haunt desolate lands on moonless nights. Under their hoods, the faces of these somber knights run like wax, giving new meaning to the word fear for those unfortunate enough to get a look at them.

Attributes:

Flame: 1/7, Body: 1/9, Soul: 1/7, Spirit: 1/8
STA 8, STR 8, AGI 10, PER 8, WIL 8, INT 8, CHA 5, CRE 5
MEL 9, ASC -, ART 5, AIM 9
SIZ 0, MOV 9, DB + 1
Hit Points 60, SWT 20, CWT 15

Skills:

Weapon: Sword 10, Weapon: Knight Shield 8
Athletics 8, Ride 8, Dodge 6, Alertness 10, Hunt 6, Intrigue 8, Fast Talk 8, Diplomacy 7, Eloquence 9, Trade 6, Tradition: realm of origin 8, Alphabet: realm of origin 7, language: realm of origin 7, Law 7, Strategy 8

TAINTED GHOSTS

Perfidy level: 100
Ensnuing Corruption: 1d10 + 10
Power: Snuffing
 The Master of Sham's sorcery has brought these Dullen ghosts back to a fearful mockery of life. Evil Spirits born from the memory of men, their appearance is as terrifying as their Snuffing power. Being Dullen, they do not have Dark Flames. They can be controlled by the power of Danse macabre, but cannot be harmed by anything except fire, which consumes them in seconds (though not for long, for tainted ghosts are immortal). A consumed one will pull itself together again later, and will not forget this bitter defeat.

Attributes:
 PER 12, WIL 10, INT 6, SIZ 0, MOV 6
Skills:
 Dodge 6, Alertness 10, Stealth 10

The Taint

Corruption does not only affect humans, but also things. As the embodiment of debauchery and depravity, the Masque loves to lead astray and change the nature of everything he touches. Thus the Corruption has given birth to the Taint. A party turned nasty, a discordant orchestra or boisterous orgies are often consequences of the Taint.

TAINTED ARTS

The Masque is a powerful Concordist, transcended by a craving for evil and a taste for lying. To him, Tainted Arts are means to an end. Through their baleful effects, he can counter the Magical Arts one by one. Tainted Arts have the power to change the structure of

TAINED ARTIFACTS

Thanks to the Taint, the Masque and his servants have created unique Artifacts. Here are three examples:

♣ **The Haunted Globe** is an ivory globe on which the outlines of Harmundia's realms have been carved. Along with it comes what appears to be a common telescope. Looking through the smaller end allows the user to detect and possibly travel to Perfidious areas. Unfortunately, this Artifact has a perverse mind of its own which leads it to send its passengers to unexpected places...

♣ **Tristelle's Rapier** is an unimpressive weapon, looking rather like an old battered theater accessory. In fact, a black fey, follower of the Elder Art and won over by the Masque, put a spell on it. It inflicts horrible damages, completely unexpected from such an unimpressive blade.

Init.: +1 Att.: +2 Def.: +1 Dam.: 10 SIZ: 0

♣ **The Scaramorph** is an obsidian jewel, shaped like a scarab, which the bearer can turn into a real insect simply by asking it. He can then use the senses of the scarab, a particularly disconcerting experience that brings him 1d10 Perfidy points. Frequent users slowly become insects. The details of this metamorphosis is left up to the EG to resolve (the Masque might decide to speed it or reverse the process, depending on his mood and needs). All Webweavers sport one of these jewels on a finger. Some are actually capable of "scaramorphing" themselves at will.

the Body, Soul and Spirit of their targets. The layman is confused and overwhelmed by Corruption. He becomes a slave of the Masque. The artist's bitterness corrupts and pervades the expression of his art. He exudes a vicious and deceitful evil that silently worms its way into mortals' hearts, allowing Tainted Arts to root there. Tainted Arts are managed by the same game mechanics as Magic Arts with two exceptions: Vista has only one opus group, that of the Fall; Discord is open only to those who play the harpsichord, the perfidious instrument par excellence. The Tainted Arts potential modifiers chart is the same as the one in the Magic Arts chapter, except that a corrupted place, saturated with Perfidy, will be a more favorable environment for the perverted Concordist.

TAINED OPUSES

♣ **Discord**

EAR SPLITTING

Instrument: harpsichord

Threshold: 20

Range/Area of effect: sight/all targets within earshot

Duration: 12 hours

Measure: 1 round

The Concordist rings out a single earsplitting note that bursts the eardrums of anyone within a 15-yard radius around him. The musician is not affected by his own opus.

INDUCE SUICIDE

Instrument: harpsichord

Threshold: 20

Range/Area of effect: sight/a precise target

Duration: 30 minutes

Measure: 5 rounds

A discordant melody full of grating and jarring notes fills the target's soul with gloomy, unhealthy thoughts. Subtle and tortured sounds put the finishing touches to his despair. The victim is utterly convinced of being stuck in an inextricable web of unspeakable secrets and shameful memories. A high-pitched and hissing finale eventually brings the listener to the point where life is worth nothing. It is time to take leave of it... Prostrated, the target will grab any opportunity to commit suicide. Deaf to reason, the unfortunate victim will not, however, resist restraint.

MUTATION

Instrument: harpsichord

Threshold: 15

Range/Area of effect: sight/precise target

Duration: 1 round

Measure: 5 minutes

By playing this Opus, the Concordist can bring about physical mutations in the target's body. Hands become claws, faces are covered with purulent boils, and slender legs end up hairy and goat-like. These mutations are up to the EG but must not alter attributes. At most, they will bring natural weapons or a new limb.

ROTTING

Instrument: harpsichord

Threshold: 20

Range/Area of effect: sight/a precise target

Duration: 24 hours

Measure: 5 rounds

On a slow, monotonous rhythm, the Concordist links discordant harmonies that destroy the environment. Fresh fruit instantly decays and flowers wither. To be targeted, a mortal must sport obvious wounds (cut, fresh scar, etc.). The Concordist will then try to infect the wound and make it rot. The target falls seriously ill and has to take to his bed to get well. The Concordist can also set his sight on a weapon or an instrument that is nicked or grazed. He is then able to inflict permanent damage to it.

In game terms, wounds will not heal, infected by a gangrene with effects similar to Slow Death. Objects are destroyed, food becomes poisonous.

♣ **Shape**

MATTER VIOLATION

Threshold: 20

Range/Area of effect: midsize object

Duration: 10 rounds

Modeling: 1 minute

Resistance: see the Materials resistance chart.

The Concordist can "enevil" an object, simply by touching it, thus giving it a different consistency. A sword will turn soft as molasses or a flute as slippery as soap.

TAINTED CLOTH

Threshold: 15

Range/Area of effect: midsize piece of cloth

Duration: permanent

Modeling: time needed to perform the Opus

Resistance: see the Materials resistance chart.

The Concordist puts a spell on a piece of cloth, thus giving it a discreet pair of eyes. Through them he can watch a scene from miles away, the link between him and the cloth having no range limit. Such cloths are often hidden behind thrones in council chambers. Thus perverted Concordists keep their master posted on the political and diplomatic situations of the main courts.

HOMUNCULUS

Threshold: 15

Area of effect: small object

Duration: 1 hour

Modeling: 1 round

Resistance: see the Materials resistance chart.

Modeling a lump of fresh mud, the Concordist creates a small slender being, a homunculus. Its pointed face does not have a mouth and is only animated by a pair of red eyes, looking constantly agitated and cruel. Extremely supple, it can hoist itself onto roofs, stretching its arms to grab the drainpipes. The homunculus' discretion and ability to disappear make them appreciated allies, which the Masque likes to use selectively.

Attributes:

STA 2, STR 1, AGI 7, PER 7, WIL 7, INT 4, CHA 0, CRE 0

MEL 5, ASC -, ART -, AIM 7

SIZ -3, MOV 1, DB -6

Hit Points 6, SWT 2, CWT 1

Skills:

Athletics 10, Climb 10, Dodge 7, Alertness 10.

LEPROUS STATUE

Threshold: 20

Area of effect: large object

Duration: 1d10 day(s)

Modeling: 1 day

Resistance: see the Materials resistance chart.

This time the Concordist models a horrible, wart-covered statue, capable of spreading leprosy through mere touch and of fighting fiercely. It is utterly devoted to its master, which it serves with cringing docility until it returns to the void it came from.

Attributes:

STA 12, STR 13, AGI 1, PER 2, WIL 0, INT 0, CHA 1, CRE 0,

MEL 7, ASC -, ART -

SIZ 0, MOV 3, DB + 8

Hit Points 70, SWT 23, CWT 17

Skills:

Weapon: claws 5



♣ Vista

TROMPE-L'ŒIL WOUND

Season: Fall
 Threshold: 15
 Range/Area of effect: sight/precise target
 Duration: permanent
 Drawing: 1 minute

With his wide-brimmed hat and somber greatcoat, the Concordist embodies the cursed painter who kills with his palette. He edges his way to his victim's bed and paints a wound on his chest. Undergoing as many Serious wounds as the painter wants, the target can be killed in the process.

CAPTURE

Season: Fall
 Threshold: 30
 Range: Area of effect/unlimited targets
 Duration: specific
 Drawing: 1 month

The Concordist paints a tiny landscape, a kind of simplified Pictureworld, which can hold an individual prisoner. The person will be freed upon the destruction of the painting. In the meantime, the prisoner is trapped in an awful nightmare linked to the theme of the painting.

TORMENTS

Season: Fall
 Threshold: 15
 Range/Area of effect: reaching distance/precise target
 Duration: 1 round
 Drawing: 1 minute

The victim's mind is submerged by gloomy thoughts that wreak havoc in his soul and deprive him of any ability to act. He is utterly paralyzed.

♣ Scansion

CEREBRAL PALSY

Threshold: 15
 Area of effect: precise target
 Duration: 5 minutes
 Verb: 1 round

The performance of this Opus enables the Concordist to put his victim's brain momentarily on hold. The target turns into a congenital idiot, quite incapable of taking any initiative. Simple orders (walk, seat down...) will be carried out with difficulty. In this state, the unfortunate has no notion of danger and will gladly jump off a cliff if urged.

COLD KISS OF TIME

Threshold: 15
 Range/Area of effect: precise target
 Duration: 24 hours
 Verb: 1 minute

The perverted Scander's favorite Opus enables them to instantly age their target by twenty years. High-pitched

verses have to be declaimed rapidly, ending with a loud kiss on the victim's face. In case of success, the consequences of aging take immediate effect.

REPLICATION

Threshold: 20
 Range/Area of effect: personal
 Duration: 1 hour
 Verb: 1 round

The Concordist can take on the appearance of anybody he has seen for at least ten minutes. Thus does the villain with a hideous face turns into a pretty young woman, long enough to carry out his plans.

TRAGIC FATE

Threshold: 20
 Range/Area of effect: proximity/precise target
 Duration: 1 round
 Verb: 5 minutes

This poem, said quickly, leads the victim to believe that death has come to claim him. He falls into a catatonic state that makes him look very dead.

THE LIVING BOOKS

Somewhere in a big city, a small ramshackle house offers passers-by the sorry sight of leprous walls, behind which work letter-writers, their hands stained with the strangest brown ink.

At night, while shivering strollers are going home, emptying the streets, the weird copyists come out in search of an interesting soul.

Having first set their sight on a rich, full life, they sneak into the house and take their victim away. The unfortunate is dragged, still screaming, down to the basement of the scribes' establishment to be bewitched with Tainted Arts and prevented ever from death.

The writers then empty their victim of his blood, skin him, and tear the flesh from his bones, which are ground to a powder. Only the heart is kept intact, still beating, and the skin is specifically treated to become a parchment. All the other substances thus collected, are used to build a flesh automaton. In the course of the night, they cover the skin parchment with tiny writing in an unknown alphabet. The parchment is then made into a large bound volume to which the unused remains (eyes, teeth, heart) are added. It is carefully sewn shut, and the appropriate seals are affixed to the quivering skin cover, forbidding opening. From then on, it will answer any question about the victim's life with great precision. This is how a disgusting library is put together, where some of the volumes are worth hundreds of drachmas... for drachma is the only currency the sinister copyists will take.



The seasonlings of the Fall

The Lady of Autumn's alliance with the Masque meant that she gave her children, the seasonlings of the three Decans she ruled, over to him. The Fallen, as the other seasonlings henceforth called them, were given new powers by their new master.

The Fallen are dangerous on two accounts: as the holders of power of Fall, and as the Masque's prime retainers. Of course, they are involved in the game only as NPCs.

The Fallen are amongst the worst enemies of the Harmony. First, they are the natural enemies of the other seasonlings, at latent war against the traitors. Second, as they belong to the Enemy, the Fallen pit themselves against the Inspired, in various manners. Their ways, behavior, history and goals are numerous and sometimes more complex than it appears. After all, their "society" has not followed the same path as the other Decans, and has shaped itself on the fringes of Harmundia, in its dark corners and evil spots. Describing it will require the talent of Eminences Grises-to-be.

It is highly probable that the Troupe will, at some point, fight these creatures. Therefore here are some of their details.

3 ~ The Fallen

DRAAKENS

♣ Features

Of human size, sometimes taller, these creatures sport a reptilian appearance, their long, slender bodies covered with tiny iridescent scales. The scales' colors go from green to black, with all shades of gray in between. Draakens can gallop on all fours, but usually move around on their hind legs. Their backs and legs are perfectly articulated, and their tails provide flawless balance. They can use them to strike, but they much prefer to use metal weapons. Their spines and lower backs are spiked. Their egg-shaped heads are bald and earless, with pointed chins and eyes slit by vertical, oblong pupils. They sometimes show small pointed horizontal horns on the forehead. Their bifid tongues spurt out of disproportionate mouths, adorned with two highly sharpened but venomless fangs.

They speak a guttural language almost entirely made up of barks and grunts. They use *it in particular* to gather in hordes to hunt. They are fearsome warriors, merciless carnivores who like dented swords and barbed spears.

Draakens hide strange secrets. One of their most terrible traits lies in their ability to mate with any intelligent creature: humans and seasonling. Thus, any female of mating age is liable to give birth to a draaken. They still have to catch their victim, which explains why draakens born from female giants are unheard of, but horrible rapes follow any village attack, so horrible that this

DRAAKENS

Attributes of an average Draaken

(The species bonus pertaining to the attribute is in brackets)

STA 5, STR 6, AGI 6, PER 7 (+1)
 WIL 5, INT 5, CHA 6 (+1), CRE 6
 MEL 6, ASC 5, ART 6, AIM 6
 SIZ 0, MOV 3, DB 0
 HP 48, SWT 24, CWT 16

Skills: They have the same number of skills points as a normal seasonling. Their tree skills are Traditions: Dragons 5, Geography (local underground networks) 5, Athletics (spe: protean) 5, Season: Fall 5.

They have access to the Ascendancy and the Tainted Arts.

has strongly contributed to the terrifying reputation of the draaken hordes. They are oviparous and have a clutch of three to five eggs (laid by unfortunate females) every two or three years.

According to some legends, they are linked to dragons. The first draakens supposedly appeared close to the mighty Prodigies' eggs. That may be why they keep looking for them – the eggs may hold a way to increase their power. In truth, the thorn in the draakens' side is their dependency on dragons to ensure the viability of their eggs. Their impregnated victims are dragged next to one of those enormous reptiles. All births outside of the presence of a dragon only lead to misshapen monsters that do not survive their own ugliness.

☛ Personality

Draakens are intelligent, but consumed by a fierce hatred of all those who do not serve the Masque. Blood-thirsty, they stop at no slaughter, reveling in the destruction of their enemies (although they cultivate no particular taste for torture).

☛ Racial assets

- **Protean ability:** Draaken can change shape. Their soft bones and runny, sticky flesh can take on a particular shape for several hours, or even days for the most powerful. This ability is most certainly the perverted remnant of a long-gone power. To change shape, a draaken must perform a STA + Athletics roll against DIF 15. The number of hours *during which* they can hold the shape is equal to SM x WIL. Afterwards, they have to rest for as long as they kept it. If killed while under the influence of this ability, they return to their original shape in a few seconds.

- **Dragon merge:** Draakens also have the possibility to merge. Two to five individuals can make up a Great Draaken, a lizard the size of a giant, close to a dragon but without wings. More than five draakens can fuse together into a black dragon, if one of these creatures helps them with its extraordinary powers. Unfortunately, this merging is irreversible and draakens are somewhat reluctant to give up their individuality. Furthermore, their numbers being limited, they cannot afford to merge very often.

- **Twin bond:** Echoing this, a particular link bonds draaken, very much like twins. They never fail to feel each other's presence, and sometimes seem to read each other's mind. But this belief might have originated in the victims' terror.

☛ Social structure

Draaken tribes usually are made up of around twenty individuals, organized in rigid hierarchies. They live underground, on the fringes of men's society, in catacombs and sewers, or in natural caves nestled in mountain slopes alongside towns. They like to quench their thirst for blood by deceiving mortals with their aforementioned powers, triggering conflicts and leaving ruins behind them.

MORGANAS

☛ Features

Morganas are humanoid males or females endowed with tremendous, non-human attractiveness. It is said that they display such tragic and gripping beauty that a mortal may experience a fatal rush of emotion just by looking at one. Light blue skin emphasizes the ethereal quality of their slender bodies, setting off the extraordinary colors of their huge fascinating eyes. Long hair magnifies their swan-like figures, making them decidedly unforgettable. They reproduce like humans, and may mate with them. They can be male or female in turn, depending on their mood, but they always retain a hint of femininity, a kind of deceptive fragility, which is why they are always referred to as "she".

☛ Personality

Morganas are mainly driven by an appetite for cruelty, and a passion for other people's suffering. A fundamental perversity compels them to bring about the greatest possible distress to others. They are the great priestesses of tragic love, and of heroes sacrificed to absurd and futile causes. Nothing stops a Morgana when she sets her mind to taking over a frightened, vulnerable soul.

☛ Racial assets

- **Tragic love:** Morganas can, with one glance, inspire an exclusive passion in a chosen target. Fortunately for the chosen, this passion is shared. All it takes is a glance and a successful CHA roll against the victim's WIL to arouse a dramatic, immoderate, morbid and eventually destructive passion in the victim. Burning with jealousy and guilt, the lover is always torn between killing her to make her eternally his and kneeling before her, rapt in worship until eternal night dawns on the world. The morgana is similarly bound to her lover, *but her feelings* are much less intense.

- **Phantoms:** Endowed with part of the Masque's unearthly beauty, the bodies of these marvelous creatures also share some of his illusion and hiding powers.

MORGANAS

Attributes of an average Morgana

(The species modifier of the attributes, as well as their minimums and maximums, are between brackets)

STA 6, STR 5, AGI 7 (+1), PER 5
 WIL 6, INT 6, CHA 12 (+4, minimum 6), CRE 4 (-1)
 MEL 5, ASC -, ART 8, AIM 6
 SIZ 0, MOV 5, DB 0
 HP 51, SWT 25, CWT 17

Skills: They have the same number of skill points as a normal seasonling. Their free skills are Poisons 5, Fast-talk 5, Eloquence 5, Season: Fall 5.

They have access to Tainted Arts, but not to Ascendancy. Their essentially cruel and false nature stops them from being able to empathize with Dancers at all.

They can take a ghost-like appearance, surrounded by a luminous and diaphanous halo, only becoming fully visible in swamps and clearings, or next to springs and lakes, which they particularly like. Their slim figure can partially dematerialize, enabling them to slip between the trees of the thickest forests, or columns of forgotten temples devoted to the Masque. Coming and going like ghosts in search of a tragedy, morganas can make themselves invisible or scarce, leaving no trace but a heady scent, and a few dried-up flower petals. They will re-emerge somewhere else to use their poisonous charm again. Morganas do not control this power, they are entirely pawns of the Masque.

☛ Social structure

Morganas are loners, hovering in their own way on the edge of humanity. They can be found in harems, behind the thrones of tyrants consumed by a mysterious passion, at the side of fanatics giving up their career, family and lives to look into the eyes of their love. They sometimes escort the Master of Sham's caravan, spreading out a luminescent veil on his way.

PIXIES

☛ Features

These tiny humanoid beings, no taller than a black fey, sport the body of a skinny child and the yellowish, wrinkled face of an elderly person. They have wings, with variable shape and texture, often iridescent and transparent like those of an insect, and sometimes cold and bony like those of a bat. Pixies are amongst Harmundia's few intelligent flying creatures. They are fast and vivacious, relying on speed and agility to escape the tricky situations in which they regularly find themselves thanks to their taste for stupid tricks.

They reach such incredible speed when flying that the most powerful among them can make themselves as elusive as hummingbird. They have a gift for unnering their victims by fluttering incessantly around them.

During combat, they use small darts as well as pitchforks, which make their victims go numb, or even put them in a catatonic state difficult to cure.

☛ Personality

Pixes are essentially unbearable creatures. On the one hand, they are endowed with a stubborn curiosity that drives them to flush skeletons out of closets. Their detestable humor compels them to use whatever their perverse intelligence and unhealthy curiosity have led them to discover in the designing their abominable tricks.

☛ Racial assets

- **Flight:** Pixies fly extremely fast and without obvious strain. This ability is unrestricted: to them, it is the equivalent of walking.

- **Elixirs:** Pixies are experts in elixirs. They have great knowledge of the plants growing in places infected by Perfidy. There they gather dew and sap, turning them into various potions. Some say that the stills they use are made up of the eldest pixies' veins, which would prove a choice material for dwarves and all other distillation adepts. The elixirs thus prepared have various effects: aphrodisiac, poisonous and even, so they say, magical abilities pressed out of the Shard.

Sleep Dust: With a roll of CRE against DIF 15, pixies can generate a luminous powder that induces sleep. It is a poison of VIR 25. Its effects last 1 round: if the STA roll fails, the target fall into a particularly heavy sleep for the next eight hours; in case of success, the target is sleepy and undergoes a modifier of -2 on all rolls.

☛ Social Structure

Pixies live in small communities of five to ten individuals, driven only by their passion for dirty tricks. They can be found in the depths of the darkest woods, or the roofs of the most disreputable neighborhoods. Their speed and exceptional stamina have established them as the Great Corrupter's messengers. In that guise, they carry backpacks.

PIXIES

Attributes of an average pixie

(The species modifier of the attributes, as well as their minimums and maximums, are between brackets)

STA 3 (max 3), STR 3 (-4), AGI 12 (+4, min 7), PER 7 (+1)
 WIL 4 (-1), INT 6, CHA 6, CRE 5
 MEL 9, ASC -, ART -, AIM 9
 SIZ -2, MOV 1/18 (when flying), DB -6
 HP 25, SWT 12, CWT 8

Skills: They have the same number of skills points as a normal seasonling. Their free skills are Athletics (spe: flying) 5, Discretion 5, Geography: Harmundia as a whole 5, Season: Fall 5.

They have access to neither Ascendancy nor Tainted Arts, being too versatile to devote themselves to them.

The Isle of Autumn

This land is like no other. It is the magical place par excellence and cannot, in theory, be the motherland of an Inspired, especially if he is a seasonling. Should the EG judge that it would be interesting to link the life of an Inspired to the Isle, he will have to be extremely creative about the circumstances that led to his stay there.

HISTORY

After the end of the Decan Wars, a lot of the seasonlings of Autumn went to sea, seeking new lands. They drew alongside the beaches of this gigantic island. They settled their first villages on the coast, before spreading all over the island. While the draakens climbed the highest peaks to build their Elementary Fortresses, the pixies made the forest theirs and the morganas stayed on the shore, favoring the waves' foam. The Lady of Autumn often came to visit, and offered them numerous wonders, until the day that the Masque finally

won her over, veiling the Spiritcore with the Eclipse. The seasonlings of the Isle should have submitted to their Lady's will and taken side with the Masque. However an extraordinary event prevented them from yielding: the sirens' song.

Wonders amongst Wonders, sirens had been living around the island since the Quest for Perfection. In the hour of the Eclipse, the sirens' song rose up to the sky, a primal chant so beautiful and mighty that it hindered the Lady's plan. While the continental seasonlings of Fall became the Masque's allies, those of Isle found themselves orphaned but free. They have kept their old name of "Autumnling" to distinguish themselves to their Fallen cousins. Since, despite all the rumors going around about them, the Autumnlings do their best to keep the sirens singing in the sea waves and depths, thus protecting the island from their Lady's treason.

The Isle has truly become a sanctuary where any seasonling can escape the will of his Lady. Nowadays, apart from a few seasonlings of the other seasons, the Autumnlings are the main inhabitants of the Isle. Landing there is extremely difficult since the sirens devote themselves to sinking any ship cruising around the island, whatever its origin.





THE SIRENS

Nobody ever knew how many of them there were. A thousand, ten thousands maybe? No matter, their enchantment is real... In practice, no ship can draw alongside the island's shores without encountering them. Unless the adventurous crew can give some very good reasons for being there, they are charmed and drowned. Numerous wrecks now lay scattered on the coral beds.

The sirens made a deal with the Autumnlings. They assembled in Choirs, chorales that sometimes bring together more than thirty of them. Scattered around the island, they weave an invisible barrier severing the link to the Lady of Fall. In return, the Autumnlings protect them from sirens hunters, especially Buccaneers, who trade them throughout Harmundia. To this day, the deal has been respected and keeps the island inviolate.

RANDOM TREASONS

Sometimes, siren hunters or some of the Masque's henchmen weaken the sirens' Choirs. The Masque never got over so many seasonlings eluding his influence, particularly the draakens he had a mind to turn into a frightful invading army. Ships with black sails sometimes glide alongside the shores, reverberating the grating chords of Discord to make the Choirs lose the thread of their melody. Such attempts enable the Lady of Fall to slip through the sirens' spell and seize an Autumnling. She can thus give him some orders before the sirens' song rises again. These random and short-lived treasons are much feared by the Autumnling, especially when the Lady gets her hands on an influential figure.

FREEDOM

Draakens, pixies and morganas living on the island, are no longer subjected to the Lady's authority. This liberation gave birth to an actual philosophy, a systematic rejection of tutelage from above. In practice, it has molded their spirit. Nowadays, they will not even consider taking side with the Masque, the Darken, Janus, the Muses or the Ladies of the Seasons. They only believe in themselves and their own values, refusing to be indoctrinated by one side or the other. Nevertheless, this freedom has a price: they cannot leave the island and give up the protection of the sirens without losing their free will.

THE STAKES

For years, the Autumnling have been planning to invade the continent. It is a joint venture, duly devised between draakens, pixies and morganas. The main lines of the plan are kept in the basements of the Elementary Fortresses. It is no less than a journey retracing the Muses' steps, following the rivers of the world so that the sirens' song will reach the heart of Harmundia. The Autumnlings believe this conquest would free the seasonlings from the yoke of the Ladies of the Seasons, and maybe even all mortals from the tyranny of Eternals.

The concrete use of the sirens' song has led the Autumnlings to study Tune and Scansion. They aim to create a magical Art based on the voice itself, which would enable any seasonling to elude the Ladies' constraint. They are particularly devoted to shielding their brothers from their Lady and the Masque by all possible means. Since they cannot themselves venture onto the continent, they hire mercenaries to bring them back to the island. Violence or deceit is always required until the seasonling discovers freedom. The Masque is thus regularly deprived of some of his henchmen.





The Art of Intrigue

If you are already well versed in role-playing, you can skip the first paragraphs of this chapter and start reading again from the Atmosphere paragraph.

ADVICE TO THE EG

The role of the Eminence Grise is crucial. He is the balance-keeper of the game. He must prepare – and often create from scratch – thrilling plots and describe the settings and their inhabitants, mortals and otherwise, to the Inspired. In short, he enables the players to live a good heroic-fantasy adventure. He must create a tale in which the players' characters have the lead roles, in which they can alter the course of events and, above all, in which they can, through their actions, bring the story to one end or another.

In our world, the EG could be called a director or storyteller. Indeed, he is simultaneously writer, director and actor in a play or a movie, which improvises itself, as hours of gameplay fly by.

The most difficult part of a game such as AGONE is the interpretation of the characters. The EG should plunge his players into the imaginary world of the Twilight Realms. Together, they will exercise their imagination and creativity to give life to a fantastic but credible intrigue. The EG is not like the other players, though. He is responsible for the balance of forces among the players, but also between the players and the NPCs. He manages the game, with the help of the game rules, but above all with his common sense. Some mistakes are easy to avoid with a little experience; others plague even the oldest veterans.

♣ Describing the world

This is the first step before starting the game. We advise you to recount or make players read the chapter The Role of the Inspired (the first chapter of Book Two). Then give them an overview of the Realms, within the limits of what the characters are supposed to know. (If they do not know each other, there is no reason to describe them; they will make the discovery by themselves as they play.) In any case, avoid too long an introduction in which too many details about Harmundia are revealed: it would be boring and useless. Tell them only what is necessary to sharpen their interest and launch them into the game.

♣ Roles

In Agone, players interpret characters, the Inspired, but they also encounter Harmundia's other actors. An important part of the game is dedicated to dialogue between the players' Inspired and the NPCs. It is therefore essential to create coherent NPCs to talk to: it will help the players fit into Harmundia's everyday life.

4 ~ The Art of Intrigue

To do this, play up accents and mannerisms so they will easily identify the speakers. Seeing you acting your parts during encounters, the same way they do, will encourage them. An improvised theater will then naturally establish itself.

To determine the NPCs' attributes, the best solution is probably to give them a basic 11 in the total attribute + skills they need, and to use the archetypes to create the main ones. In this case, you may have to change the number of points allotted to their attributes. For example, credible villains should probably get more points than the players.

♣ Do's...

- **Prepare your scenarios.** This sounds obvious, but is worth repeating again and again. Read and read again, or watch over again, the ready-made scenarios, novels, comics and films that will inspire you in your own writing. Analyze the cogs of the story and make sure you can describe details or answer a question immediately.

- **Let the players act their part as they see fit.** Their Inspired are first of all their creations. If you curb their freedom in this matter, you deprive them of an important part of the game's enjoyment.

- **Make your descriptions suggestive.** Do not worry about being too precise or too long. You must get the feeling of what your players like. Choose telling images. Use movie references, settings and situations familiar to your players. Do not hesitate to use your every day speech to put the players at ease. Better to be talkative in slang than clumsy trying to imitate 13th century parlance.

- **Discuss the game mechanics with the players.** The rules must be understood and agreed upon by everyone, so that endless controversies that would spoil the fun are avoided during the game. Of course, you need to be firm and fair. Rules must be the same for all.

- **Reward the players who work hard at their role-playing.** Try to encourage the shyest players, but without bullying them if they have difficulties being as talkative as some of the others. Never forget: rewards are indispensable.

- **Imagine the Inspired.** If you can draw a detailed picture of them in your mind, you will not forget their assets and faults. Thus, you will meet a legitimate need of your players: you will know their characters as well as Harmundia and its intrigues. Detail their pasts – or better, make the players detail them – and use their ideas.

♣ ... And don'ts

- **Do not let yourself be ruled by the rules.** Respecting them is necessary to simulation in situations like combat, but they are not laws, just a set of suggestions. In the end, it's your game. You are the highest authority, and are free to alter or stray from them. Give up on an unsatisfying point, rather than hanging on to it against your players' desires.

- **Do not play favorites.** All players must be able to hope for victory in a given situation. They all must feel that their Inspired can bring down their enemies. Game mechanics are also there to help you avoid this.

- **Do not give them the moon.** Do not flood them with Elder Art Opuses, spells or outrageous powers. Doing so is the best way to derail your game quickly.

- **Do not play the Menace's part.** You give life to the bad guys, but you are not the Masque. You stage the story without taking sides. When interpreting the Masque's pawns, you are not playing against the players, you are merely giving your rendition of these parts.

♣ And above all else...

- **Play!** All this advice will indeed be quite useful, but it will not be enough. Nothing will replace the experience you will acquire as you play. With time, you will be more at ease. While the players will learn to interpret their Inspired with increasing accuracy, you will take over the universe and develop narration techniques to surprise them.

ATMOSPHERE

AGONE's setting is the Twilight Realms. Its atmosphere depends on the intrigues the Inspired will be faced with. It can be at once...

- **Dark:** The Realms are rocked by traitors and their plots. The Masque leaves his touch, the Perfidy, everywhere he goes. Harmundia has a lot of dark sides. The mages cling to their privileges and can be as ambitious as nobles can be ruthless. Shadows hide demons escaped from the Abyss. Hope may well be reduced to ashes by the Damned's Dark Flames.

- **Shakespearean:** Inspired are chosen because of their destinies. Most of them are mortals with responsibilities in the Realms. Manipulated by forces beyond their control, they face factions driven by implacable logic. The Inspired will have to make many sacrifices to save Harmundia from tragedy.

- **Enchanting:** Harmunia is peopled with fantastic beings, seasonings, Prodigies, Wonders and Dancers. The interactions of these people, coupled with the presence of extraordinary fauna and flora, make Harmundia a colorful and unforgettable place.

- **Heroic:** The Inspired are the heroes, the real actors of AGONE's universe. Though just created, they are already part of legends. Their paths are full of mortal pitfalls, perfidious schemes, ignominious treacheries and fantastic encounters. Either they will triumph or they will perish.

- **Harrowing:** With each passing day, danger grows in the Realms but also in everyone's soul. Dark Flames grow in numbers, the Enemy's menace becomes overpowering.

INSPIRED'S TIES, RIGHTS AND DUTIES

♣ Domains

Most of the Inspired are at least middle-aged. Before the first game, these characters had settled down to a

life they thought held few remaining surprises for them. Most of them hold an office, and have responsibilities. A troupe will usually be made up of a domain's main figures (for example a baron and people from his barony). You must make sure that players will not neglect this first side of their characters when they learn about their Flames. Do not hesitate to give them trouble if they do. A baron neglecting his lands, or leaving them in the care of somebody else, in order to go roaming around, should bear the consequences. A master-at-arms neglecting to assert his authority encourages rebellion, etc. In fact, the Inspired's blunders provide many starting points for scenarios, they may even open the way to the Masque's minions...

♣ The Troupe

Inspired are not loners. They cannot fight their enemies effectively without sharing ordeals, victories and defeats. So, they gather in Troupes. Members of a Troupe determine which dangers they will focus on, and what they are prepared to do to keep the Darken or the Masque at bay. Therefore, your role is to send them where trouble is brewing, though this does not necessarily imply a connection to Darkness or Perfidy, but the only way to find out is for the Troupe to go there and investigate with the help of Magical Arts, Ascendancy, occult knowledge and the other talents available to them. A Troupe may well unravel mysteries a single Inspired would only have glimpsed.

♣ Sanctuaries

Wandering through Harmundia, the Inspired might discover a Luminary's sanctuary. They will have to try to understand him. Nevertheless, it does not mean the Troupe can settle down there. Sanctuaries are in no way substitutes for Domains. They are magical places to be protected from Dullen, and even more from the Enemy. You will have to stage this tricky situation. Make them realize that Sanctuaries are the strongholds from which the Twilight veiling Harmundia will be lifted. But the Sanctuary is not theirs; it belongs to the Luminary in residence there. He can teach them a lot, but he is not a free source of knowledge. He is a person, with a personality, quirks and opinions. The Troupe owes him respect, and *cannot afford* to reveal his existence through carelessness.

SCENARIO STARTING POINTS AND STAKES

AGONE's universe offers countless possibilities for adventures and intrigues, but there are starting points available that you can use. The following paragraphs are only suggestions to help you discover the kinds of tales your Troupe may like. There are many others, which are up to you to imagine and develop. AGONE's adventures come under various guises. The most common one is a scenario, which reaches its conclusion at the end of a six to ten hour game. A setting is the detailed descrip-

tion of a place including characters, NPCs, stakes, etc., where several scenarios can take place. For example, domains are obvious setting material. Finally, several scenarios linked together by a common underlying framework make up a campaign.

♣ Troupe versus Darken

A member of the Troupe encounters the Darkness and incurs the enmity of a demon or High Devil. This unfortunate soul has atrocious nightmares that soon materialize. He starts being terrified of the dark and shadows. Are demons going to attack him? Are the Inspired strong enough to face them and protect their companion? Is there a way to get rid of the Abyss creatures? Should they make a deal? As Inspired, their natural tendency is to fight for Harmundia's balance. The Darken and its demons will certainly be the first obstacles they encounter. As intrigues go by, your players should discover that the Darken is not what they believed it was. It can be learned from and many secrets await discovery in the Abyss, where Demons and High Devils dwell. The players should understand that the Abyss' master is not Nyx anymore, the incarnation of the Night, and Diurn's brother, but that he is manipulated by the Masque. The Troupe will most probably start looking for places and objects infected by Darkness and Perfidy. Great quests await them, which will lead them to the outermost bounds of the Realms. What of Rowana, the Greedy Sword, which Nyx is said to have forged in dragon's blood before thrusting it into Urganand's back? Or of the blood-red cromlechs from which the Wild Reaches Dancers have fled since the Darkness awoke there? Going down into the Abyss is not the best to wish for the Inspired, but one day, when they realize that the Darken can turn against the Masque, the possibility will have to be considered...

♣ Troupe versus Masque

The Inspired fall prey to a perfidious scheme. One of the Masque's agents lives in their Domain. Perhaps they know him? Perhaps one of their friends has been seduced? Even more serious, villagers identify the traitor as one of the Inspired. Has one of them been overcome by Perfidy?

The Ultimate Perfection the Muses wished to achieve through their merging gave birth to a fifth Eternal, a unique unwanted being driven by Perfidy and responsible for the veiling of the Spiritcore. The Masque is the ultimate traitor, the greatest manipulator. He is the Inspired's real enemy. Like the Darken, he can be learned from. But that requires a lot of caution. Getting too close, your Flame might get perverted or snuffed out. The Masque does not like to kill his enemies, he would rather corrupt them and put them under his yoke, the Perfidy. The infiltration of the Realms is a major stake of the game. It can sometimes be brutal (massive invasions) but most of the time remains slow and deliberate (machievellian plots): the Master of Sham's

hellhounds multiply, agents change sides, friends betray friends, coats of arms fade away, lords go mad, places are tainted, powers perverted.

♣ Troupe versus Dullen

The Inspired have neglected the duties pertaining to their offices, angering a group of Dullen. The situation is not yet desperate but if ignored, it can become the source of serious trouble. Is this a scheme of the Great Corrupter, or a snare set by another faction? Which one then? AGONE is not only about secrets and magic. Ordinary wars, where the influence of the Masque is not obvious, are always brewing. As a medieval universe, Harmundia is much akin to fictions such as *Excalibur*, *Flesh and Blood*, *Braveheart*, *Ivanhoe*, Robin Hood's stories and *The Thirteenth Warrior*. Troupe members holding offices are also involved in the everyday life of their time, outside of their Inspired status.

♣ Troupe versus Cipher-sorcerer

The Dullen from the Cipher-sorcerer forever long for supremacy and always keep a major plot or two cooking. They again intend to brew trouble in the Realms. To do so, maybe they will choose to use your Troupe? Perhaps the Inspired's Domain will be their first target!

Rivalries within the Cipher-sorcerer are a great source for scenarios. The three allegiances obviously do not get on particularly well. Some sorcerers have very strong personal ambitions, and alliances and factions have formed. Above all, Dancers represent such wealth that it excites everybody's greed. If the Inspired are deeply involved in the practice of the Ascendancy and in the intrigues pertaining to it, their brushes with the hierarchy and their progress through the mysteries of the Order will, in the long run, make them take numerous turns.

There are also the fearsome Censors, whose inquiries are so efficient. The Inspired might have been suspected, wrongly or not, of having broken one the Cipher-Sorcerer's laws. They will have to wrestle with its merciless agents, or maybe with a dilemma if one of the Inspired is himself a Censor. Ascendancy being the only kind of magic accessible to Dullen, rivalries between Dull and Inspired sorcerers are plentiful and fertile. Competition, race for power, Dancer and Gem smuggling, the search for Shard, and Remains and Relics are highly likely to confront the Inspired with numerous conflicts.

♣ Treasures and magical creatures

Harmundia is, first and foremost, an enchanted universe. Therefore, the Inspired's adventures could also focus on this aspect. Think about using buildings designed by the Square, the magical art of the Shape, or places and sites touched by the Eternals' influence (Perfections, Perversions, Sanctuaries, Darkness sites...). Furthermore, Remains and Relics contain some Shard. It follows that, apart from their powers, they have a few surprises in store due to the emotions the Shard radiates. Will the Inspired react to them? What unexpected reac-

tions might arise? The Inspired will probably set out to look for Prodigies and Wonders, as well as for the Perfections left by the Muses. Whole campaigns can be designed around this quest.

Other kinds of magic than the ones presented in this book do exist, for example, combining several Dancers, Magical Arts and Luminaries, Ascendancy and Shard. Dancers can be marked and stolen, smuggled, exploited for what is inside them: bones, rets. Their organs might be used as components for an elixir, or they may be targeted for their spells and information. All of these might be worth investigating, without even mentioning the legend of the winged Dancers!

♣ Concordists and Artifacts

Although solely accessible to Inspired, Magical Arts also give rise to quarrels and greed. Remember that a lot of them do not even know they carry the Flame. Here, there is no higher authority and the only law is the respect Concordists have for each other. Quests can be undertaken to find old masterworks, Elder Art Opuses, the magical museums where they are kept, mentors capable of teaching the most powerful opuses, etc. Looking for a famous Concordist who has vanished might be an excellent excuse for an adventure that focuses on Magical Arts. Concordists also handily make a habit of leaving their Opuses behind as hints or remnants of their knowledge. In AGONE, breaking into a private art collection can mean a lot of discoveries... Finally, Elder Arts Artifacts provide countless possibilities.

♣ Troupe versus Troupe

Another Troupe has just set foot on the Inspired's lands. They should not be enemies, but they may be hiding a Tainted Opus, believing it's under their control. Or maybe they want to use their Flames to take over the area?

♣ Darken versus Masque

Your Troupe is mixed up in one of the numerous plots that pit the Darken against the Masque. Some demons are actually dissatisfied with the part forced upon them by the Master of Sham. They have accordingly decided to use the Inspired to get rid of a particularly troublesome Perfidy agent. But what sad fate awaits the Troupe once the job is done?

♣ The seasonlings

Seasonlings keep a lot of secrets in store. Countless discoveries can be made by joining their communities. They all have strange traditions, surprising laws and local intrigues.

Rivalries between Decans can mean trouble (war stopped a very long time ago, but seasonlings have very long memories). The Fallen are unrelenting enemies. Finally, myths and hopes about the Ladies of the Seasons are fertile. How about getting the Vista's pigments? Or visiting a Lady in her Pictureworld? And what about the Lady

of Fall? Where is she? In what shape? This could be the basis of a whole campaign. The meeting of the Decan Council could be a fascinating scene to stage: the passing on of a Flame, the recovery of Flames stolen by the Masque or replaced by a dark Flame, securing the Flame of a dying Inspired about to become a Luminary before the Enemy gets his perfidious hands on it...

♣ The Muses

How the characters relate to myths is very important in the fantasy genre. In AGONE's case, the Inspired are particularly sensitive to every thing about the Muses: what they did, what they planned, what they left, what they have become, and how to get in touch with them again. This last point – restoring the connection to the Spiritcore – is linked to the Sanctuaries and will not yet be developed but the Inspired should be sure to keep it in mind. The quest for Luminaries also offers various possibilities. They can start other quests based on their memories. ("I remember, before I became a Luminary, I hid the Moorvak Ruby in Keshe's sands...")

The Inspired will face the same kinds of questions about the other Eternals, especially those playing a part in recent historical events. For example, Diurn, as the essence of Daylight, became incarnate in the Dancers; he may well keep in store some ideas about how to regain control of them. Also what of the Glimmers? Where are they hiding and how do they manifest themselves? After all, they would be choice weapons against the Darken's demons...

♣ The Borrowlight and Agone

What fate will befall the Borrowlight? Diurn left his inheritance to Agone, who used it to prevent the Obscurantists from secretly prolonging the war between Urgamand and Janrenia. He then became Urgamand's First Baron. But he did not stay long in his capital. What are his plans? He is Diurn's heir and he perpetuates the training of eminences grise. He has planted other Borrowlights and founded other schools, identical to the first, and just as secret and concealed. The eminences grise play

a very ambiguous part. They are spies and advisers but also, although most of them do not know it, they indirectly serve Janus and can be used by him. He very rarely pronounces Sentences but it can happen, at the end of a campaign for example.

Other more-or-less strange assumptions about Agone of Roundrock go around amongst the Eminences Grises. He remains unique in Harmundia, not only because of his fate but also because of the power of his Flame. Attuned, Eclipsist versed in Obscurantism, owner of a rapier born of the Shape's Elder Art... Since his stay in Borrowlight, he has become an Inspired eminence grise, Diurn's heir but marked (with paleness and white hair) by the Darken, like all the mysterious school's students. His relationship to Diurn and the Darken leads some to think that the best position Janus could have put Agone in would be as Nyx's replacement. The Darken being absent, Agone might be ruling over the demons. Who knows?

♣ Personal quests

The characters' assets, faults and histories are often the source of the best intrigues. What is more exciting than a story taking place in the Inspired's familiar surroundings or using seemingly unimportant decisions made during the previous adventures? Such intrigues are often more credible and weighty than complicated plots in which the Inspired are only indirectly involved.

VARIOUS WAYS TO PLAY

♣ Conan

This is the "traditional" sword and sorcery genre, which relies mainly on the heroes' ability to overcome the trials which block their path. Epic battles, lethal traps, buildings to burglarize, maidens to save, etc. You can count on danger, exotic and cruel perils, the hardships of travel and survival in the wilderness, and complications arising from the Inspired's social status and their attachment to power if they hold offices – baron, clan leader, etc.

♣ The Name of the Rose

The atmosphere of intrigues and mystery is strongly present in the Realms' highest institutions, such as the Cipher-sorcerer, cults like those in the Liturgical Province, schools like the Borrowlight, and noble courts. These scenarios are then made up of investigations, encounters, tailing and interrogating suspects (in Harmundia, everybody is more or less suspect) in order to find a murderer, a hidden creature, a demon working without anybody's knowledge, basements used for ungodly activities, or a Masque plot.

♣ Call of Cthullu

This is one of the masterpieces of role-playing, which is why we have taken the liberty to mention it explicitly. It greatly influenced our design of AGONE. Indeed, forces like the Darken and the Masque can expand the game

AMERTINE

The black fey Amertine, who enchanted Penumbra and followed Agone throughout his rise to power, disappeared in 1434 on the border between Urgamand and the Mercenary Republic. No one knows what became of the fey, remembered as one of the greatest Concordists of her time. There are many theories about her but only three are worth mentioning. The first and most plausible, is that she also accompanied Agone in his mysterious retreat. The second talks of a Call, the black feys' strange disease. The third and most interesting to us, postulates that she could have borne Agone a child through magic. Is this child the one black fey await to rise again? There is no proof of any such thing, but more and more tales bear witness to the presence of a black fey together with a young, winged and gray-skinned girl in the Mercenary Republic. We have already decided to send an eminence on their trail.

into the horror genre. The Inspired become investigators although in a less subtle way than in the "Name of the Rose" option. The might of the creatures and occult forces encountered by the player characters demands that they be cautious, and a little bit crazy, too. This craziness will show through Terror, and through Dark or Perfidious Sorrows.

♣ Quest and travel fantasy

Tolkien, Jordan and Eddings are masters of this approach of fantasy. It focuses on the gathering and long journey of a group bound together by a common quest. The fate of the world is at stake or a new era

must be established. The Inspired's troupe with its diverse skills represents a perfect foundation for this type of adventure. The variety of Realms doesn't hurt, either.

♣ Learning magic

As a specific field of foremost importance in AGONE, magic, in all its guises, can become the focus of the Inspired's attention and your favorite setting for stories. Because they have strong personal interest in Ascendancy or Magical Arts, or because of the scenario's demands, the Inspired may very well dedicate themselves to magic by studying a Dancer or an Artifact, lear-



ning and teaching, seeking a master, designing an Elder Art Opus, seeking and making a Luminary appear, or entrapping an Imp.

♣ The Management of a Domain

This concerns Inspired who decided to play in a Domain and to hold high offices. An upcoming supplement, "The Gray Papers", will explain the game mechanics of a Domain's creation, simulation and management.

CREATING IN HARMUNDIA

The Book One of this manual offers a description of the Realms that can be further expanded by reading upcoming sourcebooks. As an Eminence Grise, you are totally free to create anything you want: characters, places, treasures, creatures, etc.

The atmosphere of the Twilight Realms might be difficult to grasp. It requires a particular way of thinking up and naming things, taking their source in subtle anachronisms and discrepancies. It is about linking things that are seemingly very different such as religion and craftsmanship, emotions and institutions, countries and features or activities (Liturgical Province, Widowlands, Darkdream). Push your ideas to their extremes. If the result seems strange, you are on the right track! Clocks are bigger than in the "real" Middle Ages. An organ enables you to hear and record conversations. A cathedral lies half sunk in a swamp, only accessible by boat...

TROUBLESHOOTING

♣ Giants

These seasonings might become problematic if one is not aware of the risks and limits of their size and might. At first, they seem to present a huge advantage. Yet, if one of your Inspired wishes to play a giant, bear in mind the following recommendations. Even though Harmundia is a cosmopolitan universe, where people live together, not all inns' ceiling will be high enough, not all tools will be big enough, not all carriages will carry a giant's weight, etc. A giant will often have difficulties obtaining common equipment and accessories. Furthermore, a giant's ability to adapt is limited. Encounters requiring discretion are almost out of the question. Also, being very imposing, he will hardly be able to make anybody relaxed and trustful.

♣ The Enemy

Let this be clear: in a role-playing game, the adversaries' might must be adapted to the players' capacities, ambitions and actions. True, the Inspired are quite tough, as we wanted them to be. But a monster must remain a monster, not simply a prey. We also wanted to rediscover the fear that used to grip us during our first games, whenever we thought we heard a goblin growling inside a trunk. Adversaries must be determined, obstinate, aggressive, and prove that they are full participants in the game. It is then possible for your players to establish long-term relationships with them.

In AGONE, the Enemy has two faces: the Darken and the Masque. Allied, they both play a specific part in a specific way. The Darken is the Masque's instrument and as such, its legions are at its master's disposal. In a way, demons are the frontline in the coming war. The Masque, for his part, pulls the strings, insinuating and infiltrating himself, but making himself scarce when the situation gets tough. In any case, secrets are his best trump cards. His minions' strength is limited because of this. A horde of Damned and Maskers are hardly liable to flood over the Inspired's Domain... at least not yet!

At first, the Masque's powers seem difficult to counter. It is not quite true but your players should believe so. Furthermore Sorrows are handicaps, tricky to manage and liable to shatter the Inspired's trust. That's their purpose. But it is up to you to make your players realize - when they discover this aspect of the game - that they are extremely dangerous. Darkness and Perfidy points are irreversible. If need be, you can leave room for exceptions by designing a way to make Sorrows non-permanent, or to remove them temporarily, thanks to high-level magic. But make sure this remains the exception.

An Inspired touched by the Darkness or the Perfidy may spark disgust and distrust in the other members of the Troupe. The presence of an Imp is an obvious hint, difficult to conceal from the others. But the Troupe may also feel anger and compassion in the face of adversity. The Darkening is a symbol of the dangers confronting the Inspired. The Inspired will have to organize their resistance, and find ways and means to fight the Enemy by combining the Inspired's skills, Magical Arts and Ascendancy in their set and improvised forms, and seeking more powerful allies such as Luminaries.





5 ~ Roundrock

Roundrock is a good example of a Domain. The following chapter will help you to become familiar with it. Each part of this presentation of the barony has one or several offices available to your Inspired. We have pointed them out in the text whenever necessary. The attributes of non-player characters holding offices are also available. You are free to modify them as you wish, or to delete them, and entrust their offices to your player-characters.

Some history

The barony of Roundrock has always played an important part in Urgamand's defense strategy because of its location. Its coast is a natural boundary that protects the realm against the Liturgical Province and its legion of fanatics. Through the centuries, the barons of Roundrock proved themselves worthy of this responsibility. As true pillars of the realm, the Roundrocks have taken an active part in protecting Urgamand's interests. Aldermen often tell of Erdhence, Agone's father, who saved

ROUNDROCK'S OFFICES

This chart summarizes Roundrock's main figures. They may be used as long as your Inspired do not hold the offices. These ready-made characters can also be useful in your own scenarios.

- The "baron":** Arbassin
- The baroness:** Ewelf
- The lady-in-waiting:** Leandra
- The steward:** Farl the Elder
- The librarian:** Lady Elyse
- The blacksmith:** Gorn
- The master-at-arms:** Dromion
- The executioner:** Dorak
- The go-between:** Antigone
- The Censor:** Malarmel
- The liturgical spy:** Melhadior
- The Dean of the Jornist Academy:** Albedo
- The Dean of the Eclipsist Academy:** Arbassin
- The Dean of the Obscurantist Academy:** Orchai
- The Captain of Draemona:** Ralmin

BARONY OF ROUNDROCK

- Realm:** Urgamand
- Main town:** Lorgol – also Urgamand's capital.
- Population:** 40% humans, 25% sprites, 25% spriggans, 05% black fey, 05% ogres
- Demons:** uncommon
- Dancers:** common
- Natural resources:** wood, slate, cattle, fish and game.

MELHADIOR, THE LITURGICAL SPY

The Liturgical Province has not given up on its plans for hegemony. They still dream of reuniting Armgard, the empire that was broken into Janrenia, Urgamand and the Liturgical Province after the Fratricide. They have infiltrated spies in historically or strategically significant baronies. Roundrock being both, they have sent their best spy, Melhadior. A tall young man with short golden hair, he mixed with the manor's garrison and won Captain Dromion's trust. He is now his lieutenant.

Age: 26 years **Height:** 5'10" (SIZ 0)
Weight: 135 lbs. **MV:** 5

Attributes

Flame: 02 Dark Flame: 00

Body: 03

Dark Body: 00 Body bonus: +3
 AGility: 9 PERception: 9
 STamina: 7 STREngth: 6

Spirit: 02

Dark Spirit: 01 Spirit bonus: +1
 INTelligence: 7 WILL: 8

Soul: 02

Dark Soul: 01 Soul bonus: +1
 CHARisma: 6 CREativity: 6

Secondary Attributes

MEL: 8 AIM: 9 ASC: - ART: 6
 HP: 54 SWT: 18 CWT: 27 DB: 0

Fortune points: 4

Darkening Points: 11

Perfidy Points: 12

Max. Load: 180

Half Load: 90

Daily Load: 45

Skills

Knowledge: Alphabet 6, Astronomy 2, Beast lore (spe: venomous species) 5, Cult: Liturgy 7, Geography: Urgamand 6, History & legends: liturgist 7, History & legends: Urgamand 8, Languages: Urgamish 6, Language: Sacred Tongue 7, Law 6, Medicine 4, Navigation 5, Plant lore 4

Trials: Alertness 10, Athletics 6, Dodge 7, First Aid 5, Ride 6, Survival 5, Swim 6, Weapon: sword 7, dagger 8, crossbow 7

Courtly: Diplomacy 4, Eloquence 7, Etiquette: Liturgist society 6, Etiquette: urgamand 6, Fast Talk 7, Stewardship 3, Traditions: liturgist 6, Traditions: urgamand 6

Occult: Cipher-sorcerer 5, Concord 4, Dancers lore 3, Demonology 4

Rogue: Acrobatics 6, Conceal 8, Disguise 8, Hunt 5, Intrigue 5, Legerdemain 6, Locksmith 7, Poisons 7, Search 7

Assets, Gifts, faults and Sorrows

Spy network (liturgists), Secret hideout (a small inlet along the coast), Blackmail (he has observed

the servants' little tricks), Consummate acting (Perfidious Gift), Dark secret (liturgist spy), Tempted by the Masque, Mischiefous Imp (Dark Sorrow), Hypocrisy (Perfidious Sorrow)

Combat

Melee attack: sword 19, dagger 21

Ranged attack: 20

Melee defense

Dodge: 19

Parry: sword 19, dagger 19

Ranged defense: 9

Armor

Leather

Vest only: penalty -1, protection 3
 partial: penalty -1, protection 3

Equipment: A few blank scrolls, a couple of carrier pigeons, a flask of turbid liquid (5 doses of Wyvern bile), a well-made sword, a sharp dagger, a crossbow, 20 bolts, some food, an assortment of ill-matching cloths (enough to disguise one's self as nobleman, bourgeois, soldier or tramp), a well-seasoned horse, falsified credentials from a faraway barony

Typical quote: "Do not worry, I have listened closely to what you just said."

Weapon (s)

| Weapon | Init. | Att. | Def. | Dam. + DB | SIZ | Range |
|----------|-------|------|------|-----------|-----|-------|
| Sword | +1 | +1 | +1 | +4 (I/C) | 0 | - |
| Dagger | 0 | 2 | 0 | +1 (I) | -1 | 24 |
| Crossbow | +5 | +1 | - | +8 (I) | 0 | 120 |

the realm by unmasking five treacherous barons that were selling cardinal information about Urgamand's defense to the Modehans. Thirty years ago, Janrenia's troops invaded Urgamand with the help of the Liturgical Province. The occupation was marked by numerous atrocities, neither forgotten nor forgiven by the peasants of the barony.

Since then Agone of Roundrock has been the realm's First Baron. He rules from Lorgol's Borrowlight - although he has not been seen there for a long time - while his sister manages the barony with her husband Arbassin and a few Inspired (your players-characters?)

The Manor

THE MAIN BUILDING

In the middle of a large clearing lined by hundred years old trees, stands the baron of Roundrock's manor.

Erected by the dwarves of the Square, the construction hides many surprises. After lengthy renovations to fill in old cracks and straighten the gargoyles looming dangerously over the paved yard, the main building finally resembles a gleaming palace. The manor is still a fortress, even more than during the reign of Agone's father. The purely military features of the construction are skillfully hidden behind a pleasant facade.

Inside the manor, a subtle combination of Vista and Shape enabled the Square's Concordists to create a series of unusually large rooms, all richly and comfortably furnished as well as decorated with works from all over Harmondia.

Only a small permanent garrison - ten men-at-arms - is now stationed in the manor to ensure its safety. There is no jail, to Dromion's and Ralmin's great dismay.

♣ The main room

Behind a massive double door, which seals the hall, lies the Manor's main room. In the center, a heavy table, lined on both sides by matching weighty chairs and armchairs,

takes up most of the space. This is where people gather. Meals are served by servants under the silent gaze of the family's portraits. In winter, the manor's inhabitants meet in front of the gigantic hearth at the back of the room. It is here that, once a week, Lady Ewelf listens to the grievances of the barony's peasants before dispensing justice.

♣ The armory

Connected to the main room, this large square room houses fully assembled standing suits of armor that keep watch on the waist-high racks holding a variety of arms. Between the silent metallic watchers, small glass cabinets display maps of the Twilight Realms. Dromion, the master-at-arms, studies them whenever he finds himself without a training partner or troop maneuvers to lead.

♣ The library

The Manor's north wing has been turned into a library. Ten yards long and four yards wide, the room is plastered, from floor to ceiling, with shelves, made from the Modehan Marches' king-trees, that display books from every Twilight Realm.

In the middle of the room, chairs surround gaming furniture: carpeted tables for cards, secretaries holding puzzles from the Princely Communes, pedestal tables supporting brainteasers from the Widowlands, etc.

This reliable source of knowledge and entertainment is the responsibility of Lady Elyse, who spends long evenings with Lady Ewelf between games and shelves. During the day, Antigone, a gorgeous medusa, in a long dress with the breathtakingly low necklines famous in all Urgamand's baronies, can often be found there.

♣ The bedrooms

A series of identical bedrooms (apart from Arbassin and Ewelf's) occupies the first floor. They all contain at least a bed and a heavy wooden chest reinforced by metallic frames. Only the decoration and other pieces of furniture vary. Their doors all sport locks with various intricate mechanisms, which only a few people use. Every morning a chambermaid makes the beds in those left open.

THE SMITHY

Standing next to the manor's stables, the smithy cannot be missed. Stifling blasts of hot air and the unremitting jangle of metal being hammered by Gorn the blacksmith, constantly burst from this freestone building opening on the Manor's paved yard. Twice a day, at sunrise and sunset, the manor's master-at-arms comes

around. In the morning, he and Gorn assess the necessary repairs on the arms the barony's men need. In the evening, they drink great pints of Janrenian beer to Agone and Ewelf of Roundrock's health.

THE OUTHUSES

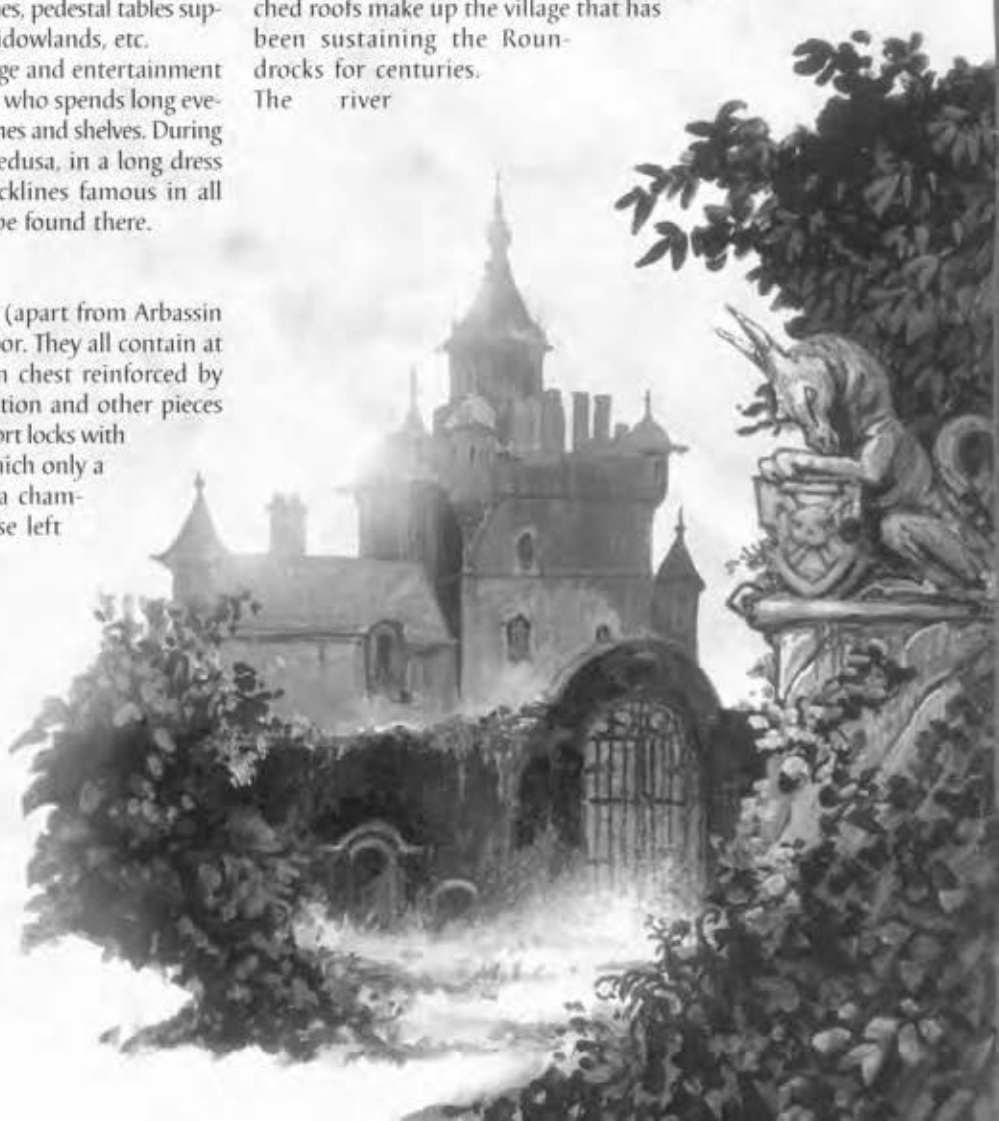
This part of the Manor includes the kitchen, full of noisy servants and colorful foods, the wine cellar and the lodgings of Farl the Elder, who keeps a close eye on the staff. Ewelf is the only person with an office who sometimes visits the kitchen in the morning. She does so when she needs an update on the manor's gossip.

The surroundings

THE VILLAGE

Half an hour walk from the manor (for a human) two dozen wooden peasant houses with thatched roofs make up the village that has been sustaining the Roundrocks for centuries.

The river



DROMION, MASTER-AT-ARMS

Endowed with a powerful set of muscles, used to heavy weapons, Dromion sports clear blue eyes set off by snow-white hair that glistens in the sun.

His father fought with Agone against Janrenia and the Liturgical Province, and taught his son resentment and distrust towards these two realms. Consequently, Dromion has a tendency to see a plot behind every unusual event. Each newcomer in Rockround could be a Janrenian spy. Unfortunately, this latent paranoia plays nasty tricks on him, as in the case of Antigone, a medusa living in the manor and the love of his life. For him, it was a perfect romance until he started suspecting her of brewing some scheme against the barony. He hired thieves from Lorgoi to keep an eye on her. She found out and left him, mad with anger. Dromion never got over it, although he is still convinced that she is a spy. But whom does she work for?

Age: 35 **Height:** 6'10" (SIZ 1)
Weight: 190 lbs. **MV:** 3

Attributes

Flame: 0 Dark Flame: 0

Body: 0

Dark Body: 0 Body bonus: 0
AGility: 8 STrength: 8
PERception: 7 STamina: 9

Spirit: 0

Dark Spirit: 0 Spirit bonus: 0
INTelligence: 6 WILL: 7

Soul: 0

Dark Soul: 0 Soul bonus: 0
CHARisma: 5 CREativity: 5

Secondary Attributes

ART: - MEL: 8 ASC: - AIM: 7
HP: 56 SWT: 18 CWT: 28 DB: +2

Darkening Points: 0

Perfidy Points: 0

Max. Load: 220

Half Load: 110

Daily Load: 80

Skills

Knowledge: Alphabet 3, Geography 5, History and legends (spe: military history) 6, Languages: urgamish 5, Law (spe: Roundrock's law) 6, Strategy 5

Trials: Weapon: sword 9, battle-axe 7, great lance 7, dagger 7, bow 6, shield 9, Athletics 7, Ride 8, Climb 4, Dodge 8, First Aid 2, Alertness 5

Courtly: Etiquette: Roundrock's nobility 5, Stewardship (spe: Roundrock's military organisation) 7

Occult: -

Rogue: Acrobatics 2, Stealth 1, Search 3, Intrigue 1

Assets, Gifts, faults and Sorrows

Huge. Office: master-at-arms, Paranoia

Combat

Melee attack: sword 18, axe 15, spear 15, dagger 17, shield 17

Ranged attack: 13

Melee defense

Dodge: 2

Parry: sword 18, axe 14, spear 15, dagger 15, shield 21.

Ranged defense: 1

Armor

Plate

Complete: penalty -14, protection 14
Knight shield: 21

Equipment: As a permanent resident in the manor, Dromion has access to virtually anything he might need.

Typical quote: *"A little training can do no harm. Then we'll have a beer, shall we?"*

Weapon(s)

| Weapon | Init. | Att. | Def. | Dam. + DB | SIZ | Range |
|--------------|-------|------|------|-----------|-----|-------|
| Sword | 1 | 1 | 1 | +6 (I/C) | 0 | - |
| Battle-axe | 1 | 0 | -1 | +8 (C) | 1 | - |
| Riding-spear | +6 | 0 | -2 | +9 (I) | +1 | - |
| Dagger | 0 | 2 | 0 | +3 (I) | 0 | 32 |
| Bow | +4 | 0 | - | +7 (I) | 1 | 80 |
| Shield | -5 | 0 | +4 | +1 (C) | 0 | - |

FARL THE ELDER

Bent by the years, Farl is quite puny, with long salt-and-pepper hair. Roundrock Manor's steward was already there when Agone left for the Borrowlight. He has survived the most troubled times of the Barony and has always been loyal to the Roundrock family.

Age: 62 **Height:** 5'5" (SIZ 0)
Weight: 180 lbs. **MV:** 3

Attributes

Flame: 0 Dark Flame: 0

Body: 0

Dark Body: 0 Body bonus: 0
AGility: 4 STrength: 4
PERception: 9 STamina: 3

Spirit: 0

Dark Spirit: 0 Spirit bonus: 0
INTelligence: 7 WILL: 7

Soul: 0

Dark Soul: 0 Soul bonus: 0
CHARisma: 6 CREativity: 5

Secondary Attributes

ART: - MEL: 4 ASC: - AIM: 6
HP: 56 SWT: 12 CWT: 18 DB: -1

Darkening Points: 7

Perfidy Points: 1

Max. Load: 100

Half Load: 50

Daily Load: 25

Skills

Knowledge: Alphabet 5, Geography 5, History and legends 7, Languages: urgamish 6, Law 4, Plant Lore 3

Trials: Alertness 6, First Aid 4

Courtly: Diplomacy 4, Etiquette:

nobility 6, Stewardship 9, Trade 7, Traditions: Roundrock 7

Occult: -

Rogue: Conceal 4, Hunt 2, Intrigue 5, Search 2

Combat

Melee attack: -

Ranged attack: -

Melee defense

Dodge: 1

Parry: -

Ranged defense: 0

Equipment: As a permanent resident in the manor, Farl has access to virtually anything he might need.

Typical quote: *"What are you doing here? Do you think your daydreaming is worth the salary Lady Ewelf pays you?"*

ANTIGONE, THE GO-BETWEEN

Tall, voluptuous, and all smiles - this is what springs to a man's mind when encountering Antigone. This medusa is quite bewitching, but her heart is already taken by Dromion, the master-at-arms. She is a sucker for complicated love stories and through the years, her romantic side has led her to become a schemer. She spends most of her time thinking up ideal couples, and doing her best to help them meet in appropriate conditions. The rat Dromion thought he had smelled had nothing to do with spying or treason, and everything with romantic affairs. Since Antigone got rid of the spies Dromion assigned to keep her under surveillance. She has been nurturing a stubborn resentment towards him whom she nevertheless still loves. She doesn't acknowledge her love - not even to herself - so her serpents, while suspicious, haven't tried to kill her yet. She is convinced that she was just "entertaining" herself with him.

Age: 22 **Height:** 6' (SIZ 0)
Weight: 120 lbs. **MV:** 3

Attributes

Flame: 0 Dark Flame: 0

Body: 0

Dark Body: 0 Body bonus: 0

AGility: 6 STREngth: 4

PERception: 7 STAMina: 5

Spirit: 0

Dark Spirit: 0 Spirit bonus: 0

INTelligence: 7 WILL: 6

Soul: 0

Dark Soul: 0 Soul bonus: 0

CHARisma: 10 CREativity: 5

Secondary Attributes

ART: - MEL: 5 ASC: - AIM: 6

HP: 42 SWT: 14 CWT: 21 DB: -1

Darkening Points: 0

Perfidy Points: 0

Max. Load: 120

Half Load: 60

Daily Load: 40

Skills

Knowledge: Alphabet 4, History & legends (spe: romantic love stories) 7, Languages: urgamand 6, Language: ophidian 5, Plant lore 2, Season: winter 5

Trials: Alertness 5, Athletics 5, Ride 5, Weapon: snakes 5

Courty: Diplomacy 3, Eloquence 7, Etiquette: Roundrock's nobility 5, Fast Talk 5, Stewardship 5, Traditions: lovers rituals 7

Occult: Cipher-sorcerer 1, Dancers lore 1, Demonology 1

Rogue: Intrigue 7, Stealth 4

Assets, Gifts, faults and Sorrows

Attractive, has a Soft spot for Dromion.

Combat

Melee attack: 10

Ranged attack: -

Melee defense

Dodge: 5

Parry: -

Ranged defense: 1

Equipment: Several books borrowed from the library (syrupy love stories) make-up, top quality clothes

Typical quote: "This story is so tragic. You like it?"

Weapon (s)

| Weapon | Init. | Att. | Def. | Dam. + DB | SIZ |
|--------|-------|------|------|-----------|-----|
| Snakes | -1 | +3 | -0 | no armor | - |

Her snakes inject a deadly poison of VIR 15 + 5M of the hit roll.

Amuvel flows through it and the whole barony. The village center amounts to an unpaved square maintained around a well and a stone washtub built on the river's shore. There are very few shops. The domain's real center is Lorgol. Here there are only simple habitations, where adults, children and animals often share one or two rooms.

THE EXECUTIONER'S HOUSE

Outside the village, on the road that goes not far from the Unicorn Inn, a stone building can be seen. It is covered with a special ivy that blooms with blood-red flowers in the summer. These are the lodgings of the Barony's executioner. Although there has not been an execution in years, people pointedly avoid his house.

THE JORNIST ACADEMY

It towers over the area, occupying a dodecagonal three-stories building on the top of the highest of the Varein Hills. The roof and walls of the top floor are adorned with stained-glass windows and openings, created by Concordist dwarves of the Vista. Light coming through them draws mysterious arabesques on this floor's only room. These complex patterns are the joy of Dancers who

love roaming the room, dancing on the shadows outlined on the floor, their heads bathed in light. The Jornist academy is headed by Albedo, a Princely Communes denizen. His attributes are the same as the Jornist archetype in Book Two. The spells his seven Dancers have access to are up to you.

The academy also houses Malarmel, the most dreaded Censor of the Realm.

Lorgol

THE THOUSAND TOWERS

An extraordinary remain of the Flamboyance, these harrowing towers spread their shadows over the city for centuries before Agone planted a Borrowlight in their midst. The tree's black branches encircled and penetrated the stone arches and buttresses, plunging the tortuous streets snaking around the towers into a constant twilight.

THE SLUMS

Now Urgamand's capital, Lorgol was once famous for its seedy neighborhoods. The dark and gloomy

ELYSE, THE LIBRARIAN

A petite, fair-haired lady with emerald eyes, Elyse has spent most of her life in the company of books. From Obscurantist libraries to Roundrocks, Elyse loves books and the knowledge they impart. She spends most of her time reading, and reading again, treatises of all kinds. Because of her theoretical knowledge of many fields, she is often called upon by urgamand noblemen for advice.

Age: 29 **Height:** 5'4" (SIZ 0)
Weight: 105 lbs. **MV:** 3

Attributes

Flame: 0 **Dark Flame:** 0

Body: 0

Dark Body: 0 **Body bonus:** 0
AGility: 6 **STRength:** 5
PERception: 7 **STamina:** 5

Spirit: 0

Dark Spirit: 0 **Spirit bonus:** 0
INTelligence: 8 **WILL:** 5

Soul: 0

Dark Soul: 0 **Soul bonus:** 0
CHARisma: 6 **CREativity:** 5

Secondary Attributes

ART: - **MEL:** 5 **ASC:** - **AIM:** 6
HP: 45 **SWT:** 15 **CWT:** 22 **DB:** 0

Darkening Points: 0

Perfidy Points: 0

Max. Load: 140

Half Load: 70

Daily Load: 35

Skills

Knowledge: Alphabet 9, Astronomy 2, Beast lore 2, Cult: all religions 1, Geography 6, Plant lore 2, History and legends 6, Languages: all 8, Law 2, Medicine 1, Navigation 1, Seasons: all 1, Strategy 1, Surgery 1

Trials: Alertness 2

Courtly: Eloquence 3, Etiquette: nobility 5, Music 1, Painting 3, Poetry 6, Sculpture 1, Stewardship 3, Traditions: numerous realms 2

Occult: Concord 3, Cipher-sorcerer 2, Dancers lore 1, Demonology 1, Scansion 1, Shape 1, Tune 1, Vista 1

Rogue: Intrigue 1, Gambling 1, Poisons 1, Stealth 2, Search 2

Assets, Gifts, faults and Sorrows

None

Combat

Melee attack: -
Ranged attack: -
Melee defense:
Dodge: 3
Parry: -
Ranged defense: -

Equipment: As a permanent resident in the manor, Elyse has access to virtually anything she might need.

Typical quote: "Can the omen butterflies foretell the future? Indeed but it rarely happens. If you wish to know more, see volume 4 of the *Compilation of Extraordinary Animals*. Or is it volume 5?"

MALARMEL THE CENSOR

In accordance with Agone's will when he became First Baron, Roundrock, as well as all Urgamand's baronies, opened magic schools. Thirty-five years later, they are prosperous and respected (which does not mean they are open to anybody). Malarmel, like all Censors, is responsible for watching over the sorcerers to make sure no one betrays the Cipher-sorcerer's will.

Tall, with pitch-black hair, Malarmel wears gray or light blue clothes that enable him to go unnoticed.

Age: 35 **Height:** 5'8" (SIZ 0)
Weight: 130 lbs. **MV:** 3

Attributes

Flame: 0 **Dark Flame:** 0

Body: 0

Dark Body: 0 **Body bonus:** 0
AGility: 6 **STRength:** 5
PERception: 7 **STamina:** 6

Spirit: 0

Dark Spirit: 0 **Spirit bonus:** 0
INTelligence: 8 **WILL:** 8

Soul: 0

Dark Soul: 0 **Soul bonus:** 0
CHARisma: 8 **CREativity:** 5

Secondary Attributes

ART: - **MEL:** 5 **ASC:** 8 **AIM:** 6
HP: 48 **SWT:** 16 **CWT:** 24 **DB:** 0

Darkening Points: 7

Perfidy Points: 0

Max. Load: 150

Half Load: 75

Daily Load: 38

Skills

Knowledge: Alphabet: septentrian 8, Alphabet: armgardic 8, History & Legends (spe: Cipher-sorcerers renegades) 8, Languages: urgamish 6, Law (spe: Cipher-sorcerer) 7

Trials: Alertness 9, Athletics 6, Climb 4, Dodge 6, Ride 5

Courtly: Etiquette: Cipher-sorcerer 6, Traditions: Cipher-sorcerer 7

Occult: Cipher-sorcerer 9, Dancers Lore 9, Demonology 2, Resonance 9

Rogue: Acrobatics 3, Conceal 6, Disguise 3, Hunt 5, Intrigue 1, Legerdemain 4, Locksmith 2, Stealth 6, Search 5

Assets, Gifts, faults and Sorrows

Office: censor, Gifted Dancer (twice).

Multiple Dancers (2), Dark secret (a Jormist is supposed to respect life, which is not always the case with Malarmel)

Combat

Melee attack: -
Ranged attack: -
Melee defense:
Dodge: 11
Parry: -
Ranged defense: 5

Armor

Leather
Vest only: modifier -1, protection 2

Weapon

None, except his dancers

Spells

Most of Malarmel's spells are offensive, but he also has a number of others. Take for granted that he has everything he needs.

Equipment: His clothes, his Dancers. What else does a Jormist Censor need?

Typical quote: "Magic has its secrets. If you do not respect this, you shall die by the sparks of my Dancers!"

| Dancer (s) | Memory | Asc. Mod. | Empathy | STA |
|------------|--------|-----------|---------|-----|
| Zihi | 40 | 4 | 5 | 7 |
| Pic | 40 | 3 | 6 | 7 |

alleys taught life the hard way and were extremely dangerous. Taverns and inns amounted to thieves' dens. Fortunes were made and lost there in seconds with tears and blood. The worst murderers and most cunning robbers are still on the prowl, looking for easy catches. There are many exciting urban adventures to be had.

THE NEW SPARK INN

Thirty years ago, a choreographer of genius, Eyhidiaz, founded a tavern, the Spark. Until the invasion of Urgamand, it was the realm's Eclipsist haven. Since peace has been restored in Roundrock and the sixteen other baronies, the Spark has regained its status as a Cipher-sorcerer's den. The heavy drapes and wide white marble tables are back. The Eclipsists' Dancers are again masters of the place.

The Spark was built by Araknir, a dwarf of the Square, and gifted Attuned, who endowed the place with a gigantic set of organ pipes. In the walls, what look to laymen like copper patches and ventilation notch are in fact the instrument's tubes. The keyboard and the structure's base are in an adjoining building, whose doors and windows have been bricked up. Roofs are topped with stone gargoyles everybody believes to be alive, although no one has ever seen any of them move.

Many say the Spark is one of Agone of Rockround's secret lairs. As for the Eclipsist Academy, it is headed by Arbassin, Ewelf's husband.

THE UNDERGROUND NETWORK

Ogres and spriggans haunt Lorgol's gloomy underground passages. Some hunt Dancers according to the Small Hunters' tradition. Others have formed guilds with other mortal mercenaries, thieves or assassins. The latter scour the town, leaving dozens of dead bodies behind them. This underground cesspit is the city's - and also the realm's - spawning pool for criminals.

Draemona

Erected on a rocky island off Roundrock's shores, the fortress of Draemona towers over sheer cliffs. This coastal stronghold has always been the impassable rampart shielding Urgamand from the Liturgical crusades. The realm having been freed from the Liturgist yoke, the fortress was restored and its garrison augmented. It now constitutes one of Urgamand's most strategic points.

Ships draw alongside a pier, from which wide stairs lead to a garrison under the protection of a wall pierced with loopholes. Overlooking the military port, the bastion displays its crenellated walls, their catapults and ballistae. The whole construction is topped by eight square towers, themselves towered over by an impressive keep soaring up from the center of the structure. A thousand and five hundred men under Captain Ralmin's orders ensure Draemona's good working order.

DORAK, THE MINOTAUR EXECUTIONER

Dorak wears ancient breeches and a black and red hood that falls to his chest. No one knows anything about him, but all fear his axe and horns. His office isolates him and makes him surly. He dreads getting friendly with anybody, in case they find themselves under his executioner's axe someday.

Age: 24 **Height:** 8' (SIZ + 1)
Weight: 420 lbs. **MV:** 4

Attributes

Flame: 0 Dark Flame: 0

Body: 0

Dark Body: 0 Body bonus: 0
AGility: 8 STrength: 12
PERception: 4 STamina: 12

Spirit: 0

Dark Spirit: 1 Spirit bonus: -1
INTelligence: 5 WILL: 6

Soul: 0

Dark Soul: 0 Soul bonus: 0
CHARisma: 4 CREativity: 4

Secondary Attributes

ART: - MEL: 9 ASC: - AIM: 6
HP: 90 SWT: 30 CWT: 45 DB: +10

Darkening Points: 10

Perfidy Points: 0

Max. Load: 480

Half Load: 240

Daily Load: 120

Skills

Knowledge: Languages: urgamish 4, Law 3, Season: summer 5

Trials: Weapon: horns 6, battle-axe 8, Alertness 7, Athletics 3, Ride 2

Courty: Etiquette: death row 5, Traditions: death row 6

Occult: Demonology 5

Rogue: -

Assets, Gifts, faults and Sorrows

Office: executioner, Mischievous Imp

Combat

Melee attack: horns 15, axe 17

Ranged attack: -

Melee defense

Dodge: 5

Parry: 16

Ranged defense: 2

Armor

Padded vest

Vest only: modifier 0, protection 1

Equipment: A large axe, a hood, an incredible collection of old-fashioned clothes (from old "clients"), an isolated small house, a worn and stained block

Typical quote: "Don't get too smart or I may very well be the last person you get smart with."

Weapon (s)

| Weapon | Init. | Att. | Def. | Dam. + DB | SIZ |
|------------|-------|------|------|-----------|-----|
| Horns | -1 | 0 | N/A | +3 (I) | - |
| Battle axe | +1 | 0 | -1 | +8 (C) | +1 |

GORN, THE OGRE BLACKSMITH

Of strong and sturdy built, Gorn is an albino ogre and a loyal companion to Dromion. The latter actually saved Gorn's life during one of the ill-reputed tavern fights he likes to participate in when he has been drinking.

Age: 36 **Height:** 6'8" (SIZ 0)
Weight: 210 lbs. **MV:** 3

Attributes

Flame: 0 Dark Flame: 0

Body: 0

Dark Body: 0 Body bonus: 0
 AGility: 4 STRength: 11
 PERception: 6 STamina: 12

Spirit: 0

Dark Spirit: 0 Spirit bonus: 0
 INTelligence: 4 WILL: 6

Soul: 0

Dark Soul: 0 Soul bonus: 0
 CHARisma: 5 CREativity: 6

Secondary Attributes

ART: - MEL: 6 ASC: - AIM: 5
 HP: 66 SWT: 22 CWT: 33 DB: +6

Darkening Points: 0

Perfidy Points: 0

Max. Load: 320

Half Load: 160

Daily Load: 80

Skills

Knowledge: Geography (spe: iron mines) 6, History & Legends 5, Language: urgamish 4, Season: summer 5, Surgery 5

Trials: Weapon: hammer 7, Alertness 5, Athletics 4, Climb 3, Dodge 4, First Aid 5,

Courtly: Crafts: smithy 7, Trade 4, Traditions: urgamand 4

Occult: -

Rogue: Locksmith 6

Assets, Gifts, faults and Sorrows

None

Combat

Melee attack: 13
 Ranged attack: -
 Melee defense
 Dodge: 8
 Parry: 13
 Ranged defense: 4

Armor

Leather apron
 Vest only: penalty 0, protection +2

Equipment: A forge and all sorts of tools, a blackened leather apron, a enormous hammer and a few horses to shoe.

Typical quote: "Come on, stop putting on this sorry face! Let's empty these barrels, it'll lift our spirits."

Weapon (s)

| Weapon | Init. | Att. | Def. | Dam. + DB | SIZ |
|------------|-------|------|------|-----------|-----|
| War Hammer | 0 | 0 | +5 | +5 (1/C) | 0 |

BORROW LIGHT'S GHOSTS

PER 12, WIL 10, INT 6, SIZ 0, MV 6

Skills

Dodge 6, Alertness 10, Stealth 10

Darkening points: -

Perfidy points: 100

When faced with the Borrowlight's ghosts, mortals must successfully test their WIL against DIF 30 or receive 1d10 + 10 Perfidy points. Ghosts can snuff the Inspired's Flames.

The swamps

A few decades ago, the Liturgists managed to annex Roundrock's marshlands and its northern forest. There they built villages and churches dedicated to Saint Noven, which enabled them to organize the realm's occupation. For fifteen long years, local people were subject to heavy-handed "conversion" attempts, until the Baron of Roundrock's troops succeeded in driving them back to sea. Having no choice but to go home, the Liturgists nurtured a strong desire for vengeance. They attempted many times to re-conquer the area, without success.

Years later, when the plots rocking the Cipher-sorcerer led to Urgamand's invasion, the realm's last loyal knights gathered around Agone of Roundrock's figure in the ruins of the swamps' churches. They all assembled in Adelguen, the only cathedral erected by the Liturgists.

THE FRONTIER

Nowadays the marsh has reasserted itself. The bridges and dikes built by the Liturgists have been taken over by brackish waters and vegetation. An army would not be able to cross one way or the other. In the shadows of the flooded alleys of tilted buildings and ghost villages, the boatman Arnuel can be encountered, as well as two greedy trolls. These two sometimes lurk in the villagers' fields to pilfer fruits.

ADELGUEN

Endowed with two square towers, this massive cathedral has lived through bloody upheavals. The sky shows through the roof in many places. Water streams inside all year round, rotting the light-colored wooden floor Agone's father had laid over the whole length of the cathedral. Walking across from nave to transept, one treads on broken lanterns, torn drapes and copper-colored gonfalons that used to hang from the arches. Great names can still be deciphered on them such as Arbasin, Malyen, Eyhidiaz, and Araknir. Wherever one looks, the light rays filtering through the broken stained glass windows only reveal chaos. (A picture of the cathedral serves as the opening illustration of this Book).

THE OBSCURANTIST ACADEMY

Hidden deep in Roundrock's swamps, the Obscurantists' school of magic occupies a building that has one story above ground and two underground. From the

ARNUEL THE BOATMAN

For twenty years, this hunchback has been haunting the swamps from the Liturgical Province to Urgamand. Twenty years risking his life so that caravaneers and merchants can smuggle between the two realms. Arnuel is getting tired of smuggling.

Age: 51 **Height:** 5'11" (SIZ) 0
Weight: 140 lbs. **MV:** 3

Attributes

Flame: 0 Dark Flame: 0

Body: 0

Dark Body: 0 Body bonus: 0
AGility: 4 STrength: 7
PERception: 6 STamina: 6

Spirit: 0

Dark Spirit: 0 Spirit bonus: 0
INtelligence: 4 WILL: 5

Soul: 0

Dark Soul: 0 Soul bonus: 0
CHARisma: 2 CREativity: 3

Secondary Attributes

ART: - MEL: 5 ASC: - AIM: 5
HP: 51 SWT: 17 CWT: 25 DB: +1

Darkening Points: 0

Perfidy Points: 0

Max. Load: 180

Half Load: 90

Daily Load: 45

Skills

Knowledge: Astronomy 7, Beast lore 4, Geography (spe: Roundrock's swamps) 9, History and legends 4, Languages: urgamish 5, Navigation (spe: swamps) 7, Plant lore 4

Trials: Weapon: great staff 4, Alertness 7, Survival (spe: swamp) 7, Swim 6.

Courtly: Traditions: urgamand 5

Occult: -

Rogue: Conceal 5, Hunt (spe: swamps) 6, Stealth 7

Assets, Gifts, faults and Sorrows
Spy network, Deformity, hunchbacked

Combat

Melee attack: 11
Ranged attack: -
Melee defense
Dodge: 0
Parry: 11
Ranged defense: 0

Armor

Leather
Vest only: penalty -1, protection 2

Equipment: Myriad flat-bottomed boats hidden in the swamps, two tiny peat houses, a long boat hook.

Typical quote: "Smuggle, smuggle, smuggle... That is all they can say. For a few coins, it happens."

Weapon (s)

| Weapon | Init. | Att. | Def. | Dam. + DB | SIZ |
|--------|-------|------|------|-----------|-----|
| Staff | 2 | 2 | 2 | +4 C | +1 |

underground passages starts a tunnel, excavated thanks to the Dancers' magic, reaching Lorgol's caves through an endless network of galleries. The academy is headed by one of Agone's oldest (and most unsavory) companions, Orchal.

The Schools

THE PRECEPTORIAL FRATERNITY

As the only noble inheritance from the Liturgical Province, these teachers were given permission by Agone to stay in Urgamand. To be accepted by all barons, they had to renounce their traveling, which was seen as a liability to the security of the Realm. Nevertheless, the other itinerants of the Twilight Realms still call them brothers.

Nowadays, each village has its preceptorial member. Every morning, in rudimentary schools, he teaches all children from seven to ten to read and write. The rest of the time, he assists the burgomaster in his administrative duties. He also receives the villagers who trustingly confide in him, because they know he can get the baron's attention. In Urgamand, the Preceptorial is the peasants' legacy. They have begun to keep written archives of the marriages, births and deaths in their villages. They are also many in Lorgol's neighborhoods.

A player can choose the preceptorial fraternity as an Office. He is then called an Alderman. This Urgamand Office asset costs 1 point.

THE RUINS OF THE FIRST BORROWLIGHT

At the bottom of the cliffs lining the sea, a long sandy path leads curious travelers to an island where this building's ruins are run through by the branches of a titanic dead tree, the Borrowlight. Ripped by gaping cracks, the streets have been turned into open graves filled with the inhabitants' skeletons. This was once the most famous school in all Twilight Realms. Now, no one dares to venture out to the peninsula for fear of the terrible diseases that consumed the Borrowlight teachers, and still linger in the deserted vestiges of the sinister school. A small community of sprites keeps a constant watch over the ruins.





6 ~ Scenario: The Lords of Mean ~ Mist

through their offices, the characters are going to discover that children under a strange influence have taken over a neighboring domain. To set things right, they will have to fight against a very young Inspired, precocious and already tempted by the Masque. But Perfidy is never easy to detect.

The Plot

INTRODUCTION

Your Eminence, Admittedly, what follows is the consequence of a mistake. A mistake that goes back ten years and is named Adelph. You may remember it. The Decans assigned the medusa bastard Orphyd the mission of endowing a local boy with the Flame. Unfortunately, the traitor Milfalsen's troupe set out after him to steal the precious Flame. During a pitch-black night, cornered and wounded, Orphyd saw an open window. He hoisted himself inside and landed in young Adelph's room. He entrusted the Flame to him rather than let Milfalsen lay his hands on it. Then he ran for his life. Adelph was now an Inspired. With a exceptional Flame too! Particularly bright and powerful, it should have ensured the boy a noble fate. He was not even twelve when he discovered his potential. He was playing with friends in a loft when a heated argument unleashed his anger. As he let out an enraged roar, a flood of flames engulfed the building. The fire killed one of the children and left the others traumatized. Adelph now knew that he was not just another little boy.

But then he was frustrated. Grown-ups never understood where that fire had come from and looked at him askance. But they still treated him like a kid. His aspect appeared to him as a major obstacle. He took refuge in the domain's library where he could dream of the Flamboyance's old heroes, bold men who became kings. What about him? What would he become? Would he have to wait until he was an adult before becoming a hero? Adelph longed for only one thing: growing up. He learned a lot in the library. He also understood that, by manipulating his friends with fear, he could rule them like a king. His dream left its touch on all the domain's children and they all grew too fast, clumsily mimicking their elder. Adelph's power enabled them to take over from grown-ups and leave them helpless. Fortunately, the arrival of a Keshite merchant initiated the fall of the Bleak Children's reign.

ADELPH

Race: human
Age: 13 **Height:** 5'2" (SIZ - 1)
Weight: 85 lbs. **MV:** 2

Attributes

Flame: 3/0

Body: 4/1 Body modifier: +3
 AGility: 5 STrength: 4
 PERception: 8 STamina: 5

Spirit: 5/0 Spirit modifier: +5
 INTelligence: 10 WILL: 5

Soul: 3/2 Soul modifier: +1
 CHARisma: 8 CREativity: 6

Secondary attributes

ART: - MEL: 4 ASC: - AIM: 6
 HP: 40 SWT: 15 CWT: 20 DB: -1

Fortune Points: 6

Flame powers: Spitfire, Insensibility; impaling weapons

Darkening points: -

Perfidy points: 25

Corrupted Powers

Miasmas of Chaos, Bleak Infancy

Skills

Trials: weapon: dagger 4, Alertness 7, Athletics 2, Dodge 3
Rogue: Intrigue 6, Search 6, Stealth 4
Courtly: Eloquence 7, Fast Talk 3, Stewardship 5, Trade 1
Knowledge: Alphabet: modehan 7, Alphabet: septentrian 5, Astronomy 5, Geography 6, History & Legends 10, Languages: keshite 5
Occult: Harmony 2

Assets, Gifts

Presence, Beneficial mistakes, Hypnotism, Dire Wisdom

Faults, Sorrows

Very young, Tempted by the Masque, Traitor's mug (Perfidious Sorrow), Evil Readings (Perfidious Sorrow)

Combat

Initiative: 16
 Melee attack: Dagger 15
 Ranged Attack: -
 Melee Defense:
 Dodge: 11
 Parry: dagger 11
 Ranged defense: 7

Heavy Clothes

Vest only: modifier 0, prot. 1

Weapon (s)

| Weapon | Init. | Att. | Def. | Dam. + DB | SIZ |
|--------|-------|------|------|-----------|-----|
| Dagger | 0 | +2 | 0 | +1/P | -1 |

came closer and crossed the path of a "being, draped in black with ophidians eyes" that vanished into the night. The story is of course a slight misconception of an encounter with Orphyd who had taken refuge in the church to escape Milfalsen. When Jerialdo manages to elude his family, he sneaks in and spends the night, hunched up behind the altar, torn between terror and morbid fascination.

THE HOUSE OF OCYAN

This cloth trader is a very wealthy man. His house is the only one in Mean-Mist to be truly luxurious. Adelph's father is a ruthless man who stops at nothing to be successful in his business. Although he enjoys power, he does not seek Manansome's office. He had great influence on the town until the children took things into their hands. Meeting him is not particularly difficult, but he likes being shown respect. Everybody must be aware of his tremendous wealth and notable status. After all, he belongs to the town's council! His wife died several years ago. Listening to him, one wonders if he is aware of having a son. When asked about him, he will explain that Adelph is studying with Meboden in the Mansion.



The characters

ADELPH, A PRECOCIOUS CHILD

Who is he?

Adelph is no less than a tremendously intelligent being endowed with the Flame. He is also a child who wants

to grow up too fast. He hates having to wait and easily gives way to whims and anger. He does not plan for the long term. He looks like an ugly twelve years-old child (he suffers from the *Perfidy Sorrow*: *Traitor's mug*). He is self-assured and very confident in his abilities. After all, he believes himself to be unique. This confidence crumbles when he finds out that the *Inspired* share his singularity even though they certainly have different powers. From the beginning of his venture, Adelph has been living in the *Mansion's library*. He "convinced" *Meboden* to teach him all he knows. It is, of course, a pretext.

♣ What he knows

As the source of the changes affecting *Mean-Mist*, he knows almost everything. He believes all children are under his control, which is not quite true. He is far from imagining that *Jerialdo the Jitters*, *Jerialdo the Coward*, is ready to turn against him. He also has no idea of the *Masque* and the *Muses*. No mentor has been there to shed light on his situation. His only references are the *Flamboyance's* myths. He devours *Meboden's* legends and historical treatises.

♣ What he plans

Adelph wants to be an adult. To him, this means being ruthless like his father and respected like *Manansome*. An adult has power and dominates others. That is what he wants. Meeting and observing the *Inspired*, he might be tempted to be like them. It greatly depends on their behavior. In this case, he might escape the *Masque* despite his crimes. Otherwise, he will treat them as enemies and do all he can to get rid of them.

THE BLEAK INFANCY

Adelph has a unique and very special power that enables him to make children "grow up". It does not affect their size at all. But for a time, the child will behave as he believes an adult does. It is a poisonous gift, another of the *Masque's* tricks, for the image the child chooses as model is distorted. He will become a caricature: violent husband, shrewish mother, obsessive scribe or fickle lover. A colorful gallery of characters can be created.

Any child coming into contact with Adelph must perform a *WIL* roll against *DIF 20*. In case of failure, he or she undergoes the effect explained above. This effect spreads like a plague. Any contaminated child can pass it on to others with the same conditions, as long as Adelph is in the vicinity (the size of a small town).

JERIALDO, A GIFTED PUPIL

♣ What he is

Jerialdo is a tormented young man. He has been deeply traumatized by the *loft's* fire and *Adelph's* powers. His old friend often makes fun of him, attaching nicknames to him such as the *Jitters*, the *Coward* or the *Whiner*. *Jerialdo* has indeed felt *Terror* in the face of the flame. It has left aftereffects in his mind. As far as *Adelph* is concerned, *Jerialdo* is torn between fear and jealousy. The *Bleak Infancy* has affected his perception and made him more mature like all *Mean-Mist* children. Like *Adelph*, he has understood that using fear can bring power. But being dominated, he has also learned to disguise his true thoughts and intentions. Thus, he has been introduced to *Perfidy*.

JERIALDO

Race: human

Age: 15

Weight: 95 lbs.

Height: 5'6" (SIZ 0)

MV: 3

Attributes

Flame: 0/0

Body: 0/0

AGility: 7

PERception: 8

Body bonus: -

STRength: 6

STamina: 5

Spirit: 0/2

INTelligence: 7

Spirit bonus: + 2

WILL: 5

Soul: 0/1

CHARisma: 8

Soul bonus: + 1

CREativity: 8

Secondary Attributes

ART: - **MEL:** 6 **ASC:** - **AIM:** 7

HP: 45 **SWT:** 15 **CWT:** 22 **DB:** 0

Fortune Points: -

Darkening Points: 27

Perfidy Points: 14

Corrupted powers: none

Skills

Knowledge: Alphabet: modenhan 6.

Language: keshite 4

Trials: Weapon: dagger 4, short sword 5, bow 4. **Alertness** 6, **Athletics** 6, **Climb** 3, **Dodge** 7, **Ride** 6.

Courtly: Fast talk 8, **Stewardship** 2

Occult: Demonology 2

Rogue: Hunt 5

Assets, Gifts

Iron will, *Second wind*, *Circle I Involking* (*Dark Gift*), *Experienced Imp* (*Dark Gift*), *Consummate acting* (*Perfidious Gift*)

Absent-mindedness, *Phobia: fire* (2), *Imp* (*Dark Sorrow*), *Nightmares* (*Dark Sorrow*), *Hypocrisy* (*Perfidious Sorrow*).

Faults and Sorrows

Absent-mindedness, *Phobia: fire* (2), *Imp* (*Dark Sorrow*), *Nightmares* (*Dark Sorrow*), *Hypocrisy* (*Perfidious Sorrow*).

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Absent-mindedness, *Phobia: fire* (2), *Imp* (*Dark Sorrow*), *Nightmares* (*Dark Sorrow*), *Hypocrisy* (*Perfidious Sorrow*).

Combat

Initiative: 15, **Bow** 19

Melee attack: dagger 12, two-edged sword 12.

Ranged attack: bow 11

Melee defense

Dodge: 14

Parry:

dagger 10, two-edged sword 11

Ranged defense: 7

Heavy clothes

Vest only: modifier 0, protection 1

Note: *Jerialdo's Imp* is a tiny creature of darkness with two little red eyes. He lives in *Jerialdo's shadow*, but stays invisible most of the time. He will not be stupid enough to appear when the *Inspired* are around.

Weapon (s)

| Weapon | Init. | Att. | Def. | Dam. + DB | SIZ | Range |
|--------|-------|------|------|-----------|-----|-------|
| sword | 0 | + 1 | 0 | +3/IS | -1 | - |
| dagger | 0 | + 2 | 0 | +1/I | -1 | - |
| bow | +4 | 0 | - | +7/I | 0 | 90 y. |



JERIALDO

Jerialdo is a hard nut to crack. He really looks like a child terrified by Adelph but deep down, he only wants to be in his shoes and rule over Mean-Mist. He has established a complex relationship with his imp. He is not afraid of it but of what it represents: the power of the Abyss. At the same time, the creature fascinates him with its unrelenting encouragement to further his plans.

♣ What he knows

He is perfectly aware of Adelph's powers. He too, and for some time now, has been scouring the library's shelves in order to gather helping information. His tormented mind quickly led him to books on the Abyss and demons. Although these were mainly fairy tales of little interest,

he has thus started his transformation. It can only be completed by more serious volumes and practice.

♣ What he plans

As opposed to Adelph, Jerialdo is not in a hurry. He now lives in a permanent nightmare, but has the possibility to master it. He learns and waits. When Adelph stumbles, Jerialdo will be there to stop him from picking himself up. Then he will make sure he gets back the throne, which is his by rights, his father's. He probably will not stop there either...

MANANSOME, SUCH A NICE LORD

♣ What he is

Manansome is among the rare nobles who left their old castle to live in a town. Apart from Mean-Mist, his domain stretches out to three small villages that he visits once a year. The city demands all his attention. He does without a burgomaster and uses only Farolf's and Ocyan's services. Manansome was once a warrior and a leader respected by his subjects. But now that nightmares inspired by Adelph constantly haunt him, he is no more than a puppet. He completely lacks willpower and has to submit all the domain's affairs to Adelph. Farolf hoped to make the most of it but was quickly overcome by the apathy affecting all the town's adults.

Unable to sleep properly, if at all, Manansome is physically exhausted. It shows on his face and makes him look like he is going to fall asleep any minute.

♣ What he knows

Manansome says he is far too tired to make any decision. Neither he nor Farolf are capable of administering the domain. Adelph on the contrary is so intelligent

MANANSOME

Race: human

Age: 44

Height: 6' (SIZ 0)

Weight: 190 lbs.

MV: 3 HP: 54 SWT: 18 CWT: 27 DB: +2

Combat

Init. 15, sword 16, Buckler 12

Att. sword 18, Buckler 18

Dodge 17 (armor 7)

Parry: sword 18, Buckler 20

DB: sword +6/IS, DB Buckler +2/C

Armor

Partial plate, protection 15

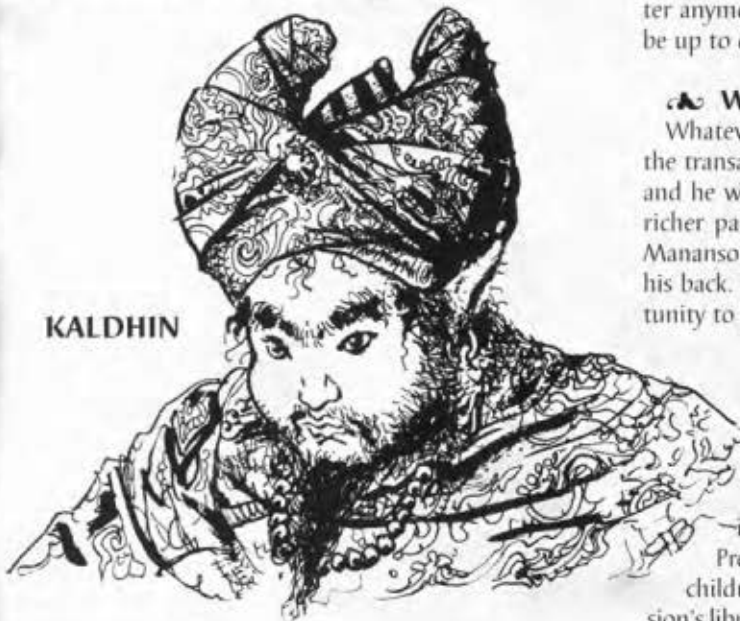


MANANSOME

and gifted! The thought of his new master's age does not even enter his mind. He does not see him as child any more but as the next seneschal of Mean-Mist. Needless to say, Manansome will be useless to the Inspired.

♣ What he plans

He has no energy left to think. Indeed, his dearest wish is now to sleep one night without being awakened by horrendous nightmares. Getting him to react will be extremely tricky. Some of the spirit that used to drive him might resurface should his children be endangered. Unfortunately, this might very well mean escaping Adelph's claws to fall into Jerialdo's jaws.



KALDINH

KALDINH

Race: satyr
Realm: Keshe
Age: 38
Height: 5'9"
Weight: 195 lbs.

MV: 3

Useful Bases

Eloquence 15, Fast-talk 15, Trade 18.

KALDINH, A SOMEWHAT DISORIENTATED MERCHANT

♣ What he is

The satyr has been sent to negotiate a wood purchase on behalf of a northern building site in need of timber. Sharp and smart, he has always managed to make the most of the trickiest situations. Critics would say he is hypocritical and deceitful. That is not enough to make him a Masque agent, at least not willingly... He will always be nice to the Inspired, hoping it will help the negotiation.

Kaldinh has a gut hatred of mages. He believes they possess myriads of terrifying powers. His main fear is that they could be capable of reading his mind and seeing right through him. As for Mean-Mist, he hates it. No woman has responded to his overtures and that is really abnormal!

♣ What he knows

He has not missed the fact that Manansome is not his usual self. He doubts that the lord of Mean-Mist will be able to see the deal through. After the disaster of their first encounter, he immediately realizes that something is up and Manansome definitely is not the domain's master anymore. It remains to be seen if the new one will be up to do business.

♣ What he plans

Whatever happens, Kaldinh only wants to conclude the transaction. The building site needs its timber fast and he will not let this wonderful opportunity to get richer pass him by. He intends to take advantage of Manansome's "illness" to deal with the Inspired behind his back. Unfortunately, he will never have the opportunity to clinch the deal...

MEBODEN, A WORRIED LIBRARIAN

♣ What he is

This dear old man has spent his whole life in the library. As a young man, he trained in Preceptorial but he discovered that he didn't like children very much. He was hired to be the Mansion's librarian. The library is his territory and he knows it through and through. He is proud of every book. At first, he resented Adelph's presence. But the child is so different from the others! His intelligence and talents have seduced Meboden, who is now Adelph's loyal follower. Having never known children's screams and shouts, the scholar easily accepts the seriousness of Mean-Mist children. Most have inherited their parents' faults, but that is how it goes - cats do not breed dogs. On the other hand, Adelph and Jerialdo seem quite promising, even if the latter lacks his father's presence.

♣ What he knows

Everything in the library, and that's a lot! Apart from that, Meboden has become a *useless pawn* of Adelph. Having given him access to all the books, there is nothing else he can do. Meboden's taking care of the library is the only thing that prevents the young Inspired from getting rid of him.

♣ What he plans

Meboden has no other ambition but to die among his precious books. He hates strangers rummaging through his shelves; they might damage something. If chased, Adelph will seek shelter in the library, knowing that

MEBODEN

Race: human
Gender: male
Age: 59
Height: 5'7" (SIZ 0)
Weight: 155 lbs.

MV: 3

Useful Bases

Stewardship 12, Etiquette 10, Alphabet 15

Meboden will shield it with his own body rather than let anybody mess it up, even if he has to confront his lord Manansome.



MEBODEN

PRODIGAL

Race: spriggan
Gender: male
Age: 39
Height: 4'6" (SIZ -1)
Weight: 95 lb

MV: 2

Useful Bases

Acrobatics 10, Alphabet 15, History & Legends 14.

PRODIGAL, A PANIC-STRICKEN TUTOR

♣ What he is

This spriggan trained in Preceptorial. Until recently, he was private tutor to Manansome's children. He befriended Dalanna, the town's schoolmistress, who was the first to notice the changes in the children. She confided in him. Prodigoal had a chat with Jerialdo and Bellin (Manansome's second son) and realized they were under somebody's influence. Dalanna's death had already panicked him, and when his two pupils attacked him, he hid himself in the Mansion's secret passages. Since then, he has been living shut away in there, while the children have no more interest in him.

♣ What he knows

He has understood quite a lot: that the children are dominated by a dark force and that it all started soon after the loft fire. Traumatized by their friend's death, they changed. They lynched Dalanna because she probably discovered something. He has also discovered Adelp's taking over the library. He knows that the child stays there night and day, sleeping in a secret chamber. He also knows that Meboden fears him and that Manansome is completely under his influence.

♣ What he plans

Staying hidden is enough for now. In the long run, Prodigoal definitely intends to escape. His behavior points him out to the Inspired as the perfect suspect. He has the size of a child and always keeps to the secret passages, only coming out at night. Surely, that is the attitude of a perfidious creature.

Overture

Kaldinh, a Keshite merchant, arrives at the Inspired's domain with an offer. He wants to buy a tremendous amount of wood for a building site in the north. The trees in their forest have the perfect trunks for frameworks. Unfortunately, the forest is bordering Manansome's domain, and the border has never been clearly established. Of course, nobody wants to be taken in. The Inspired, because of their offices, are sent to the neighboring domain to negotiate a compromise.

In Harmundia, most institutions own land, even academies or schools, so property disputes are widespread. In this case, the sums at stakes give the affair some importance. The idea is to get the upper hand on Manansome while remaining on good terms with him. Even a Censor will be useful in these dealings, his importance and stature serving to impress the other party. Of course, an Inspired with courtly skills will be perfect.

If the Domain really does not fit this layout, data is easy to adjust. Even Lyphanian nomad tribes have ter-

ritories. In a desert climate, the forest can be replaced by mountains with mineral deposits. If the Inspired's Domain is a keshite caravan, they can always act out Kaldinh's part as negotiator.

Act 1: Contact

THE ENTRANCE

The Inspired enter Mean-Mist in the late afternoon. The town's activity does not amount to much. Shops are closed, the streets almost empty. The atmosphere is strange and the Inspired could easily think that there is a curfew. But the welcome at the Mansion can just as easily dispel any suspicious thought. An affable staff leads the horses directly to the stables. Lady Ariel, Manansome's wife, informs them that her husband is very busy with the city's affairs and will only join them for supper. She suggests that they should rest in their apartments until then and a young manservant comes for them.

Of course the Inspired could take advantage of the free time to wander in Mean-Mist. They will soon be disappointed - the town seems dead. People are shut away in their homes. The very few passers-by, when hailed, are quite uncommunicative and seem intent on avoiding the newcomers.

They might then turn to visiting the Mansion. No one will stop them, and the staff will remain courteous. Lady Ariel will carry out her duties as well as she can, but remain hesitant and standoffish.

THE MEAL

Now comes the time to feast and meet Lord Manansome. The whole family is there: Manansome, Ariel, the two children, Jerialdo and Bellin. Also present are Meboden the librarian, Farolf the seneschal, and of course Kaldinh the merchant.

Despite a few troubadours who are trying to amuse hosts and guests with their acrobatics, dance and music, the evening promises to be utterly boring. Having welcomed his guests and apologized for his earlier discourteous absence, Manansome spends his time in muttered talk with Farolf, paying them no more attention. Lady Ariel manages to smile, but not to hide her boredom. She cannot even busy herself by keeping the children in check. They are as good as gold, sitting straight and looking grave. As for Meboden, he looks a little weird and is not sociable at all.

In short, Kaldinh sticks out in this sorry party. All smile, he asks the Inspired about their trip and other unimportant subjects. But behind the smile, his sincerity seems rather doubtful. The only individual capable of normal conversation at this table could talk forever without meaning a single word.

SOME HISTORY

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| 1439 | Birth of Adelph, son of Ocyan, in the city of Mean-Mist |
| 1441 | Chased by a Masker, Orphyd gives a Flame to young Adelph so it will not fall into the Masque's hands |
| 1449 | Adelph discovers his Inspired talents during an argument with his friends. He is responsible for a fire and the death of a child. Nobody understands how the fire started. Adelph resents being a child and wants to gain the adults' recognition. |
| D -5 weeks | Under the influence of the Masque, Adelph develops a unique power. All the city's children grow up too fast and take over from the adults. |
| D -4 weeks | Adelph comes to live in the Mansion. Thanks to the Miasmas of Chaos, he disturbs Manansome's sleep with terrible nightmares. |
| D -2 weeks | Preceptorial's schoolmistress Dalanna tries to confront Adelph. She is killed by the militia under the influence of the children who see her as the symbol of the grown-ups' tyranny. Private tutor Prodigal is attacked by Jerialdo and Bellin. He seeks shelter in the Mansion's secret passages. |
| D -1 week | Adelph takes over. Completely incapacitated by his nightmares, Manansome is nothing but a puppet. |
| D Day | The Inspired arrives in Mean-Mist. |

THE NIGHT

As soon as the meal is over, Manansome dismisses the troubadours and takes his leave, wishing his guests good night. Everyone else takes their cue from him, leaving the Inspired on their own. A young manservant suggests they should return to their apartments.

Kaldinh will try to get in touch with the Inspired he believes to be the leader of the group, or with the one he has found to be the friendliest. He will want to know in what state of mind he views the negotiation and whether a deal could be reached quite quickly, arguing that it would be to everyone's advantage, particularly the Inspired's. Kaldinh believes Manansome incapable of seeing the deal through. If questioned, he will burst out laughing and leave with a *contemptuous retort*: "Did you get a good look at him?"

One of the Inspired could be tempted to make a nocturnal visit of the Mansion. If one the child-manservant sees him, he will warn Adelph straight away. He could also encounter Kaldinh trying in vain to fathom the situation by going to the library to talk to Meboden.

Finally, a perceptive Inspired (PER + Alertness against DIF 15) could witness Manansome meeting with somebody wrapped in a coat in the Mansion's yard. The somebody is short - like a spriggen - and talks in a low voice.

The tone of the conversation clearly indicates that it is Manansome who owes the explanations. If he or she manages to hide (AGI + Discretion against DIF 17 – do not forget the Remain's bonus), the Inspired can hear what is said. The overall discussion is clear: the "spriggn" – Adelph – is unhappy about the Inspired's presence in Mean-Mist. They just might cause trouble and the talker does not want his authority undermined. They do not have to be eliminated, but they must leave as soon as possible. This wood business must be settled quickly.

THE NEGOTIATION

The negotiation takes place the day after, in the main room. Lady Arial is there with two other women. They are chatting away while working on their embroidering. Children – including Adelph and Jerialdo – quietly play before the hearth. Manansome, Farolf and the Inspired are settled around the table. Farolf lays out maps given by Meboden as well as legal parchments proving Manansome's ownership of the forest. The Inspired probably have their own maps and legal documents. In short, each party legitimately claims the forest.

The Inspired soon realize that Mean-Mist's lord is not really capable of pulling this off. His twitching face betrays his nervousness. He looks exhausted. The Inspired must first believe that Manansome is troubled, by the weight of his charge perhaps. Farolf is no great help. A seasoned negotiator (PER + Diplomacy against DIF 15) will understand that Manansome is behaving as if he was not the decision-maker, which is surprising.

Kaldinh starts by letting the two parties settle their argument. After a while, he offers a common fund. He needs thirty healthy oaks. According to the forest's capacity, he will choose the trees and the payment will be equally shared by the two domains. This solution enables both of them to stick to their claims. Of course, it does

not solve the problem. It might be high time to sort out this border question. If somebody expresses the idea out loud, Kaldinh will take it in stride and remind the assembly that matters of this kind must be submitted to the highest authority in the realm (the First Baron if the domain in Urgamand, for example). This kind of appeal means endless delays and a significant loss of profit for the two parties.

But Manansome does not back down. He asks Kaldinh for an appraisal of the price he intends to pay. The satyr answers that he cannot possibly do that, since it all depends on the number, size and quality of the trees. He states that he needs about three hundreds steres (a local unit of measure, roughly equivalent to one cubic yard of wood). At this point the children, not knowing what a stere is, start questioning each other. The Inspired, focused on the debate, will probably not notice the background noise (PER + Alertness against DIF 25).

Someone well informed about raw material prices (INT + trade against DIF 15) could give an estimate of fifty gold pieces per stere. But Kaldinh, good Keshite merchant that he is, counts only in scrapes. He will be happy to point out that the price of a stere in the area is five hundred and forty-eight scrapes. Thus, the price of three hundred steres can be estimated at a hundred sixty-four thousand and four hundred scrapes. This of course gets even more complicated when the numbers must be converted in local currency, depending on where the scenario is taking place. Moreover, the conversion is meaningless since, according to trade traditions, it must be calculated by a neutral third party.

But to make things easier, Kaldinh does not mind calculating a first estimate. What follows is a true masterwork of commercial warfare. The Inspired may be able to follow the satyr's quick reasoning if they have some training in the matter (INT + Trade against DIF 18). They may even realize that, without ever cheating, he makes the calculations much more difficult than they should be (SM 10).

Manansome and Farolf do not follow at all and are utterly confused. Kaldinh has to go over his reasoning several times, but without any success. The children's whispers gets louder and louder. The whole scene becomes hectic and irritating. Manansome will not bulge. Kaldinh gets all worked up and finally asks that the women and children leave the room to bring back some order.

A heavy silence settles at once. The guards look bewildered but not as much as Manansome. Kaldinh goes pale, realizing he must have made an Etiquette blunder. Manansome mutters to lead the women and children out. The debate starts again. Kaldinh is tense. Manansome is lost. After a short while, the latter suddenly gets up, mumbles undecipherable words and rushes out.

CURRENCY EXCHANGE SYSTEM

It has been designed by the Keshites and is a true masterpiece. In a world using mainly the decimal system, designing an exchange system with a base 11 is pure cruelty. As a rule, Keshite merchants use scrapes, especially when they are buying. The advantage is the seller is fooled by the big figures he hears. Here is a reminder: the reference currency is the gold piece used in the Mercenary Republic. It is worth 11 scrapes. But the Keshites use their own currency, the dirhem, to pay. So if it is actually a third party who carries out the calculations, the seller needs to turn to somebody who will buy backs his dirhems. If the Keshite merchant has any knack for business (and they usually do), he will be the only one able to do so. Merchants and negotiators have become masters in this art. Their clients' minds are so deadened with the calculations that they usually do not realize that part of the money actually goes back from whence it came. Needless to say that most of the time, the aforementioned third party in charge of the exchange happens to be one of the merchant's acquaintances...

Act II: Symptoms

HESITATIONS

The Inspired will probably be at a loss as to what should be done after such a disaster. Manansome's strange behavior should intrigue them. Soon, a young manservant informs them that the lord is feverish. The negotiation will have to wait a while, probably until the day after. And there is no way Manansome can be reached even by offering to cure him.

If no Inspired was there to witness the night encounter between Adelph and Manansome, Kaldinh tells them about it. He assures them that he saw Mean-Mist's lord in the yard with a spriggan. The latter seemed to be the one giving orders. The Keshite is convinced that this spriggan secretly rules over Mean-Mist. It is obvious to him that Manansome does not behave normally. Since he arrived, he has never seen him taking care of the city's affairs or calling a council meeting. Farolf appears just as incompetent.

THE MANSION

The Inspired now have more time to take an interest in their surrounding. By going to the library, they can find out information about Filamon, the local hero, to whom the church is dedicated (PER + History against DIF 10). Nothing unusual – he fought a lot of demons. His best friend betrayed him to his enemies who snuck inside his home at night to murder him. Only his daughter survived. Ten years later, she married the traitor and killed him on their wedding night.

They might very well meet Adelph in the library, hunched over a pile of parchments and books, all dealing with legends of the Flamboyance. Adelph will then feel that they are akin to him, and therefore extremely dangerous. As for Meboden, he does his best to prevent Adelph from being disturbed. If somebody so much as touches a book, he literally growls and offers, in a most unkind way, to help the visitor find what he is looking for before he knocks everything down.

By skillfully questioning the staff (CHA + Intrigue or Fast Talk against DIF 18), they might learn that a shadow has been seen edging its way along the corridors. Supposedly, someone lives hidden in the Mansion. Food regularly disappears. Lady Arial and Lord Manansome have been told, but nothing has been done. It is of course Prodigal.

Finally, should they find themselves in the wing housing the city's council, they might wonder about the stench. The room that used to be the Preceptorial classroom is in chaos. There is evidence of fighting. The body of a woman, dressed in a torn preceptorial uniform, lies *behind a desk*. The crime is several days old. She is lying on the floor, her arms pinned to the wall, propped up by spearheads (Terror roll against DIF 10). The body

shows countless bruises – she was lynched. If questioned, Farolf will explain that the punishment was deserved. The preceptorial schoolmistress, Dalanna, was a traitor working for the enemy – to be chosen depending on the scenario's location – and seeking to pervert the children. He seems quite unperturbed at the body's fate, and points out that it has been left to rot on the lord's order.

By investigating town's children, now without schooling, the Inspired might learn about Manansome's children's private tutor, a spriggan called Prodigal. He has gone missing several days ago. Manansome is waiting for Preceptorial to send another schoolmaster.

THE TOWN

The Inspired will probably want to stretch their legs in town. There is a lot more going on during the day than in the evening. If they pay just a little attention, Mean-Mist weirdness can be detected.

A militia is in charge of maintaining law and order, as well as defending the town. But strangely enough, these men themselves have an escort of children, robust young fellows sporting the same fierce expression as their elders, with knives on their belts. Apart from the richest denizens, everyone seems to fear them, and gets out of their way as they march by.

Depending on how long they spend outdoors, the Inspired might witness numerous scenes involving children. A young boy works as a public writer although his writing is appalling. Girls scour the peasants' market doing their shopping.

The inhabitants of the Domain's three other villages are not affected by Adelph's spell. They too are a bit taken aback by recent events. The Inspired can question them. They will learn that precisely five weeks ago, Mean-Mist's children started taking part in all the town's activities. It is indeed strange but the peasants put it down to urban eccentricity. As long as their children do their work in the fields and respect traditions, there is nothing to worry about.

In a tavern, children gather and talk about very serious (or so they believe), matters. By discretely listening in (PER + Fast Talk against DIF 10), the Inspired will find it is a cock and bull conversation. They are discussing the after-effects of a war won long ago, the threat of a snowstorm when it definitely is not the season, or other problems usually alien to children of this age.

MILITAMEN

HP: 40 SWT: 15 CWT: 20 DB: 0

Init: 10; spear 14, sword 11

Att: spear 10, sword 10

Dodge: 8 (armor 2)

Parry: spear 11, sword 11

DB: spear + 4/l, sword + 4/l

Armor: partial banded mail, protection 9

♣ In the evening, six drunk teenagers, belonging to the militia's escort, beat up a peasant. They are very aggressive and will attack any male coming their way. The Inspired will hopefully be able to keep themselves in check, for these children certainly do not have any fighting ability. But to spice up the situation, they could be joined by real militiamen.

WRONG TRACK

As mentioned before, Prodigal is lying low in the Mansion's attic. This labyrinth of beams is only accessible through the manor's secret passages. Prodigal uses them a lot at night, to pinch food in the kitchen or spy on the residents. Finding him will demand speed and persistence. If chased, he will keep to familiar ground, where he has the advantage.

In the secret passages, corridors, chambers, stairs and so forth, will come one after the other. The spriggan is not fast but knows his way better than the Inspired. Nothing is more infuriating than to enter a room just as an invisible door bangs closed!

In the attic, the chase will be all the more difficult. This time, it is the spriggan's height that is an advantage. The Inspired must be constantly careful or bang their heads every few yards (AGI + Athletics or Acrobatics, restrictive Dodge, against DIF 15). The attic covers the same area as the manor. It is dark and hot. Every move sends dust flying around. The floor is shaky and crumbles if someone fumbles. Not to mention the birds and reptiles that have taken up residence... Without a touch of magic, the venture will prove dangerous and difficult.

The easiest way is to observe Prodigal's nocturnal wandering and set up a trap. But most importantly, the Inspired should understand that they must act alone. Brought into the confidence, Adelph will try to get rid of Prodigal.

Then everything depends on the Inspired's diplomatic skills. It does not take much to realize that Prodigal is truly panic-stricken. He looks like a victim, not like a plotter or a Masque agent. The trouble is that he is convinced that his pursuers are Manansome's men. Avoiding violence and threats is the only way to make him talk (CHA + Fast Talk against DIF 15). He will then tell every thing he knows, from the loft's fire to Dalanna's murder to the change in the children. Unfortunately, he has no idea about who is responsible. But he has noticed that Adelph, Ocyan's son, has taken up residence in Meboden's library. Anyway, he is convinced that Jerialdo knows a lot more than him about all this.

Act III: Cure?

JERIALDO'S CONFESSION

Questioned by the Inspired, Jerialdo first keeps his ground. He behaves like a true Mean-Mist heir and

orders them to leave him alone, threatening to call the Mansion's militiamen.

However, Jerialdo knows his time has come. Eventually he bursts into tears, suddenly a child again, and accuses Adelph of being a demon. He is the one responsible for the fire and Dalanna's death. He is the one who made him and Bellin attack Prodigal to get rid of him. He has the power to control people and has put the children under his yoke. All this is true, of course. But Jerialdo's Consummate Acting (Perfidy Gift) enables him to convince even the Inspired that Adelph is nothing but a threat, a vermin to be wiped out as soon as possible. Playing his last dramatic trump card, Jerialdo admits that Adelph intends to kill Kaldinh who has proved too nosy. The satyr must be found at once!

KALDINH'S BODY

The unfortunate Keshite indeed lies in his bed, his throat ripped open. Numerous bites and claw marks are scattered around his body (Terror roll against DIF 10). An expert will recognize the work of an Imp (PER + Demonology against DIF 20, if the Inspired has an Imp). But a human is responsible for Kaldinh's death; the wounds made by the Imp are secondary. If Jerialdo is still with the Inspired, he will pretend to burst into tears again. He will do his best to bring the Inspired to consider extreme solutions. At this moment, Anger, the secondary emotion of the Remain, might get into the act...

CATCHING ADELPH

The Inspired probably know where he is. The library takes up a whole wing of the Mansion, stretching out over several floors. Thanks to Prodigal, the secrets passages can be used to arrive directly in the reading room. The Inspired then have surprise on their side.

Adelph is in a "meeting" with other children (the young militia escort), laying plans to get rid of the Inspired. Of course, depending on previous events and the noise due to Prodigal's chase, Adelph could well be ready to welcome the Inspired and not at all surprised. The children protecting him carry large knives (Attack 9, Parry 8, Dodge 5, HP 35). Hopefully the Inspired will be aware of their opponents' young age and hold back their blows!

Meboden will also get involved by throwing himself on an Inspired in a fit of rage. He is a distraction, but not much more. The Inspired's real adversary is Adelph himself. He is not a seasoned warrior and only carries a dagger, but he has a strong Flame. If cornered, he will not hesitate to use his Spitfire power. In this environment, the fire will spread rapidly, feeding on the books. It will consume the library and reach the rest of the manor. Much depends on the Inspired's actions. They may choose to try to stop the fire, help the children out, or focus on stopping Adelph from running away.

If Adelph manages to escape, he will gather a crowd and round up the militia, accusing the Inspired of having

caused the fire. A verbal sparring match may then take place between him and an eloquent Inspired. Reminding people of the previous fire would be a good argument to spread doubt in their minds but Adelph's adversary starts off very disadvantaged (CHA + Eloquence roll, DIF 16, modifier -4 which can be made up for by good arguments and a punchy style).

In case of success, the Inspired then has to manage the situation. If he really has won the crowd, Adelph could well be in danger, and the young Inspired will fight back with all he has. The most efficient solution would probably be to talk sense into Adelph and convince him that he is wrong either during the sparring match (SM 15) or afterwards (CHA + Fast Talk against DIF 23).

Epilogue

ADELPH'S FATE

If he is still alive, the players find themselves in charge of an Inspired child marked by the Perfidy. He is probably best off between the hands of the Decans, so the seasonlings can complete his training. He will remain vulnerable to the Masque, that cannot be undone, but hopefully, with time, he will be much more careful and learn from his wrongs. Then maybe Orphyd will not have made a mistake by giving him the Flame.

JERIALDO'S FATE

The players have had little opportunity to see through him, unless they believe Adelph when he says he did not kill Kaldinh. Even Adelph is far from suspecting that Jerialdo the Jitters duped him.

If everything goes back to normal, Jerialdo can take up the part of the thoughtful son again. He is very conscious that a time will come when he will be lord of Mean-Mist. His father's weakness should make the wait quite short. Let us wager that, in several years, the Inspired will have to contend with such a neighbor.

On the other hand, if Jerialdo is unmasked in any way (his Imp could get noticed), he will run away. He will gain enough experience on the road to become a fearsome adversary. As a seasoned Invoker and an exceptional Masque's minion, he will come back to take revenge.

FINDING OUT THE REAL STORY

If the Inspired are curious, they can ask questions about Adelph when they meet the Decan Council. They will learn about Orphyd who had to protect a powerful Flame from the Masque. Adelph was never chosen – it was the luck of the draw. One thing leading to another, they might get interested in the powerful Masker who has been operating in the area for dozens of years: the fearsome Milfalsen, a former eminence grise who relentlessly chases Inspired and seasonlings. He will make sure your players have a lot on their plates during future sessions!





ere are profiles for a few of Harmundia's animals. Use them to populate your Domains. Most of them are common, or even widespread.

♣ **Horse**

Attributes

STA 12, STR 12, AGI 3, PER 7
MEL 7, ASC -, ART -
SIZ +1, MV +6, DB +10
HP 82, SWT 27, CWT 41

Skills

Athletics 7, Weapon: Hoof (bucking) 3

Note: A specially trained horse can access the skills Weapons: hooves 6, Weapon: trample 6.

♣ **Pony**

Attributes

STA 10, STR 10, AGI 4, PER 7
MEL 7, ASC -, ART -
SIZ +1, MV +5, DB +6
HP 66, SWT 22, CWT 33

Skills

Athletics 7, Weapon: Hoof (bucking) 3

♣ **Camel**

Attributes

STA 12, STR 12, AGI 4, PER 7
MEL 7, ASC -, ART -
SIZ +1, MV +6, DB +10
HP 82, SWT 27, CWT 41

Skills

Athletics 7, Weapon: Hooves (trample) 3

Note: A specially trained camel can access the skill Weapon: trample 6.

♣ **Ox**

Attributes

STA 15, STR 15, AGI 2, PER 2
MEL 8, ASC -, ART -
SIZ +1, MV +4, DB +18
HP 82, SWT 27, CWT 41

Skills

Athletics 7

Note: Consider all other cattle as having roughly the same attributes.

♣ **Sea horse**

Attributes

STA 12, STR 12, AGI 6, PER 5
MEL 7, ASC -, ART -
SIZ +0, MV +4, DB +8
HP 82, SWT 27, CWT 41

Appendix 1: Harmundia's fauna

Skills

Athletics 7

Note: Sea horses can only be used as mounts by sea creatures. It is necessary to be able to breath underwater to ride one properly.

🐾 Wolf

Attributes

STA 8, STR 5, AGI 10, PER 14
MEL 7, ASC -, ART -
SIZ -1, MV +4, DB +0
HP 45, SWT 15, CWT 22

Skills

Weapon: claws 3, Weapon: teeth 6, Athletics 10, Hunt 6, Stealth 3, Alertness 10

🐾 Dog

Attributes

STA 7, STR 4, AGI 7, PER 11
MEL 5, ASC -, ART -
SIZ -1, MV +4, DB +0
HP 47, SWT 15, CWT 23

Skills

Weapon: claws 3, Weapon: teeth 5, Athletics 7, Hunt 5, Alertness 8

🐾 Cat

Attributes

STA 2, STR 2, AGI 11, PER 10
MEL 6, ASC -, ART -
SIZ -2, MV +4, DB -4
HP 17, SWT 5, CWT 8

Skills

Weapon: claws 3, Stealth 7, Climb 8, Alertness 8

🐾 Bear

Attributes

STA 10, STR 12, AGI 5, PER 8
MEL 8, ASC -, ART -
SIZ +1, MV +4, DB +10
HP 76, SWT 25, CWT 37

Skills

Weapon: claws 5, Weapon: teeth 5, Hunt 5, Alertness 8

Note: Bears can attack twice a round, and use the "Closing in" maneuver.

🐾 Lion

Attributes

STA 10, STR 13, AGI 6, PER 8
MEL 9, ASC -, ART -
SIZ +1, MV +3, DB +6
HP 66, SWT 22, CWT 33

Skills

Weapon: claws 7, Weapon: teeth 6, Hunt 2, Alertness 6

🐾 Tiger

Attributes

STA 10, STR 13, AGI 7, PER 8
MEL 10, ASC -, ART -
SIZ +1, MV +4, DB +6
HP 66, SWT 22, CWT 33

Skills

Weapon: claws 7, Weapon: teeth 7, Conceal 6, Hunt 6, Stealth 7, Alertness 6

🐾 Snake, big

Attributes

STA 8, STR 15, AGI 8, PER 8
MEL 11, ASC -, ART -
SIZ +1, MV 0, DB +18
HP 80, SWT 26, CWT 40

Skills

Weapon: constriction 8, Conceal 6, Hunt 6, Stealth 5

Note: A constriction attack does no immediate damage, but as soon as the snake has successfully coiled itself around its victim, damage equal to the STR of the snake is automatically inflicted each round. In addition, the soon-to-be snake's snack can no longer attempt any actions.

🐾 Snake, small

Attributes

STA 2, STR 2, AGI 12, PER 8
MEL 7, ASC -, ART -
SIZ -1, MV 0, DB -2
HP 22, SWT 7, CWT 11

Skills

Weapon: bite 8, Conceal 7, Hunt 5, Stealth 6

Note: The bite injects a poison into the target. The VIR of this poison may vary greatly. One of the most common types of snake venom is green ruff (VIR 17), which takes effect within a few minutes, provoking a rapid fever and a greenish discoloration around the eyes. Often lethal to children, it does not have sufficient Virulence to kill a healthy adult.

🐾 Shark

Attributes

STA 10, STR 10, AGI 8, PER 8
MEL 9, ASC -, ART -
SIZ -1, MV +6, DB +2
HP 46, SWT 15, CWT 23

Skills

Weapon: teeth 6, Hunt 6, Swim 7, Alertness 6

☞ Eagle

Attributes

STA 7, STR 7, AGI 5, PER 14
 MEL 6, ASC -, ART -
 SIZ 0, MV +1 (grounded)/ +12 (flying), DB +1
 HP 42, SWT 14, CWT 21

Skills

Weapon: beak 5, Weapon: talons 8, Hunt 7, Alertness 9

☞ Hawk

Attributes

STA 5, STR 1, AGI 7, PER 11
 MEL 4, ASC -, ART -
 SIZ -3, MV +1 (grounded)/ +12 (flying), DB -6
 HP 26, SWT 8, CWT 13

Skills

Weapon: beak 4, Weapon: talons 8, Hunt 7, Alertness 8

☞ Raven

Attributes

STA 5, STR 1, AGI 7, PER 6
 MEL 4, ASC -, ART -
 SIZ -3, MV +1 (grounded)/ +9 (flying), DB -6
 HP 26, SWT 8, CWT 13

Skills

Dodge 6, Alertness 5

☞ Rat

Attributes

STA 3, STR 1, AGI 10, PER 8
 MEL 5, ASC -, ART -
 SIZ -3, MV +6, DB -6
 HP 10, SWT 3, CWT 5

Skills

Stealth 6, Dodge 7, Alertness 6

☞ Phoenix

The phoenix is a Prodigy. This scarlet-feathered firebird is 3 cubits high, with a wingspan of more than 5 cubits (over 8 feet). It is extremely rare and sought by both the Masque and the Inspired, as it never severed its link with the Muses. On the first day of summer, the phoenixes spontaneously combust and burn to ashes, which are scattered until they are reborn from them the following winter. It is said that the flames running over their feathers at the beginning of summer have the same capabilities as those of the Inspired. Nobody knows

what this could imply if true. Seasonlings from the Decan Council study the Phoenixes and try to save the magical Flames that spontaneously appear in the summer.

Attributes

STA 7, STR 7, AGI 12, PER 10
 MEL 9, ASC -, ART -
 SIZ -1, MV +1 (grounded)/ +9 (flying), DB 0
 HP 47, SWT 15, CWT 23

Skills

Weapon: beak 6, Dodge 10

Note: the Phoenix's beak does impaling damage and also fire damage (VIR 5).

☞ Troll

A Troll is a good 6 cubits high (9 to 10 feet). His distorted face and greenish body make him positively frightening, though he is a kindly soul who enjoys the companionship of animals. His body spontaneously reacts to its environment: in the spring, small flowers bloom on his legs, while in the fall moss covers him from neck to toes. Many animals live on a troll's body, mainly birds, which can nest in the thick mop of what passes for hair. Calm and always ready to help Nature's allies, trolls often come to the assistance of sprites or giants. Trolls can however become aggressive in the presence of fire. They can't stand to see a torch or even the spark of a tinderbox. In such cases, a troll will become excessively violent and will do anything to put out the fire. Trolls are Wonders.

Attributes

STA 15, STR 14, AGI 5, PER 6
 VOL 4, INT 4
 CHA 1, CRE 1
 MEL 9, ASC -, ART 1
 SIZ +1, MV +6, DB +15
 HP 91, SWT 30, CWT 45

Skills

Weapon: claws 5, Conceal 5, Plant lore 6, Survival (forest) 8, Alertness 7, Beast lore 5, Concord 3

Note: Trolls benefit from a natural +2 modifier to Conceal during spring and fall. When wounded, the troll hides, stands still, burrows his legs in the ground, and grows back the wounded area of his body. Whether trolls are animals or plants is still an open question.





Appendix 2: Moving through Harmundia

oing to neighboring towns or villages is considered a difficult undertaking by the majority of the population. Visiting places more than one or two days walk away (in other words, further than thirty miles), is considered a serious exploit. Distant places, such as capital cities, neighboring counties or foreign countries, are only known through legends and rumor, with perhaps a few travelers' tales thrown in for the curious or lucky few. However, a handful of individuals have turned travel into a profitable career.

Traveling over great distances demands a few indispensable necessities. For instance, a certain amount of courage is required because roads aren't always safe. Organizing the trip is also important. The hardened traveler knows that no one will be there to help him, to lend him what he forgot to pack, or to show him the way when he gets lost. Maps are rare and sketchy, to the point where it is often necessary to know the route by heart. In case of problems, you will only have yourself to rely on. Lastly, one must have the means to travel – rucksack, horse, pack animal, provisions – and all these things cost a lot of money, assuming one even knows where to get them in the first place.

Moving

Depending on the means of locomotion, movement will occur at different rates under different conditions. The first factor to take into account is the condition of the terrain. For example, traveling through the Wild Reaches is considered sheer stupidity – a route hardly exists, there are no bridges whatsoever, and there are bloodthirsty savages everywhere. Conversely, the Princely Communes have a fantastic network of paved roads, allowing safe and rapid journeys.

So, each trip is an individual case. A few general rules can however be established.

The table below shows, according to a certain number of parameters, the average distance that an individual may travel under ideal conditions. By ideal conditions, we mean a flat and well-maintained road surface, good weather (no extremes of heat or cold, and no rainstorms), and a traveler in good shape.

Note: Sea travel is a special case. A ships move at speeds varying from 2 mph to 6 mph for 24 hours a day, which means that they can cover 60 miles per day under ideal conditions. However, a dead calm could also immobilize a ship completely for an extended period.

DISTANCE TRAVELED ACCORDING TO MEANS OF LOCOMOTION

ON FOOT

| Means of Locomotion | Speed | Distance traveled per day (min. 8 hours traveling) |
|---------------------|-------|--|
| SIZ -2 | 1 mph | 8 miles |
| SIZ -1 | 2 mph | 16 miles |
| SIZ 0 | 3 mph | 24 miles |
| SIZ 1 | 4 mph | 32 miles |
| SIZ 2 | 6 mph | 48 miles |
| SIZ 3 | 9 mph | 72 miles |

BY...

| Means of Locomotion | Speed | Distance traveled per day (min. 8 hours traveling) |
|------------------------|-------|--|
| Pony, donkey, coach | 3 mph | 30 miles |
| Ox, heavy wagon | 2 mph | 20 miles |
| Horse, camel, alcheron | 4 mph | 40 miles |

FLYING

| Means of Locomotion | Speed | Distance traveled per day (min. 8 hours traveling) |
|---------------------|--------|--|
| MOV 9 | 15 mph | 125 miles |
| MOV 15 | 18 mph | 200 miles |
| MOV 20 | 25 mph | 250 miles |

Speeding Up

In exceptional circumstances, or by means of extremely precise organization, it is possible to considerably increase the distance traveled, for instance by having relays or posting houses that allow a regular change of horses.

You can also make use of your own abilities to go beyond "comfortable" traveling conditions and travel faster. It is obvious that a giant could easily increase his speed, thanks to his amazing powers of endurance and his size.

By exhausting the steeds, or at the price of a roll for STA against DIF 20, you can double the speed of progress. The DIF of the roll is increased by 5 for every day this pace is maintained, failure meaning the traveler can go no further and must rest up a few days in order to recuperate his strength. After two or three days of this kind of treatment, most riding animals generally die of exhaustion.

By running steeds to death, or by extreme personal effort (roll STA against DIF 30), it is possible to go even faster and triple the speed. This time the DIF is increased by 10 for every day the pace is maintained, with the same consequences in case of failure. One day of this treatment is enough to kill the animal that the traveler is riding.

What can slow things down

UNKNOWN TERRAIN

Not knowing the way, in a situation where the path is not well defined, can cause significant loss of time

(around 10%) over very long journeys due to the contingent rest periods and inevitable mistakes in direction. Over short distances, this is negligible. On the other hand, on difficult terrain, in mountains or forests, there is no limit to the slowing effect. However, only really bad luck should force the journey time beyond twice normal.

GROUP TRAVEL AND CARAVANS

Traveling in a group can be reassuring - there's safety in numbers - but it makes for slower travel. There are no clear rules for managing this type of situation, but it can be estimated that a group of more than five persons can increase the journey time by up to a third if they are inexperienced travelers. However, a group of twenty, well-trained and superbly organized horsemen - like a group of scouts - could travel just as fast as a lone individual.

Routes through the major realms

Each realm gives a different priority to the upkeep and growth of its roadways. Movement will progress at varying speeds, depending on a road's condition and the geographical relief. The following is a short summary of ease of travel in the main regions of Harmundia. Please note that these are just indications to give an idea of movement possibilities. They should in no way take precedence over the adventure. If travel conditions are "lethal", it doesn't mean that no one can go there, but simply that no one organizes regular voyages, and that danger is omnipresent in the region.

THE PRINCELY COMMUNES

Most of the territory is flat, so progress is rapid. What's more, the road network is one of the best in Har-mundia and one of the only ones to have a paved surface. There are a good number of comfortable inns. On the other hand, the splintered political system has caused posting houses to be rare and poorly equipped. The relatively dry climate is rather good for traveling. Rain or snow almost never block the roads in the plains.

Travel conditions: Optimal (normal movement), difficult along the frontiers (2/3 speed)

Note: It is impossible to speed up by organizing relays of horses, except in the districts of Tslana and Shushan.

LYPHAN

Despite its relatively flat geography, the Lyphanian steppe is not good for travel. Roads are rare, uncared for, and at best are just horse-trodden earth. To this must be added the endless inter-clan feuding and the constant risk of bandits, which all add up to a lot of dangerous and trying moments. Needless to say, there are almost no inns or relay stations. In winter, moreover, snow makes travel difficult.

Travel conditions: Difficult (2/3 speed), bad in winter (1/3 speed)

Note: With a lot of gold, organizing relays of horses is easy (speed x 3 possible).

THE WILD REACHES

Is there any need to explain the infinite difficulties awaiting travelers in these desolate lands? The only paths are the ones made by wolves. The clans often attack strangers on sight "just in case". The climate is dreadful and makes progress uncomfortable in summer and practically impossible in winter. Don't bother looking for inns or posting houses, they are held in utter contempt by Wild-Reachers.

Travel conditions: Catastrophic (speed reduced to 1/10)

Note: Great Eagles can be acquired here as mounts; they suffer from none of these difficulties (normal speed).

THE BUCCANEER HAVEN

The Buccaneer Haven doesn't really know what a road is. All movement is by sea, which is a lot easier. Mad-men who want to travel inland should reflect on the volcanoes and arid mountains that are home to ferocious groups of draaken.

Travel conditions: Lethal towards the interior (travel impossible), optimal by sea (normal speed)

THE KESHE EMPIRE

Although covered by a heat-blasted desert, the empire is rather good going for travelers. As long as they take

elementary precautions for survival, they will travel swiftly and safely. Caravans are frequent, relatively cheap, rapid and well organized. The routes are not always of the best quality, but they are scrupulously maintained and the object of constant care.

Travel conditions: Uncomfortable (speed 3/4)

Note: One can go almost anywhere by accompanying the highly efficient caravans that travel the desert (speed 3/4). A solitary traveler who wears himself out by speeding up risks death in the desert.

THE WIDOWLANDS

Travel in the Widowlands can be said to be average. The main roads are made of cobblestones and are properly maintained, but the smaller routes are often rutted tracks, maintained just well enough to let herds of livestock through.

The climate is quite good, but inns are scanty. There is a system of posting houses, which is inaccessible to foreigners, although gold can often smooth out any difficulties.

Travel conditions: Uncomfortable (speed 3/4)

Note: Organizing horse relays is possible (speed x 2).

THE MODEHAN MARCHES

Despite outward appearances, beneath their veil of forests, the Modehan Marches are a paradise for the traveler. Although there are very few main roads and they are never paved, the remarkably gentle landscape contains easy-going lanes and pleasant footpaths. Movement is easy, though a traveler without a guide will have trouble keeping his bearings.

There are hardly any inns and almost no posting houses, but the inhabitants are very hospitable and there is no lack of animals to ride. Lastly, the climate is gentle and very good for traveling.

Travel conditions: Optimal (normal speed)

Note: Organizing relays is easy (speed x 3) and Great Eagles may be used in the mountains.

THE MERCENARY REPUBLIC

As curious as it may seem, a traveler in this relatively inhospitable region will find the going not too hard. Numerous troop movements have forced the Mercenaries to develop a road network, which interconnects the larger towns. In contrast, there are few inns, and food is hard to come by. Furthermore, the fauna and flora are dangerous. Lastly, winters here are extremely harsh, although for the rest of the year travel is not too difficult.

Travel conditions: Uncomfortable (speed x 3/4), bad in winter (speed x 1/3)

Note: Posting houses are common, but reserved for soldiers. Using them requires a lot of bribe money, but once this has been organized, the system and the horses are of excellent quality (speed x 3).

URGAMAND

The realm has a rudimentary network of roads, which is having difficulty recovering from the last Liturgical invasion. Travel would be difficult if the barons weren't so keen on getting the traffic – and all the tax money they earn from it – back to normal. Moreover, members of the Preceptorial Fraternity, who are always on the road, will often help travelers in difficulty. Unfortunately, a downside is banditry – a national disease.

There are plenty of inns, many of them new, and posting houses are common.

The climate is a little rough, but not a serious handicap to the traveler.

Travel conditions: Difficult (speed 2/3)

Note: Posting houses are plentiful. Organizing horse relays is easy (speed x 3). Furthermore, many Keshite and Modehan caravans cross the country.

JANRENIA

A vast plain, Janrenia is a realm that is well served by a proper network of cobblestone roads, maintained at great expense by the crown. Since the Women's Revolt, inns and posting houses have multiplied, and extra bridges have been built. In short, the country has tried to make itself more amenable to travel. Its one weak point remains the cold climate.

Travel conditions: Optimal in summer (normal speed), difficult in spring and fall (speed x 2/3), uncomfortable in winter (speed reduced to 1/4)

Note: Horse relays can be organized (speed x 2).

THE LITURGICAL PROVINCE

Despite noteworthy efforts to catch up, the province's roadway system is in lamentable condition. Liturgical forces are mainly directed toward the sea. Furthermore, the ever-present paranoia has left the country without a single hostel, and the powerful network of posting houses is reserved exclusively for the clergy and the army. A positive note: the climate is rather gentle.

Travel conditions: Bad (speed reduced to 1/3)

Note: Foreigners traveling within the Liturgical Province require an extraordinary quantity of permits.

THE HORNS...

...are a traveler's hell. Unbearable climate, total absence of any kind of route whatsoever, population zero, and violently hostile plant and animal life.

Travel conditions: Lethal (many hazards await the unwary traveler)





Sanctuaries

The Sanctuary will prove a major step for the Inspired, since, in the long run, it is the way new Flames may be born. It will become a fortress to them, a magical enclave connected to the Muses, where the Inspired will rest, draw energy, inspiration and powers, share the Flame and train apprentices.

For now, the building of a Sanctuary is not possible. It will be a goal later on, when the Inspired have enough experience to engage in such a venture.

Appendix 3: Sanctuaries, Domains and Schools

BIRTH OF A SANCTUARY

♣ The Influence

A Sanctuary exists thanks to a Founding Luminary, which is the recipient of the Muses' inheritance. Thus the four Magical Arts constitute the Sanctuary's pillars: Shape, for its layout and architecture, Vista for its appearance and perception by others, Scansion for its history, ancient volumes and relationship to time, and Tune for its atmosphere and mood. The four Muses have more or less influence on each Sanctuary. Let us imagine a floral Sanctuary where Vista and Tune are the more influential. The place will therefore appear as an enchanting clearing where crystal-clear water springs, ivy and roots make up canopies, and the lightest breeze gently ruffles leaves to create soft and limpid music. Chisella's influence being minimal, such a sanctuary would be fragile and easily destroyed if discovered. On the other hand, Nuence's strong presence could enchant the place so as to make it invisible to Dullen. Then again, if Stance had little hand in it, the vegetation would not be sheltered from time or climatic changes...

♣ The Luminary

He is the heart and soul of the Sanctuary. His past and emotions are instrumental in the Sanctuary's evolution. Perceiving the Luminary's nature is essential if the place is to last. If the Inspired do not devote themselves to understanding and looking after the Luminary, the Sanctuary may lose its powers and waste away. Therefore founding a Sanctuary means discovering a Founding Luminary, winning his trust and establishing a *close relationship* with it. In practice, most of them have had extraordinary lives. Even if their memory fails them, they can be the driving force behind numerous quests.

THE EVOLUTION OF A SANCTUARY

The evolution of a Sanctuary will follow that of the Inspired. The Inspiration acquired during adventures can be invested in the Sanctuary so that it may grow in size and might.

Concretely, it will evolve like a magical organism. Energized by the Inspired's experience, it will generate new spaces, new defenses and so on, until it reaches its ultimate state. In the course of this evolution, it will bring new powers to the Inspired: lightening the effects of Perfidy and Darkness, attempting to get briefly in touch with the Muses, maybe even lifting a part of the veil hiding the Spiritcore from Harmundia. But above all, it will provide a shelter of harmony, where the Inspired will be able to meet. It must become the last stronghold against the enemy, a place the Masque has no access to, a shelter for gathering and discussing Harmundia's salvation.

THE APPRENTICES

The training of apprentices is one of the Sanctuary's purposes. In the long run, each Inspired should be able to find his heir - man or woman, human or seasonling. This heir does not have to be a blood relative. The Inspired rather chooses the best recipient for his Flame. Trained within the Sanctuary, the apprentice is molded into a reflection of his master. He will feed on his Flame until he is ready to become an Inspired and keep on with the fight. The Decan Councils have rightly assessed the importance of Sanctuaries and apprentices. A lot of seasonlings belonging to the Council devote themselves to protecting these Sanctuaries.

NOWADAYS...

There are, scattered throughout Harmundia, a handful of almost unknown Sanctuaries. Some manage to reach maturity and generate new Flames. Others fall prey to the Masque and are wiped out.

And now, other Sanctuaries are being built. Some have just been created and are extremely vulnerable, others can already defend themselves but would probably not hold out against the Enemy should he find them out.

Domains

They are regions, institutions or social structures that bring the Inspired together and bestow offices on them.

They are described by statistical parameters similar to those of an individual. These parameters are sociological data but also ratings allowing simulation: resources management, politics, defense, atmosphere, magic, foreign relations, etc. Perfidy is also present in domains. It is used to assess the quantity of intrigues they house, the presence of traitors, succession problems, and how much the Masque is behind all these.

Local history should be detailed and should help to further the Inspired's involvement in the domain's stakes. Specific assets and faults will be provided to the EG, and it will be possible to invest Inspiration points in the Domain's various parameters.

A Domain's description includes non-player characters, some of which can be replaced by the Inspired. You are free to put your Inspired in key offices or, on the contrary, to keep the mystery of your favorite NPC intact.

ROLE-PLAYING IN DOMAINS

This option entails a lot of responsibilities for the Inspired. They hold offices pertaining to the Domain and must carry out the ensuing duties. There are advantages in terms of background and links between the characters. The drawback is the burden of the Domain's constraints and priorities. Keep in mind that Domains are not closed and isolated. Barons have distant cousins whom they often visit, scholars go on missions, and fiefs are linked by alliances and vassalage. Inspired holding offices can use their Domain's organization and contacts as the starting points for adventures outside its physical boundaries.

The chapter *The Role of the Inspired*, and the descriptions of offices in the chapter *Assets and faults* (Book Two), clarify this feature of the game. Domains, their creation and management as well as a detailed example in each realm, will be dealt with in the upcoming supplement *"The Gray Papers"*.

Schools

Schools are a typical institution of the Twilight Realms. A hundred years ago, all realms had theirs, organized according to each country's traditions. At the time they were thriving, but the years that led to the Urganand war and the rise to power of Agone of Roundrock saw their decline. For a time

the Schools' traditions were neglected, but some of Agone's closest companions took steps towards their revival.

His sister Ewelf, in particular, who first intended to marry the School of Arpegne's Dean before favoring Arbassin, is committed to their resurrection. She is not the only one. Schools are reopening in many regions.

Their purpose is to train the elite. The noble classes or those craving power and responsibilities send their children there to receive the best training in the area that interests them.

Eminences grise have classified the Schools by individual skills:

- ♣ Trials Schools: Study of weapons, strategy, war, etc.
- ♣ Rogue Schools: Spies, thieves' guilds, scouts, locksmiths, etc.
- ♣ Courtly Schools: Trade, arts, diplomacy, etc.
- ♣ Knowledge Schools: Erudition, literature, medicine, etc.
- ♣ Occult Schools: Magical Arts, Ascendancy (under the close supervision of the Cipher-sorcerer), knowledge of mythical fauna, etc.

Note that some Schools combine different activities, especially the most ambitious and mysterious, such as the Borrowlight. It could have been classified as a Rogue School, since it trained eminences grise, who are technically spies. But it was also a Courtly School, given the importance of Etiquette in becoming good advisers.

Schools are often supervised by a Dean, but subdivided into several departments. Each of these is under the tutelage of a professor who is chosen by the students for providing the best training or being the most charismatic teacher. An Inspired may very well have trained in a School.



Glossary

- **Abyss:** Underground realm of the Darken, where the Darkness was born and where demons and High Devils dwell.
- **Advocatus Diaboli:** Arbitrator managing the Connivances between demons and Invokers.
- **Artifact:** Object endowed with the magic of any of the Elder Magical Arts.
- **Ascendancy:** (Universe) Magic using Dancers to cast spells. (Game mechanics) Secondary Attribute allowing performance of this magic.
- **Aspects of the Flame:** Numbers representing the Flame. Bright aspects: Body, Spirit, Soul. Dark aspects: Dark Body, Dark Spirit, Dark Soul.
- **Aspect modifier:** Number to be added to an action roll.
- **Attributes:** Innate parameters of a character.
- **Concordist:** Adept of the Magical arts.
- **Connivance:** Pact between a Demon and an Invoker.
- **Cipher-sorcerer:** Institution ruling Ascendancy Magic. Divided into three allegiances: Jormism, Eclipsism and Obscurantism.
- **Dark Flame:** Flame of an Inspired corrupted by the Enemy.
- **Darken:** Eternal, disincarnated state of Nyx under the Masque's influence.
- **Darkness:** Magical matter linked to the Darken; makes up demons and demonic objects.
- **Dawn of time:** Birth of the Muses and creation of Harmundia.
- **Decans:** Janus's system of organization for Harmundia. Also, the twelve races of seasonlings. The Decan Council has nine members, one for each decan except those of the Fall.
- **Diurn:** Eternal; incarnation of Daylight, created by the Masque.
- **Domain:** Area, institution, or social structure in which individuals hold offices.
- **Drama:** the Masque's rebellion against his creators, the Muses.
- **Dullen:** Mortals without a Flame.
- **Eclipse:** Ritual performed by the Masque and the Lady of Fall to sever the link between Harmundia and the Spiritcore.
- **Eminence Grise:** (without capitals) spy and adviser; (with capitals) the game master in AGONE.
- **Empathy:** (Universe) Jormist way of the Ascendancy. (Game mechanics) Dancers' attribute.
- **Enemy:** The alliance of the Masque and the Darken.
- **Eternals:** Beings who were born during the mythical time: the four Muses, the Masque, Nyx (now the Darken), Diurn, Janus, and the four Ladies of the Seasons.
- **Flamboyance:** Period of time following the Ritual of the Inspiration (all humans were inspired, but not the seasonlings).
- **Flame:** A magical fragment that contains the Muses' inspiration, which humans are endowed with, making them Inspired. It is composed of Soul (from the Muses), Body (the mortal receptacle) and Spirit (from Diurn).
- **Fortune points:** A secondary attribute enabling a player to increase his chances of success in a risky situation.
- **Ghast:** Disincarnated state of a mortal whose Flame could not ascend to the Spiritcore.
- **Gifts:** Game term designating abilities that compensate for Darkness or Perfidy Sorrows.
- **Glimmers:** Diurn's servants, hidden in a safe place and protected by Janus.
- **Harmundia:** The universe of the Twilight Realms, created by the Muses.
- **Impulse:** Eclipsist Way of the Resonance.
- **Initiative:** Die roll determining the order in which the players' actions are going to take place.
- **Inspiration:** Ritual performed by the Muses with Diurn at the end of the Agony, in order to create the Flames and endow the mortals with them.
- **Inspired:** Mortal endowed with the Flame.
- **Invoker:** Person who invokes and controls demons.
- **Janus:** Eternal created by the Muses to organize Harmundia after the arrival of the Masque.
- **Ladies of the Seasons:** Eternals; manifestations of Harmundia, born out of Janus's Decan organization, Godmothers of the seasonlings. By seducing the Lady of Fall, the Masque caused the Eclipse. The three others are hidden deep in pictureworlds.
- **Lost Soul:** Inspired whose Flame has turned into a Dark Flame.
- **Luminary:** Inspired having reached the highest level of his Flame's development, or disincarnated state of such an Inspired after his or her death.
- **Magical Arts:** Magic inherited from the Muses and based in art:
 - Vista for painting
 - Shape for sculpture
 - Tune for music
 - Scansion for poetry
 There are two kinds of Magical Arts: the Elder Arts, which use Artifacts, and the Free Arts, which do not.
- **Masque:** Eternal; rebellious fifth Muse born out of the Quest for Perfection.
- **Mortals:** Humans and seasonlings.
- **Nyx:** Eternal; incarnation of the Night, created by the Masque.
- **Office:** Hierarchical position with responsibilities in a Domain.
- **Pigments:** Magical paints of the Vista.
- **Resonance:** A mage's magical relationship to a Dancer.
- **Sanctuary:** Invisible place where a Luminary sleeps.
- **Seasonlings:** Mortal and intelligent nonhuman creatures, born from the Seasons and belonging to one of the twelve Decans.
- **Secondary attributes:** Parameters calculated from attributes.
- **Shard:** Magical substance which appeared during the Eclipse; Shard contains surviving Flamboyance magic and emotions.
- **Sorrow:** Game term designating traits affecting the Inspired, due to Darkening points (Dark Sorrows) or Perfidy points (Perfidious Sorrows).
- **Specialty:** A specific field of study in a skill; +1 to the action roll under appropriate circumstances.
- **Spiritcore:** Shelter of the Luminaries; this is where Flames want to go when they are released. Born out of the ritual of the Inspiration, this place is now veiled by the Twilight.
- **Skills:** Parameters of a character, acquired through learning and experience; organized into five groups.
- **Sorcerer:** Follower of the Ascendancy. May be Inspired or Dullen.
- **Symposium:** Cipher-sorcerer's meeting.
- **Torture:** Obscurantist Way of the Ascendancy.
- **Troupe:** group of Inspired players.
- **Twilight:** The consequence of the Eclipse. For fourteen centuries, the Realms have lived under a magical "half-light".
- **Zenith:** Period of time following the appearance of the Masque and his creation of Nyx and Diurn.

Name ◦
Occupation ◦ **Birthplace** ◦
Sex ◦ **Race** ◦ **Age** ◦
Old age diff. roll ◦ **Size** ◦ / **SIZ** **Weight** ◦ **Move** ◦

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| Appearance ◦ | HP _____ Current HP _____ |
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|---------------------|-----------------------------------|--|
| Attributes ◦ | Flame <input type="text"/> | Dark Flame <input type="text"/> |
|---------------------|-----------------------------------|--|

| Body | Spirit | Soul |
|--|--|--|
| Body <input type="text"/> Dark Body <input type="text"/> Body Bonus <input type="text"/> AGility <input type="text"/> STrength <input type="text"/> PERception <input type="text"/> STamina <input type="text"/> | Spirit <input type="text"/> Dark Spirit <input type="text"/> Spirit Bonus <input type="text"/> INTelligence <input type="text"/> WILL <input type="text"/> | Soul <input type="text"/> Dark Soul <input type="text"/> Soul Bonus <input type="text"/> CHARisma <input type="text"/> CREativity <input type="text"/> |

◦ **Secondary attributes**

Skills

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|--|--|--|--|
| ME Lee <input type="text"/> AIM <input type="text"/> Damage bonus <input type="text"/> Fortune (points) <input type="text"/> Hit points <input type="text"/> ART <input type="text"/> ASCendancy <input type="text"/> Serious wound threshold <input type="text"/> Critical wound threshold <input type="text"/> Maximum load <input type="text"/> Half load <input type="text"/> Daily load <input type="text"/> | Weapons* : • (.....) --/-- • (.....) --/-- • (.....) --/-- • (.....) --/-- • (.....) --/-- Rogue (~3) Acrobatics (.....) --/-- Conceal (.....) --/-- Hunt (.....) --/-- Disguise (.....) --/-- Stealth (.....) --/-- Search (.....) --/-- Intrigue (.....) --/-- Gambling (.....) --/-- Legerdemain (.....) --/-- Poisons (.....) --/-- Locksmith (.....) --/-- | Stewardship (.....) --/-- Music* : • (.....) --/-- • (.....) --/-- • (.....) --/-- Trade (.....) --/-- Painting (.....) --/-- Poetry (.....) --/-- Craft* : • (.....) --/-- • (.....) --/-- • (.....) --/-- Sculpture (.....) --/-- Traditions* : • (.....) --/-- • (.....) --/-- | Languages* : • (.....) --/-- • (.....) --/-- • (.....) --/-- Law (.....) --/-- Medicine (.....) --/-- Navigation (.....) --/-- Seasons* : • (.....) --/-- • (.....) --/-- • (.....) --/-- Strategy (.....) --/-- Beast lore (.....) --/-- |
| Alertness (.....) --/-- Athletics (.....) --/-- Climb (.....) --/-- Ride (.....) --/-- Dodge (.....) --/-- Swim (.....) --/-- First aid (.....) --/-- Survival (.....) --/-- | Courtly (~3) Fast Talk (.....) --/-- Diplomacy (.....) --/-- Eloquence (.....) --/-- Etiquette* : • (.....) --/-- • (.....) --/-- • (.....) --/-- | Knowledge (impossible) Alphabets* : • (.....) --/-- • (.....) --/-- Astronomy (.....) --/-- Surgery (.....) --/-- Cults* : • (.....) --/-- • (.....) --/-- Geography (.....) --/-- Plant lore (.....) --/-- History & legends (.....) --/-- | Occult (impossible) Magical Arts* : Tune (.....) --/-- Shape (.....) --/-- Vista (.....) --/-- Scansion (.....) --/-- Dancer Lore (.....) --/-- Cipher-sorcery (.....) --/-- Demonology (.....) --/-- Concord (.....) --/-- Resonance : Jornist (.....) --/-- Eclipsist (.....) --/-- Obscurantist (.....) --/-- |

◊ Magic ◊

Player Name :

◊ Magical Art Opuses ◊

Art :

..... Mag. Art APT:

..... Mag. Art APT:

..... Mag. Art APT:

..... Mag. Art APT:

..... Mag. Art APT:

..... Mag. Art APT:

..... Mag. Art APT:

..... Mag. Art APT:

| Name | Art/ Instrument | Thresh. | Range/ Area of effect | Duration | Time | Effect |
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◊ Ascendancy ◊

ASCendancy:

Obedience:

Resonance:

Dancer Lore:

Ascendancy APT:

Intuitive APT:

◊ Dancer attributes ◊

| Name: | Dancer: | Dancer: | Dancer: | Dancer: |
|------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| | | | | |
| Memory: | | | | |
| Spells in | | | | |
| memory: | | | | |
| Ascendancy | | | | |
| bonus: | | | | |
| Empathy: | | | | |
| Stamina: | | | | |
| Active | | | | |
| stamina : | | | | |
| Effect : | | | | |

◊ Spells ◊

| Spell Name | Obedience | Thresh. | Range/Area of effect | Duration | Dance | Spell Description | Effect |
|------------|-----------|---------|----------------------|----------|-------|-------------------|--------|
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◊ Artefacts ◊

| Name | Description | Power | Duration | Activation |
|-------|-------------|-------|----------|------------|
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◊ Contacts ◊

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AGONE, an epic role-playing game in the Twilight Realms

At the dawn of time, the Muses breathed life and magic into Harmundia. Then the Masque came, a renegade set on putting all mortals under his yoke. The Eclipse darkened the sky and Twilight descended upon the world. Since then, the humans and the nine seasonling races have built the Twilight Realms. Now the enemies are more deceitful and more powerful than ever. The Masque has returned, and the evil Darken is creeping into the Realms. Once again, as the Eminences Grise foretold it, war is setting Harmundia ablaze!

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